

Gentlemen, I present to you not the favorite son of one state, but the favorite son of the fifty states, the favorite son of every country he has visited, the favorite son of every country which has not seen him but is secretly thrilled by his name." Bedlam. The kill. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you Adlai Stevenson of Illinois." Ears and tail. Hooves and bull. A roar went up like the roar one heard the day Bobby Thomson hit his home run at the Polo Grounds and the Giants won the pennant from the Dodgers in the third playoff game of the 1951 season. The demonstration cascaded onto the floor, the gallery came to its feet, the Sports Arena sounded like the inside of a marching drum. A tidal pulse of hysteria, exaltation, defiance, exhilaration, anger and roaring desire flooded over the floor. The cry which had gone up on McCarthy's last sentence had not paused for breath in five minutes, and troop after troop of demonstrators jammed the floor (the Stevenson people to be scolded the next day for having collected floor passes and sent them out to bring in new demonstrators) and still the sound mounted. One felt the convention coming apart. There was a Kennedy girl in the seat in front of me, the Kennedy hat on her head, a dimpled healthy brunette; she had sat silently through McCarthy's speech, but now, like a woman paying her respects to the power of natural thrust, she took off her hat and began to clap herself. I saw a writer I knew in the next aisle; he had spent a year studying the Kennedy machine in order to write a book on how a nomination is won. If Stevenson stampeded the convention, his work was lost. Like a reporter at a mine cave-in I inquired the present view of the widow. "Who can think," was the answer, half frantic, half elated, "just watch it, that's all." I found a cool one, a New York reporter, who smiled in rueful respect. "It's the biggest demonstration I've seen since Wendell Willkie's in 1940," he said, and added, "God, if Stevenson takes it, I can wire my wife and move the family on to Hawaii."

"I don't get it."

"Well, every story I wrote said it was locked up for Kennedy."

Still it went on, twenty minutes, thirty minutes, the chairman could hardly be heard, the demonstrators refused to leave. The lights were turned out, giving a sudden theatrical shift to the sense of a crowded church at midnight, and a new roar went up, louder, more passionate than anything heard before. It was the voice, it was the passion, if one

insisted to call it that, of everything in America which was defeated, idealistic, innocent, alienated, outside and Beat, it was the potential voice of a new third of the nation whose psyche was ill from cultural malnutrition, it was powerful, it was extraordinary, it was larger than the decent, humorous, finicky, half-noble man who had called it forth, it was a cry from the Thirties when Time was simple, it was a resentment of the slick technique, the oiled gears, and the superior generals of Fitzgerald's Army; but it was also—and for this reason one could not admire it altogether, except with one's excitement—it was also the plea of the bewildered who hunger for simplicity again, it was the adolescent counterpart of the boss's depression before the unpredictable dynamic of Kennedy as President, it was the return to the sentimental dream of Roosevelt rather than the approaching nightmare of history's oncoming night, and it was inspired by a terror of the future as much as a revulsion of the present.

Fitz's Army held; after the demonstration was finally down, the convention languished for ninety minutes while Meyner and others were nominated, a fatal lapse of time because Stevenson had perhaps a chance to stop Kennedy if the voting had begun on the echo of the last cry for him, but in an hour and a half depression crept in again and emotions spent, the delegates who had wavered were rounded into line. When the vote was taken, Stevenson had made no gains. The brunette who had taken off her hat was wearing it again, and she clapped and squealed when Wyoming delivered the duke and Kennedy was in. The air was sheepish, like the mood of a suburban couple who forgive each other for cutting in and out of somebody else's automobile while the country club dance is on. Again, tonight, no miracle would occur. In the morning the papers would be moderate in their description of Stevenson's last charge.

(511)

HARLOT'S GHOST
816-819

816 - ~~FRANKLIN MANN~~

MAKING IT WITH MODENE

(START)

July, evening and there on the television set was John Fitzgerald Kennedy speaking at a press conference at the Democratic Convention. I watched with all the shock of passing through an occult experience. It was as if I had been reading a book and one of the characters had just stepped into my life.

stet }

It was then I recognized that the fact that Modene was now at the convention in Los Angeles had not held as much reality for me as the account of her earlier activities I had been sending out each night to Hugh Montague.

Hearing Jack Kennedy's reedy voice on TV, however, put me through transformations. Time, I discovered, was no unimpeded river, but a medium of valves and locks that had to be negotiated before one could reenter the third week of July. It took a day before I began to call the Fontainebleau every few hours to see if Modene had returned. When she finally came back to her room on the evening of the ninth day, her phone was ringing as she came through the door. I am certain she took it as an omen and must have concluded that I was gifted with remarkable powers, for she immediately burst into tears.

Shortly after my arrival, forty minutes later, our affair commenced. The mermaid was hooked—a singular dislocation of metaphor! If the barb had been set, it was in me. I had never gone to bed with a girl so beautiful as Modene. If there had been nights I was not likely to forget in the brothels of Montevideo, they also revealed the trap in commercial pleasure; as my body encountered new sensations, so did the rest of me tear off in moral panic: To go so far, when one cared so little! With Modene, however, it took no more than a night to fall in love. If half of me loved her more than the other half, all of me was moving, nonetheless, in the same direction. I did not know if I would ever have enough of Miss Modene Murphy, and this passion was even larger than my anxiety that I was breaking the first commandment handed over by Harlot. If a sneaky had been planted in her room while she was away, then I was engraving my voice onto the tapes of the FBI. Even in the middle of our first embrace, I kept telling myself that they would at least remain ignorant of the name of Harry Field. For on my race over to the hotel after receiving her call, I had prepared a piece of paper on which was written: "Call me Tom, or call me Dick, but Harry never." Of course,

~~We~~ We embraced as the door clicked shut behind me, and stopped for breath and kissed again, and then she was crying when we finished, so I did not get to hand the note over for the first five minutes, and by then, since she was no longer weeping, but laughing as well, she took in the message and laughed some more. "Why?" she whispered.

"Your room has ears," I whispered back.

She nodded. She shivered. A wanton look came over her face. In the midst of loose mascara and smeared lipstick, she was lovely. Her beauty depended on arrogance, and that had just returned. If her room was bugged, she was, at least, a center of attention.

"Tom," she said clearly, "let's fuck."

I would know her better before I would know how seldom she used the word.

On that night, the more Modene and I learned about each other, the more there was to learn. I was not accustomed to being all this insatiable, but then, I had never made love before to the mistress of the man who might yet be President of the United States, nor to the girl who had had an affair with the most popular singer in America, nor to the woman who might be the lover of a brute overlord in crime: All that, and I had not fainted on the doorstep—a monster of resolve was on the prowl in me. I could not have enough of her.

When it was all over and we came down at last to a little sleep in each other's embrace, she whispered to me on awakening at two in the morning, "I'm hungry, Tom, I'm hungry."

In an all-night diner in the southern end of Miami Beach, down in the twenty-four-hour sprawl on Collins Avenue of all-night movie houses and all-night stripper bars, of motels that rented by the hour while their names hissed in their neon signs, we ate sandwiches, drank coffee, and tried to talk. I felt as if I were on a boat, and dead-sweet drunk. I had never been so relaxed in my life. It was only by a last inward tide of duty that I could introduce her to the idea that we needed a private code. She took to it immediately. The urge to conspire lived as brightly as a genie in her. We decided to meet in the bars of hotels near the Fontainebleau, but the name of each hotel would stand for another—if I spoke to her of the Beau Rivage, I would

mean the Eden Roc; the Eden Roc would be the Deauville, and mention of the Deauville was a signal to go to the Roney Plaza. An 8:00 P.M. date would be for six in the evening. I worked out the transpositions in duplicate and handed her one of two pieces of paper.

"Am I in danger?" she asked.

"Not yet."

"Not yet?"

I did not know if I wished to come back to any world at all. "Mr. Flood worries me," I said at last.

"Sam would not touch my fingernail," she said fondly.

"In that case," I said, "he might touch mine." I regretted the remark instantly.

"You know," she said, "I feel wonderful. My father was a motorcycle racer, and I think his blood is in me tonight. I feel high."

A black pimp at the other end of the diner was trying to catch her eye and in the absence of such contact was leaving his evil cloud on me.

I felt as if I had come into the place I had been expecting to enter all my life.

19 | It would take two weeks before I found out why she had been so distraught on her return. Now that we were lovers, Modene told me less about herself than in our two short meetings for drinks. We could talk about her childhood and mine, about singers and bands, movies and a book or two—she did think *The Great Gatsby* was overrated ("The author doesn't know *anything* about gangsters") and *Gone with the Wind* was a classic, "although it took the movie to convince me of that."

I hardly cared. If we were married, her taste might be a hurdle of the first order, but then it occurred to me that I had never asked myself how much I admired *The Great Gatsby*. One was not supposed to wonder about that. Not at Yale. It was like asking yourself whether you were moved by St. Francis of Assisi.

We agreed, at any rate, on *The Catcher in the Rye*—"Heaven," said Modene, "although not a *great* classic," and that was enough to do with books. We ate and drank well. She knew every good restaurant in southern Florida. Whenever I had a day off, and there was more time now that HEEDLESS was up to date, we would (despite her long fingernails) go waterskiing or scuba diving in the Keys and spend Saturday night in the bars of Key West. It was amazing I did not get into fights. At bottom, I felt so green in the role of squire to an incredibly lovely girl that I would be on battle-alert whenever anyone looked at her. Hardly confident of my mastery of martial arts—the stint at the Farm had obviously not been enough—I was covertly measuring every conceivable opponent until I came to learn that one seldom got into a fight before one's woman provoked one. Modene forestalled such possibilities. I did not know exactly how she managed, but processing ten thousand or more people a year on an airplane may have had something to do with it. She was pleasant to strange men but not accommodating, and made it clear that I was her date for the evening and she was with me. So, I survived. I prospered. I may even have looked a little more formidable than I felt. I was, in any event, ready to die before I would ever yell, "You can have her, you can have her," and ~~knew I would wonder forever if Dix Butler had been telling the truth.~~

We also drove to Tampa, and to Flamingo in the Everglades. If we would spend a day together as preparation for our night, part of the joy was to be together in a car. She loved convertibles. Soon, I was renting them. I had a principal I could never touch until I was forty which consisted of bonds issued by the City of Bangor in 1922. It had been passed on to me by my paternal grandfather, and I could use the interest, although by family protocol, I was not supposed to. Who knew why our family did what it did? I, at any rate, good Hubbard, always predeposited such interest. Now parsimony would screech at me

5/15/11

How

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~~95-11-172 - the Bay of Phages~~

A Putative First Lady

(83-86)

Start: ~~It was~~ the Summer of 1968

~~The Existential Heroine~~

~~after the Democratic Convention~~

~~before we were~~

~~at the~~

~~all those motels and summer white~~

House, too: the Kennedy compound, an enclosure of three summer homes belonging to Joe Kennedy, Sr., RFK, and JFK, with a modest amount of lawn and beach to share among them. In those historic days the lawn was overrun

with journalists, cameramen, magazine writers, politicians, delegations, friends and neighboring gentry, government intellectuals, family, a prince, some Massachusetts state troopers, and red-necked hard-nosed tourists patrolling outside the fence for a glimpse of the boy. He was much in evidence, a bit of everywhere that morning, including the lawn, and particularly handsome at times, as one has

~~flashed~~ looking like a good

version of Charles Lindbergh at noon on a hot August day. Well, Jackie Kennedy was inside in her living room

sitting around talking with a few of us, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and his wife Marian, Prince Radziwill, Peter Maas, the

writer Jacques Lowe, the photographer, and Pierre Salinger. We were a curious assortment indeed, as oddly assembled

in our way as some of the do-gooders and real baddies on the lawn outside. It would have taken a hostess of broad

and perhaps dubious gifts, Perle Mesta, no doubt, or Ethel Merman, or Elsa Maxwell, to have woven some mood into

this occasion, because pop! were going the flashbulbs out in the crazy August sun on the sun-drenched terrace just beyond the bay window at our back, a politician—a stocky

machine type sweating in a dark suit with a white shirt and white silk tie—was having his son, seventeen perhaps,

short, chunky, dressed the same way, take a picture of him and his wife, a Mediterranean dish around sixty with a

bright, happy, flowered dress. The boy took a picture of father and mother, father took a picture of mother and son—another heeler came along to take a picture of all

three—it was a little like a rite surrounding *droit du seigneur*, as if afterward the family could press a locket in

your hand and say, "Here, here are contained three hairs from the youth of the Count, discovered by me on my wife

next morning." There was something low and greedy about this picture-taking, perhaps the popping of the flashbulbs in

the sunlight, as if everything monstrous and overreaching in our insane public land were tamped together in the fool-

proof act of taking a sun-drenched picture at noon with no shadows and a flashbulb—do we sell insurance to protect

our cadavers against the corrosion of the grave?

1968

CH

~~Robert~~
~~Jackie~~
~~Kennedy~~

D

Second
meeting
Keep it
away with
the rest
of the
family

516

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And I had the impression that Jackie Kennedy was almost suffering in the flesh from their invasion of her house, her terrace, her share of the lands, that if the popping of the flashbulbs went on until midnight on the terrace outside she would have a tic forever in the corner of her eye. Because that was the second impression of her, of a lady with delicate and exacerbated nerves. She was no broad hostess, not at all; broad hostesses are monumental animals turned mellow: hippopotami, rhinoceri, plump lion, sweet gorilla, warm bear. Jackie Kennedy was a cat, narrow and wild, and her fur was being rubbed every which way. This was the second impression. The first had been simpler. It had been merely of a college girl who was nice. Nice and clean and very merry. I had entered her house perspiring—talk of the politician, I was wearing a black suit myself, a washable, the only one in my closet not completely unpressed that morning, and I had been forced to pick a white shirt with button-down collar: all the white summer shirts were in the laundry. What a set-to I had had with Adele Mailer at breakfast. Food half-digested in anger, sweating like a goat, tense at the pit of my stomach for I would be interviewing Kennedy in a half hour, I was feeling not a little jangled when we were introduced, and we stumbled mutually over a few polite remarks, which was my fault I'm sure more than hers for I must have had a look in my eyes—I remember I felt like a drunk marine who knows in all clarity that if he doesn't have a fight soon it'll be good for his character but terrible for his constitution.

She offered me a cool drink—iced verbena tea with sprig of mint no doubt—but the expression in my face must have been rich because she added, still standing by the screen in the doorway, "We do have something harder of course," and something droll and hard came into her eyes as if she were a very naughty eight-year-old indeed. More than one photograph of Jackie Kennedy had put forward just this saucy regard—it was obviously the life of her charm. But I had not been prepared for another quality, of shyness conceivably. There was something quite remote in her. Not willed, not chilly, not directed at anyone in particular, but distant, detached as the psychologists say, moody and abstracted the novelists used to say. As we sat around the coffee table on summer couches, summer chairs, a pleasant living room in light colors, lemon, white and gold seeming to predominate, the sort of living room one might expect

to find in Cleveland, may it be, at the home of a fairly important young executive whose wife had taste, sitting there, watching people go by, the group I mentioned earlier kept a kind of conversation going. Its center, if it had one, was obviously Jackie Kennedy. There was a natural tendency to look at her and see if she were amused. She did not sit there like a movie star with a ripe olive in each eye for the brain, but in fact gave conversation back, made some of it, laughed often. We had one short conversation about Provincetown, which was pleasant. She remarked that she had been staying no more than fifty miles away for all these summers but had never seen it. She must, I assured her. It was one of the few fishing villages in America which still had beauty. Besides it was the Wild West of the East. The local police were the Indians and the beatniks were the poor hard-working settlers. Her eyes turned merry. "Oh, I'd love to see it," she said. But how did one go? In three black limousines and fifty police for escort, or in a sports car at four a.m. with dark glasses? "I suppose now I'll never get to see it," she said wistfully.

She had a keen sense of laughter, but it revolved around the absurdities of the world. She was probably not altogether unlike a soldier who has been up at the front for two weeks. There was a hint of gone laughter. Soldiers who have had it bad enough can laugh at the fact some trooper got killed crossing an open area because he wanted to change his socks from khaki to green. The front lawn of this house must have been, I suppose, a kind of no-man's-land for a lady. The story I remember her telling was about Stash, Prince Radziwill, her brother-in-law, who had gone into the second-story bathroom that morning to take a shave and discovered, to his lack of complete pleasure, that a crush of tourists was watching him from across the road. Yes, the house had been besieged, and one knew she thought of the sightseers as a mob, a motley of gargoyles, like the horde who riot through the last pages in *The Day of the Locust*.

Since there was an air of self-indulgence about her, subtle but precise, one was certain she liked time to compose herself. While we sat there she must have gotten up a half-dozen times, to go away for two minutes, come back for three. She had the exasperated impatience of a college girl. One expected her to swear mildly. "Oh, Christ!" or "Sugar!" or "Fudge!" And each time she got up, there was a glimpse

of her calves, surprisingly thin, not unfeverish. I was reminded of the legs on those adolescent Southern girls who used to go out together and walk up and down the streets of Fayetteville, North Carolina, in the Summer of 1944 at Fort Bragg. In the petulant Southern air of their boredom many of us had found something luminous that summer, a mixture of languor, heat, innocence and stupidity which was our cocktail vis-à-vis the knowledge we were going soon to Europe or the other war. One mentions this to underline the determinedly romantic aura in which one had chosen to behold Jackie Kennedy. There was a charm this other short Summer of 1960 in the thought a young man with a young attractive wife might soon become President. It offered possibilities and vistas; it brought a touch of life to the monotonies of politics, those monotonies so profoundly entrenched into the hinges and mortar of the Eisenhower administration. It was thus more interesting to look at Jackie Kennedy as a woman than as a probable First Lady. Perhaps it was out of some such motive, such a desire for the clean air and tang of unexpected montage, that I spoke about her in just the way I did later that afternoon.

"Do you think she's happy?" asked a lady, an old friend, on the beach at Wellfleet.

"I guess she would rather spend her life on the Riviera."

"What would she do there?"

"End up as the mystery woman, maybe, in a good murder case."

"Wow," said the lady, giving me my reward.

It had been my way of saying I liked Jackie Kennedy, that she was not at all stuffy, that she had perhaps a touch of that artful madness which suggests future drama.

My interview the first day had been a little short, and I was invited back for another one the following day. Rather nicely, Senator Kennedy invited me to bring anyone I wanted. About a week later I realized this was part of his acumen. You can tell a lot about a man by whom he invites in such a circumstance. Will it be a political expert or the wife? I invited my wife. The presence of this second lady is not unimportant, because this time she had the conversation with Jackie Kennedy. While I was busy somewhere or other, they were introduced. Down by the Kennedy family wharf. The Senator was about to take Jackie for a sail. The two women had a certain small general resemblance. They were something like the same height, they both had

PP 58-60

follows
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*A Sketch of the Republicans Gathered
 in Convention: The Choice Between the
 Venturesome and the Safe; What May
 Happen at Three O'clock in the Morning
 on a Long Dark Night*

One did not go to the other convention. It was seen on television, and so too much cannot be said of that. It did however confirm one's earlier bias that the Republican Party was still a party of church ushers, undertakers, choirboys, prison wardens, bank presidents, small-town police chiefs, state troopers, psychiatrists, beauty-parlor operators, corporation executives, Boy-Scout leaders, fraternity presidents, tax-board assessors, community leaders, surgeons, Pullman porters, head nurses and the fat sons of rich fathers. Its candidate would be given the manufactured image of an ordinary man, and his campaign, so far as it was a psychological campaign (and this would be far indeed), would present him as a simple, honest, dependable, hard-working, ready-to-learn, modest, humble, decent, sober young man whose greatest qualification for president was his profound abasement before the glories of the Republic, the stability of the mediocre, and his own unworthiness. The apocalyptic hour of Uriah Heep.

It would then be a campaign unlike the ones which had preceded it. Counting by the full spectrum of complete Right to absolute Left, the political differences would be minor, but what would be not at all minor was the power of each man to radiate his appeal into some fundamental depths of the American character. One would have an inkling at last if the desire of America was for drama or stability, for adventure or monotony. And this, this appeal to the psychic direction America would now choose for itself was the element most promising about this election, for it gave the possibility that the country might be able finally to rise above the deadening verbiage of its issues, its politics, its jargon, and live again by an image of itself. For in some part of themselves the people might know (since these candidates were not old enough to be revered) that they had chosen one young man for his mystery, for his promise that the country would grow or disintegrate by the unwilling charge he gave to the intensity of the myth, or had chosen another young man for his unstated oath that he would do all in his power

to keep the myth buried and so convert the remains of Renaissance man as rapidly as possible into mass man. One might expect them to choose the enigma in preference to the deadening certainty. Yet one must doubt America's bravery. This lurching, unhappy, pompous and most corrupt nation—could it have the courage finally to take on a new image for itself, was it brave enough to put into office not only one of its ablest men, its most efficient, its most conquistadorial (for Kennedy's capture of the Democratic Party deserves the word), but also one of its more mysterious men (the national psyche must shiver in its sleep at the image of Mickey Mantle-cum-Lindbergh in office, and a First Lady with an eighteenth-century face). Yes, America was at last engaging the fate of its myth, its consciousness about to be accelerated or cruelly depressed in its choice between two young men in their forties who, no matter how close, dull, or indifferent their stated politics might be, were radical poles apart, for one was sober, the apotheosis of opportunistic lead, all radium spent, the other handsome as a prince in the un-stated aristocracy of the American dream. So, finally, would come a choice which history had never presented to a nation before—one could vote for glamour or for ugliness, a staggering and most stunning choice—would the nation be brave enough to enlist the romantic dream of itself, would it vote for the image in the mirror of its unconscious, were the people indeed brave enough to hope for an acceleration of Time, for that new life of drama which would come from choosing a son to lead them who was heir apparent to the psychic loins? One could pause: it might be more difficult to be a President than it ever had before. Nothing less than greatness would do.

Yet if the nation voted to improve its face, what an impetus might come to the arts, to the practices, to the lives and to the imagination of the American. If the nation so voted. But one knew the unadmitted specter in the minds of the Democratic delegates: that America would go to sleep on election eve with the polls promising Kennedy a victory on the day to come, yet in its sleep some millions of Democrats and Independents would suffer a nightmare before the mystery of uncharted possibilities their man would suggest, and in a terror of all the creativities (and some violences) that mass man might now have to dare again, the undetermined would go out in the morning to vote for the psychic se-

curity of Nixon the way a middle-aged man past adventure holds to the stale bread of his marriage. Yes, this election might be fearful enough to betray the polls and no one in America could plan the new direction until the last vote was counted by the last heeler in the last ambivalent ward, no one indeed could know until then what had happened the night before, what had happened at three o'clock in the morning on that long dark night of America's search for a security cheaper than her soul.

(FWD)

POSTSCRIPT TO THE THIRD PRESIDENTIAL PAPER

This piece had more effect than any other single work of mine, and I think this is due as much to its meretriciousness as to its merits. I was forcing a reality, I was bending reality like a field of space to curve the time I wished to create. I was not writing with the hope that perchance I could find reality by being sufficiently honest to perceive it, but on the contrary was distorting reality in the hope that thereby I could affect it. I was engaging in an act of propaganda.

During the period after Kennedy was nominated, there was great indifference to him among the Democrats I knew; disaffection was general; outright aversion was felt by most of the liberal Left—the white collar SANE sort of professional who had been for Stevenson. The Kennedy machine worked well to overcome apathy and inertia; so did the debates with Nixon. Through the early Fall, before the election, people who had been going along with the Democratic Party for years began somewhat resignedly to accept their fate: they would go out after all and vote for John F. Kennedy. But there was no real enthusiasm, no drive. My piece came at the right time for him—three weeks before the election. It added the one ingredient Kennedy had not been able to find for the stew—it made him seem exciting, it made the election appear important. Around New York there was a turn in sentiment; one could feel it; Kennedy now had glamour.

As will be seen in the essay on Jackie Kennedy, I took to myself some of the critical credit for his victory. Whether I was right or wrong in fact may not be so important as its psychological reality in my own mind. I had invaded No

November 1960

The Shadow of the Crime

A WORD FROM THE ~~REAL~~ AUTHOR

In November, 1960, Norman Mailer stabbed his spouse, Adele, several times with a pen-knife that penetrated deep enough to nick the sac of her heart. The surgeons, looking to stanch the source of internal bleeding, cut her open from the sternum to the pelvis. She was left permanently scarred and permanently embittered. In turn, the assailant accompanied the shadow of the crime for the rest of his life. It sat beside him like a döppelgänger at odd hours of the morning and the night.

yoghurt
fart
church
for
art

blood
and
wood
is
bread

mother
menstrual
spike
and
mass

Murder

foetus
feathers
food

earning
butter
bone
and
break

fairies
father
flutes

homocide is hairy

morons murder mutes

Royal
is
the
rat who runs the race

Beard is blonde
it makes you
drunk
like that
mommie-dolly,
Daddy.

Gin is not water
but she is white
She makes
you very
drunk
like mommie-daddy-dollie
used to be
when she-he
fall
boom-boom,
off the wagon
baby

The Good Lors

The Good Lors
gave me
my
pretty
face

The Good Lors
is full
of air
like a polar bear
with
lollypop
breeze,
daddy.

He
who
travels
alone
travels
least
said
the
police
pounding
the beat
in
pairs

527

~~WAKE. BY~~

The timid
engage
the
profound
through
horror
said
the crippled
old
spider

60

Paper
roc
sti
A wt
tbl
A fa
tbl
A m
tbl
Circ
The

Every time
I move
I squash
something
said
Loathesome.

529
after 1960 green ink

not you
but your cure
do I fear
O my love
for your cure
is a
curse
upon me

530

Never
contemplate
nothing
said
the saint.

1960

THE ART OF 1

What writers have

E. M. Forster, a superb novelist, I admire most in *The Longest Journey* the page and read "Go in a football game." I important through the denly and abruptly d. taught me that person more inexact than I have you wrote a novel you and walked around like related more closely to saw one recently which there was a television I could turn on. Turning painting both. Well, F. novels. I suppose what written in the third person.

Forster has never written

I know he has it, but personally a sufficient third person. Forster, a not. I think I must have to write in the third person. I don't know that I've

N THE UNITED STATE OF AMERIC

One modest reality used to save such hours from dipping too quickly into too early a drink. It was the scraps of paper I would find in my jacket. There were fragments of poems on the scraps, not poems really, little groupings of lines, little crossed communications from some wistful outpost of my mind where, deep in drink the night before, it had seemed condign to record the unrecoverable nuance of a moment, a funny moment, a mean moment, a moment when something

I might always have taken for granted was turned for an instant on its head.

Some of those curious little communications ^{that} came riding in on the night through an electrolyte of deep booze were fairly good, many were silly, the best were often indecipherable. Which would feel close to tragic. Almost always the sensation of writing a good poem (in the dark of early morning) was followed in the daylight by the knowledge I had gone so deep I could not find my eyes. My handwriting had temporarily disintegrated in the passion of putting down a few words. Somebody had obviously been down in the rapture of the depths.

It was not so very funny. In the absence of a greater faith, a professional keeps himself in shape by remaining true to his professionalism. Amateurs write when they are drunk. For a serious writer to do that is equivalent to a professional football player throwing imaginary passes in traffic when he is bombed, and smashing his body into parked cars on the mistaken impression that he is taking out the linebacker. Such a professional football player will feel like crying in the morning when he discovers his ribs are broken.

I would feel like crying too. My pride, my substance, my capital, was to be found in my clarity of mind or—since my mind is never so very clear—let us say found in the professional cool with which the brain was able to contend with the temptations and opportunities each leap of intuition offered. It was criminal to take these leaps like an amateur, steeped in drink, wasteful, wanton. To be hearing the inspirations of the angel when one is kissing the flames is a condition so implicit with agony that it took eighteen centuries of Christendom before Kierkegaard could come back alive with the knowledge that such moments not only existed but indeed were the characteristic way modern man found a knowledge of his soul—which is to say he found it by the act of perceiving that he was most certainly losing it.

I would go to work, however, on my scraps of paper. They were all I had for work. I would rewrite them carefully, printing in longhand and ink, and I would spend hours whenever there was time going over these little poems, these sharp dry crisp little instants, some of them no more and hopefully no less possessed of meaning than the little crack or clatter of an autumn leaf underfoot. Something of the wistfulness in the fall of the wind was in those poems for me. And since I wasn't doing anything else very well in those days, I worked the poems over every chance I had. Sometimes a working day would go by, and I might put a space between two lines, or remove a word. Maybe I was mending. As the sense of work

work

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unhappy. In the absence of a greater faith, myself in shape by remaining true to his sure write when they are drunk. For a poet is equivalent to a professional football player in traffic when he is taking his body into parked cars on the street. Such players will feel like dying in the morning. His life is broken. My pride, my substance, my mind in my clarity of mind or—since my mind is clear—let us say found in the profession of the brain was able to contend with the opportunities each leap of intuition offered. These leaps like an amateur, stepped in on them. To be hearing the inspirations of a poet kissing the flames is a condition so intimate it took eighteen centuries of Christendom to come back alive with the moment not only existed but indeed it was modern man found a knowledge to say he found it by the act of perceiving, certainly losing it. I took, however, on my scraps of paper. They were not. I would rewrite them carefully, print them, and I would spend hours whenever I got over these little poems, these sharp dry bones of them no more and hopefully no more than the little crack of clay of an ool. Something of the wistfulness in the as in those poems for me. And since I was doing very well in those days, I worked by chance I had. Sometimes a working day might put a space between two lines or maybe I was mending. As the sense of work

a little clearer and the hangover receded, there was a happiness working mornings on *Deaths for the Ladies* which I had not felt for years. I loved *Deaths for the Ladies*, not because it was a big book—I knew my gifts as a poet were determined to be small—but because I was in love with its modesty. The modesty of *Deaths for the Ladies* was saving me. Out of the bonfire I seemed to have made of my life, these few embers were to be saved and set—not every last part of one's memories would have to be consumed. Besides, I wanted to give pleasure. It seemed to me that *Deaths for the Ladies* would give more simple pleasure than any book I had ever written, it was pure, it was modest, it was sad, and it was funny—it was so very modest—how could one not like it? And it had even one innovation to offer poets—so I thought. There was no music or prosody or command or rush of language in the book, no power, not much meter, not at all, much of it was poetry only by the arbitrary insistence of the short line, but *Deaths for the Ladies* was something else, I thought—it was a movie in words. I set it with the greatest care. Every line was placed on the page by me. The spaces were chosen with much deliberation, the repetitions of phrases were like images in a film. The music of the poem as a whole—if it had any—was like the montage of a film. I felt that all of *Deaths for the Ladies* made up one poem, not at all a great poem, never in any way, but still a most modern poem about a man loose in our city, for one cannot talk of New York without saying our city, there, majestic, choking in its own passions, New York, the true capital of the Twentieth Century. And *Deaths for the Ladies* was like a small sea breeze running through some of those electronic canyons where a myriad of fine moments were forever dying in the iridescence of foam.

Of course, if you fall in love with a book, you may be certain it will drown, suffocate, or expire all alone on an unintended bed. *Deaths for the Ladies* came out in modest edition and sank without a sound. It was only reviewed three or four places, and the one good review it received (the *Sunday New York Times*) was six months late. Poets, for the most part, resented it. Why should they not? I had dabbled in that life for which they were willing, if they were good enough, to starve and to lose love. They had studied their craft, I had just skipped about in it. They were dedicated to poetry, I was dedicated to climbing out of the hole I had dug for myself, and poetry was offering the first rung. Therefore, poets ignored the book, which was a pity, for a good poet might have done something with my little innovation, my movie in words.

But to end on a note less altruistic to the interests of art let us look at one review. I had had secret hopes, I now confess, that *Deaths for the Ladies* would be a vast success at the bar of poetry. The hopes got bounced. Here is the review in *Time*, March 30, 1962:

Ever
see
a drunk
come on
daring
I mean
drunk
like
daring
was a
sloppy
entreechat?
Mr M
comes on
with fourbucks
of poems
about sex
not love
that run
down
like this
only
not
lined up
neat.
Having less
than
fourbucks
fun
a reader
counted
the words
and concluded
Mr M
is making up
for his
first book
which had
too many.
You
didn't
score

**this
time
M
a
n**

In a fury of incalculable pains, a poem was written in reply, sent to *Time Magazine's* column of letters, and printed there.

You will keep hiring
picadors from the back row
and pic the bull back
far back along his spine
You will pass a wine
poisoned on the vine
You will saw the horns off
and murmur
The bulls are
ah, the bulls are not
what once they were
Before the corrida is over
there will be Russians in the plaza
Swine some of you will say
what did we wrong?
and go forth to kiss the conquerer.

Now, on the comfortable flank of this reminiscence, I think I may have been fortunate to get so paltry a reception on *Deaths for the Ladies*. For if I had been treated well, I might have kept floating in a still little pond, and drowned my sorrow for myself in endless wine and scraps of paper and folios of further poems. Instead, the review in *Time* put iron into my heart again, and rage, and the feeling that the enemy was more alive than ever, and dirtier in the alley, and so one had to mend, and put on the armor, and go to war, go out to war again, and try to hew huge strokes with the only broadsword God ever gave you, a glimpse of something like Almighty prose.

CUBA - I

The Bay of Pigs

April 1961

You let everything stand
until it's knocked over
and then
you go over
and write
your own
ruins

The Bay of Pigs

April 1961

(61)

538

April 61

966-980-14.G.

966 1 - NORMAN M. M...

Bay of Pigs

~~Cuba. The owners' decision to defect from [redacted] was doubtless
not passed on to the [redacted] thought they were signing on for
routine [redacted]~~

later

The situation has become so acutely intolerable for Pepe San Román that he took off in one of his battered launches to scour the seas, looking to find a supply ship. Of course, from six miles out, which is as far as the launch, given its asthmatic motor, dared to go, he could do nothing but transmit code-name cries by radio: DOLORES, THIS IS BEACH, NEED YOU. AM TRYING TO FIND YOU. DOLORES, PLEASE ANSWER BEACH.

I couldn't help observing that the text was as desperate as the notices in a personals classified.

By dawn it seems evident that we will not be able to supply the beachhead until tonight. In compensation, President Kennedy did agree during the night to allow six of the B-26s in Nicaragua to try a strike against the remaining planes in Castro's air force.

We are, however, cursed. This morning, black, low-lying tropical clouds cover Havana's airfields.

Of course, the fact that this flight was authorized after the same mission was vetoed on Sunday has put everyone in an ugly mood. "Irish Hamlet" may be the one epithet applied to Kennedy that is not too vicious to memorialize, and Cabell has hardly been seen on these premises since he paid that catastrophic visit on Sunday morning in golfing clothes. There is also some resentment of Bissell. The story, as it is coming out (and I have heard two virtually congruent versions from Cal and from David Phillips) is that when Bissell and Cabell went to Rusk's office in the State Department on Sunday afternoon to argue for the need to reinstate the bombing raid, Rusk, obviously more concerned with our compromised situation at the UN, proceeded to call President Kennedy at Glen Ora. Over the telephone, he did give a fair presentation of Cabell and Bissell's arguments on the need for a second air strike, but then told the President that he did not agree. Whereupon Kennedy said he would go along with Rusk, who now relayed this message to our officers, and pointed to the phone. Did they wish to speak to the

President? They did not. Three days later, you can still hear the muttering at Quarters Eye. Of Cabell it was to be expected, but why had Bissell been silent?

I asked my father. He put a quick end to that subject. "Dickie was afraid," said Cal, "that if he pushed too hard on the absolute necessity of a second air strike, Kennedy might reply, 'If it hangs on that thin a thread, call it off.' " Cal gave me one wild look. "Every now and then in a man's life," he said, "one can have a little trouble with an erection. What's the advised procedure? Get it in, boy, even if it's only the tip. Then, pray to God for reinforcements. Please, God, just let an elephant step on my ass."

How my father, son of the greatest headmaster St. Matthew's ever had, developed his sexual view of the universe is to me, after eight years of living with the idea, the best single proof of the existence of Alpha and Omega.

3:00 P.M., April 18, 1961

Roberto Alejos' brother, Carlos, the Guatemalan Ambassador, has just made a speech to the UN in answer to Cuba's charges. As I watch on TV, Carlos Alejos says, most forcefully, that the troops who landed in Cuba, were not trained in Guatemala. His country, he solemnly states, is not about to allow its territory to be used for aggressive acts against fellow American republics.

I am overcome. In part, I must admit, it is with admiration. Large lies do have their own excitement. I much prefer a major mistruth in the name of a real purpose than all that pandering to Mothers of Miami and Caravans of Sorrow.

4:00 P.M., April 18, 1961

The front is relatively quiet this afternoon. Castro's forces, a little more respectful after their mauling last night, are moving cautiously down the road from Playa Larga to Girón. At San Blas, on the eastern front, where equally heavy fighting took place yesterday, there has been some realignment of our troops. The Third Battalion, which went ashore with Pepe San Román at Girón and has seen no action so far, is moving over to the eastern front to relieve the paratroopers at San Blas. The Fourth

Battalion, dispatched to Playa Larga yesterday in lieu of the half-drowned Fifth Battalion, has now been pulled back to cross over to the eastern flank. The Sixth Battalion, playing musical chairs with the Fourth, has shifted to the western end. It occurs to me that I have not accounted for the First Battalion. Then I realize they are the paratroopers. Yes, they are back taking a well-earned rest in Girón for a few hours. I think of beer bottles in cantinas, and men diving under tables when Castro's planes come over. I have no idea if the image has any validity.

At TRAX, Pepe San Román impressed me as lean and lithe, with a small, pinched, totally consecrated face, utterly humorless. Whole determination to win. It was obvious he was altogether capable of sending men out to die since he had no doubt of his own ability to do so. Now he is at the edge of his temper.

BLAGAR: This is Task Force Commander. How are you, Pepe?

PEPE: Son of a bitch. Where have you been, you son of a bitch? You have abandoned us.

BLAGAR: I know you have your problems. I've had mine.

GRAY: (an Agency man on the *Blagar*): Pepe, we will never abandon you. If things are very rough there, we will go in and evacuate you.

PEPE: I will not be evacuated. We will fight to the end here.

GRAY: What do you need?

PEPE: Weapons, bullets, communications, medicine, food.

GRAY: We will get you all these things tonight.

PEPE: That's what you said yesterday and you did not come.

5:02 P.M., Tuesday, April 18, 1961

Cal tells me, via his State Department leads, that Khrushchev sent a strong note to Kennedy. He has part of the text and shows it to me.

Written at an hour of anxiety fraught with danger to world peace: It is not a secret to anyone that the armed bands which invaded Cuba have been trained, equipped, and armed in the United States of America. There should be no misunderstanding of our position: We shall render

the Cuban people and their government all necessary assistance in beating back the armed attack on Cuba. Sincerely interested in a relaxation of international tension, we shall, if others aggravate it, reply in full measure.

Kennedy's answer is available to us. He is going to say that in case of outside intervention, the U.S. will feel obliged to honor immediately its hemispherical treaty obligations.

The fish is red!

8:00 P.M., April 18, 1961

A message from the *Blagar*: PROCEEDING BLUE BEACH WITH 3 LCUS. IF LOW JET COVER NOT FURNISHED AT FIRST LIGHT BELIEVE WE WILL LOSE ALL SHIPS. REQUEST IMMEDIATE REPLY.

12:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

The *Blagar* waits for an answer even as we have been waiting all night. It has taken this long for Bissell, General Lemnitzer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Burke, Dean Rusk, and Robert McNamara to get a meeting underway with the President. Very much in the way was a formal reception at the White House tonight. The President and First Lady have to greet his Cabinet, members of Congress, and guests.

No sooner has the President left the party for the meeting, however, than one of my father's contacts, a Congressman present at the White House reception, reaches Cal to tell him about it. I have always known that my father is, by half, a gregarious man, but I had never realized until the last two weeks of bunking with him how many tips, leads, sources, feeds, ties, and links he has to Congress and Departments of the Government. Where Hugh Montague is devious and full of pressure points he can tap, my father treats it all as a social matter. He is full of friendly curiosity, or so, at least, he presents himself, and given his personal force, which always leaves you feeling as if you're setting more weight on one foot than the other (for he is certainly capable of tilting you), people do come forward with answers to his inquiries. Tonight, from the mouth of this minor Congressman, who is delighted to be able to get through to a senior officer in CIA, Cal has learned the following: The President,

immaculate in white tie and tails, and Jackie Kennedy on his arm in a pink evening gown, came down the main stairs to the ballroom at 10:15 p.m. while the Marine band in dress red uniforms played nothing less than "Mr. Wonderful." The President and the First Lady had a dance looking "elegant as champagne," then mixed with the guests until close to midnight, whereupon apologies were made, and the President left the party, went to his office, and now is closeted with the high officials who are going to help him to decide the fate of the Brigade. Cal informs me that Bissell has some daring and wholehearted goals to shoot for at this point. My guess is that Bissell has been in contact with Allen Dulles in Puerto Rico. According to Cal, Admiral Burke and General Lemnitzer in company with Bissell will ask Kennedy for the following: (1) Complete air support from the U.S. Navy carrier *Essex*, now twenty miles off the coast of Girón; and (2) Bite the bullet! Put ashore the 1500-man Marine battalion stationed on the *Essex*. In short, the tip is in; reinforce it. Bissell and Company will argue that this is the only way for the U.S. to save face.

I can't get over the picture I hold of the President coming down the main stairway of the White House with his wife (who in my mind now looks more and more like you, Kittredge). It might as well be a film by George Cukor, or Rouben Mamoulian. High intrigue *cum* white tie and tails. Of course, I haven't really slept in two and a half nights. My mind leaps like a fly with one wing.

2:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

About a quarter of an hour ago, Bissell came back to Quarters Eye. Needless to say, we all gathered about him. He looked tired to me, but spoke as if much has been gained. The President, he said, had authorized six jet fighters from the *Essex* to provide air cover over the beach from 6:30 A.M. to 7:30 A.M. They would be there to protect the B-26s from Castro's fighters. While our jet fighters were under orders not to be the first to fire, they were now authorized to reply. With such protection, the Brigade's B-26s ought to be able to cause serious damage to Castro's troops and tanks at the battlefront. During that hour, the *Barbara J.*, the *Blagar*, and the LCUs can also unload their supplies at Girón.

I, knowing how much military aid was asked for, and how little has been granted, am surprised at the enthusiasm with which the news is received. Perhaps it is no more than the power to be electrified by some kind of positive response when fatigue and despair have hollowed one out, but you can feel the difference. Even Cal is not without enthusiasm. "We asked for a lot, and didn't get it, but those were bargaining chips. When Admiral Burke spoke of sending in the Marines, Kennedy had to offer something."

"Is it enough?"

"Well, Kennedy can't pretend he's a virgin anymore."

3:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

I walk around with a knot of anxiety as large as an apple in the long road of my esophagus. It is all very well to send B-26s in under an umbrella of American jet fighters, but what Kennedy may not know, and Bissell did not necessarily tell him, is that nine of the sixteen B-26s with which we began, are down; most of the remaining bombers are battered. Since Sunday night, the pilots have been up in the air almost constantly. What with seven hours for each round trip and at least two trips a day, they are exhausted. In fact, some of them, not believing in our promise to give jet support, now refuse to take off. Someone, obviously without authorization, must have promised jet support yesterday that did not materialize.

Cal has also informed me that two of the four planes going out on this mission are actually being flown by Americans, two to each plane. Four Americans, contract pilots, any one of whom, if he parachutes out and is captured, can sink us internationally. Moreover, one of the Cuban pilots on this mission has served notice that he will not take his B-26 past Grand Cayman Island, 175 miles south of Girón, unless he is met by fighter cover.

Well, he will not be met. Fighter cover doesn't begin to show until they are much nearer the *Essex*. In any event, it's academic. That same pilot has just radioed in that his right engine is gone and he has to turn back. We are down to three planes. I try to conceive of how difficult it must be to fly danger-

Your brave actions must begin to seem suicidal. Valhalla is for victorious warriors.

I am by now in that state of mental disarray where simple computations have to be made over and over again. If the planes are to arrive at 6:30 over the beach, then they must leave at 3:10 A.M. our time, or 2:10 A.M. Nicaraguan time.

Since Bissell only returned at 2:45 A.M., I am trying to calculate how the B-26s can possibly get to the beachhead on time. Then I realize (while imbibing all the spiritual ecstasy of an epiphany opening its gates) that even if Bissell did not leave the White House before 2:30 A.M., the decision to accompany the B-26s with *Essex* jet fighters had to have been reached earlier. The order probably went out at 1:45 A.M. So, of course, the planes had time to take off.

A simple calculation, but I am perspiring, and feel beatific from the ardors of the calculation. If three nights of three hours of sleep has done this to me, how well will I function under combat? I do not want to lose respect for myself, but I feel drawn too fine. By the look of everyone around me, I am not certain they are faring better. It is my hope that real combat delivers energies that staff work leaches out.

6:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

All of us are ill. The three B-26s, flying in prearranged radio silence, appeared promptly over the beaches of Girón at 5:30 A.M., *our* time. Since the support from the *Essex* was not due till 6:30, the Navy jets were still being brought up to the carrier deck about the time Castro's T-33 trainer jets came along to shoot down two of the three B-26s. The survivor, seriously crippled, managed to get away, and, at last report, is skittering back to Nicaragua on one engine while staying a hundred feet above the water. Naturally, none of our supply boats were approaching the shore at 5:30, and no ammunition has been landed. The *Essex* jets, which were only empowered to protect the B-26s from attack 6:30 A.M. to 7:30 A.M., will not even take off now.

Everyone is trying to determine how the error was made, but a wall of obfuscation has come up over this point.

I have a theory. Assuming other minds have been stretched into skews of calculation comparable to mine, someone in Quar-

ters Eye must have sent a message for the B-26s to be over the beach at 5:30 *their* time, and something happened to the possessive to make it come out in Puerto Cabezas as *their time in Cuba*, or 4:30 A.M. Nicaraguan time. Consequently, the planes took off at 1:10 A.M. Nicaraguan time, or 2:10 A.M. our time, and what with radio silence, no one knew.

This is my explanation. I have heard five others. The most convincing is that Bissell and Admiral Burke never checked with each other, so separate orders were transmitted to Happy Valley and to the carrier fleet. Cal whispers that the Navy is always on Greenwich Mean Time and we are sometimes on Standard Time. Oh, God! I can feel in me—I must admit it—a vein of pure nastiness. It is taking a lively, private pleasure in all these massive military mentalities failing to anticipate the one crucial trouble spot. The pleasure whips through me as fast as a squirrel crossing an open yard, then shame at myself wells up with more volume than I expected; behind it flows the woe of all that is being lost, and I am relieved to know that I am human, loyal to the team, and not a monster after all.

7:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

On the western front, a few miles to the west of Girón, Castro's forces are attacking. Also on the San Blas road. Troops pressing from the east. To the south is the Caribbean.

10:30 A.M., April 19, 1961

This journal may no longer be necessary. The messages sent to the *Blagar* by Pepe San Román tell most of it.

6:12 A.M. Enemy on trucks coming from Red Beach are right now 3 km from Blue Beach. Pepe.

8:15 A.M. Situation critical. Need urgently air support. Pepe.

9:25 A.M. Two thousand militia attacking Blue Beach from east and west. Need close air support immediately. Pepe.

On it goes. Obviously, no one explained to Pepe San Román that the jet support was only for the B-26s. In their absence, nothing.

1:30 P.M., April 19, 1961

More messages. "Out of ammo." "Enemy closing in."

3:30 P.M., April 19, 1961

They are still holding. I don't know what last negotiations have taken place between Quarters Eye, the Joint Chiefs, and the White House, but the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic, that is, CINCLANT, has been instructed to bring off an evacuation. In force, if necessary. A copy manages to make its way among us. (Two days ago, such breach of security would have been unheard of—I am beginning to understand why old OSS men are the way they are. Security is for cold wars, but combat calls for mutual participation.) I hardly feel as if I am in the CIA any more.

CINCLANT was told: HAVE DESTROYERS TAKE BRIGADE PERSONNEL OFF BEACH TO LIMIT CAPTURE. DESTROYERS AUTHORIZED RETURN FIRE IF FIRED UPON DURING THIS HUMANITARIAN MISSION.

Two destroyers will lead the *Blagar*, the *Barbara J.*, the *Atlántico*, and the LCUs in to shore. The only trouble is that after the aborted attempt this morning, the supply ships dispersed again and are now about fifty miles out to sea.

At this moment, I am put to work on the last communiqué, Number Six, to be issued by Lem Jones Associates. I am given the guidelines by Hunt and Phillips who, I realize, are even more emotionally decomposed than myself. Decomposed? Or is there a brushfire burning within? I feel as if we are all in danger of being overrun by incoherence. I am happy to have a task to perform. I feel like a fire fighter.

4:20 P.M., April 19, 1961

BULLETIN #6, CRC, CARE OF LEM JONES ASSOCIATES. TO BE RELEASED UPON NOTICE TONIGHT:

The Revolutionary Council wishes to make prompt and emphatic statement in the face of recent astonishing public announcements from uninformed sources. The recent landings in Cuba have been constantly, although inaccurately, described as an invasion. It was, in fact, a landing of supplies and support for our patriots who have been fighting in Cuba for months and was numbered in the hundreds,

not the thousands. The action taken allowed the major portion of our landing party to reach the Escambray Mountains.

I had difficulties writing the paragraph. Three times I misspelled "uninformed" as "uniformed." Mental fatigue takes on its images. I am in a dungeon, and a woman with an enormous vagina is waiting outside my door. I know she is enormous because her mighty thighs are spread and Hunt and Phillips are stroking her with a giant feather. Her greed to be stroked is insatiable. She has no interest where the feather went one minute ago. She wants to know: Where is it now?

I begin to laugh. We are the gnomes who seek to please the great American public. To my horror, I am suddenly close to throwing up. Then I realize why. From the stalls around me comes the odor of vomit. My nostrils are so acute that I can not only smell Scotch and vodka, but am convinced that the metallic odor of each pocket flask is in the spew, and so is the pharmacological smell of Dexedrine. We've been spinning along on the stuff for days. I have an intimation that this is how one feels when a marriage is breaking up.

When I come out of the loo, I am assigned to write a few vagaries to take the place of the radio broadcasts we had prepared to send into Cuba after early victories. I compose it now: "The fish are brightly spotted. Javier is carrying his hoe. The whale will spout on the full of the moon. The grass is waving. The seed is dispersed."

There will be no argument over these choices.

5:00 P.M., April 19, 1961

I read a last message. It came via the *Blagar* at 4:30 P.M. I HAVE NOTHING TO FIGHT WITH. AM TAKING TO THE WOODS. I CANNOT WAIT FOR YOU. PEPE.

5:30 P.M., April 19, 1961

This was followed by a transcript of a conversation which concluded at 4:40 P.M.:

GRAY: Hold on. We're coming. We're coming with everything.

PEPE: How long?

GRAY: Three to four hours.

PEPE: You won't be here on time. Farewell, friends. I am breaking this radio right now.

It is believed that Pepe San Román, Artime, and their staff are heading into the Zapata swamps. Thirty or forty of them may succeed in making their way into the Escambray Mountains. Like Castro before them, they can build a mighty guerrilla movement. Or so, I suspect, goes the thinking of Artime and San Román.

6:00 P.M., April 19, 1961

Men are starting to leave Quarters Eye. Others remain. Most are not needed any longer. Nonetheless, they remain, as I do. Perhaps we have some elusive quality in common. I begin to think we must all be the sort of people who stay up till three in the morning listening to repetitive news broadcasts about a catastrophe, hoping to hear one new detail.

Indeed, one new detail does arrive. This Wednesday morning, the exile leaders threatened to smash their way out of their barracks. Bender succeeded in convincing them that the bad publicity would be a media bloodbath. Everyone will lose dignity. To keep them placated, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Adolf Berle flew down this morning. Now, word comes back that the Council is in the air, and will land soon in Washington where they will be taken to see President Kennedy. Several of the exile leaders (Cardona, Barbaro, and Maceo) have sons fighting in the Brigade. Others have brothers or nephews. All are now dead or captured. In this swamp of desolation, I feel something positive for Kennedy. It is a decent act, I decide, to meet them at this time.

Dick Bissell comes up to the newsroom, and tells us that the exile leaders are now in a safe house near Washington, D.C. "Will you," asks Bissell of Hunt, "escort them to the White House?"

"I can't face them," says Howard. "They trusted me and I can't face them."

Frank Bender will accompany them instead. I think of wildly

corrupt and wholly compromised Toto Barbaro engaged in small talk with the President. What does it matter?

Phillips slips a word into my ear. "I don't think it was the Cubans that Howard can't face, but the President. I would bet Howard wishes Kennedy six feet under and I don't know if I disagree with him."

The last teletype I read before leaving Quarters Eye was a wire service pickup of a story in the *Miami News*. "Rebel invaders claimed today to have driven fifty miles and scored their first big victory in the battle to topple Fidel Castro."

Well, at 9 P.M., Bulletin #6 will go out from Lem Jones Associates to confirm that nonexistent fact.

I send out last instructions to Happy Valley. Tomorrow, one of the remaining B-26s is to take our undistributed leaflets hundreds of miles out to sea, and dump them.

So ends this journal which I tried to present in a non-dramatic style appropriate to the posthumous tone. Now that I am instead alive, I will transfer all of these pages from Cal's safe deposit box to mine.

41 | Allen Dulles came back from Puerto Rico early Thursday morning with a terrible case of gout. To my father, who had gone out to meet him at Andrews Air Force Base, he said, "This is the worst day of my life."

On that same morning three exile leaders were flying back from Washington to their families in Miami, and I was on board to expedite any problems they might encounter. While it had been deemed discourteous to send our Cubans back alone, none of my superiors wanted the job, so I volunteered one moment before it would have been assigned to me.

It proved a quiet voyage. As heavy as pallbearers, we sat in our Air Force seats, and, on arrival, so soon as I had arranged for transportation, we shook hands gravely to say farewell. It was obvious they had seen enough of the Agency.

Since I was done with this task before noon and could take another Air Force plane back to Washington in the evening, I decided to drive downtown, park the car, and walk about in the April warmth. Crossing NE 2nd Street, I felt an impulse to enter Gesu Catholic Church, a noble armory all of 180 feet wide and not much less than 300 feet in length, a Miami edifice to be certain, offering pink and green walls and golden-yellow chapels. I had gone there several times over the last ten months to service a dead drop in one of the missal books in the fifth pew of the thirty-second row off the southern aisle.

So, yes, I knew Gesu Catholic Church on NE 2nd Street. I had also dropped in there on my own after bouts of love with Modene, and I do not know why, but the church was balm, I found, for sexual depletions of the spirit. I even used to wonder, if in no serious way (since I understood that I was not the least bit inclined), whether one more High Episcopalian might not be tempted just a little to become a Catholic. As an expression of that random impulse, I had even on one occasion asked Modene to meet me in the back of Gesu at the votive candles, a choice that I suspect irritated her. She had not been inside a Catholic church for over a year, and then it had been for another stewardess's wedding.

Today Gesu was not empty. The last Mass had taken place well over an hour ago, and the next was not due till five in the afternoon, yet the pews were not empty, and everywhere were women praying. I did not want to look at their faces, for many of them were weeping as well. My ears, keened to the private silence I could always hear within the larger solemnity of a church, became aware at last, in the slow befuddled manner of a drunk who has wandered right up to the edge of the sea, that today there was no silence. Lamentations never ceased. Into them poured, as from many smaller vessels, murmurings of sorrow from the throats of separate men and women, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters of the lost Brigade, and the dimensions of the loss came over me then with such power that

for this one rare time in my life, I had a vision of the suffering of Christ and thought, yes, such suffering was real, and this is how the mourners must have felt as they waited in the shadow of the cross and heard His agony, and feared that some tenderness of spirit was vanishing from the world forever.

That much I felt, and knew the vision was a self-deception. Under my pain was rage. I did not feel tender or loving, but full of the most terrible anger at I knew not what—was it the President, his advisers, the Agency itself? I had the rage of a man who has just lost his arm to the gears of a machine and does not know whether to blame the engine or the finger in some upstairs office which flicked the switch to turn it all on. So I sat alone in church, a stranger to my own lamentations, and knew that the end of the Bay of Pigs would never end for me since I had no real grief to build a tomb for my lost hopes. I was condemned instead to the black, obsessive rings of one oppressive question: Whose fault was it?

At that moment I saw Modene on the other side of the church. She was sitting by herself at the end of a pew with a black lace handkerchief on her head, and she had knelt in prayer.

I saw it as a sign. A sense of happiness as quick as the light on a blade of grass when the wind turns it to the sun came to me, and I stood up and walked to the back of the church and over to her aisle and up to her pew and sat down beside her. When she turned around, I knew that I would see the same light come into her green eyes that I had seen in the long thin palm of the grass blade, and she would whisper, "Oh, Harry."

When the woman turned, however, to look at me, it was not Modene. I was staring at a young Cuban woman who styled her hair in the same manner—that was all.

I had not permitted myself to steal near to any feeling of what I had lost, but now it was there. I had lost Modene. "*Discùlpame*," I blurted out and stood up and left the church, only to stop at the first pay phone and call the Fontainebleau. The desk clerk did not react to her name, but merely rang her room. When she answered, I discovered that my voice was near to mutinous. The words almost did not come out.

"God, I love you," I said.

"Oh, Harry."

"Can I come over?"

"All right," she said, "maybe you had better come over."

Her room, when I arrived, proved small enough to suggest she was certainly paying for it herself, and we made love on the carpet on the other side of the door, and from there made our way to bed, and I may have been as happy making love as I had ever been, for when we were done and holding one another, I heard myself say, "Will you marry me?"

It was an amazing remark. I had had no intention of making it, and thought it was desperately wrong so soon as I said it, for she would hate the life of an Agency wife, and, good Lord, she could not even cook, and I had no money unless I broke into the safe of my tightly closed principal and accruing interest—yes, all practical considerations came rushing into my thoughts like travelers arriving too late to catch the train—and were swept away in the big steam and blast of the departure—yes, I wanted to marry her, we would find a way to live together, we were extraordinarily different and wildly connected, we were the very species of cohabitation out of which geniuses are born, and I said again, "Modene, marry me. We'll be happy. I promise you."

To my surprise, she did not throw her arms around me and burst into celebratory tears, but broke out weeping instead with sorrow that came out of so deep a place in herself that she could have been the vehicle for all the grief collected in Gesu Catholic Church on NE 2nd Street.

"Oh, darling," she said, "I can't," and left me waiting for her next words long enough to recognize the true horror that sits like a phantom at the root of every lover's wings. It was coming in on me that the higher I had flown, the more I had been traveling alone, so high on my long-hoarded love that the profound sweet calm in which she received me could have been—now, and much too late, I knew—the whole numb body of grief itself.

"Oh, Harry," she said, "I tried. I wanted to get near to you again, but I can't. I just feel so sorry for Jack."

~~1969~~

1961-1969

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The Man Who Died Before He Died

1 | On that morning following the Bay of Pigs, when Allen Dulles returned from Puerto Rico with a case of gout, my father was to describe him as looking as if he had died.

I do not know whether Cal's remark shaped my view, but in the months and years that followed, I always thought of Mr. Dulles as a man who, by some inner measure, was dead, even if it would take seven more years before he passed away, and that event was going to provide a notably unhappy Christmas week for those who were still close to him. I remember that on the evening he took ill I was in Saigon. It was Christmas Eve of 1968 and I was writing a letter to Kittredge who would send me details of his demise in the return mail, and I would hear more of it in the late spring of 1969 at lunch with her in a crab-and-beer hutch of a roadhouse on the Virginia Tidewater. Our affair had by then begun, that affair which was yet to uproot our lives and send tragedy plummeting upon us.

That, however, lay ahead. In the spring of 1969, Christopher was still alive and Harlot most certainly had the full use of his legs. He might be a cuckold, but, not at all witting of that, he remained a priapic prodigy, more ramrod than the lover who

had, to a degree, replaced him—that younger lover whose ability to woo Kittredge originated in the felicities of his mouth and lips, offering “delights so rare one knows the rapture of a feather’s fall,” a phrase Kittredge uttered once in passing, and I never dared to ask if it came from a poem I ought to have recognized; but then, I hardly cared—the words were accurate. We adored each other. No two friends could ever have been more dear. Our lovemaking was as close as the little turns of our talk, curving in and out of our mood like the fine and artful ridges of a well-formed ear.

That afternoon in a roadhouse shack, cracking our crab claws with lobster pincers on an unpainted trestle table, she told me again of Allen Dulles’ final and much-delayed death, and “the way it came was as bizarre as his birth.” I had all but forgotten that he was born with a clubfoot, his toes curled into the same black warp as Lord Byron, but she reminded me that his father, the Reverend Allen Macy Dulles, Presbyterian, who had been so liberally advanced in the early 1890s as to preside at the remarriage in full church ceremony of a divorcée, could not, nonetheless, endure the sight of his son’s deformity. Did it speak of caverns of damnation? He had the infant operated upon before baptism would expose him to the gaze of the Foster and Dulles relatives. “Once Hugh told me about Allen’s foot, I have never been able to see him otherwise,” Kittredge remarked. “No other man stood so securely with one foot in the full glory of the sun while the other was stuck in the mucky dark.”

Dulles began to die his last and corporeal death on the evening of the large party he and his wife, Clover, gave on Christmas Eve of 1968, and if the best of Langley’s seventh floor was present, the Montagues, the Helmses, the Angletons, the Tracy Barneses, the Lawrence Houstons, the Jim Hunts, as well as old friends from the State Department and a few chosen foreign dignitaries, it was a tribute, finally, to Dulles’ old reputation that a full seven years after his retirement his guests could find the generosity to come out on the last night of what had been a week, after all, of pre-Christmas drinking, but they were paying him the honor of confirming that Allen Dulles might be off the board, yet his chair had never been filled; they would

commemorate him one more time even if he was old, bent, and kept his gouty foot in a carpet slipper. Yes, remarked Kittredge, they had all popped over to salute him, but he did not make an appearance. Only his wife, Clover, was present to receive the guests and lead them over to the drink and the reliably good food—fluttery, once beautiful Clover, slender and as unfit for combat as a violet—"ditsy Clover, never quite there," Kittredge would say and then remark that Clover was as vague as the desire for vengeance when there is no real desire, only the marks of old matrimonial rancor. Allen had made love to half the women he knew in Washington, and Clover had even done her best to make friends with some of her husband's more serious mistresses; yet through such bouts and rounds, Clover had exacted only the smallest, most systematic revenge, although it must have jabbed like a spear in Allen's gouty foot: Clover spent money with the full license of a financial illiterate. The Dulleses were invariably in debt or nibbling on their principal. Each affair produced one more ballroom gown; one too many affairs, and the living room would be redone. They had been married for close to fifty years and she loved him, but she detested him. "Very long marriages develop divinely opposed strata of Alpha and Omega," Kittredge could not resist adding.

Now, at the party, guests began to notice that Allen had still not come down. Kittredge was perhaps the first to detect his absence. There had not been a meeting, after all, in the eighteen years since Allen first encountered her that he had not flirted like the Devil discovering his own true angel; Kittredge, in turn, loved the hearty promise of all that had never been embarked upon; they loved each other in the wholly enclosed way that will allow love, on occasion, to be perfect. They could count, instantly and dependably, on an improvement in their mood when they encountered each other.

So, Kittredge was the one to notice. Allen was most certainly not to be seen at his own party, and she told Hugh, and insisted, since Clover remained vague about his absence, that Hugh take a reconnaissance of the upper floor of the house. There was Allen in his bed, unconscious, the color of a wax effigy, and in a deep sweat.

Hugh came down to convince Clover that her husband was

frightfully ill. "No," said Clover, "it's just flu and spells. He gets these things."

"On the contrary," said Hugh. "He has to go to a hospital at once."

Hugh called an ambulance while Kittredge whispered a few words to hasten the drink-up and departure of the guests, and the ambulance came, but Clover almost did not go along, and then rushed out in such a hurry that she forgot to take her coat. Allen proved to be very ill, and Clover was obliged to leave him at the hospital, coming home by herself at midnight. Chilled by the return trip in a poorly heated cab, she ran hot water for a bath, but was feeling so cold that she got into bed while waiting for a full tub, and fell asleep, thereby waking on Christmas morning to discover that the overflow had taken down the sculpted moldings of all the ceilings on the downstairs floor, and her furniture was buried in a blizzard of wet plaster. It would not be known for certain until the next day that the Hartford Insurance Company did not, under the circumstances, consider itself liable for the damage.

"I don't care," said Clover, "what it costs to fix it. I just don't want my husband to find out."

He did not, said Kittredge. He had died in the hospital.

That may have been his end, but since I had thought of him as near to dead for many years, I pondered his slow extinction. Had his soul died years before his heart and liver and lungs? I hoped not. He had enjoyed so much. Espionage had been his life, and infidelity as well; he had loved them both. Why not? The spy, like the illicit lover, must be capable of existing in two places at once. Even as an actor's role cannot offer its reality until it is played, so does a lie enter existence by being lived.

If this is a poor epitaph for Allen, let me say that I mourned him devoutly and most enjoyably through all of my illicit lunch with Kittredge in the spring of 1969. But let me stop at this point for I am already eight years ahead of myself.

Cuba II $\frac{1}{m}$

LIAISONS, LETTERS, TRANSCRIPTS AND FULMINATIONS

1960-1962

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1960-1967

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Washington, but to his work. Not even to most of it, of course, but he would empower me (his term!) to collaborate with him on one or two of his projects. (Which he calls *pieces*.) I discovered Hugh's skill at negotiation—I ended, you may be certain, with less than I could have obtained. No matter. What I have gained is fascinating enough. I am now his junior partner, and it is sweet to sup on a couple of the secrets. I believe he even enjoys revealing the top-drawer manifestations of his mind. Domestic tranquility threatens to lap at our feet.

Start *L* *→* ~~Not too seriously, however. We're still combatants. This~~
Last November, for example, we had a horrendous row. I had not even been back in Washington for more than a month when my old friend Polly Galen Smith was at the doorstep. Now, I know you remember her as our epistolary cut-out between Washington and Montevideo, but I can't remember how much else I told you about Polly. Her husband, Wallace Rideout Smith is no longer at State but has transferred over to the Agency and is now one of our muckamucks at the other end of things—Administration. And a duller man never walked a Company corridor. Did I write to you about them once before? Polly, as I believe I've told you, has been deliriously unfaithful to Rideout Smith for years—not in quantity, but she does take abyss-jumper risks. I think it's just as simple as that she enjoys men the way all of you men are supposed to enjoy us.

At any rate, Polly and I get along famously because we are so different. She came to me again about a month before the presidential inauguration to ask "one hell of a favor." Would I let her use the Stable for an hour early Wednesday afternoon while Hugh was away working and I might be shopping? She had a friend who lived two blocks to one side of me in Georgetown, and there was Polly three blocks on the other side. Her friend was the busiest man in Christendom right now, but they had "absolute grabs" for each other. Well, who was he? State secret, she answered. Impossible, I said, there's Christopher to think of, and the maid. Not so, she said. Christopher is still in nursery school at 2:00 P.M., and the maid has Wednesdays off. She had *cased* my situation.

I won't say yes until you let me in on who the man could be, I told her.

Can't be done, she said. In that case, I responded, you and your buddy-buddy will just have to find a motel.

Oh, God, no, Kittredge. Well, why not? Too prominent, the man is too prominent, she kept saying. At last I dragged forth the name. Her beau was none other than her old senatorial pal of two years ago, now our presidential jock-elect, Jack Kennedy. The reason they needed a place just so convenient as mine involved the concerns of the Secret Service. Told in advance, they will remain a discreet half block away. Moreover, Jack can duck out of his house on N Street between meetings, then slip back without raising a stir about sizable gaps in his schedule.

I had one instant of revelation: snobbery, property, propinquity, and good old *droit de seigneur* revealed their trusslike interrelations in me. Harry, I had to say yes. I wanted the President-Elect of the United States infusing my rooms with his carnal presence. I think I became aware at that moment what a slut I could have been with another kind of upbringing.

How I envied Polly. Envy is mean! I found myself insisting on a particular payment. I wasn't going to have Jack Kennedy investing my linens with his spoor when I hadn't even met the man.

Polly protested as if I'd broken a bottle of stink, but she had to give in. So commenced their Wednesdays. They were going to love Wednesdays at the Stable, she said, even if the whole thing was going to take up no more than thirty minutes—an item I was to discover when we arranged how the encounter would take place. I was to pretend to come home unexpectedly, but *on the minute*. "If you're two minutes late, he'll be gone, and if you're five minutes early, you will walk in on the finishing touches." Polly, you can see, is to the point, and that, I comprehended, is exactly why they got together in the first place. I have not met a man who is more to the point than Jack Kennedy, unless it is his brother Bobby. (Of course, their father, I hear, leaves them both in his wake.)

At any rate, I saw him. Even as I turned my key and came through the door to my own parlor, my heart fluttered twice—once for history and once for the person. He is awfully attractive and I think it is because he is not out of measure. I was talking to a man to whom I felt equal, which I must say is bottomlessly

agreeable. And he's so direct and sure of himself that it comes off as a natural quality rather than arrogance. He is nice. And so amoral. And so unflappable. Polly was trying to keep from guffawing, which was forgivable—two of her best friends, after all, were meeting, and he—whether or not she had told him—seemed not at all surprised by my supposedly unexpected entrance. (Perhaps she did tell him in advance and he had worked it out with the Secret Service. Indeed, on reflection, they had to have done just that.)

"Do you know," he said for greeting, "you and my wife have a slight resemblance to each other. It's uncanny."

I thought of Jacqueline Kennedy's father, Black Jack Bouvier. Then I had to compare him to my father and I said, "Oh, dear, next to your wife I'm dry-as-dust," and felt shabby suddenly, a most unexpected feeling for me, but it is all genes, isn't it? Folio dust was coming out of my pores by way of my father's pores. Or so I felt! "Dry as dust," I repeated when he just kept smiling, considerably more comfortable in my parlor than I was.

"Oh," he said, "we will see about that," and offered a glint of a very good smile.

"Ho, ho, curfew," said Polly Smith, and Jack gave a small salute and was out the door, leaving Polly behind. "Till next Wednesday," he said.

Polly stayed for tea, and I began to feel disloyal to Hugh. I was so avid to hear about Jack.

By the time Hugh came home, I was in a confessional mode. I said nothing before we went to sleep, and nothing again on the next night, but, I was beginning to feel those unruly intimations of dread that I call "the dark wobbles." I can't suppose you don't remember. They were touched off in me once by that awful brooch you sent from Montevideo. Well, it was coming on again, and I knew I had to tell Hugh. He couldn't have taken it worse. "I feel sullied by it," he said. Then he said, and you don't know how much this is out of character for him, "I couldn't feel worse if that fellow Jack Kennedy had buggered me!" Can you conceive of Hugh speaking like that?

"It was Polly, not I," I said to him, "who was in the receiving position."

"That will be the last time she receives in our house," he answered.

"No," I said. "I can't do that to her."

"It pollutes everything here, including the child. Can you make no distinction between the relatively sacred and the wholly profane?"

Well, I was going to strike my colors. He was right, after all, and I knew it; I have also learned, however, that Hugh has no respect for you if he wins too quickly, so I thought I'd hold out till the Tuesday before the next Wednesday and let him think he'd won a major match.

Talk of presidential timing. I'm beginning to see how Jack got where he is. I did not say a word to Polly but on Monday an invitation was delivered by hand. Could Mr. and Mrs. Montague come to dinner on N Street Tuesday night?

I must say that Hugh went through a major stomach upset. I have never known him to throw up in such manner before. And I realized what it was about. He was dying to go to N Street. He wanted to be familiar with Jack Kennedy, oh, how he wanted that. If for nothing else, then for the Agency. But be damned if he was going to have his home tom-catted up. Yet, if Polly were cut off before Wednesday, wouldn't dinner be rescinded for Tuesday? Of course, we could go and then cut the lovers off. No! You didn't do things like that to the President-Elect!

All this is speculation, mind you; Hugh was vomiting so audibly that I would have held his head if I dared, but then he emerged from the loo long enough to say, "It's clear to me. You call Polly now, or I will."

I had to love him even if I couldn't bear the thought of giving up dinner with Jack, but who can deny characterological integrity when it is on that scale? I called Polly. I was able to say no more than, "Hugh's on to the game."

"Oops," she said, "are sirens ringing?"

"No. But cancel your venue for Wednesdays."

Do you know, the dinner invitation was not rescinded, and Hugh, to my surprise, had a hell of a time, and I got along with Jackie Kennedy satisfactorily. Under all that false innocence, she's awfully sensitive to what's wrong in people and she knew there was something just a little off in me vis-à-vis her husband. Still, we got on. She knows a good bit about eighteenth-century Piedmont and Charleston cabinetwork, and had a special little slave tale to tell. It seems one of the greatest furniture makers

in Charleston—Charles Egmont—was a former slave whose liberty was given to him by his owner, Charles Cawdill, who set black Charles up in his own shop and they split the profits. She tells such tales with great intimacy, as if with some maidenly pain she is offering you one of her jewels. But, oh, Harry, that's a complex and troubled woman!

Meanwhile, Hugh and Jack were certainly getting along. At one point, Jack confessed to Hugh that it was a pleasure to meet "the mythological Montague." "Mythological?" says Hugh, his mouth all twisted up as if he's being asked to kiss a turkey's tucker.

"Let's say the apocryphal Montague," says Jack.

"I'm only a minor factotum in the Department of Agriculture."

"Come off it. I've heard about you for years."

Well, I could see them cooking up some special understanding. Hugh was brilliant once he got going on Soviet skills at disinformation. To my horror, he started to give the President-Elect and his wife a lecture; to my large pride, he brought it off.

Now, since the inauguration, we get invited back from time to time to the White House. To the more intimate White House dinners, mind you. At the last soirée, Jack chose, while dancing with me, to ask about Polly.

"She pines for you," I said.

"Tell her I'll call one of these days. It's not out of my mind."

"You are awful," I said.

He got that glint in his eye. "Do you know, for a beautiful woman, your dancing is a hint stiff."

I wanted to cream him with my evening bag. Alas, I didn't dare. He's not that splendid a dancer himself, but oh so schooled. Like a rider with a cultivated seat who doesn't really take to horses.

All the same, we get along. I think he's wary enough of Hugh not to entertain notions about me, but we do have the next best thing—promise.

Later

I don't want to exaggerate. We're invited to sup with them at their House perhaps not more than once a month. And on one

occasion, they came to the Stable. Relationships, however, do deepen. Between Jack, that is, and myself. Jacqueline Kennedy and I are on a plateau—awfully equal stuff passes back and forth between us, and I respect her because she does not wield rank over me any more than is implicit in the rich-mouse country-mouse syndrome, but, then, that is the price you pay for such entrée. Meanwhile, Hugh and Jack are off in a corner. You know Hugh—at his best when one on one. And Jack, no matter how furious over the Bay of Pigs, is fascinated with cloak-and-dagger and smart enough to know that Hugh is the *saucier* in that kitchen. And, of course, as laid out above, Jack is chummy with me.

I never realized how much this was disconcerting Hugh until one day this summer, toward the end of July, he suddenly put the BLUEBEARD dossier in front of me. "Here's another side to one of your friends," he said. I think he expected me to be put off by the contents, but I wasn't; I know Jack's nature: Promiscuity is the price he pays to open the gates to his other skills. Jack Kennedy is like a child that way. Must have his daily reward, and it's in the forbidden jam. Good for him, I say, so long as I'm not part of the private preserve. If he can do a little more good than harm, God will doubtless forgive him for all the girls whose hearts he juggled and juggled. I'm sure he sees it that way.

But I did lose a bit of respect for Hugh. He should not have handed me the file. In truth, I wouldn't forgive him if it were not for Ty Cobb's death on July 17.

Hugh once remarked that your father broods over the obituary columns instead of enjoying them, but Ty Cobb is a signal figure in the Montague arcana. After all, Ty Cobb's mother killed his father in much the same way that the Montague family tragedy enacted itself. So, when Cobb died (of prostate cancer, by the way—poor man—once so fleet on the base paths!), Hugh took a tumble, and finally handed over the BLUEBEARD file.

As you may expect, I was riveted to it. Of course, I kept wondering whether anyone but you could be Harry Field. (Hugh wouldn't relinquish that morsel.) And yesterday, receiving verification, I confess that I went through a turn.

Well, I not only have digested your reports, but some later

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BLUEBEARD transcripts you have not seen, and I'm worried, as is Hugh. He's been doing his subtle best to get our young President to recognize what an incubus is J. Edgar Buddha on any administration, especially this one, but in the interim, I don't believe Jack comprehends how many pressure points are being handed over to Hoover. That man could end with a total choke on the Kennedy windpipe. Modene is so fabulously indiscreet. I am not going, as you did, to memorialize her meanderings with her friend, Willie, which I find misleading since under the guise of telling nothing, she tells her friend (and J. Edgar) all, even if it takes too long to find out! I am going to summarize what I have learned and save you the time you did not save me.

In brief, Modene suffered the lacerations of the abandoned during Jack and Jacqueline's visit to Paris at the end of May. Do you recollect? Our First Lady was a sensational success in Paris. Jack even said, "My real mission in Paris is to escort Jacqueline Kennedy." God, how all that must have been etched into your poor girl's brain. And, of course, our ogreish Sam G. couldn't resist twitting her on the raw nerve. "Are you jealous, Modene?" he kept asking. "Not at all," she kept replying. In recounting it to her stalwart Willie (whom, I must say, I picture as post-deb, blond, and seriously overweight—did you ever obtain a description?) Modene does, however, burst into tears. It comes out that earlier in May, before the trip to Paris, Jack had Modene in bed at the White House. Can you imagine? After a surprisingly dreadful lunch of cold soup and ketchup on the hamburgers—Irish!—Jack took Modene from the family dining room on the second floor to a bedroom, same floor, with a commodious bed. There, they consummated their reunion. She is madly in love again. Or so she will tell Willie that night.

This transcript does happen to be worth offering for flavor.

WILLIE: Wait a minute. The guards just allowed you to walk into the White House?

MODENE: Of course not. I had to go through the gate, and then there was a short, well-built little man named Dave Powers who came down to meet me. He had a twinkle in his eye, permanently, I think. Looked like a troll. The President, he said, was having a swim and would be by

soon. Dave Powers kept saying, "*the President*" with a high hush in his voice as if asking you to kneel in church. Of course, he left as soon as Jack came in to lunch. By then Dave Powers had gotten it across to me that he's the fellow who wakes Jack up every morning and tucks him in at night. He certainly makes you feel you are in the White House.

WILLIE: It's not a very sexy place, is it?

MODENE: I would say it is like the inside of a Quaker church, only heavier. Sacred trust sort of feeling. I never wanted a bourbon so much. It was early Saturday afternoon, the place was deserted, and I kept having the feeling I would never get to see Jack. After Powers took me upstairs to the family quarters, though, it was less uncomfortable—I was familiar with all that N Street furniture they had moved over to the second floor.

After lunch, they journey to the bedroom. Following the preliminaries, Jack receives her on his back. Which French king was it who used to greet his mistresses in that manner? Louis XIV, perhaps, given that pampered look. In any event, as Modene explains it, Jack's "lumbar condition" has grown worse. "Cares of office." She is happy to serve the master, but a nugget of discontent remains. "I don't mind which position is chosen. Different positions bring out different sides of me. Only I prefer to get to them on my own."

Mind you, all this while, through a window near the double bed, she can see the Washington Monument.

Dear man, I have to wonder what your reactions must have been while reading the earlier transcripts. I hope I understand you well enough to assume that such perusal spurred you on to greater heights with Modene—or was it faster flats? We do want to shine in the eyes of the Immortal Race Steward.

Oh, Harry, is all this due to the teasing I was never able to give to that younger brother I never had?

I return to the essential. Despite Jackie's triumphs in Paris, Jack does get in touch with Modene again early in June, and all through the summer, on fearfully hot, deserted, dog-day Saturday afternoons in Washington, he keeps bringing her to the

same double bed. They used to say of Joe Kennedy that the longer you were in a business deal with the man, the more he took from it, and the less you brought home. Something of that lament creeps into her conversations with Willie. All the same, she finds justifications for Jack. "He is so tired. He does have many concerns to deal with."

It is a most peculiar period for our BLUEBEARD. She is based now in Los Angeles. She is actually sharing an apartment in Brentwood with four other stewardesses. Hardly the Modene you knew! From this base, however, she keeps waiting for the next summons to Washington. Meanwhile the Brentwood apartment is a focus for parties. Actors, marriageable young corporate types, a couple of professional athletes, one or two fringe film executives, and a prodigious amount of drinking. I'm not familiar with evenings of this variety, but gather there's a great deal of dancing and a fair amount of marijuana. Then she's always ready to fly to Chicago or Miami to spend a weekend with RAPUNZEL. Yet—her steadfast claim—there is "no sexual link." I won't bore you with Willie's doubts about this.

What speaks loudly is dissipation. Modene keeps gaining weight, and is drinking so much that she actually goes "as a tourist" to an AA meeting, but is "appalled by the gloom." She is also taking stimulants and depressants. Her hangovers are described as "calamities." A tennis game outside her window sounds "like an antiaircraft barrage." She keeps referring to "a crazy drunken summer." When working, she suffers "as never before." She calls Jack frequently. Apparently, he has given her a special number to reach one of his secretaries. According to Modene's account, Jack does call back when not immediately available. And she has offered hints that last summer she did carry a manila envelope from IOTA to RAPUNZEL. All the same, Jack keeps teasing her. "Don't," says Jack, "let it get too personal with Sammy. He's not a fellow to trust with the collection plate."

Hugh, in one surprising moment of candor, said to me, "I suspect this has to do with Castro. Under it all, your Jack has an IRA mentality. Trust that Mick instinct. He wants to get even. Get even and you can enjoy your old age."

I find the most curious feelings in me. I've always thought

of myself as ruefully patriotic, that is, I love America, but it's like having a mate whose gaffes keep you exclaiming, "Oh, my God. He's done it again." I am outraged, however, that this man Castro, who is probably more qualified to be captain of a pirate ship than a head of state is now gloating over us. It does bother me. And I know it rests like a thorn in the Kennedy heart. With his love of intrigue, it might not be unlike Jack to pick such an outré back channel as Sammy G.

Toward the end of August, our girl is invited once again to lunch on Saturday in the small second-story dining room. This time, however, Dave Powers is invited to eat with them.

MODENE: At the end of the meal, Jack said to me, "Modene, I am picking up a few tales out of school." "Tales?" I asked. For the first time since I knew him, I didn't like his tone. Not at all. He said, "Did you ever say to anyone that I tried to get you to accept another girl to go right in there with us?"

WILLIE: He spoke in such manner right in front of Dave Powers?

MODENE: I think he wanted a henchman there for the record.

WILLIE: Maybe you were being recorded?

MODENE: Don't say that. It's offensive enough already. I certainly had the feeling that he was doing it for Dave Powers' benefit. As if to announce: "Well, here is this unlikely tale, but were you, Modene, malicious enough to go around spreading it?"

WILLIE: You must have been furious.

MODENE: I don't make a habit of swearing, but instinct told me to get downright coarse. So I said: "If you ever tried something so low as hoping to put another girl into the sack with you and me, I sure as hell would be the last one to run around with that story. It's an insult to me."

WILLIE: You did tell him off.

MODENE: He had transgressed the line of privacy.

WILLIE: I appreciate what you are saying.

MODENE: Yes.

WILLIE: Except you did tell it to me.

MODENE: I did? . . . Yes, I did, didn't I? But you don't count.

WILLIE: Did you tell anyone beside me?

MODENE: I may have told Tom. I can't remember. Do you know, I really can't remember. Do you suppose pot and alcohol if taken with sleeping pills might injure a person's memory?

WILLIE: Yes.

MODENE: Well, I do remember telling Sam.

WILLIE: Oh, no.

MODENE: I couldn't stew in it alone.

WILLIE: What happened after you told him off?

MODENE: I kept on the high road. I asked him how he dared to discuss something that personal in front of a third party? Jack must have made some signal then, because Powers left the room. Then Jack tried to make amends. Kept kissing me on the cheek and saying, "I'm awfully sorry. But a story did get back to me." I told him if he didn't like tales out of school, maybe he ought to comport himself in another manner. And then very suddenly I said, "Let's break it off." I couldn't believe I had said it. He tried to get me to stay. I think, after all this, he still wanted to get me in bed. Men are single-minded, aren't they? I finally had to say, "You are insensitive. I want to leave."

WILLIE: You just took off?

MODENE: Oh, no. He wouldn't permit that. Dave Powers had to take me on a tour of the White House.

WILLIE: I'm sure they wanted to check on whether you were under control. All they needed was some mad beauty running out of the White House and ripping off her clothes on Pennsylvania Avenue.

MODENE: You are particularly humorous today.

WILLIE: Sorry.

MODENE: The tour was painful. Dave Powers had done it so many times before that I wanted to scream. I felt as if I were working an all-seats-occupied flight. Dave must have taken forty-five minutes guiding me through the Green Room and the Red Room and the Oval Room and the East Room.

WILLIE: Do you remember any of it?

MODENE: Don't I just? "Elegance is the fruit of rationality."

WILLIE: What?

MODENE: "Elegance is the fruit of rationality." That was in the East Room. Dave Powers kept talking about the noble proportions of the East Room. When we got to the Oval Room, he had to say, "It's traditionally employed for White House weddings." Then he began to describe all the shades of blue that the Oval Room has seen. Originally, under President Monroe, it was crimson and gold, but Van Buren changed it to royal blue, then President Grant made it violet-blue, and Chester Arthur's wife altered it to robin's-egg blue. Mrs. Harrison picked out a cerulean blue.

WILLIE: There is nothing wrong with your memory.

MODENE: Thank you. Mrs. Harrison's cerulean blue was a figured wallpaper.

WILLIE: Thank you.

MODENE: And then Teddy Roosevelt made it steel blue. Harry Truman altered it back to royal blue.

WILLIE: Amazing.

MODENE: I was sick. I wanted to get out of there.

I can feel for Modene. Men don't understand how much importance women attribute to composure when they are feeling nothing but emotional debris. The moment Modene does get back to her hotel, she packs her bags and catches a flight to Chicago.

It is here, I must tell you, that she begins her affair with Sam. However, I don't feel ready to write to you about that today. I would feel more secure if you would answer this letter first.

Yours provisionally,
Eiskaltblütig

P.S. Can you believe it? That is one of Hugh's nicknames for me. I, who am as unformed and overheated within as Lava Inchoate.

D-3

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESIDENTIAL PAPER

in Spanish) never went to any newspapers at all. It stayed in the drawer for months. One got out of Bellevue, one did a little work again. The marriage broke up. The man wasn't good enough. The woman wasn't good enough. A set of psychic stabbings took place.

In December for the Ladies there is a fragment written about a sex before the marriage was finally lost. It is a companion piece to the letter to Fidel Castro, and can be found by those who are curious in Appendix C which ends this book.

A month later, in April, came the Bay of Pigs. There is no need to dwell on the outrage, fury, and sense of betrayal, and it is forth that one was feeling. It is talked about with the ease of a lawyer. No, these emotions will be found in the writings of the open letters as will also be found how glorious I was at myself. The jeering but all in the heroic tone adopted for addressing the President through.

But of course Kennedy had committed one of the blunders of the century. We can only be grateful he did not compound the blunder by sending in a force massive enough to conquer Castro. We would still be occupying Cuba; every day bodies of American soldiers and Marines would be found ambushed by guerrillas in the hills. All of Latin America and South America would be moving silently and steadily toward the Communists. This way the road was left open for Khrushchev to commit a blunder as large as Kennedy's; when the atomic missiles were sent to Cuba, Khrushchev was returning back to America the fifty years of political advantage Kennedy had given him. There may even be a political principle here that one large blunder disturbs the balance sufficiently to create another.

The Bay of Pigs remains a mystery. One can doubt if it will ever be found out how it came to pass, or who in fact was the real force behind it. But there is a tool of investigation for political mysteries. It is Lenin's formula: "Whom?" Whom does this benefit? Who prospers from a particular act?

Well, whom? Kennedy and the liberal center did not gain honor from the Bay of Pigs. Castro most certainly did not gain an advantage for he was forced now finally to commit his hand altogether to Russia. The Left in America, that fine new Left of Pacifists and beatniks and Negro militants and college students who just knew something was bad—this

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Left certainly did not benefit from the Bay of Pigs because they were now divided about Castro even as an earlier generation of Leftists had been divided by the Moscow Trials.

No, the people who benefited from the Bay of Pigs were the people who wanted a serious Communist threat to exist within ninety miles of America's shore. They were the people who had taken the small and often absurd American Communist Party and had tried to exaggerate its menace to the point where the country could be pistol-whipped into silence at the mention of its name. They had infiltrated this party until even the Saturday Evening Post offered hints that a large part of the American Communist Party was by now made up of FBI men. These were indeed the people, these secret policemen, who would face an excruciating dilemma if the Communist threat disappeared altogether in America. Because then what would they do? If there were no Communists, the FBI would be required by the logic of their virility to take on the next greatest danger to American life, the Mafia, and how were they ever to do that, how were they to investigate the Mafia without ripping the Republican and Democratic parties up from top to bottom? Because the Republican Party was supported by the Mafia, and the Democratic Party was supported by the Mafia. Through and through. Down at the low level where the little heelers and the small cops got their bite at the local bar, and up at the high level where the monster housing projects were contracted out, and the superhighways, and the real estate grafts. No, it was safer by far that Cuba go Communist. That would be good for the FBI, and it would be good for the Chinese Communists who wished to increase the pressure on Khrushchev's back. Whom? asked Lenin, who benefits? And the answer is clear. All the totalitarians of the world were benefited by the Bay of Pigs and the missiles which followed.

End.

Dear Jack:

Back in a certain nice Summer before a long Fall, I wrote an essay for one of our large garish national magazines about the Democratic Convention, the city of Los Angeles, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. In that piece, I may have made the error of sailing against the stereotype that you were a

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~~The president
has asked us
to drink a glass of milk
every day.
I'm sure
he didn't ask
us
to do this
just because
milk is full
of vitamins.~~

Men
who are not
married
and grow beards
are insecure,
said the CIA
before
it went
to Cuba.

Freedom of the Press

~~Let every
writer
tell his
own
lies
That's freedom
of the
press.~~

1960
Foreign Affairs

ELEGY

Read 625
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publish an open letter to Fidel Castro as the first rocket in the campaign. Through October and the beginning of November, I worked at the letter, polished it here, cut it there. Then a rocket went off in a direction I had not anticipated and I smashed a thousand pieces in people around me. That letter is one of the broken pieces. It made no sense to publish it any longer since I had lost the right to use my name in any happy way.

Now, however, you come to my aid. It occurs to me that that prose, now half a year old, will help you to understand Cuba no less well than you have managed to do so far on the basis of those marvelous reports which come in from your Mr. Allen Dulles. I mean: think of all the studs and girlygoos in CIA who held hands and toes and told each other the invasion was bound to succeed. Success, America!

~~The Letter to Castro~~

Dear Fidel Castro:

I have said nothing in public about you or your country since I signed a statement last year in company with Baldwin, Capote, Sartre, and Tynan that we believe in "Fair Play for Cuba." But now I am old enough to believe that one must be ready to be faithful to one's truth. So, Fidel Castro, I announce to the City of New York that you gave all of us who are alone in this country, and usually not speaking to one another, some sense that there were heroes left in the world. One felt life in one's cold overargued blood as one picked up in our newspapers the details of your voyage.

But I go too fast. Since this is an open letter, and thus meant for the people of New York as much as for you, I suppose I must write first of events with which you are more than familiar.

Back in December, 1956, you landed near Niquero in the Oriente of Cuba with 82 men and a few arms. Your plan was to ignite an insurrection which would rid Cuba of Batista in a few weeks. Instead, you were to lose all but 12 of these men in the first few days, you were to wander through fields and forests in the dark, without real food or water, living on sugar-cane for five days and five nights. In the depth of this disaster, you were to announce to the few men still with you: "The days of the dictatorship are numbered."

"This man is crazy," one of them admits he said to himself.

It took you more than 20 days to reach the summit of the Pico Turquino, the high peak in Cuba, high in the Sierra Maestra. You reached it on Christmas Eve. There you stayed for two years. For much of that time you were no more than a symbol.

Through Cuba passed the word that 12 men lived on a mountain top, 12 men who had sworn to destroy the tyranny. It was incredible. What that token of resistance came to signify! Day after day, month by month, grew a spirit of rebellion in Cuba.

As the underground developed, so developed Batista's methods of torture, his excesses, his murders, his uncountable atrocities, at last so open and so foul that he ended by alienating some of the wealthy, the well-born, the best of his own support.

For those two years your army discovered itself; your skill as a military leader developed art, your diplomatic talents untied the complexities of an underground choking with factions and old feuds.

You survived skirmishes, negotiations, and battles; you suffered a major defeat, and recovered quickly enough to hold off 14 battalions of Batista's army with no more than 300 of your own men, you came at last out of the hills to defeat an army of 30,000 professional soldiers. Two years and a month after the disaster of your landing, you were able to enter Havana in triumph.

It was not unheroic. Truth, it was worthy of Cortes.

It was as if the ghost of Cortes had appeared in our century riding Zapata's white horse. You were the first and greatest hero to appear in the world since the Second War.

Better than that, you had a face. One had friends with faces like yours. In silence, many of us gave you our support. In silence. We did not have an organization to address you, we talked very little about you, we said: "Castro, good guy," and let it go, but all the while you were giving us the idea that everything was not hopeless. There has been a new spirit in America since you entered Havana. I think you must be given credit for some part of a new and better mood which has been coming to America.

Now, you did not feel friendly to my country when you had won your war. There was the bitter memory of our Ambassadors, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Smith, and the photographs they took all too often with Batista and his friends; there was the recollection of the American rockets which

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had been sold to the Cuban government at a time when Batista's Air Force was burning the huts of peasants in your hills; there were the headlines in Cuban newspapers: DULLES TOASTS BATISTA which appeared the day before Batista held his last false election. You must have wondered why Dulles had chosen that particular day to visit Ambassador Arroyo at the Cuban Embassy in Washington. You may even have wondered why our newspapers chose to print so many of Batista's stories that you were Communist.

Still the situation was not very bad. Much of our press gave you good treatment here, and some of our largest newspapers and magazines welcomed your victory. A general wave of congratulation passed through our mass-media. For a few days, you were popular in America.

Then you had your public executions. I suppose tragedy cannot exist without irony. If Batista's people had just been shot, all 500 of them, shot in their homes, their bars, the automobiles in which they were fleeing, our newspapers would have complained a bit, but it would have been attributed to the excesses of a victorious army, a retaliation in kind upon Batista's assassins.

You, however, were interested in justice, in proclamation, in propaganda—you were saying to the people of Cuba: "I am not a bandit like the ones who come before me, I am the leader of a revolution—I execute the torturers of the past before the eyes of the present."

Our newspapers erupted against you. They used the executions to condemn everything in your regime. One would have thought you were almost a successor to Adolf Hitler the way they excoriated you because 500 Batistas were condemned to death in trials of public spectacle, 500 cut-throats who had maimed the heads, crushed the hearts, and disfigured the genitalia of your men and your women. The worst of our newspapers screamed with rage and terror. As if you were killing them.

And you were. Like Bolivar, you were sending the wind of new rebellion to our lungs. You were making it possible for us to breathe again. You were aiding our war.

But then, I do not know if you can understand our war here.

In Cuba, hatred runs over into the love of blood; in America all too few blows are struck into flesh. We kill the spirit here, we are experts at that. We use psychic bullets and kill each other cell by cell.

We live in a country very different from Cuba. We have had a tyranny here, but it did not have the features of Batista; it was a tyranny one breathed but could not define; it was felt as no more than a slow deadening of the best of our possibilities, a tension we could not name which was the sum of our frustrations. We all knew that the best of us used up our memories in long nights of drinking, exhausted our vision in secret journeys of the mind; our more stable men and women of some little good will watched the years go by—their idealism sank into apathy. By law we had a free press; almost no one spoke his thoughts. By custom we had a free ballot; was there ever a choice? We were a league of silent defeated men who could not even assent on which were the true battles we lost. In silence we gave you our support. You were aiding us, you were giving us psychic ammunition, you were aiding us in that desperate silent struggle we have been fighting with sick dead hearts against the cold insidious cancer of the power that governs us, you were giving us new blood to fight our mass communications, our police, our secret police, our corporations, our empty politicians, our clergymen, our editors, our cold frightened bewildered bullies who govern a machine made out of people they no longer understand, you were giving us hope they would not always win.

That is why America persecuted you. That is why our newspapers made their subtle distortions, lied about your accomplishments, put dirt on your name, wrote in a prose of cheap glow that you were sick and would certainly die in a few months, and were even more furious when somehow you did not die, and no power agreeable to America arose in Cuba to steal your power. That is why they mocked your speech at the U. N.

They had reported you were very ill: it did not vouch well for their reliability that now you spoke for four and a half hours. How can anyone talk that long they say now and giggle nervously. He must be a compulsive, they say. They do not admit to themselves that no one here in this country dares to talk for more than four and a half minutes they are so afraid they will give themselves away.

Now, at the moment, revolted by the cheap muck of the most cess-filled brains in our land, disheartened by the impossibility of receiving a fair report from us, you are obviously getting ready to commit your political fortune to Khrushchev. I do not know the complexities of the situation.

Maybe no one does. We hear everything here. We hear that you are committed completely to the Russians, we hear that you are still your own man. The combinations offered are endless. What worries us is that the facts are too many to be able to know what one reads.

I would guess you were not ever a Communist, that you are not now—you have always had too much of a private vision to be Communist—I would speculate of you, sir, that you came to power ready to make a revolution which could give more of what is noble to the people. You were simply bewildered when the American press turned on you. Then it was I would guess that you began to give the Communists your ear. What an argument they had now. "Look," they must have said, "why believe America's lies about the Communists, why believe them when you see how they lie about you?"

Well, we lie about the Communists. They lie as well. We deaden the life of millions by hypocrisy and go on to claim we are the hope of civilization; they liquidate the life of millions and argue they are the imagination of the future.

Of course it may not be agreeable to listen to this now. You have a new friend. He was good to you at a time when my country promulgated its disgrace. You are Latin. Your honor is to be loyal. Still, I must say that as one of your sympathizers I do not trust your new friend. He is a wise peasant bully. Yet an intellectual should not forget that he came to power because of one exceptional ability: he was able to live as a flea in the stumpy tail of a wild old bear named Josef Stalin; this old bear was notorious for eating his tail. At the end Khrushchev was the only flea left who had strength. Perhaps he was the flea closest to the root. Since then he has grown big as a man.

Of course you may not like these words about Khrushchev. At a time when our large newspapers were writing like small-town gossips about the condition in which you left your rooms in one of our New York hotels (what do the same rooms look like after a convention of American salesmen have left, you must have wondered), at a time when you could not make a move in our city without being able to read the next day in the newspapers about it as an act sinister or foolish, Khrushchev had the genius to kiss you on the cheek for our photographers, and so restore your honor.

He has good manners, that man—I suppose a part of you

will like him forever because of his embrace that day. But revolutionaries are different from Commissars, and a kiss from one is not the same as a kiss from the other. Khrushchev kissed many before you, and he has signed the papers which removed them forever. He is a Commissar—they like to kiss. But Commissars never made a revolution.

So Khrushchev will never be able to understand that you are serious. He will think he is a realist, and you are an actor. Realists endure, goes the logic of Khrushchev, actors can be replaced. Khrushchev will never understand that when no personal authority exists in a leader, a country sinks into the authority of public relations—it has a vacuum at its center. Khrushchev will never understand that Cuba does not have its strength because the Communists give you arms but because so many of the people still believe in you, they cry out for you to cover yourself when you speak in the rain.

Look! Plain words. I hear from the source of a source that the situation is bad in your country now. I hear Communists control Cuba and shut you into the psychic prison of their encirclement, I hear they manipulate you to say the things which will most irritate our press into striking back in the way which will most irritate you. By every step of this logic you distrust your new friends less, hate America more, and thus begin to prepare yourself for a war you may even begin to desire as a sedative to personal madness, so great is your rage at the monuments of *mierda* laid upon the cross of your expedition down from the peak into the city, so great is your anguish at the filth you must breathe to keep alive the simple idea of the mountain air: one must free the people and give them life. This is what I hear. I do not want to believe it, but I can no longer ignore what I hear, because my private sources are people still sympathetic to Cuba and to you. They go on to declare that the Communists want America to attack. Their hope—so goes the argument of my source—is that America will be incited by you to invade Cuba, create a new Korea, and alienate the people of Latin and South America forever. As a Communist strategy it is excellent. Of course Cuba will lose another 58 years. But the Communists are used to considering small nations expendable—it is part of their pride that they will sacrifice their followers.

It is not so difficult for them. In the other country they do not kill people—they liquidate. Certain people become

fascinating, they are too rich in their private time—the State does not care to afford them. They disappear. Friends do not even know if they are dead—one cannot hold a funeral in their memory. One knows just that it is better not to talk about the missing friend. A new shame chases the other. Remembrance of the past turns to fog.

Fidel, is this what you wish for Cuba, for your Cuba which is so alive? I cannot believe it. Your people went through a little too much. They are not statistics. You cannot want them to talk like machines of the state in the new Cuba. You cannot. You must play for power, not commit yourself to it. So do not give up on my country too quickly.

I know it is a bad place, I know well how bad it is, I know millions will be squeezed out of existence here in the center of prosperity, stricken by the deadness of a life which can find no love. Yet one thing will be said for my country. They allow me to speak my mind in a way I never could in the other country. You who are a poet will know this is a freedom some of us do not want to live without.

Besides, in my country, it is possible the people are better than their government: they could come to understand you if you would think of how to speak to us.

I do not expect the way is to listen to your present advisers. You would do better to hire a public-relations man from our Madison Ave. They are corrupt, our men of Madison, so corrupt they will work as well for you as for the corporation. Fact, they will work better. By now, they hate our country more than you could, they know it better.

Bad humor. Forgive it. I have a proposal. Address an open letter in your name to Ernest Hemingway. Many would say—I am one of them—that he has been our greatest writer. It is certain he created my generation—he told us to be brave in a bad world and to be ready to die alone.

Actually he is afraid of our country. He is a very brave old man, I believe, but he does not have a cancer-detector, so he stays away from us, from our smog-ridden, atom-haunted city. He prefers Cuba, as doubtless you know. He has lived there off and on for 20 years. He no longer writes to us. Maybe a letter once in a while. We do not talk about him any longer. Some of us are bitter about him. We feel he has deserted us and produced no work good enough to justify his silence.

There are many of us who will curse his memory if he dies in silence.

So do the old man a favor. Send him an invitation to come back to Cuba, at his own expense or at yours. He may not want to come. He has his work to do, he has a big book on which he has been working for 15 years. If this work is going well it would be an excessive sacrifice for him to interrupt it. But, then, he may not mind an interruption. In the past 15 years he has interrupted his work many times to write about other things. He may come to see that it would not be so very bad to write about you. If he agrees, it is your duty to those of us who care about your fate to let him tell the world whether he likes what is happening with you or not.

Show the world that you will let a Nobel Prize writer who speaks the language of the country travel anywhere in your territory, unmolested, unobstructed, unindoctrinated. Let him come, let him get to know you if he wishes, hope that he will write something about Cuba, a paragraph, a line, a poem, a statement—whatever he says cannot be ignored in my country. The world will read what Hemingway has to say, the world will read it critically, because he will be making a history, he may even be preparing a ground on which you and our new President can meet.

Whether our new President is a good man, I do not know. I had no sense of his moral being the two brief times I talked to him. One had the impression he is a brave man and a complicated man, and he has intelligence. But I thought he had a taint I could not name. It is not an interesting taint, evil, decadent, or extraordinary, it was more a sense that he was dead and dull in little places where some of us are still alive. It is possible he does not understand or is lacking some of the necessary and vital emotions of most people.

I think it is not impossible he will become a great President, but I also think he could lead us into dictatorship. It is not only up to him, but to many of us, whether he becomes a good leader or a bad one. The question is whether he has a mind deep enough to comprehend the size of the disaster he has inherited here.

If America had a mind and one could stare into it, the landscape of our psyche might be bleak, gutted, scorched by 15 years of mindless government, all nerves withered by the management of men who were moral poltroons. Many of us have hope that Kennedy will help our national mind to see again, but of course one does not know. One does

not want to hope too soon. I think Kennedy's statements on Cuba during the election campaign were ugly. They took away the enthusiasm one felt in voting for him. Still, one voted. It was the first time one voted in 12 years. It seemed self-evident he was superior to the other. You could not talk to the other. I think you could talk to our new President, I think he might come to recognize that if a man of Hemingway's age was willing to give up some important moment of his time to write new words about your country, that the culture of the world—that culture existing in every cultivated mind—would be judging Kennedy if he did not respond or react to Hemingway's view (whatever it might be) of your country. And Kennedy wishes to be considered a great man in the cultivated verdicts of history.

So respond to this letter, Fidel. There is value in it for you. If we get no word, it will come to mean that you care no longer about those who want to believe in you, it will come to mean that you have lost interest in all but your hatred of America. So you will then give strength to our enemies here; they will delight in your silence and your hatred.

But I do not know that you will give them such pleasure. You may still believe in that larger part of the world which endures in the possibility that neither the United States nor Russia will triumph, that there is a third way, that futures are not built nor civilizations kept alive by super-states, but that it is rather people who make history, people more brave, more talented, or more generous than there was any reason to be. You belong not to the United States nor to the Russians but to We of the Third Force. So long as you exist and belong neither to America nor to Russia, you give a bit of life to the best and most passionate men and women all over the earth, you are the answer to the argument of Commissars and Statesmen that revolutions cannot last, that they turn corrupt or total or eat their own. You are the one who can show the world that a revolutionary belongs to no one, that his actions cannot be predicted because he is possessed by a vision: he knows the world must grow better at a breathless rate or there will be no mankind. Just super-states, endless machines, and empty men who flee the night in all terror of eternity.

Still your brother,
Norman Mailer

Mr. President, I could say that letter to Fidel Castro makes me sad, because it might have accomplished a little, and did not have its chance. But, indeed, what chance? While the letter was being written we were training invasion armies in Florida and Texas and Guatemala and the Keys and other points and holes of the Caribbean. In the *Herald Tribune* of Tuesday, April 25, 1961, we read that:

New information was revealed about Mr. Nixon's role in urging the Eisenhower Administration to act against Cuba. After Castro visited Washington in 1959, Mr. Nixon proposed in a memorandum that the United States help anti-Castro Cubans overthrow the regime. The State Department was divided and within the Administration Mr. Nixon was in a minority for a year. By March 1960, however, his view prevailed and the program for training anti-Castro forces was begun.

What a pity Nixon was not elected. If he had invaded Cuba, half of America would have cheered at our defeat. Yes, you are a danger, Jack. You occupy the center like no Republican ever could.

No letter, no argument could have turned this issue. When one holds an invasion army whose roots are in United Fruit and the Commissars of Decency, one must use that army, or there is no peace for the authority.

So the test was made. The authority used its army. What America claimed was the truth of Cuba would now be observable as a working hypothesis: if Cuba was a miserable land seething with hatred of its leaders, such invasion would fire its own success.

Now, as gentlemen, we ought to obey the logic of our failure, face into the mirror of our tragedy and our comedy. Do we now see that we bent over and beseeched the Soviet Union to drive a spike into our bottom? Do we agree it may now be said by history that the Kennedy invasion of Cuba in 1961 put Communism permanently on the shores of Latin and South America? Their flag was planted in the Bahia de Cochinos, that Bay of Pigs our Intelligence chose for a landing.

Sad. A nation as large as ours, blinded by the lies of the men who feed us our news. With the best intention in the world, our reporters and our secret agents cannot tell the truth any longer, their habits for lying have grown so profound the lie shines with the clarity of a truth.

It may be that now there is only one answer left for us in Cuba. It is to begin again. Begin again. Take our hat in our hands and say we were wrong. We have been wrong for 58 years.

We do not expect you, Cuba, to trust us in a hurry, but we ask you to consider the possibility of forgiving us. We will no longer try to destroy your revolution. We recognize that we cannot win this way, we will merely have a war between Soviet tanks and planes and American tanks and planes, and Cuba will be destroyed, and our name will be loathed throughout the Western Hemisphere.

No, we will admit that we were wrong, that maybe we were criminally wrong to try to win Cuba by invasion. So now we ask you to believe that we can see our error, and that we want, yes, you will not believe us, but humbly we wish to fight with Russia in Cuba.

Not with guns, not even with ideas (because the ideas of democracies are too subtle and existential to war polemically with the clanking jargons of the total mind) but as styles. As liberties. We do it because we cannot leave you alone with Russia, lost to what we can offer. There is one way in which we are a greater nation than Russia. Our creative artists are greater. Our writers, our poets, our painters, our jazz musicians. We have a life in all our private arts which they do not possess.

Cuba, you can flourish more with the arts of our best styles than with theirs. So we will help you with your economy and pay the price of having tried first to injure it, and we will play the long slow stubborn painful game of winning your neutrality back from the Russians. Yes, we accept your revolution with all the political cess we will have to pay at home to those cess-filled centers where our Commissars of Decency prevail. We know that is the price we have to pay for the brutally stupid errors we have made and the fear we have had of Cuba's tropic air. But we do it, because we still wish to become a great nation. Only a nation so dedicated would dare to admit its mistake.

Will we say that, Jack?

In the pig's hole we will. You've cut the shape of your plan for history, and it smells. It smells rich and smug and scared of the power of the worst, dullest, and most oppressive men of our land. You will use brains but fear minds, seek for experts and eschew spirit, look for force and sap courage, promise sex and dull beauty. You will

increase the power of this country and use up its marrow.

You are a virtuoso in political management but you will never understand the revolutionary passion which comes to those who were one way or another too poor to learn how good they might have been; the greediness of the rich had already crippled their youth.

Without this understanding you will never know what to do about Castro and Cuba. You will never understand that the man is the country, revolutionary, tyrannical, brilliant, extraordinary, hysterical, violent, passionate, brave as the best of animals, doomed perhaps to end in tragedy, but one of the great figures of the twentieth century, at the present moment a far greater figure than yourself.

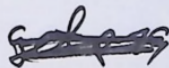
Jack, if all your soldiers were saints you could not take Cuba, because your soldiers would arrive in the name of our land, and to the peasant of Cuba, Castro is now God and we in America are the Devil. Do you propose to get around that by putting higher I.Q.s into the seersuckers of the Central Intelligence Agency?

No, commander. You are in trouble. Your best troops now fear you are not deep enough to direct the destinies of our lives. And if you are not, the country will deaden a little more, even as it increases in its fevers, and the imagination of the best will begin to harden into the separate undergrounds of a new Left and a new Right, ready to war against the oppressive, flatulent, and totalitarian center of our beleaguered land.

Do not hold to that center, Jack, it is a pusillanimous sludge of liberal and conservative bankruptcies, a pus of old jargons which will whip into no militant history, but may be analyzed eventually by the chemists as the ingredient which smudges the ink on such mothers of the center as the *N. Y. Post*.

Your near-contemporary,
N. M.

P.S. I was in a demonstration the other day of five literary magazines (so help me) which marched in a small circle of protest against our intervention in Cuba. One of the pickets was a very tall poetess with black hair which



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reached near to her waist. She was dressed like a medieval varlet, and she carried a sign addressed to your wife:

JACQUELINE, VOUS AVEZ
PERDU VOS ARTISTES

Tin soldier, you are depriving us of the Muse.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOURTH PRESIDENTIAL PAPER

There is a last irony in the Letter to Castro. Hemingway is gone; the missiles have replaced him. Yet Cuba has come near to full circle. Having gone all the way over to the Communists, there is a possibility they have now come some part of the way back. We could still do worse than to send good writers to Cuba. Castro could do worse than invite them. For of one thing we may be certain—the average American reporter writing for the average American paper is as well-equipped to discuss the complexities of Cuba and the nuances of Castro's personality as a horse is equipped to teach syntax.

I can think of a few writers to send: John Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, and Dwight Macdonald who always tells the truth as he sees it. James Baldwin, Saul Bellow perhaps, Truman Capote. J. D. Salinger—let him try something interesting for once. Or James Jones—let him do something worthy for once. Ralph Ellison—who may contain the essence of the observer. Lionel Trilling, Alfred Kazin, Norman Podhoretz, Robert Lowell, Bernard Malamud, Vance Bourjaily, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, Arthur Miller. There are enough writers. I would like to be one of them but I am disqualified on too many counts. I have a vested interest in the health of the Cuban Revolution.

But it would be right if Castro has the wit to invite these writers, and let them move around. It would drive a wedge into the totalitarian certainties of the mass media's attitude to Cuba. The mass media knows their reports are worth nothing compared to the eye and voice of a serious writer. Like bad cowardly bulls, people in the mass media paw the ground when one comes near.

~~1962~~

FULMINATION

P91

The Existential Heroine

When Jackie Kennedy was First Lady

1962

A303

pp 91-98
Pres
Papers

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I would have liked to say, "talk on television about the things you do not understand." Use your popularity to be difficult and intellectually dangerous. There is more to greatness than liberal legislation." And to her I would have liked to go on about what the real meaning of an artist might be, of how the marrow of a nation was contained in his art, and one deadened artists at one's peril, because artists were not so much gifted as endowed; they had been given what was secret and best in their parents and in all the other people about them who had been generous or influenced them or made them, and so artists embodied the essence of what was best in the nation, embodied it in their talent rather than in their character, which could be small, but their talent—this fruit of all that was rich and nourishing in their lives—was related directly to the dreams and the ambitions of the most imaginative part of the nation. So the destiny of a nation was not separate at all from the fate of its artists. I would have liked to tell her that every time an artist failed to complete the full mansion, jungle, garden, armory, or city of his work the nation was subtly but permanently poorer, which is why we return so obsessively to the death of ~~Tom~~ Wolfe, the broken air of Scott Fitzgerald, and the gloomy smell of the vault which collects already about the horror of Hemingway's departure. I would have liked to say to her that a war for the right to express oneself had been going on in this country for fifty years, and that there were counterattacks massing because there were many who hated the artist now, that as the world dipped into the totalitarian trough of the twentieth century there was a mania of abhorrence for whatever was unpredictable. For all too many, security was the only bulwark against emptiness, eternity and death. The void was what America feared. Communism was one name they gave this void. The unknown was Communist. The girls who wore dungarees were Communist, and the boys who grew beards, the people who walked their dog off the leash. It was comic, but it was virulent, and there was a fanatic rage in much too much of the population. Detestation of the beatnik seethed like rabies on the mouths of small-town police officers.

Oh, there was much I wanted to tell her, even—exit sociology, enter insanity—that the obscene had a right to exist in the novel. For every fifteen-year-old who would be

hurt by premature exposure, somewhere another, or two or three, would emerge from sexual experience which had been too full of moral funk onto the harder terrain of sex made alive by culture, that it was the purpose of culture finally to enrich all of the psyche, not just part of us, and damage to particular people in passing was a price we must pay. Thirty thousand Americans were killed each year by automobile crashes. No one talked of giving up the automobile: it was necessary to civilization. As necessary, I wanted to say, was art. Art in all its manifestations. Including the rude, the obscene, and the unsayable. Art was as essential to the nation as technology. I would tell her these things out of romantic abundance, because I liked her and thought she would understand what one was talking about, because as First Lady she was queen of the arts, she was our Muse if she chose to be. Perhaps it would not be altogether a disaster if America had a Muse.

~~Now it is not a matter of you who read this that a small but distinct feud between the editors of *Esquire* and the writer was made up around the New Year. What is not as much off the matter was the suggestion, made at the time by one of these editors, that a story be done about Jackie Kennedy.~~

~~One used the idea. What has been written already is curious proof if it is not obvious how much one liked the idea. Pierre Salinger was approached by the Magazine, and agreed to present the same idea to Mrs. Kennedy. I saw Salinger in his office for a few minutes. He told me: not yet a chance to talk to the Lady, but might that evening. I was leaving Washington. A few days later, one of the editors spoke to him. Mrs. Kennedy's answer: negative.~~

~~One didn't know. One didn't know how the idea had been presented, one didn't know just when it had been presented. It did not matter all that much. Whatever the details, the answer had come from the core. One's presence was not required. Which irritated the vanity. The vanity was no doubt outsize, but one thought of oneself as one of the few writers in the country. There was a right to interview Mrs. Kennedy. She was not only a woman looking for privacy, but an institution being put together before our eyes. If the people of America were to have a symbol, one had the right to read more about the creation. The country would stay alive by becoming more extraordinary, not more predictable.~~

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The Existential Heroine

(Concerning the Tour Jackie Kennedy
gave of the White House in 1962?)

CRITICISM

III

Set page after
print 4 lines

1961 ✓

B161

Start

Not with a kind eye then did I watch Mrs. Kennedy
give the nation a tour. One would be fair. Fair to her and
fair to the truth of one's reactions. There was now an ad-
vantage in not having had the interview.

I turned on the program a minute after the hour. The
image on the screen was not of Mrs. Kennedy, but the
White House. For some minutes she talked, reading from a
prepared script while the camera was turned upon old
prints, old plans, and present views of the building. Since
Jackie Kennedy was not visible during this time, there was
an opportunity to listen to her voice. It produced a small
continuing shock. At first, before the picture emerged from
the set, I thought I was turned to the wrong station, be-
cause the voice was a quiet parody of the sort of voice
one hears on the radio late at night, dropped softly into
the ear by girls who sell soft mattresses, depilatories, or
creams to brighten the skin.

Now I had heard the First Lady occasionally on news-
reels and in brief interviews on television, and thought she
showed an odd public voice, but never paid attention, be-
cause the first time to hear her was in the living room at
Hyannis Port and there she had been clear, merry and
near excellent. So I discounted the public voice, concluded
it was muffled by shyness perhaps or was too urgent in
its desire to sound like other voices, to sound, let us say,
like an attractive small-town salesgirl, or like Jackie Ken-
nedy's version of one: the gentry in America have a dim
ear for the nuances of accent in the rough, the poor, and the
ready. I had decided it was probably some mockery of her
husband's political ambitions, a sport upon whatever advisers
had been trying for years to guide her to erase whatever
was too patrician or cultivated in her speech. But the voice
I was hearing now, the public voice, the voice after a year
in the White House had grown undeniably worse, had
nourished itself on its faults. Do some of you remember
the girl with the magnificent sweater who used to give the
weather reports on television in a swamy sing-song tone?
It was a self-conscious parody, very funny for a little while:
"Temperature—forty-eight. Humidity—twenty-eight. Prevail-
ing winds." It had the style of the pinup magazine, it

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caught their prose: "Sandra Sharilee is 37-25-37, and likes to stay in at night." The girl who gave the weather report captured the voice of those pinup magazines, dreamy, narcissistic, visions of sex on the moon. And Jackie Kennedy's voice, her public voice, might as well have been influenced by the weather girl. What madness is loose in our public communication. And what self-ridicule that consciously or unconsciously, wittingly, willy-nilly, by the aid of speech teachers or all on her stubborn own, this was the manufactured voice Jackie Kennedy chose to arrive at. One had heard better ones at Christmastime in Macy's selling gadgets to the grim.

The introduction having ended, the camera moved onto Jackie Kennedy. We were shown the broad planes of the First Lady's most agreeable face. Out of the deep woods now. One could return to them by closing one's eyes and listening to the voice again, but the image was reasonable, reassuringly stiff. As the eye followed Mrs. Kennedy and her interlocutor, Charles Collingwood, through the halls, galleries and rooms of the White House, through the Blue Room, the Green Room, the East Room, the State Dining Room, the Red Room; as the listeners were offered a reference to Dolly Madison's favorite sofa, or President Monroe's Minerva clock, Nellie Custis' sofa, Mrs. Lincoln's later poverty, Daniel Webster's sofa, Julia Grant's desk, Andrew Jackson's broken mirror, the chest President Van Buren gave to his grandson; as the paintings were shown to us, paintings entitled Niagara Falls, Grapes and Apples, Naval Battle of 1812, Indian Guides, A Mountain Glimpse, Mouth of the Delaware; as one contemplated the life of this offering, the presentation began to take on the undernourished, overdone air of a charity show, a telethon for a new disease. It was not Mrs. Kennedy's fault—she strove honorably. What an agony it must have been to establish the sequence of all these names, all these objects. Probably she knew them well, perhaps she was interested in her subject—although the detached quality of her presence on this program made it not easy to believe—but whether or not she had taken a day-to-day interest in the booty now within the White House, still she had had a script partially written for her, by a television writer with black horn-rimmed glasses no doubt, she had been obliged to memorize portions of this script, she had trained for the part. Somehow it was sympathetic that she walked through it like a starlet

who is utterly without talent. Mrs. Kennedy moved like a wooden horse. A marvelous horse, perhaps even a live horse, its feet hobbled, its head unready to turn for fear of a flick from the crop. She had that intense wooden lack of rest, that lack of comprehension for each word offered up which one finds only in a few of those curious movie stars who are huge box office. Jane Russell comes to mind, and Rita Hayworth when she was sadly cast, Jayne Mansfield in deep water, Brigitte Bardot before she learned to act. Marilyn Monroe. But one may be too kind. Jackie Kennedy was more like a starlet who will never learn to act because the extraordinary livid unreality of her life away from the camera has so beclouded her brain and seduced her attention that she is incapable of the simplest and most essential demand, which is to live and breathe easily with the meaning of the words one speaks.

This program was the sort of thing Eleanor Roosevelt could have done, and done well. She had grown up among objects like this—these stuffed armchairs, these candelabra—no doubt they lived for her with some charm of the past. But Jackie Kennedy was unconvincing. One did not feel she particularly loved the past of America—not all of us do for that matter, it may not even be a crime—but one never had the impression for a moment that the White House fitted her style. As one watched this tame, lackluster and halting show, one wanted to take the actress by the near shoulder. Because names, dates and objects were boring down into the very secrets of her being—or so one would lay the bet—and this encouraged a fraud which could only sicken her. By extension it would deaden us. What we needed and what she could offer us was much more complex than this public image of a pompadour, a tea-dance dress, and a Colonial window welded together in committee. Would the Kennedys be no more intelligent than the near past, had they not learned America was not to be saved by Madison Avenue, that no method could work which induced nausea faster than the pills we push to carry it away.

Afterward one could ask what it was one wanted of her, and the answer was that she show herself to us as she is. Because what we suffer from in America, in that rootless moral wilderness of our expanding life, is the unadmitted terror in each of us that bit by bit, year by year, we are going mad. Very few of us know really where we have come from and to where we are going, why we do it,

and if it is ever worthwhile. For better or for worse we have lost our past, we live in that airless no-man's-land of the perpetual present, and so suffer doubly as we strike into the future because we have no roots by which to project ourselves forward, or judge our trip.

And this tour of the White House gave us precisely no sense of the past. To the contrary, it inflicted the past upon us, pummeled us with it, depressed us with facts. I counted the names, the proper names, and the dates in the transcript. More than two hundred items were dumped upon us during that hour. If one counts repetitions, the number is closer to four hundred. One was not being offered education, but anxiety.

We are in the Green Room—I quote from the transcript:

Mr. Collingwood: What other objects of special interest are there in the room now?

Mrs. Kennedy: Well, there's this sofa which belonged to Daniel Webster and is really one of the finest pieces here in this room. And then there's this mirror. It was George Washington's and he had it in the Executive Mansion in Philadelphia, then he gave it to a friend and it was bought for Mount Vernon in 1891. And it was there until Mount Vernon lent it to us this fall. And I must say I appreciate that more than I can say, because when Mount Vernon, which is probably the most revered house in this country, lends something to the White House, you know they have confidence it will be taken care of.

A neurotic may suffer agonies returning to his past; so may a nation which is not well. The neurotic recites endless lists of his activities and offers no reaction to any of it. So do we teach with empty content and by rigid manner where there is anxiety in the lore. American history disgorges this anxiety. Where, in the pleasant versions of it we are furnished, can we find an explanation for the disease which encourages us to scourge our countryside, stifle our cities, kill the physical sense of our past, and throw up excruciatingly totalitarian new office buildings everywhere to burden the vista of our end? This disease, is it hidden in the evasions, the injustices, and the prevarications of the past, or does it come to us from a terror of what is yet to come? Whatever, however, we do not create a better nation by teaching schoolchildren the catalogues of the White House. Nor do we use the First Lady decently if she is

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delete page

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flattered in this, for catalogues are imprisonment to the delicate, muted sensitivity one feels passing across Jackie Kennedy from time to time like a small summer wind on a good garden.

Yes, before the tour was over, one had to feel compassion. Because silly, ill-advised, pointless, empty, dull, and obsequious to the most slavish tastes in American life, as was this show, still she was trying so hard, she wanted to please, she had given herself to this work, and it was hopeless there was no one about to tell her how very hopeless it was, how utterly without offering to the tormented adventurous spirit of American life. At times, in her eyes, there was a blank, full look which one could recognize. One had seen this look on a nineteen-year-old who was sweet and on the town and pushed too far. She slashed her wrists one night and tried to scar her cheeks and her breast. I had visited the girl in the hospital. She had blank eyes, a wide warm smile, a deadness in her voice. It did not matter about what she spoke—only her mouth followed the words, never her eyes. So I did not care to see that look in Jackie Kennedy's face, and I hoped by half—for more would be untrue—that the sense one got of her in newspaper photographs, of a ladygirl healthy and on the bounce, might come into her presence before our deadening sets. America needed a lady's humor to leaven the solemnities of our topeless power: finally we will send a man to Mars and the Martians will say, "God he is dull."

Yes, it is to be hoped that Jackie Kennedy will come alive. Because I think finally she is one of us. By which I mean that she has not one face but many, not a true voice but accents, not a past so much as memories which cannot speak to one another. She attracts compassion. Somewhere in her mute vitality is a wash of our fatigue, of existential fatigue, of the great fatigue which comes from being adventurous in a world where most of the bets are covered cold and statisticians prosper. I liked her, I liked her still, but she was a phony—it was the cruelest thing one could say, she was a royal phony. There was something very difficult and very dangerous she was trying from deep within herself to do, dangerous not to her safety but to her soul. She was trying, I suppose, to be a proper First Lady and it was her mistake. Because there was no need to copy the Ladies who had come before her. Suppose America had not yet had a First Lady who was even re-

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page*

Sketch
page 2

motely warm enough for our needs? Or sufficiently imaginative? But who could there be to advise her in all that company of organized men, weaned on the handbook of past precedent? If she would be any use to the nation she must first regain the freedom to look us in the eye. And offer the hard drink. For then three times three hurrah, and hats, our hats, in the air. If she were really interested in her White House, we would grant it to her, we would not begrudge her the tour, not if we could believe she was beginning to learn the difference between the arts and the safe old crafts. And indeed there was a way she could show us she was beginning to learn, it was the way of the hostess: one would offer her one's sword when Henry Miller was asked to the White House as often as Robert Frost and beat poetry's own Andy Hardy—good Gregory Corso—could do an Indian dance in the East Room with Archibald MacLeish. America would be as great as the royal rajah of her arts when the Academy ceased to be happy as a cherrystone clam, and the weakest of the beat returned to form. Because our tragedy is that we diverge as countrymen further and further away from one another, like a space ship broken apart in flight which now drifts mournfully in isolated orbits, satellites to each other, planets none, communication faint.

63-62

(646)

PRES PAF

(B304)

~~On Fallout, Napoleon, Goethe, and P...~~

POETRY

Presidential Poems

~~One of the princes in the palace guard around the
nads once saw fit to tell a wife of mine that I was "an
intellectual adventurer." I was struck with the accuracy of
the remark. Only an intellectual adventurer could write an
open poem to the President. It came at a curious time ^{for me}
the inner life of JFK because he was contemplating the pos-
sibilities of an all-out fallout-shelter drive, which if success-
ful (and the largest campaign in America seem to be the
easiest ones) would have ^{with a} us Egyptian as a nation: a
million underground oom-ooms stocked to the barrel
top with canned goods, toys, and the beginnings (under-
taken by children) of cave drawings. Something went wrong
with the campaign; maybe the President had a bad dream.
At any rate, this poem was one of a hundred thousand items
which might have been present to shift his mind.~~

Open Poem to John Fitzgerald Kennedy ✓

fallout
is the hormone
of the small town mind

a fallout shelter
is sex

think how warm
at the thought
are all of U
and little Mrs. U S A
bonging the gong
below

while bigcity flesh
 all that blond hair
 and black hair
 straight and long
 short and highly curled
 floating in through
 the trees
 a dew
 of homogenized bone
 and blood mist
 atom bombs
 are not so bad
 says small-time
 in the town mind
 they disinfect
 the big city
 and jazz us to the toes
 out here in God's Country

fingering is lovely
 on the edge of the grave.

Mr. President
 you realize of course
 that your shelter program
 for every home owner
 is sexing up the countryside
 and killing us in the
 bigcity bar.

If this is good
 for the vitality
 of the nation
 (I mean that countryside
 could stand some sex)
 then Mr. President
 you are a genius
 and corporation executives
 living in the suburbs
 with the five thousand
 dollar
 shelters
 ought to salute you.
 I do.

Dear Mr. President:

THE SIXTH PRESIDENTIAL PAPER

112-113

Pres

Re: [unclear]

Now, of course, this would not have been my question. It would have been unprofessional. It would also have been impossible to answer. Like any complex man of our time, you know that the final intent of your heart is inscrutable even to yourself. You could answer with the fiercest sincerity that you trusted yourself, that you believed your motive was good, and yet one nerve might tingle in your fingertip. That nerve might be the only indication of a demon buried within yourself.

During that historic week in the fall of 1962 when America and Russia were on a collision course, and it was possible the death of all we had known could come at one minute or another, I would try to contemplate how iron must be your nerve, and I came to the conclusion that your nerve was either very great or that you were nerveless, which is another matter. If Russia has been the villain of these years and we the relative heroes, if we—all guilt acknowledged—have been relatively more innocent than Russia, and our secret aim has been to avoid war if possible, then your action was noble, your nerve worthy of the great generals of history. But if the existence of our being is not really essential to you or to your associates, if in depth beneath depth of your mind there is not fear but a high calm joy at the thought of atomic war, then what you were showing us that week was not fine nerve but nervelessness, for then you were like a poker player with a royal flush, a revolver in his hand, unlimited money to raise each bet, and a string of carefully graded insults calculated to tip the table and let the shooting begin.

One does not know the answer. But the sensation is uneasy. There was an article in *Look*, December 18. Its title was "Washington in Crisis—154 Hours that shook the world: the untold story of our plan to invade Cuba." Let me quote from it.

Changes were made weekly as Castro's Cuba rattled with more rifles, tanks, and guns from Russia. By October 16, 1962, the invasion plan—a series of black loose-leaf notebooks in Pentagon safes—called for the massing of 100,000 men to take the island, a swarm of Air Force bombers and fighters and hundreds of Navy warships, from aircraft-laden carriers to assault landingcraft. This time, the pros would take no chances.

As part of the invasion plan, President Kennedy, his Cabinet, and top military and civilian leaders would repair to secret, atom-proof shelters in the mountains of Virginia and

1962

Maryland—for once the troops jumped off, no man could foretell with certainty the Kremlin's response. (Italics mine.)

It is not your secret atom-proof shelters in the mountains of Virginia which cause the terror—one can accept the fact that by the logic of war, you would have to be protected. It's been true for almost half a century that the General with the highest rank is to be found in the deepest part of the ground. Besides, your physical bravery is not in question.

But there is panic at the thought that your own personal safety may affect the secret estimates of your mind. None of us can be certain that our own protection from death may not leave us secretly indifferent to the extinction of a million others. Which one of us can say we wept in childhood for the famine and death of ten million Chinese?

It provokes a further question. What of your family? Does your daughter, your son, your wife go down into the bomb shelter with you? Do you know yourself to be so pure that even if you lose nothing yourself, you still can feel concern for us? Or are we militarily expendable?

So I ask you this. Why not send us a hostage? Why not let us have Jacqueline Kennedy? The moment an invasion is let loose, and you as the Commander in Chief go to your deep bomb shelter, why not send us your wife and children to share our fate in this city? New York is the place where we have air raid drills every year and no way at all to save a single body from a single Russian bomb. Yes, let your wife's helicopter land on the Hotel Carlyle, and we will know it is likely you are ready to suffer as we suffer, and that the weakness we feel before war is not merely our own pathetic inability to stare into the mountain passes of Heaven, the stench of Hell, or the plastic of cancer, but is the impotence of men who would be brave, and yet must look at the children they have become powerless to protect. You see, we in New York are now like the ten million Chinese. Show us that you understand our condition, put a hostage from your flesh into our doomed city, or know that we can never trust you completely, for deep within yourself may be contained a bright mad psychic voice which leaps to give the order that presses a button.

Yours respectfully,
Norman Mailer

CUBA - III

A FOOTNOTE TO MANGOOSE

1962

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~~Signature~~

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Harlot's
Glast

Early Wednesday evening, October 24, I hoisted myself off a barstool in a cantina on SW 8th Street, picked up my tote bag, and went out to the street with Dix Butler to hail a cab. We were on our way to 6312 Riviera Drive. The radios in all the bars on SW 8th Street were reporting in English or Spanish that two Soviet ships had come within fifty miles of the line of quarantine the U.S. Navy had established around the island of Cuba.

There had been no day in my life like the Monday, the Tuesday, and the Wednesday just passed. In Washington, print-outs were being circulated among key personnel at the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and at Langley to show the route of evacuation to underground shelters in Virginia and in Maryland. At JM/WAVE, maps of southern Florida were distributed to a few of us. As I now learned, we had built a twenty-man fallout shelter two years ago in the swamps of the Everglades, and I thought this an interesting achievement since little enough earth in the Everglades could be found two feet above water. A rumor passing from Langley to JM/WAVE had Bobby Kennedy declare that he was not going to a shelter. "If it comes to evacuation, there will be sixty million Americans killed, and as many Russians. I'll be at Hickory Hill."

When I passed the story on to Dix Butler, he said, "How do you know Bobby doesn't have his own dugout at Hickory Hill?"

That may be taken as a sample of the observations being passed around Zenith. Emotions had gone careening in all directions, as if a stone had been thrown into a flight of birds. It did not seem condign that we should all die so soon. Now when I felt rage it seemed to scald my chest; sorrow was uncomfortably close to weeping; cynicism, on revealing itself, tasted poisonous. It was hard to say who had become more unpopular at JM/WAVE—Fidel Castro, the Cuban exiles, or the brothers K. Bill Harvey was convinced that there would yet be a sellout to Cuba. "If we don't have a shooting war, Khrushchev will piss all over Kennedy in the negotiations."

Given such quick alternations of exhilaration and gloom, the thought that there might be power never yet unleashed in oneself also had time to come forth. Miami, soft as a powderpuff, murderous as a scorpion, lay suspended like Nirvana; no one

could, when all was said, resist waiting. Except for Harvey. He chafed like a boil about to burst on its incarcerating collar; it took very little effort by Dix Butler to convince the boss of JM/WAVE that he should allow us to go on a mission. Harvey was all for improvising a few missions in this week of emergency.

He did take me aside long enough, however, to say, "Hubbard, I don't know if I give one toot whether you come back or not, but if you do, and the world continues, I want my ass covered. So you are not to tell Hugh Montague that you are going. Should he contact me concerning you, I will tell him that you took off spontaneously on a job I was restricting to Dix Butler, but that I won't press charges, which I won't—that is, between you and me, I won't—unless you make the mistake of telling the truth to His Lordship. In that case, it will be your word against mine, and you are about to be counterdocumented. Since you want to go out with Butler, write a memo and sign it. You can have it say, 'I, Herrick Hubbard, acknowledge the receipt of memo number 7,418,537 and will obey instructions pursuant to it.' "

"Have I seen 7,418,537?"

"You will now." He read it aloud. "All personnel in Office B, JM/WAVE, are hereby instructed to remain within a ten-mile radius of Base for duration of crisis, and will keep themselves in constant availability."

"Yessir," I said.

"I am putting 7,418,537 out now. It will be on your desk in ten minutes. Send your reply as soon as you receive it."

I did. I felt weightless. It occurred to me that I was absolutely free. For I might be dead in two days. So I could lie once again to Hugh Montague. Wild Bill, after all, was using us to some purpose. We would embark on Eugenio Martínez's boat, *La Princesa*, with cartons of flares, and bring them into Cuba on rubber dinghies to hand them over to one of Harvey's networks. These flares would then be available for the Cuban underground to light the way at night for an American invasion force.

It is significant to my state of mind that that was all I knew about our mission. Waiting in such passivity, I wondered if the about-to-be-born on the last day of their nine months in the womb do not also feel the high sad sentiment that all they know

of existence is about to be lost forever for they are embarking on an endeavor of high risk.

I was obviously swimming in much emotional soup. I remember standing before a full-length mirror in my furnished apartment trying to attach these highly undisciplined sentiments to the stern expression on the presentable, tall young man who looked back at me. I had never felt further away from the image in the mirror. "Is this what goes on with movie stars?" I recall asking myself.

Early Wednesday afternoon, Butler drove us down to one of our proprietaries, a marina on Key Largo, and we loaded a fourteen-foot inflatable black rubber dinghy with 1,500 pounds of cement-brick and sand to simulate the weight of the equipment and men we would be carrying. Then we rode out to the smaller keys, pushing into mangrove swamps while throttling each of our twin outboards down to a purr, then vamped the craft through shallows at low tide, raising the outboards if necessary, scraping bottom. When Butler was satisfied, we went back to the mooring, carted one motor into a shed, and there in an unlit room with the engine mounted to the inside of a half-filled barrel of water, we practiced simple maintenance in the dark, stripping the little beast and reassembling it. Years ago, I had had one long day like this at the Farm, when they drove us to a cove just south of Norfolk, and brought us up to much the same sort of intense half-competence. What I had learned then I had all but forgotten; would I remember tomorrow what I was studying now?

We drove back to Miami in late afternoon, went to a cantina, had three Planter's Punches "in honor," said Butler, "of the plantations we will soon be restoring to their greed-ass shit-bag owners," and drank to that, and to Berlin—a touchy toast was that—"and to Nirvana," said Butler, which managed to startle me since I had been resting on just that word in my mind. Were we all growing telepathic now that the end of the world was near? It seemed a logical proposition. I sighed, and the Planter's Punch carried me back to how beautiful the sea had been this afternoon outside Key Largo, a luminous pale green sea, twice luminous as the shelf dropped off into the iridescence of aquamarine. A myriad of silver minnows escorted our dinghy to the

mangrove swamp, threaded the roots beneath the water and were lost to view.

Now we had gone through the door at 6312 Riviera Drive and in a wardrobe closet changed into black high-topped sneakers, black denim pants, a black turtleneck sweater, a black hood with holes for eyes and mouth. It was hot in this anteroom. The polyester suits and tropical shirts of a dozen other men were already suspended from hangers and poles, but I was comprehending why the life of the executioner must be worth its other pains. Dressed all in black, I did not seem to inhabit myself any longer so much as I was an acolyte to the communions who would guard the dominion of death; it was then I comprehended that I had never understood the Agency until this moment; now I knew why I was here. One should not spend one's life in the halls of a great profession without descending at least once to the cellar chambers—a metaphor, but then I was consuming metaphors on this night the way others in the same brew of anxiety might chew on facts; death was but a metaphor for metaphor, even as the square root of minus one was the mandrake root to guide us into that other world where there might be no roots. I kept thinking of the minnows that swam around our dinghy before disappearing into a forest of underwater foliage not two feet deep.

The interior of 6312 Riviera Drive was barely furnished, but then the model for a barren habitat is a safe house. We passed through a living room paneled in dark wood and by an archway into a dining room where four dark Spanish chairs were grouped around a mahogany dinner table, and I thought of the solemnity of middle-class Spanish life; the wives somber, the children solemn, the father guilty beneath the moral weight of a querulous mistress furious at his parsimony even as she wears the black lingerie he has purchased for her, yes, I must be a servant of death when an empty room offered the intimate history of an unhappy family I had never seen. How close had the Russian freighters approached by now to the line of quarantine?

Beyond the dining room was a door to a glassed-in porch that looked upon a patio; at the other end was the wharf. A large white fishing boat, immanent as mausoleum marble, was rising and falling with the small breath of the tide. I had time to think

of Giancana's dead wife before I stepped on board. Below were ten men in black hoods sitting on bunks in the galley, and only a few looked up. The air proved close if not yet foul, and the lurch of the ship at its mooring was not agreeable.

We waited. We did not speak beneath our hoods. The in-board motors started up, vibrating their intent through my feet, closer to the purpose than I might be. From above, like the sounds of a surgical team impinging on one's ear through partial anesthetic, I could hear the skipper calling out orders in Spanish. We were casting off. Down in the galley, with no more illumination coming through the portholes than the dock lights of the Miami houses along the canal, our motors sounded as alive as the growl of beasts.

We traveled at low throttle to reduce the wake, and I fell asleep passing through the narrow canals of Coral Gables into Biscayne Bay, and by the time I awakened we were in the open sea and the lights of Miami were far to the stern, their sky-glow as plum-colored as that last rose hue of sunset before evening is committed to night. Off the bow, more than a hundred miles to starboard, fainter than the penumbra of the moon, came a glow from Havana itself. It was a black night but a clear sky, and I had time to think that by tomorrow evening, both cities might be burning, and would we witness the sight from land or sea? "Eugenio is going to take us in between Cárdenas and Matanzas," said Butler. "We'll make Cuba by three in the morning."

I nodded. I was still drowsy. In truth, I was stupefied. It occurred to me that death should not come to one in this thick and clouded state.

"Do you want some rum?" asked Butler.

"I'd rather sleep," I said.

"Man, I'm drum-tight. It'll stay that way until we get back."

"I would have expected no less," I told him, and went below again, thinking no good thoughts about Butler, since he had now given me to understand that sleep before combat was no virtue, but an overindulgence. If Butler's character was not splendid, his adrenaline was nonetheless superb.

In the galley, men were lying down any way they could, two to a narrow bunk, four on the galley table, two on the galley deck, now three as I joined them. The floorboards were damp,

but warm enough in any event, and since others had gone up on deck, there was room to stretch out; I slept between the sloshing of the bilge and the battering of the hull against a rolling swell. The fetid odor that rises from men who eat garlic and perspire in black clothes went through the galley; by the shielded light of a blue ten-watt bulb over the sink, I watched Cubans inching up their black hoods with the instinctive movement of a sleeper wishing to breathe more easily; then pulling them down over their face in the reflex of awakening. To what end were these hoods? Was it their families they were looking to protect, or the bonds of magic? On this dark tropical sea where the Gulf Stream met the long roll of the Atlantic, magic was only a minor ally of commerce, but on the southern shore of Cuba, incantations washed in from the Caribbean. I thought of the facsimile of the Matahambre copper mines that we had constructed at full scale in the Everglades. Over the last nine months, exile commandos had trained there for demolitions work. Mock raids had been practiced. In each training raid we had satisfied the scenario, which was to succeed (figuratively) in dynamiting the model, but we had never been able to blow up the real works. In the last attempt on the Matahambre, eight raiders went ashore in the black hours after midnight, and were flushed by a Castro patrol. Six of the commandos made it back to shore long enough to be evacuated. That had been our most ambitious effort on the Matahambre, and it, too, had failed ignominiously. They never reached shore.

Now we were being sent out. We had dispensed with detailed preparation. We were to do no more than rendezvous with a few Cubans who would know where to conceal the flares for the technological magic that would follow—a full invasion force, several orders of magnitude more mighty than *santería*. Half asleep, I mused.

Then it occurred to me that I might be entering sleep for the last, or for one of the last times I would ever sleep. The mystery came over me then as never before, and I understood that we live in two states of existence, wakefulness and sleep, exactly those daily manifests provided us for life and for death; we were two histories living in one; at that moment, I wished to write a last letter to Kittredge adjuring her never to give up her

theoretical work, for it was profound, yes, profound, and so adjuring her, was waking up—I did not sleep after all—merely lay in the poetic detritus that blows about the marketplace of the mind as one returns from the deep, and I sat up, and felt ready for action even if there were hours to wait. Then, taking a few deep breaths of the foul air of the galley, I pulled down my hood and went on deck.

Butler was up with the skipper on the flying bridge. I knew the man, Eugenio Martínez. I had written about him to Kit-tredge. He had made more sorties to Cuba than any other boat-man in southern Florida; he was a hero with a sad story, of which half of JM/WAVE was by now aware. He wished to bring his parents out of Havana, but Harvey had forbidden it. Even as I came up the ladder, he was approaching the subject.

"Tonight, a guy stops by me and says, 'I have my hood on, so you do not know who I am, but I know you. You are Rolando.'

" 'If you know me so well,' I say to him, 'then you know I am Eugenio Martínez and am only called Rolando.' 'That I know as well,' he answers, 'but we are told to call you Rolando.' 'Of what use is that,' I say, 'when even the DGI knows Rolando is Eugenio?' You see, Mr. Castle . . ."

"You can call me Frank," said Dix.

"All right, Frank, Frank Castle. Frank, I will call you. The argument I hear from Mr. O'Brien, your boss, the corpulent man, is that my parents are well known at their home in Cuba, and it is certain capture for me if I try to reach them. I accept the logic of such matters because I am, by part, Spanish. If you are blessed and cursed with such blood, it becomes your duty to obey the laws of logic. That is a necessity for violent people if they detest chaos."

This speech had been so clearly uttered that I assumed Eugenio Martínez might continue speaking. I was mistaken, however. He could serve a silence. We served with him. His silences supported as much cerebration as speech. Up on the flying bridge, we rolled in the swell—the horizon, like a compass needle, doomed forever to adjust itself. Below was the ongoing message of the inboard motors working for us, working for us. We listened to the silences in the lull between each wind. Martínez had listened for so many nights that the silence may have

belonged to him. He had a long triangular face with a long Spanish nose and dark eyes in a full depth of socket that seemed ready to take in all his experience, a way, I suppose, of saying that he had seen a good deal and paid the price. I thought his eyes were haunted—had he seen as many ghosts as corpses?

That is a great deal to perceive at night under a clear but moonless sky, so I will admit that I had drunk with him two nights ago at Butler's suggestion, and, as is obvious, honored him now. Even my father, however, fond of saying, "I wouldn't trust a Cuban as far as I could throw him, although I would be happy to throw him through a plate-glass window," had also said, "Give me a hundred men like Eugenio Martínez and I will take Cuba myself." So I was pleased to be up on the flying bridge and felt as open to hero-worship as on any fevered day at St. Matt's. It would not have surprised me if the sky behind us were to go up in a conflagration of fiery mountains, and the unspeakable white light that propelled the mushroom cloud would sear our eyes. No more would it have surprised me if Havana, down the main a hundred miles to starboard, had flared up like a rocket in a tower of flame. The reality of our situation only came to me through the flexing of my feet in response to the roll of the boat. I could sense that we must be near to Cuba. If I was not yet able to see land, Communist searchlights, full of agitation, were flashing away from twenty miles off like that flutter of heat lightning when the forces above are not yet large enough to drive a bolt through the sky.

I had studied the map and knew where the dinghies were to put in to shore, but the coast was irregular. Mangrove swamps, dignified on the map as offshore keys, sat next to coral reefs. So soon as we had transferred the men, the flares, and our ammunition from *La Princesa* into the dinghies, we would run due south a few miles to find our beach. Let there be, however, one patrol boat to roar out of its concealment in the mangrove keys, and we would have to race off to the nearest inlet too shallow for them to follow.

Now, the closer we came to Cuba, the more we saw of other ships. Freighters and fishing trawlers passed in the distance. A U.S. Naval convoy of eight vessels, its flagship a destroyer, out, doubtless, from Key West, sailed by to some destination in the

east—was it the line of quarantine? We were traveling in radio silence. All the same, my interest in the world had diminished. What we were about to do was beginning to seem all that there was to do. For the last hour, our *prácticos* had been busy pumping up the rubber dinghies, checking equipment, breaking out assault rifles from the racks, and stacking cartons of flares on deck. Butler and I sat at the edges of this, ranked somewhere between Agency observers and honored guests. If we were to measure the venture by our usefulness, our presence might be a folly. I knew the physical taste of fear then, and it was nothing remarkable. An upwelling of bile embittered my nose and throat. It occurred to me that keeping control of myself might not be automatic.

Butler spoke at that instant. "You and me are in the same dinghy," he said, his voice agreeably husky.

"Good."

"You'll be my passenger."

I didn't know whether to feel relieved or humiliated.

"These are okay men," he went on.

"You know them?"

"I've trained with a couple. If it goes all right, there is nothing to it. If it goes wrong, you don't need training. It will be a mess. For the Castros more than for us."

"You sound like you are up on this."

"I hit the beach at Girón."

"You what?"

"Unofficially."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

He shrugged.

I had no idea if he was telling the truth. It seemed to me that he could be. I was angry. I had thought somehow that we were going out as innocents together. I knew that some intolerable condition between us, present at the edge of every mood since our one abominable night in Berlin, might be thereby shriven. But now I saw myself as a sacrificial clown. Yes, it was better to be angry than afraid.

I spent my last thirty minutes on *La Princesa* trying to familiarize myself with the Czech machine pistol handed to me. It had a curved magazine holding thirty 9mm rounds, could be set for

semi or full automatic, and could probably, if need arose, be fired from the hip out of a careening dinghy. Not even hours of practice could guarantee such shooting.

The dinghies were put over the side and loaded, waterproof carton by waterproof carton. Next came ourselves, six men in each boat. Eugenio Martínez came to the rail to say good-bye.

"Suerte," he whispered, and we clasped hands. I felt cleansed; I was setting out.

This lofty intuition was maintained for as long as it took to keep one's balance and sit down. The swell was sullen, and we were pitching too much for spiritual illumination. "Straight in, due south," said Martínez at the last. He would meet us at approximately this place on the waters in twenty hours—that is, at eleven tonight—it was now three in the morning—or, if we did not appear, would come back on each following hour through the night.

The dinghy had a compass and a wheel mounted on a plywood dashboard. Butler, steering the boat, was taking us in at ten knots, a speed slow enough for the muffled sound of our twin exhausts to blend with the wind. The chop was in our favor. It would not be easy to detect a black dinghy from any distance when the bob of the wave rose higher than our profile except when we were lifting over a crest. We did not speak. Words could carry more clearly than the throb of a motor. Yet, I could hear another motor, faint as the wash of surf on the shore, and realized it was our companion dinghy moving toward its separate rendezvous. The night air was heavy. We pushed forward slowly, as if ensconced in pillows, the dinghy so closely loaded that our freeboard was not six inches, and we shipped a little water with every rise and fall, and bailed it out with plastic milk jugs cut in half, painted black, attached by a length of rope to a ring in the rubber floor of the dinghy; the sound of bailing added to the quiet advertisement of our passage.

Shore was approaching. A line of phosphorescence washed onto a narrow beach. Were our people waiting for us, or would we be met by Castro's militia? The rubber bottom grated on the sand, and I stood up with the others and stepped over the side of the dinghy into a few inches of water, my muscles as tight as a clenched fist. Without a sound, all six of us pulled the dinghy

twenty feet up the beach, enough to reach the shelter of a small sea-bent tree whose leaves bent so low as to paw the ground. In the night silence, a gourd fell. Its impact on landing was as raucous as the cry of an owl. Out of the thicket behind the beach came a swarm of small sounds, crawling, creeping, unstinted, inexhaustible—in that thicket was the mill of generation itself. To the rapt advance of vegetation growing came the sounds of insects eating the vegetation.

"Hubbard," whispered Butler, "I need you."

He had removed the cushion of his driver's seat from the dinghy and it now unfolded into a long black bag. We inserted our heads, turned on a pencil light, and studied his map. "We're off the mark," he whispered. "We can't be off by more than a quarter of a mile, but is it to the east or the west?" I peered at the map. At the place where we were supposed to have put in, a stream flowed down from the woods to divide the beach. Where we had landed was no stream.

"Well," I said, "the current was running west to east."

"I know," he said, "but I could have overcorrected."

As we came in, I had perceived a low knoll some few hundred yards to the west of us. By the topographical lines on our map, the knoll had to be a thousand yards west of the stream.

"Go east," I said.

Under the black enclosing blanket, we spoke with our faces inches apart. I felt a distinct desire to terminate this dialogue. Butler, however, kept studying the map as if to deny my conclusion. "You may be right," he said at last, and we withdrew.

Now the question was whether to send a man east to reconnoiter the beach and; ideally, locate our waiting guerrillas, or push the boat into the surf once more and ride along parallel to the shore. If I had been in command, I might have sent one man east. He would attract less attention and if intercepted the shots would warn us. Butler, however, decided to get back into the water. Our reception party would be expecting a rubber boat, not a man on foot.

"One more item," said Butler. "If there is a firefight, and we are captured, don't get caught with that rifle."

"I know that," I said. Harvey not only had told me as much, but drew a finger across his neck for punctuation. Before we left,

he had provided us with a cover story that could prove sufficient. We were here in Cuba as reporters for *Life* magazine, ready to describe a raid; Butler was the photographer, indeed he had a camera with him, and I was the writer. Our *Life* accreditation had been gotten ready for us overnight by a JM/WAVE shop. If we were caught, Wild Bill would contact an editor he knew at *Life*. The magazine would back us up. Such was our cover. Yes, here on the beach, just arrived, two stringers down from New York, Frank Castle and Robert Charles, marginal journalists shipping out on a gamble. It was not particularly reassuring cover, since I had had no time to work up my biography, but it could suffice. Who in the DGI would know a great deal about the inner workings of *Life* magazine?

Even as we dragged the dinghy back into the surf, my mind was developing the scenario. If captured, I would tell the DGI that I had been in Miami for only a week, long enough to meet some coyotes. I would describe the coyotes. That would check out, doubtless, with what the DGI knew. For the next few minutes, as we rode parallel to the shore not two hundred feet out, searching the beach for the mouth of a small stream, I felt as creative as an actor discovering the subtler character embedded in his role. I decided on my boyhood. It had been spent in Ellsworth, Maine. My father was a carpenter; my mother a housewife. I would have graduated from Ellsworth High, which would mark the end of my formal schooling. The DGI would not have a yearbook from Ellsworth High—conceivably the KGB, but not the DGI.

It was just as well that I enjoyed my scenario, for that proved the last fruitful meditation I was to have for a time. Around a slight turn in the beach, we came upon a stream, and Butler rapped my shoulder once in affirmation, and took us in to shore. Once again we landed, once again we dragged the dinghy into the cover of a low tree, and waited, and listened to the sounds of vegetation growing.

Since no trail went up into the bush, only the stream which was no more than a brook, we reconnoitered it far enough to post a *práctico* at the first bend. He was back, however, in twenty minutes. The mosquitoes had proved too fierce. Butler handed the man insect repellent and sent him back.

We waited. The password was *parangón*. The reply was *incompetente*. My hearing grew ready. *Parangón*—paragon. Would it come in a hoarse voice or a whisper? The insects came instead. I took out my repellent and shared it with Butler. He was impatient with waiting. Back went our heads into the black bag to study the map once more. If, for the sake of hypothesis, we had made an error of more than half a mile on the first approach, then the knoll from which I had taken my calculations could have been mistaken for another headland further down the coast. Our faces six inches apart, our breath disturbed by the anxiety that we were losing any authoritative relation to this map, we argued.

I refused to give up my interpretation. We did not remove our heads from the bag until the penultimate moment. For in another ten seconds the missing Cubans came forth from the brook in the company of our *práctico*, and a whispered set of greetings were joined in the darkness of the low trees that bordered the beach. I thought of how much quick happiness was available in war! I had rarely taken to strangers so much as these six Cubans who had joined us at the head of the stream, and in the dark I could not even see their faces.

In the beginning, there was much translation. Our hosts spoke a dialect I could not comprehend. So they were obliged to address themselves to a *práctico* who communicated with me. It took time. Whispered links were lost, and there were problems to discuss. Once the boat was unloaded, were we to drag it up the stream until we found a clearing large enough to hide it, or should we let out the air, stuff it in the thicket, and use the foot pump on our return to blow it up again? When it developed that there was no likely place upstream, we took the second course and bound the deflated rubber skin into an object the size of a large suitcase, then located a hollow for it.

Now we were ready to transport the flares. They came in forty-pound cartons. Since the guides who had come to meet us knew the turns of the stream where the Castro militia could set up an ambush, one of them took the point, another the rear, and all of us, Butler, myself, the four *prácticos*, and the six locals, each shouldered a forty-pound carton. That took care of all but two boxes. When the heaviest man in our welcoming party handed

his machete to a friend and put a carton on each of his shoulders, Butler decided to do the same, thereupon giving me his assault rifle. Loaded with one carton and two weapons, I joined the others as we went up the brook in the dark.

We slogged along in water that came to our knees, switched from bank to bank on the rocks, slid in mud, sat down in mud, dropped a carton from time to time. In places, the stream became a pool and we walked in water to our waists. I do not know if we covered a mile, but it felt like five and took considerably more than an hour and much agonized breathing before we reached a dirt road adjacent to the watercourse and found a clearing where the cases could be stacked. A truck, we were promised, would arrive before dawn to transport the flares. The people with us knew no more than how to guide us to the clearing. Now we were told that it would be wise to return to the beach. It was always possible that the militia would drive along this road.

"I'm staying here," said Butler, "until the truck arrives."

One of the Cubans tried to explain the situation. If the militia were to come by and discover the cartons, that would not be good for the local community. On the other hand, it would not necessarily be a disaster since a gang from Matanzas could have been squirreling away their ordnance here. Should we be found, however, a skirmish with the militia had to ensue, and then there could be dead men to account for. It was better if we went back right now.

"Tell this dude," said Butler, "that there is nothing more important than our flares. We are going to wait until the truck arrives."

I never had to translate his remark. Our vehicle came along then. It was not a truck, but an old and very large Lincoln sedan, showing a faded green paint job in the dawn.

We loaded fourteen muddy cartons into the trunk and rear seat of the car, and with no more than a blanket to cover all visible loot, the driver, who looked young enough to be a student, offered one remarkable smile, his teeth as white as his mustache was black, and took off in the direction he had come.

There was now nothing to do but go back downstream. We would have to spend our day in the thicket hoping to find a place

where we would not be tormented altogether by insects. Tonight, we would inflate our dinghy and return to *La Princesa*. I could feel Butler's disappointment that no more had happened.

I could understand. There should have been more. It took no more than twenty minutes to return to the beach. I will not dwell on our day. We were in tropical woods and foliage. There was nothing for it but to pick a spot in the brush, drench ourselves in insect repellent, and try to sleep in the miserable condition of starting up each time a sound came from the forest. Out at sea we could hear patrol boats, and above us, in the spiderweb of sky visible through overhanging foliage, jet planes passed. Once in the morning and again in the afternoon, a helicopter took its airborne promenade along the beach. Time passed in a misery of insects macho enough to fight through repellent and make the sting. I discovered that the secret was not to push against the phlegmatic disposition of time.

At twilight, a fiery apocalypse descended in the west between green and purple clouds. With evening, the insects grew ferocious. Butler would wait no longer and had us move the rubber boat out to a sandbar near the mouth of the stream. Still protected by foliage, we took turns on the foot pump and in half an hour, it was inflated. We were loading the last of our rifles, ammunition boxes, and machetes, when a gunboat, perhaps thirty feet long, motored along, scanning the beach. If it had been less dark, we might have been detected.

Fifteen minutes later, we put out to sea. It would not take thirty minutes to reach our rendezvous, but we no longer wanted to stay on land. It was as if we had to quit the dark earth body of Cuba, too fecund, too strange. I felt like an insect buried in the thick mat of an enormous beast, nothing visible of his head, his tail, his limbs.

We rode out, hunched over in a low profile, and I, sitting beside Butler, my eye on the compass and the tide, muttered small corrections to him from time to time. Although he was never partial to the suggestions of others on how to adjust any of his skills, since he was possessive of all of them, he had come to recognize that I knew more about boats than he did, as well I should with a boyhood of Maine summers, even if little enough of it had been spent in blubbercraft stink-pots such as this, but,

yes, I knew navigation, and he sensed it, and we were on the mark, and thirty minutes early. No Martínez, no sight of *La Princesa*, but at least we were past the coral reefs and the mangrove keys, and if a patrol boat was going to bear down on us now, it would not come from the near lee of a dark island.

With Martínez nowhere in sight, we headed further out to sea. There was the likelihood, or so we had been told in Miami, that the Cuban Coast Guard would not respect the three-mile limit if no American gunboats were visible, but we rode higher in the water now, our weight reduced by 560 pounds of delivered flares. If the twin outboards held up, our dinghy ought to compete with the speed of any old and much-repaired Cuban craft.

A half hour later, after completing the four turns of a nautical square, we came back to where I hoped and calculated *La Princesa* would be. It was another dark night and another clear sky, but far to the east, clouds were being driven by wind.

Butler began to question my navigation. Could I have taken us through a trapezoid? Could I swear we were in the proper place?

"We are at the coordinates of the rendezvous," I said with all the confidence I could muster (although confidence was a tattered flag within), but I knew we could not steer by committee, so I convinced him to take one more square, this time but a half mile on each leg. At 11:15, *La Princesa* came motoring toward us looking as large as a galleon. Butler shook my hand. "We'll make a team yet," he said, and *La Princesa* idling, we came alongside, unloaded the dinghy, pulled it up after us, and went to the galley for coffee. I wondered if it ever felt better after a good day of rock climbing with Harlot.

It was then Butler asked about the line of quarantine. "It's over. The Russian ships have turned back," Martínez said. He repeated this news to the *prácticos*, and they received it without great happiness. There would be no invasion of Cuba now. Our flares would moulder in whichever dubious place they were stored.

Martínez had a more immediate concern, however. The other boat had missed its rendezvous. Martínez said, "That is why we were late. We waited for the others. Now we go back to look for them again."

It was a long hour. We ground along at half throttle, suffering a whiplike roll in the new wind that came out of the east. Tropical rain followed. I could see by our nearness to the mangrove keys that we were considerably closer to land than the three-mile limit.

Martínez said, "If they were chased from shore, they will be hiding in *these* keys," and he pointed with his pencil light to some mangrove isles on the chart. "I know the *práctico* who is leading the party. He is familiar with these lagoons. In there it is too shallow for the Castros to follow."

"What have you heard from Mr. O'Brien?" asked Butler.

"It was he who told me about the Russians."

"What else did he say?"

"He said: Return to Miami. *Pronto.*"

"Why?"

"He said to tell you he was handling all kinds of hell." Martínez shrugged. "That may be true, but how am I to leave men behind?"

Butler nodded. He looked happy. "Hubbard," he said, "you and me have to go out and look for them."

Martínez nodded.

It was foolhardy. We would search through unfamiliar lagoons for Cubans who might not even be there, but I would make no objection. It was easier to go back into those waters than to live with the knowledge that Butler was my moral superior.

We were ready. On our return, we would rendezvous with Martínez at a point midway between two mangrove keys on our chart. It would be inside the three-mile limit and that could prove hazardous for him, but it was simpler for us. Every hour for the next four hours, he would make a running pass through that area, and if we were not back by then, we were all in trouble, for it would be close to dawn. Now we spent twenty minutes in the galley going over the charts to mark the shallows in each of the keys and reefs we would be exploring.

Out in the dinghy, with no more than Butler and myself for ballast, handling was lively. At twenty knots we planed from wave to wave until the roar of the echoes chased us down to low throttle again, but now we knew the speed of our craft.

The area Martínez had chosen for us to explore contained

in three square miles five keys and four coral lagoons. Methodically, shallow by shallow, our twin outboards raised until we drew no more than six inches, we ventured into every pool and bottom we could find in the dark, running aground in sand and mud, backing off, only to run aground again. Our rubber bow, bent by the trap of submerged roots, sprang back when we were free, our bottom scraped on shoals, we could have been blind men feeling our way through a cave. It was curious. The deeper we explored into each shallows, the further away seemed Castro's coast guard. I began to feel as if we were infiltrating our way into an organism. Swarms of insects welcomed us in each lagoon, and we traversed the coral reefs ripple by ripple, my eyes beginning to see a spectrum of differentiations in the dark until I hated to flash the pencil light on the chart, for it deprived me for a little while of such keen sight. I realized that I was feeling something close to affection for Butler. He had forced me into our venture, yet it was worth it. How much it was worth! Entering this wilderness of swamp, wild growth, and water was equal to exploring every cavern of myself where demeaning fear was stored. On we went.

There were few openings in the mangrove keys, and many entrances dwindled into trackless swamps, but we kept the anticipation that in one of these shallow flows we would find our people. So we thought, and at the depth of each small exploration, one of us would cry like a mournful bird, "*Parangón.*"

In the third hour, in the lightening air before the last dark hour preceding dawn, we heard a man croak back, "*Incompetente.*" So, we found him. A weak voice. He lay with one foot caked in blood on the rubber floor of his ruptured dinghy. He had ripped the boat open on a coral reef, had reached this stream, and tugging the boat behind, had lacerated his foot.

Where were the others?

Dead, he said. Captured. There had been an ambush. They had all been ambushed, and only he and his friend had escaped to the boat.

Where was his friend?

Dead. A patrol boat had chased them. His friend had taken a machine-gun bullet that blew him out of the boat. Right in the middle of the pursuit.

"Bullshit," whispered Butler to me. "He threw the dead man overboard so the dinghy would go faster."

"None of the story works," I said.

It didn't. On the pretense of looking at the blood oozing through his boot, I used the pencil light to study his face. He had a scrawny beard, a straggling mustache, a thin and sallow face—he looked like a man you would not trust: one more failed version of the son of God.

Did it matter now what he had done or failed to do? Unless he had dashed off in the boat while the others were ambushed on land, his real story, whatever cowardice it might protect, was probably true to this degree: The others were gone. He certainly had the look of a man who had lost the men around him.

There was one more question: Was the patrol boat that had chased him into this narrow inlet still circling the key?

We found the answer. We had just emerged from this swamp when a cabin cruiser with a searchlight in its bow came around a low promontory and bore down on us.

How loud was the machine gun! How dazzling its light! Tracers struck the water to the right of us, then to the left, for we were careening side to side. Were we two hundred yards from the patrol boat or was it closer?

I remember that I had no fear of dying. Adrenaline kept prayer at bay. I was enormously excited. I was full of awe. Death was a great temple and we stood at the gate—the light from the muzzle of the machine gun seemed as livid as a high-voltage spark jumping a gap. The sky seemed to jump, or was it our boat? The stars leapt like fireworks. I remember letting loose a prodigious whoop. Butler screamed at our pursuers, "*Fuck your eye-e-e-e-e-e-s.*" He would stand up from time to time to draw a higher angle of fire, then dip into a quick turn. Each time he stood up, the machine gun would fire at his head, and its tracers went into the air. Since those tracers were no longer kicking up water to the left or right of us, the machine gunner lost his aim and Butler would veer off at a wild angle to escape him for a few seconds. Once, we even lost the searchlight as well, and streaked in the dark around the bend of a key and on over a coral reef we had negotiated already and knew we could draft. Before that shallow, the patrol boat had to bear off. In a fury, it sounded its

Klaxon. The siren screamed through the dark as loudly as if the invasion of Cuba had commenced after all. Butler was sobbing from laughing so hard. "All cops are the same," he said. "All the world over."

We picked up another channel on the other side of the reef, put our dinghy up to full throttle and plotted a course for rendezvous. A mile to the east, I could see our pursuer searching every lagoon and shore with its light. I punched Butler on the arm. It was inescapable. No one was worse than Butler.

"You son of a bitch, you are fucking pure," I said, which was as much obscenity as I had ever put into a sentence. It all went into the broil. Given the noise of our outboards, he could hardly hear me.

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October 30, 1962

Dear Kittredge,

Well, we have all gone through such exceptional experiences these last ten days. I am still piecing together the various crises with the Russians, and, of course, I wait to hear what you will add to these matters. I will say that I am impressed once again by your psychic powers. In your last letter to me—it does seem a year ago—you said, "Do not do anything insane with people like Dix Butler."

I did, and have lived not to regret it, and would write to you about our eight-reeler in the swamps but am worn out. Suffice it that after two trips in a rubber dinghy through Cuban territory, we managed to get back to our mother ship, *La Princesa*.

~~I wish to write to you now about its skipper, a remarkable man named Eugenio Martínez.~~

(end)