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Memories of Joy

by

Norris John Boehm

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English

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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

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Ames, Iowa
1979
This thesis has been accepted by the Department of English in lieu of the research thesis prescribed by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.
Part I: Somebody To Love

"When the truth is found
To be lies,
And all the joy
Within you dies,
Don't you want somebody to love?
Don't you need somebody to love?...."

"Somebody to Love" by the Jefferson Airplane

Summer, 1968 Buckston, Iowa

There I stood along Highway 1 with my arm cocked and my thumb out. I had a duffle bag over my left shoulder. I was eighteen. I had graduated from high school in the spring of 1968 and hung around home most of the summer, not being able to decide whether I wanted to go to college or work. Finally August had come, and a lack of money for school, because I hadn't worked all summer, made the decision for me. I would have to find a job. Every meal I sat down to at home I was reminded of this fact by my father, "Did you look for a job today?"

"No," I'd say as I nibbled on a chicken wing.

"Do you know where that food comes from?"

"Yes," I'd reply, swallowing hard.

"It's bought with money and money is earned through work."

That sounded simple enough to me. Gradually I began to show up at fewer meals. I began to lose weight. I thought about joining the Army; then I'd take a second look as I watched television. I saw soldiers on stretchers or soldiers dodging real bullets. I didn't think I wanted that. Still, if I didn't go to school that would be where I'd end up. I knew that; yet it didn't seem to matter. I saw a friend of my older brother
come home in a box. Joseph Balderson, a high school buddy of mine, who had dropped out to join, came home without his sight. He was always kind of in the dark anyway, always daydreaming. I'll bet he was daydreaming when the fellow in front of him stepped on that mine. I wonder about what? Probably Ann, that was his girl. He lost her too....

As I stood along the highway I thought about all this stuff as I'd thought about it over and over the last few weeks. This trip to Iowa City to visit my older brother, Mike, had been designed to find a job. I had failed and blown my last ten bucks on beer. Mike, a couple of other guys, and I had drunk up all my money; and I'm here to tell you that at that time I couldn't have given a shit one way or the other.

It had become dark and I began to really feel miserable. I had a hangover and I was hungry and had no place to stay. I had to get home, but now it had turned dark on me. I picked up a pebble and pelted a speed limit sign. That was fun. I did it again and again. Finally I asked myself, "What the hell you doing, Jack, my boy?"

I stuck my thumb out again. I thought about women. I wished some woman would pick me up. She'd be all alone. She'd say, "You need a lift?"

I would say to myself, "No, you dumb broad, I'm just standing out here for my health."

"Where're you headed?"

"Buckston."

"Where?" She'd ask with a smile.

"Buckston," I'd reply, as we moved back onto the highway.

We would talk for awhile, then she'd pull off the
highway and ask me to drive. I'd say, "Sure," because the car would be a Mustang with four on the floor and a big eight up front. So we'd change places with her crawling over me and she'd have this real short skirt on that'd ride clear up on her, and....

After I'd have taken over the wheel, she'd get some beer from the back seat, showing me quite a bit as she did this too. We'd drink and drink and she'd always be fooling with the radio and she'd say, "How about I take you right on home?"

"Sure," I'd reply, "Sure; that's great."

I'd feel the car whipping through the night and she'd reach across and turn down the dashlights and start nibbling on my ear....

I heard a car honk. Somebody had stopped for me. I couldn't believe it at first, but then, here he was, backing up. I opened the door, "Where're you going?" he asked.

"Buckston."

"Hop in," he said, "I can take you as far as Ralston."

I hesitated for a second. Ralston was a small town off the main highway. I thought that if I get stuck off the main road, I might never get back for hours. Oh, what the hell, I concluded, it's better than nothing.

The man was young and smiled like an idiot the first few miles. I couldn't believe it. He must have noticed that I was becoming uneasy. "Have a cigar?" he offered.

"I don't smoke."

"Go ahead...It's bad luck if you don't accept it."
I couldn't figure out what he was driving at. First he continually smiled and now he was forcing cigars on me.

"My wife just had a baby, fellow," he said, as if he couldn't keep it in another second. "What's your name?"

"Jack."

"Yes sir, Jack, my first...." He rattled on and on about his business and how he was going to work harder and how he hoped he wouldn't get drafted and how beautiful his wife looked after birth, and, about forty-five minutes later, we pulled into Ralston.

There were only a couple of cars on Main Street and one of them was a police car. I walked down to the Laundromat. I had a fifty-cent piece on me and wanted to try my luck at the coin changer. About two years back, I had been to a family reunion with a buddy of mine named Tom Yeardon. It was his family reunion, not mine. My family never gets together. Anyway, Tom and I had lunch and wanted to go over to the Laundromat for some pop. I put fifty cents in the coin changer and out came money for about five minutes; all quarters and nickels and dimes. I wanted to keep the whole bundle since it was my fifty-cent piece, but, like a fool, I split with Tom.

So, here I was again with fifty cents and in Ralston. I tried the machine and out came a quarter, two dimes, and no fucking nickel. I hit the machine three or four times with no results, except that the disturbance raised two policemen. They asked me where I was headed and why I didn't start in that direction. I told them about the machine and wanting a little pop and one shoved me against the wall and told me to get on out of town or else I could plan to stay awhile.
I was out on the street again and didn't feel much like walking to the main highway, which was three miles away. I rubbed my ribs and kept moving though.

I had just reached the edge of town when I spotted a car coming up Main Street. I stuck out my thumb but they didn't stop. It was a high school guy and his date in a '50 Chevy in cherry condition. About three blocks away, the taillights brightened and the car began to back toward me.

As I ran up to the car on the girl's side, out popped her head, "Aren't you Jack Glover from Buckston?"

I nodded yes.

"See," she said to the guy in the car, "I told you so."

There was a pause, then the guy asked, "Where're you headed?"

"Buckston."

"That's kind of out of our way," he said.

"We can take him," said the girl, turning to the guy, "right Mark?"

"If you could just give me a ride to the highway," I said, "that would be enough for me."

"No," said the girl, "No, Mark can take you to Buckston. Can't you, Mark?"

"I suppose," he said, biting the end of "suppose" off.

It was a four door and she let me in the back. As we headed for Buckston, I asked, because the silence had become embarrassing, "How'd you know who I am?"

"From basketball," the girl answered, "Our coach said, 'if you girls want to learn how to shoot a jump shot, go watch that forward Jack Glover for Buckston.'"

The talk went from basketball to who they were.
The guy was from a small country high school north of Buckston and the girl was from another school in our conference. I couldn't get over how she complimented me time after time as we drove to Buckston. She wasn't bad-looking either. She had long black hair and light skin. She had a pretty face and never did stop talking. Her boyfriend didn't say hardly anything; and, when we arrived in Buckston, he dropped me off uptown. The girl gave me this big smile and said that she would see me like she really meant it. I figured she'd catch hell from her boyfriend, so I forgot about her almost a block from where they had let me out. It would be nice, I concluded, but she was still in high school and I couldn't understand why a girl would like me. I was tall, real thin, wore glasses, hardly ever wore anything but jeans, a lumberjack shirt, this pendleton coat with leather elbows, and wing tip shoes. I always wore wing tip shoes; I suppose because they are comfortable. Still, I reckon a woman might be interested in my face. I do have blue eyes, light blue, and blond hair about the color of wheat, with some wave to it. I take after my mother in looks a lot, my father in temperament.

Fall, 1968    Buckston, Iowa

I got a job with this gas pipeline company at one of their booster stations. All the kids my age had gone to college who were going, and my father knew the plant manager. I guess he got the job; nevertheless, it was a miserable job. The first three weeks I mowed grass everyday. The next two weeks I cleaned the dead stuff and weeds out of the rose bushes that lined the
driveway to the station. The driveway was a mile long and the plants were about six foot apart.

I used to ask myself, as I spent the last three weeks washing windows, what there was to this job. All I could see was the money; just put in your time and collect the money.

I showed up on Monday of the ninth week and the foreman took me off windows. I still had about two thousand panes left and that was no exaggeration. He told me to follow him, which, of course, I did. We went out to Engine Building #1, which was one large building about the size of a large hay barn with another couple of thousand windows, and I thought, "Oh no, not more windows." It was like he had heard me, because he said, "I suppose we'll have to get those windows too," he paused, "but first, we've got to mop up oil."

Inside this building, the temperature must have been around one hundred degrees, which didn't feel bad because my hands were blue from washing windows outside in October. We went down to the basement and he pointed to a heap of grease rags. "You see those rags?" I nodded. "Take about ten of them and crawl under that engine and wipe up the oil spots."

I haven't told you about the engine yet. The engine was as big as the building. It was built like a car engine except that it was about a thousand times bigger. The pistons were as large as fifty gallon oil barrels and it had about sixteen of them, and it made a noise so loud that I could yell at myself and not hear me. The engine ran all the time unless it was stopped for maintenance or repairs, so it was naturally always hot, and there I was underneath it, wiping up oil.
Actually I was proud of myself. I was proud of the fact that I hadn't said a word or complained about anything in all the time that I had worked there, but, when some hot oil dripped off the engine and hit me square in the back as I crawled through a hole just wide enough for my shoulders and just giving me enough air to keep from suffocating, I wondered if it wouldn't be better to die heroically in Viet Nam than to fry under an engine in my hometown.

I finished the job and crawled out. The foreman waited for me and pointed to another tunnel. I asked, "Why am I the only fellow that has to do this?"

The foreman looked away and then back at me as if I had just insulted his wife or something, then he calmed down some and said, "Because boy," he emphasized the word "boy", "because boy, your shoulders are the only ones that will fit in those tunnels."

"What about yours?" I asked, noting that his were narrower than mine.

"I've done this before and you're right, it ain't no fun...but...well, someone's got to do it."

"Then," I replied, "why don't you shut off the engine? That oil's hot when it hits your back."

"We can't do that boy," he added quietly, "no sir, boy, if we shut off this engine, the whole south side of Chicago would come to a standstill."

"Then," I added, "why can't I do this when you shut down for repairs?"

"Because boy," he said, "that oil is harder to wipe up when it's cold. It's darn near impossible to wipe up when it's cold."

"Well shit," I said, "why don't you just forget it? It's not hurting anything. No one can see it. You have
a drain in there. Why don't you just flush some detergent down there every so often?"

He didn't have an answer. He just pointed to the tunnel and said, "Either you get in that tunnel or you can go pick up your hours and get out."

I worked the rest of the day and didn't come the next morning because of the flu. I really was sick, but, I guess the foreman thought I was just faking it, because I received my walking papers on Wednesday in the mail. This pissed my father off, but, when, I told him about Monday, he didn't say much. I didn't know whose side he was on, but I really couldn't help getting sick. Hell, I had a doctor's excuse and everything, but they still wouldn't let me come back. I didn't push it though, because I now had enough cash to move on, but didn't have the slightest idea to where.

Fall, 1968    Buckston, Iowa

The local pool hall became my home away from home. I got up bright and early as if I were headed out to make my first million dollars and ended up everyday, about midmorning, in the North Side Pool Hall, where I had breakfast of a Pepsi and spanish peanuts. I played a few games of snooker, talked with a few guys, hung around in front and pitched pennies, and just plain killed time until Frank, the owner and only bulldog I ever saw smoke a cigar, said, "Hey, why don't you guys find something to do?" From there, I usually rode around with one of the guys and drank until early morning, when I came home and grabbed a few hours of shuteye.

Saturday night came and I sat on the bench in
front of the North Side Pool Hall. It was cool, but a
great big starry night. I watched the cars circle the
square. Occasionally someone pulled over to the curb
and yelled, "Hey Jack, buddy, hop in. Let's go." I
waved them on and began to feel like the starter at the
local drag races. My hand came down and the car burned
away from the curb.

I heard Frank lock the door behind me and take a
seat on the bench. A car's headlights spotlighted us,
then moved on down the wall. Frank muttered something
like, "Bright lights on in town, dumb shit." Frank's
skin looked as if he took it off every night and stored
it under a rock. He said, "What's a young buck like you
sitting here for?" He paused, "It's Saturday night."

I folded my arms and watched a carload of girls
go by. "Ain't you got some flower to pollinate tonight,
Jack?"

I got up to leave. "Where the hell you going? Sit
down." He grabbed my belt loop in back. I came back
onto the bench. "Why don't you get out of this one horse
town?"

I could feel another lecture coming, "Man," he
began, "you've got some good stuff in you. Go get you
some of that young stuff. Oh sure, I know you don't
want to start something, I mean, with the draft waiting
to load you on the bus at a moment's notice, but ain't
nothing stopping you from picking up some good times
before you blend into Army green." I had to walk down
the street and around the corner before Frank's raspy,
coughing voice finally died.

As I neared home, I saw that the yard light was on.
I thought that the folks must have some guests over; I
turned to go back uptown, when I saw a dark blue Mustang
in the driveway with a fairly tall, dark-haired woman walking toward it. As I stood there, I saw my mother point at me and say, "There he is now. Home early for a change." I felt a tightening above my eyes. The woman walked toward me. I still didn't recognize her. She wore tight blue jeans and a red sweater, which was also tight and buttoned to the Adam's apple. Her face was whiter than white like the moon and her lips looked blue. She raised her hand to shake and said, "Hi Jack, remember me?"

I couldn't for the life of me. I felt embarrassed that I didn't know her. I said, in my usual tactful way, "Not really. Your face is familiar, but...."

"Carol," she said, and now she was along side of me and we were walking toward her car. "You remember," she added, "Ralston. You were hitchhiking and I was in with a kid named Mark."

That was all the prodding I needed, but I couldn't figure out what she was doing in my driveway, at my place. I didn't have to wait long or even ask, "You want to take a ride?"

As we got into her car, I took a second look at her body. There was something in the way she dressed or the jewelry she wore that made her seem different, older, more refined than the other girls I ordinarily looked at. She had not stopped talking since I saw her, she continued, "I thought you might call me, but you didn't. Why?" She didn't wait for a reply, but added, "I just decided to drive over and see if you were at home."

I still hadn't said anything, but I realized that I was grinning from ear to ear. "If you want a beer, there's one in the backseat?" I fished out two beers and we headed out of town to drink them. The Beatles
filled the car with "She was just Seventeen," and Carol asked, "You want to drive?"

We toured the country roads and polished off the six-pack. I was mildly buzzed; Carol was half drunk. We stopped near the city dump and listened to the radio and talked mostly about people we both knew. After a long silence, I reached to start the engine. Carol touched my hand. I turned and we kissed. I could smell her hair. I felt her leg resting against mine. I shivered and wrapped my arms around her.

I saw Carol every chance I could find for the next week or so, and this may sound strange, but the more I saw her, the more she threatened me. I'm not talking about a threat to do physical harm to me. No, it was like I had this highly developed idea of how women were to operate and she never fit into this idea. After all, I thought, what kind of woman would come straight out of the blue and pick you up at your own house? That was what a man was supposed to do. He was also supposed to supply the transportation and the refreshments. But not with Carol.

Still, where Carol really began to disturb me was in the area of how women were to operate sexually. In the past, if I drove down a deserted lane and shut off the motor, the girl I was with would usually ration me three regular kisses and one French, that was where you stick your tongue in the girl's mouth and touch the tip of her tongue. With Carol, I went through my three and one French in the first ten minutes. I didn't know what to do then, so I waited and waited and finally decided to try for another couple, which she also gave freely. I began to question myself like this, "I wonder what
she would do if I tried to kiss her behind the ear?"
I tried and she didn't do anything but say something
like, "That feels good."
Sure, I have to admit that this was all fun, but
that didn't make it any less nervewracking. I must
have kissed every square inch of her head. I was
running out of room to move. Then, as if she had read
my mind, the next night she wore a blouse that exposed
more territory. I had a wide open shot at almost all
the skin between her chin and her breasts. At first
I was hesitant but then I said, "Oh, what the hell."
It was during one of these sorties into new territory
that I came face to face with two mortal enemies, Carol's
breasts.
At first I didn't think anything could be so lovely,
so soft, yet that was nothing compared to what was below.
I had to retreat. I sat back and looked at the moon.
Carol sat in the seat next to me, naked to the waist.
It really hurt me in a pleasant way to look at the moon's
reflection off her breasts. And that smile. Why was
she smiling? Most women I had known took all this stuff
very seriously, yet, here was Carol smiling, relaxed,
and after all, she made no attempt to cover herself. I
said, "I have a brother who lives in Iowa City."
She nodded, then sat up closer to me, placing her
hand on the inside of my thigh. I looked even farther
out into the darkness. "I want to do something nice for
you." I said this effortlessly. "I want to take you out
to dinner or something. Maybe we could go to Iowa City
and dance?"
"When?" she asked. Her voice was deep, serene.
"How...how...how about tomorrow night?" I asked,
than added, "It's Saturday. Anyway, I want to look the
place over. My brother wants me to move in with him."

The next evening I was tense, really tense. I picked up Carol at seven. She wore a blue dress that zipped up the side. I noticed that right off. We ate at a Chinese restaurant and skipped the dancing. My brother left the key under the doormat. After several seconds of searching I found the light switch, which was right by the door frame where it was supposed to be. Actually, I didn't find it; Carol did.

We had a couple of beers and then I started to think. I didn't trust Carol. She sat there on the sofa. She didn't say much. I tried to figure out how to do what I wanted to do without her seeing me naked. Carol had to go to the bathroom. That was perfect. While she was in there, I went into the bedroom and closed all the curtains. It was pitch dark. I heard her call, "Jack, where are you?"

I mumbled some reply and she came into the bedroom. I said, "Close the door." She stubbed her toe on the bedpost and fell in pain onto the bed. Her moans in pain turned into squeals of joy as we began to roll and play like two kids on the bed. I then touched something moist and hairy. I thought it was her armpit. It wasn't; Carol had already undressed.

I became real serious, because dark rooms are only dark for a short time. The eye then adjusted and the room appeared to be under some giant spotlight. I dropped my pants and was finished about thirty seconds later. I could see where my belt buckle had scratched her leg.

I love to drive a fast, new car on Interstate 80 at night. Carol's head lay in my lap. The road stretched
darkly before us. I massaged Carol's breast gently with my free hand. Buffalo Springfield commanded the sound waves with "For What It's Worth." I smiled mildly at the rapport of the lyrics, "Something happening here/ What it is ain't exactly clear...."

Carol sat up and began to undress. I watched her remove her dress the rest of the way; then her undergarments and even her rings. She sat there in the seat next to me, Indian style, and we talked.

"Turn up the heater, will you?" She asked.

The car became very warm. Carol removed my shirt, then my shoes, first one shoe then the other. After about twenty miles, I was also bare as a newborn babe. I was having trouble driving, because my vision became more blurred the farther up my thigh Carol kissed. We finally exited and found a dirt road.

Later, Carol said, "You know what I'd like? I'd like to stop where my mom works and eat a great big tenderloin."

"Yeah," I added, "a great big one that won't even fit in the bun."

"Or your mouth," laughed Carol, poking me in the side.

On top of the hill, I saw the large neon sign, flashing off and on, "Mid-Iowa Truck Stop." I parked the car and Carol and I walked, giggling, into the restaurant. All the people seemed to look up at once and I immediately became self-conscious for acting so conspicuously in public. "You two look like you're having fun?" asked a woman, who stood behind the counter. Her badge, pinned above her left breast, said, "Hi, I'm Lou Ann. May I help you?" I thought, "You bet, I'll take two of you." That was when Carol introduced Lou
Ann as her mother.

At first I couldn't believe it. I've seen those Ivory dishwashing soap commercials on T.V., where the mother and daughter look alike right down to their hands, but I didn't think I'd ever see it in real life. Carol was a dead ringer of her mother, except in a couple of spots. One of those spots was just under the badge I previously mentioned. Suffice it to say that the badge looked like a trail marker at the base of a mountain range.

The other spot was a little higher up. Lou Ann had her hair all fluffed up like a country-western singer, and it made her head look about four times larger than it really was.

As I reached out to shake hands, I heard a male voice ask, "Who's this?"

I turned and saw a thin, short fellow with glasses and thinning hair, who wore an apron that said, "I'm the boss." I heard Carol say, "This is Jack Glover from Buckston, Ralph."

"Where's Mark tonight?" Ralph asked. I watched Lou Ann turn and yell out our order.

"Mark?" Carol replied, "You mean Mark Rogers?"

"You know damn well I mean Mark Rogers. You remember him, don't you? Your boyfriend? My nephew?" Ralph leaned across the counter.

Carol started to say something, but Lou Ann stepped up and said, "Mark's out hunting coons tonight, ain't he Carol?"

Carol just nodded; Ralph scowled and walked off. I couldn't decide where this guy got off. I knew Carol didn't have a father. He was killed in the Korean War. Lou Ann returned with our tenderloins, "Don't pay no
attention to Ralph. Bad day, you know."

When Lou Ann had to go take an order, I asked Carol, "Who is Ralph?"

"He's Mark's uncle and mom's manfriend."

"Manfriend," I repeated.

"You know," added Carol, with a straight face, still the little girl, repeating what her mother had told her, "You are my boyfriend now, but if we were over thirty and still going together like this, I'd call you my manfriend."

I laughed and asked, "Why over thirty?"

"I don't know," she concluded, smiling now, "maybe something happens to a boy at thirty."

"You mean a boy becomes a man simply by turning thirty?" I asked.

Carol smiled and massaged my shoulder, "You feel like a man to me."

"But I'm only eighteen?" I said, watching Ralph give me the eye as Carol went back to her tenderloin. Jesus, I felt conspicuous around that guy. Carol added, "I've always thought of Ralph as, well, not her manfriend, but her boyfriend."

I watched Ralph flip a couple of eggs and straighten out some sizzling bacon strips. Carol asked, "Did you hear what I said?"

I nodded. Carol continued, "I came home one night. . . ."

In a way I wanted to stop her, yet I knew she was displaying complete trust in me. If I should stop her, she might stop opening up, and that was one thing I didn't want her to do. I wanted her to open up. But here she was doing it, and, at that precise moment, I discovered that there was more to a woman than just her sexual parts. She had a mind, and that mind thought pretty much the way mine did. I felt extreme pleasure
and contentment, equal to the physical satisfaction that I had experienced earlier in the evening in all degrees plus one; that one was, Carol was now beginning to really trust me.

I watched a trucker pay Ralph and leave. I wondered what state in the union he was from. I wanted to see some of life and landscape. I heard the truck kick over outside, then explode with power. I watched the wheels begin to turn. I heard the engine wind up and down as the gears were shifted. I didn't say anything to Carol, but my mind didn't want this thing that was developing with her. I turned at this point and returned to myself. Still, I didn't say anything, because I had, also at this instant, a memory of her earlier in the evening. I was confused to say the least.

I once again listened to Carol, "...Ralph was out in the kitchen. I guess he didn't realize that I was there or maybe he was too mad and blind with jealousy to see me in the next room. I listened to him accuse Mom of having sex with some other fellow the night before. He was so crude as to say something about a pick-up truck and behind The Lucky Tavern right near the door so that anyone coming out the back could see. I knew all this wasn't true because we had spent that night together. Mom told him that, but he replied, 'You fucking whore...you'd do that to me. You'd drag my name in the dirt, drag it behind the Lucky with Curly Jones.' This is when Mom started laughing, 'Curly Jones,' she repeated, 'Curly Jones.' That's when I heard him hit her. I ran out to the kitchen, grabbed a pan, and hit him square between the shoulders. He turned, his face red with anger, and walked out the back door. I picked up Mom, which wasn't easy, because she was wound up in the
ironing board with the iron burning her arm."

Carol went on with the story. I tuned out. I couldn't understand why Lou Ann put up with it.

A couple of days later, Carol invited me over to eat a homecooked meal. Lou Ann was supposed to be there too, but when I arrived I found Carol alone. She told me that Lou Ann had to fill-in for a girl at the truck stop. "She hated to miss it," added Carol, "but she said, 'You kids'll probably have more fun without me.'"

Lou Ann was right. We ate T-bone steaks, drank some beer, then moved up to some of Lou Ann's hardstuff—seven and seven. We watched some T.V. up in Lou Ann's bed, then, at precisely ten P.M., we took a newsbreak, and after the newsbreak, Carol came from a brand new direction: "I've been thinking about Mark the last couple of days." She rolled onto her side to gauge my reaction. I scratched my right cheek. She continued, "He called me the other night when we got back from Iowa City."

"That was kind of late, wasn't it?" I asked.
"He said he'd sat in front of my house so long that one of the neighbors called the police." I smiled, then resituated my pillow.

"Don't you want to know what he said?"
"Yeah, I guess so," I replied.
"Don't you really want to know? I mean, here I am giving up a lot for you and you're not even interested." I immediately felt guilty for not caring, "I didn't know whether you wanted me to ask or not. I've always been taught to mind my own business."

"Not with the one you love," Carol quickly returned, "that is, if you love me?"
I sat up in bed and watched a dog jump from one horse to another on the tube. I listened to Carol continue, "You see, Jack, he says it's either you or him. I really don't know how you feel about me?"

"What are you afraid of losing?" I asked. It seemed like a natural question to me. Carol started crying. I had the feeling she wanted to say a whole lot more, but I heard a car pull up below Lou Ann's window. Through the split in the curtains I saw Ralph's car and Lou Ann was with him. They were heading for the house, and I was almost dressed. Carol flicked on the T.V. in her room and we acted like we had been watching a long time. I could hear their voices from the kitchen. I asked Carol, "Why are they talking so loud?"

"They're probably having another fight."

The voices trailed through the living room, up the stairs, and there I was in the middle of a real live squabble between Lou Ann and Ralph. I inched out of the chair, waiting for them to notice me. They had, or at least Ralph had, "What are you doing up here? This is Carol's bedroom."

I didn't know what he wanted me to say. I just stood there, waiting for him to change the subject. He continued, moving closer to me, (I could see and smell that he was pretty drunk), "Answer me!"

I just continued to look at him. Maybe my look said, "Leave me alone, Ralph; I'm not going to take this shit," but I can't help that; I can't pluck out my eyes, can I?

Ralph turned to face Carol and moved toward her, "I suppose you're going to be just like your mother, hey Carol?"

"Ralph," said Lou Ann from the doorway, "I think
you'd better leave."

"You shut your mouth, bitch," barked Ralph with so much expression he looked like he was going to throw up.

I stepped forward. I hesitated to say it, because I really didn't want to fight. I sized-up Ralph. I figured that I was probably in much better shape than he was. I had been a defensive halfback on the football team, so I had the mental edge as well. Even though I felt all this, I still had never hit an elder of mine. In reality, though, there stood an elder, and he was forcing me to step forward. I suppose it had to happen sometime. "You know, Ralph," I looked at Carol, then turned back to Ralph, "you know, Ralph, this is Lou Ann's house and if she doesn't want you here, then I think you'd better leave."

Ralph was too angry to speak immediately. He stammered, "You think...I'd better...what?"

"I mean," I continued with more poise now, bracing myself for the physical action that was inevitable. It was strange, now that I knew it was to come, I became too absorbed in the activity to think. I felt clean and hard and right. At that instant I recalled when I was back in the defensive secondary in the fourth quarter of the final game for the conference championship. We were ahead but the other team had the ball. I saw a halfback flare out of the backfield. He came around my end; I watched the ball float from the quarterback - a flare pass. The halfback ran to the position of the ball. I came forward and hit him with my full force. The referee ruled that the halfback had caught the ball and that our team had a legitimate claim to the fumble. I extended my hand to help the halfback up, but he was out cold. I heard myself repeat to Ralph, "I mean, you
heard me."

Ralph turned to Lou Ann, "Is that right, Lou Ann? Get another job that pays like I pay you. Think about how much schooling you've had."

"Money can't buy everything," I said, sensing that I had gone too far. I just wanted to get it over; it was getting kind of ugly. "And maybe you'd like to apologize to Carol for what you said about her being loose or something."

"I never apologize when cocksuckers ask me to," Ralph said, his fists clenched, "Never!" I almost laughed because he was already gasping for air and the fight hadn't even started. He pushed up against me.

"Just back up and apologize, and I'll forget what you said about me," I offered, taking a step back to brace myself. He reached out to push me, but then I felt a blow hit my upper arm; he'd tried to get in a short jab, but was too slow. I moved forward clinically; my first left jab split his upper lip just below the nose. The right hook caught him squarely in the right ear, and was followed by a left upper cut that brought blood from both ears. The last direct face shot put him out cold. I watched him slide down the wall.

I pulled my foot back, more as a reaction than with intention, but, on the back swing, I barked Lou Ann's shin. I turned to help her, but she just screamed, "Please stop, don't hurt him; please stop, don't hurt him...."

I came toward her, "Don't get near me. Don't you get near me."

"But...Lou Ann," I tried to make an excuse for what I had done, but couldn't think of anything to be sorry for.
"Don't you ever set foot in this house again," Lou Ann said, pointing toward the doorway.
Carol was in action now, "Wait for me, Jack, wait."
Ralph moaned. Lou Ann rushed past me, and returned with a wet towel. She motioned for me to leave. This time she said, "Get out of here. Let things cool down."
This seemed like a reasonable idea. As I descended the stairs, I saw Carol, suitcase in hand, heading to pack. She saw me, "Wait in the kitchen."
I walked straight through the kitchen and out the back door. Standing on the porch, my head cleared. It was ridiculous. What was I waiting for? Where would Carol and I go? I was driving the folks' car. I laughed out loud at myself and walked away thinking, "If I took Carol with me now, Jesus, I can see myself in five years. I'd probably be the body and fender man at the local Chevy dealer. I'd come home every night at the same time, by the same route, and there would be Carol with our daughter, and dinner wouldn't be ready, and I'd bitch about that because that's all I'd have been doing since I lifted my head from the pillow that morning."
It was a clear, crisp night. I started the car, warmed up the engine, and drove off.

Fall, 1968 Kirksville, Missouri

Then came the bad news.
I woke up the next morning and felt a stiffness in the arm that Ralph had clobbered. I lay there and listened to my mother call me to breakfast for the last time again. I got out of bed, washed my face, and tried to decide what day it was.
Downstairs my mother handed me the mail that I had
forgotten to ask for the last couple of days. There was a personal note from the Selective Service secretary. She informed me, being the mother of one of my best friends, that I had better go to school or it was off to the Army for me. She said that January would be too late; that I had better find a school that was on the quarter system - Kirksville, Missouri - Northeast Missouri State College.

It was a grey, late November day when I first took a bus to Kirksville. The bus ticket was a present from my father. I always thought that there'd be some big dramatic scene when I left home for the first time. I just yelled out the back door to my father, who was burning the dead plants and leaves on the garden. He looked up, then walked over, "See you, Jack." He gave me this big smile and the next time I felt that way was on the bus in northeastern Missouri just across the border. I saw a sparrow in a bush along the road. The bush was bent sharply in the strong wind and the sparrow was all puffed-up.

The rest of the day didn't come off much better. As I rode into Kirksville, I hated the place. It was Missouri at its worst. The streets were lined with double-parked cars. The sewers or lack of them left water standing in large puddles. I thought it might have been partly the bad taste in my mouth, but Kirksville looked like I had heard it described so many times before - the armpit of the nation.

I went through the baggage check-out in fine style, then stood in front of the bus station, bags in hand, and wondered where the school was located. I just started walking, then I asked someone, then walked some more. If I'd have known where I was going, what eventually
took seven hours to complete would have only taken about thirty minutes. I went to sleep that first night whistling, "Like a Rolling Stone," and occasionally singing a few bars, "Oh, how does it feel/To be on your own/With no direction home/Just like a complete unknown/Just like a rolling stone." And I knew why I felt that way. I didn't want to be here in Kirksville, Missouri, spending my hard-earned money at a school I couldn't stand. Still, I didn't want to get another job either, so I just lay there, and occasionally I'd roll over, then back. Outside I heard few voices.

Fall, 1968 Iowa City, Iowa

I stayed in Kirksville for four days or until that first Friday afternoon. It was known as a suitcase college and I didn't want to change its image, so I took a bus to Iowa City. My brother Mike met me at the bus station. It was about midnight when we got back to his new basement apartment, which he shared with a guy named Larry Gasby, who was from Chicago. That was the first thing he told me as if it were something to be proud of, being from Chicago.

We sat around and had some chili and Mike asked me about Carol. I was a little embarrassed to talk about it in front of Larry. Larry must have sensed that because he left the room. I started to tell Mike about the fight, when Larry reappeared smoking a cigarette. He offered it to Mike and asked, "Does your brother smoke the gold?"

"The gold," I repeated.

"The high-test Acapulco gold," he sang. I watched him cross the room and switch on the radio. It was one
of those big wooden, old-fashioned jobs.

Mike asked me if I wanted to smoke some reefer. I felt a little let down by Mike. He had always sort of been someone I looked up to and here he was smoking a weed that could get us all sent to prison. Mike was about to ask me again when there was a knock at the door. I just about lost my water.

It was just a few more people. I sort of got lost in the crowd. I just kept moving down the couch until I was right next to the radio. I had been drinking beer for a couple of hours when I tried my first puff of marijuana. It seemed there was a whole special way of smoking the stuff. What you had to do was take in air along with the smoke and hold it for as long as possible. I did this about three times when I swear to God, I could see the musical notes coming out of the radio. That was when I decided to get near the restroom, but, on the way, I found that I couldn't reach it, because the kitchen light was too bright and it burnt my skin. I stood in the hallway for awhile, then grabbed a beer from the refrigerator.

The curtain blew back as I returned to the living room and I could see into Larry's room. I wasn't sure but I thought I saw a naked woman sitting on Larry. When I returned to the living room, I found Mike asleep on the couch with empties scattered around him. I must have been in that hallway quite awhile.

Then it hit me. I had this tremendous urge to call Carol. I didn't even think about the time until I heard a voice ask, "Hello...Hello...." Luckily, it was Carol. "Carol..." I repeated, "Carol, this is Jack."

"Jack, do you know what time it is?"

I really couldn't think of a reply for that. She continued, "What do you want, as if I cared?"
I couldn't think of a reply for that either. "How are you?" I finally asked.

"None of your business...just leave me alone."

"What's wrong?" I asked.

I heard the receiver click loudly, then the dull hum of the dial tone. I reached across the table and grabbed the remains of a marijuana cigarette. I smoked it down to where it burnt my fingers. I woke up the next morning still seeing those notes drifting out of the radio, and I was humming a song I later identified as "Lady Madonna," by the Beatles.

Winter, 1968 Kirksville, Missouri

I spent the months of December, January, and February in almost complete isolation. I had decided that I had made the wrong decision about going to school again, but I didn't want to waste my hard-earned money so I studied all the time for the first time in my life. I was surprised at the results. I received the highest marks possible. Everyone thought I was a genius. I couldn't believe it. In high school I was just a jock, an athletic type, and hardly ever cracked a book. Now, here at college, I read some and spoke up some in class and people listened to me. When I came home over Christmas, my parents even listened to me. I guess I liked the feeling, but there was a problem. I didn't have any money for the next quarter.

Over the break at the end of February, I decided to buy a pound of marijuana and sell it. This would get me enough cash to make a down payment on my tuition and room and board. After I had bought the pound and had about half of it sold, my father said he would loan me.
the money, with interest of course. I took him up on the deal, figuring that I could get another pound of mary jane and pay him back by the end of March, which I did, saying I received a grant.

Well, one pound led to another pound and I started to collect a little capital and discovered that the real money was in pills - L.S.D. and speed - and there was also the convenience of the lack of bulk, weighing, bagging, and all that crap, plus pills had a higher mark-up so I could make an even greater profit.

It was strange; I hadn't really understood the war in Viet Nam until I started pushing all this stuff. Most of the people who supplied me were staunchly against the war. As we sat around testing the weed before the deal or tasting some speed to gauge the purity, we had to talk about something I guess, so we talked about the fuckers in the government, the military-industrial complex, and pretty soon we all started to sound silly. I mean if we really didn't like it, why didn't we do something about it? At least this is the way it looked to me. Of course, since then, I've learned that there is always a great distance between the realization of a problem and the appropriate action.

I started to get kind of heavy into speed. I liked it. I could study long hours without rest. I could get high easier if I were a little tired and I became thinner and thinner, which I didn't like. Finally, one weekend, I scored some bennies, that's benzedrine, and decided to shoot them. There was only one problem though. I didn't have any works, or, the needle and spoon, and the know-how to shoot them.

I walked around Kirksville looking for a guy named
Hog. Finally, this guy at the Student Union told me where he lived. Hog's house was a small, green shack with shingles for siding. It had three rooms upstairs, counting the toilet; and the kitchen was in the basement. The house faced the alley and was located behind a holy rollers' church and along the railroad tracks.

Inside, the walls were completely covered with pictures from magazines and headlines from newspapers. Hog stood just inside the door. He was of average height, long brown hair, a square-jawed worker's face, with dark eyes. He was solidly built and had come from New York City, where he had driven a taxi for awhile. He was older than I was, much older, perhaps close to thirty. He was a speed freak who knew how to do speed. I mean, he didn't have the look of a freak because he took good care of himself between runs.

"Do you dig the pad, dad?" he asked, opening the screen door.

I shook my head and walked in. "Man," he said, "when I'm doing the stuff, I like to have something to do. Do you dig the walls - many hours of labor, many spoons of crystal."

"It wasn't all crystal," I heard a voice say, "you'd shoot the junk yard, Hog, if you could get it in your vein and if it'd get you off."

The voice walked from behind the curtain. I was surprised to see a good friend of my older brother named Craig Gott. I believe he was just as surprised to see me. It was love at first sight. I mean, I had always sort of idolized Craig. He was tall and thin like me - well, not as thin as I was, with snow-blond hair - straight, red lips and blue blue eyes. He had always had women after him. He had been in drama in high school; he'd chosen
that over sports, and after graduation from high school, he had moved to Chicago. He wanted to act but ended up working for United Airlines as a baggage handler. He had the talent and the looks, but when his number came up for the draft, he refused to go. His case was pending at the time. The authorities were investigating him as a suspected subversive.

"Hog tells me that you have some bennies, Jack?" Craig asked.

"Do you have enough to go three ways, Jack?" asked Hog, "I'd like to do a little run with Craig."

I put the plastic bag on the table and picked out a record, Credence Clearwater. I liked that song, "Suzy Q."

"What'd I tell you, man?" Hog said to Craig, "This Jack's a king, a peach, a real brother."

I looked at Craig. Craig was who I wanted to be. I guess you could say I admired him. I respected him and what he had done when the service called him. I also liked the life he led. His seemed exciting, colorful, far away places; mine was dull, a small college, books, no women.

"I don't have a fit," I said. "Do you have one, Craig?"

"Have you ever hit up before, Jack?" he asked.

"No...I figured I'd watch and then try it." It all sounded sort of mysterious and a little frightening. I had heard about the rush immediately after the needle was in and I had heard some preliminaries on how to go about it, but no, it all made me feel a little uneasy. I had also heard of overdoses and hepatitis.

Craig hit me up. He took three bennies from the bag. Hog said, "Hey man, don't you think we should
start out with just one or two - you know, to see how strong they are?"

Craig put one back and crushed the other two into a fine powder, which he then poured into a tablespoon. The fit sat next to a glass of water. It was a medicine dropper with a needle attached to the end. He drew some water out of the glass, and, drop by drop, he added it to the spoon of bennies. Instantly, the white powder turned into clear water, "Man, this stuff is high-test," squealed Hog.

"We'd better cotton it anyway," said Craig.

Craig took a little piece of cotton and rolled it between his fingers and dropped it in the liquid. The cotton filtered the liquid. Craig stuck the needle in the cotton and filled the dropper, trying to keep as much air out as possible.

"You see those bubbles," said Craig, "if one of those got into your vein, it would fry your brain or make your heart skip a beat."

"Why don't you go first, Hog?" I said.

"No, man, no, you brought it; you're first in line."

"How about you, Craig?"

"Man, if I get screwed up too bad, I won't be able to hit you up," said Craig.

I stepped up to the desk and sat in the chair. Hog put a necktie around my upper left arm and pulled it tight. The veins began to bulge on the inside of my left elbow.

"Squeeze your fist a few times," said Craig, "then hold it."

I did and watched the veins become even larger and bluer. Craig stabbed the largest of the two most visible veins and I saw some blood drift back into the dropper,
"It's fit, Hog, back off," said Craig. Hog released the tie and I felt the blood surge into my lower arm, as the fit was slowly, very slowly, drained of the liquid. Craig told me to relax my hand. He jerked the fit free just as the speed did what it was supposed to do.

My engine had been idling before the hit. Now, someone had tromped on the accelerator and stayed on it. I was on a roller coaster with the wind rushing through my hair, and the coaster was forever dropping. All the objects on the table had halos. Everything seemed bright, my future was rosy, my life was rosy. I had entered a new world. I sat back and watched Craig, then Hog, go through the same procedure.

We listened to Super Session with Mike Bloomfield, Al Kooper, and Stephen Stills. That guitar on "Her Holy Modal Majesty." That silence and precision, the quiet patience of a master. Then Kooper, Kooper took me up and down, up and down, as his fingers flowed across the organ keys, and it was a magic carpet or a big, black Cadillac, winging down an Interstate highway with soft music and good Scotch.

I had done the first hit at eight P.M. Friday night. At midnight I did my second hit. I could feel myself becoming tired, yet, after the hit, the fatigue gave the rush an extra dimension. My body became a tired old man trying to keep up with the young man that was my mind. It was like a scene from some movie. A warring tribe of Indians were chasing two settlers through a densely wooded forest. One settler was old and had injured his ankle coming into the last clearing. The young man could hear that the Indians were getting close. The old man sensed this too, he said, "Go ahead without me."
Go on, I'll be O.K." The young man knew that he would be captured and tortured, yet the time had come to make a decision. The mind cried for more speed; the body must be left behind.

I did my third hit at six the next morning. For four hours I lay flat on my back and looked at the ceiling. When I started to come down again, I managed to crawl into a chair. I heard Craig and Hog talking.

"Man, they took out these clubs. They were hardened wood, I'll bet," said Craig. "and we all locked arms and chanted, 'Hell no, we won't go; Hell no, we won't go.'"

"And then what happened?" asked Hog.

"And then this line of cops started beating us with those sticks, and we tried to hold our lines but they were too much," said Craig. "I saw this woman's head in front of me pop like a dropped pumpkin, and when she was down, this cop stepped right on her crotch."


"If you think that's bad," said Craig, "I ran to the park to get away and these national guards, two of them, had this real nice looking chick behind the monument and one was fucking her while the other held her down. When they saw me, one drew his revolver and I hit the deck. I must have crawled a hundred yards when three cops caught me, and the next thing I knew I was in an ambulance with blood all over my shirt."

Craig showed the scar near his hair part to Hog.

"Remember the Alamo, Remember the Maine; we'll get those bastards, we'll get them. Remember Chicago," said Hog, "right Craig, right?"

Hog put another disk on. Craig prepared another hit.

"Hey man, how many hits left there?" asked Hog
"We can make it through Sunday," said Craig, "but oh Monday."

"Yeah man, oh Monday without my baby by my side," sang Hog. "Hey Craig, listen up, a profound question."

"Shoot."

"Which would you rather do, fuck or hit on speed?"

"No contest, no contest," repeated Craig, "Speed's my doll. No hassels, no hangups, the big let down sure; but there's always tomorrow. Give me a hit, you can have your chicks."

"Man, I like both myself," said Hog.

"To tell you the truth, Hog," said Craig, "I can't even get it up after a day or two run. But you're right, you're right...when I'm coming down, coming down hard, there's nothing like the arms and legs of a good woman to nest in."

I still hadn't moved a muscle and it was going on three P.M. Hog had this tomcat and in my animated condition, he appeared to move in slow motion. I watched him cross my legs, the muscles in his shoulders, the grace, poise; he turned and faced me full. His eyes were piercing. I couldn't hold his stare. I wondered through streams of steaming water after I closed my eyes. I had seen light at the window shade near my chair. When I opened my eyes again, there was darkness and the room was full of people. Everyone was hitting off the bennies; there were wine bottles all over and grass on the table. A large black face touched mine and I could smell fried chicken or hamburgers and French fries. "Hey Jack," she whispered, "thanks for the motion." She sat on the arm of the chair with her arm around my neck. When someone would come near me, she said, "He's mine, all mine." I looked at the name stitched on her uniform, Sharon. I tried to
say something, but my mouth was too dry. As if she had read my mind, she poured me a glass of wine. She started to talk to me, "Where you from? I've lived here all my life. My name's Sharon. Maybe you've seen me at the Kentucky Fried Chicken place on...." She couldn't remember the street address.

The party broke up. Sharon put three bennies in my mouth and directed me to the couch. I lay flat on my back. Sharon lit a candle and poured another glass of wine. The speed began to take hold, and I could feel my pants being removed. I was soon naked and I felt Sharon's warm, smooth body next to mine. I could hear voices from the kitchen below. Sharon rubbed my back and I must have falled asleep, because the next morning I found myself in the kitchen on the floor.

I had to get back to school, to my room before nightfall. Hog shoved two downers into me and Craig walked me home. In my room I listened to the radio and smoked some grass. I had to sleep. I had to come down to sleep. I hated my hands. I hated my feet. I looked at my face in the mirror; it had become bones. My eyes were sunken deep, skeletal.

My room began to annoy me, yet I was afraid to leave. I drank some tea, then some soup. The food made me drowsy. I fell asleep at the desk, then, in the middle of the night, I dreamed of a hit. My heart beat furiously. I woke up and walked around the room. The veins in my neck pulsed. I went to bed. I couldn't sleep; I felt sprung.

Spring, 1969 Kirksville, Missouri

After the run with Hog and Craig, I became even
more withdrawn. I hardly saw anyone; I went to class, did my studies and went to bed early. I still did some speed every now and then, but mostly before tests and when I had to do a long paper. After a few weeks I began to like my new lifestyle. Then Friday afternoon came.

I don't know, but there's something about Friday afternoon and me, especially in spring. Spring was everywhere - in the trees, in the grass, in the light, in the air. I walked home from my last class. I had removed my coat. I felt the breeze against my bare arms. I took a few deep breaths. I was actually aware of fragrances in the air again. The winter freezes fragrances; now they were alive again.

I walked into my room. It was stale and the blinds were pulled. I opened the blinds and lifted the windows. I tried to study. The sun became red in the west. I couldn't read. I began to feel frustrated and tried harder. I took some speed. I still couldn't shake this absorption in something unknown to me. I decided to get drunk.

It was now dark. I bought a pint of Irish whiskey. I walked the streets and nipped at the bottle. I wanted to be with people.

The Pizza House was half-full. I noticed a guy from psychology class in the corner booth. I walked up and said, "Hello, Goldstein, may I sit down?"

Goldstein looked up. There were two other people at the table. Next to Goldstein was a redheaded woman with green eyes. Across from her was a fellow named Jerry Morris. "If it isn't the genius," said Goldstein, "Genius Glover, this is Ruth McVay and Jerry Morris. Take a load off your feet."

I sat down next to Morris. I thought that the woman,
Ruth, looked at me strangely, almost as if I were a bright light or something. "What's up tonight, Genius?" asked Goldstein.

I said to myself that I didn't care. I was going to tell them exactly how I felt. This feeling might have come from the whiskey more than from my own intestinal fortitude. "You know, Goldstein," I began, "I'm glad you asked that." I felt as if I were being a little too formal, so I changed my tone. "It's this way. As I walked over here tonight, I felt, really felt, that spring had arrived. I felt fertile, rich, deep dark mud thawing and stirring within me."

"Didn't I tell you," said Goldstein, turning to Ruth, "Didn't I tell you. This fellow is bizarre."

I decided not to tell them. Ruth spoke next, "Go ahead, please," she persuaded, "Go ahead."

I was a little turned off by her manner; it seemed affected, but I continued anyway, "I couldn't read or think or get high or anything. I hit the streets and bought this bottle." I showed them the bottle.

"First class stuff," said Morris.

Goldstein started a conversation about our psychology instructor, "He's gay, I tell you...really listen to me..." He was talking to Morris really. I looked across the table at Ruth. I knew that she was what I wanted. My eyes must have shown this, because when I looked up at her face, she held my eyes for a brief moment, then became very uneasy. She excused herself. I watched her cross the room.

All of a sudden, the room began to suffocate me. I started to panic, yet remained outwardly calm. I had to leave. I had to leave before Ruth returned. I felt that she had had a good time until I arrived. Now she
was uneasy. I tried to decide which conflict this was – Approach/Approach, Avoidance/Avoidance. At any rate, I turned to Morris and said, "Nice meeting you, Morris; see you, Goldstein."

"Man, it's raining outside," said Goldstein.

"It's just a sprinkle," I said over my shoulder as I walked away. I waved at Ruth, who was heading back to the table.

The rain had settled into a gentle shower. I took two long drinks back to back. I hadn't slept the night before. I had had a test that morning in Logic. Fatigue slowed my walk. My eyes began to blurr. I had to sit down.

There were these steps in front of a house that had been torn down. All that remained were the steps. I sat there and felt a real peace flow through my body. My brain held no thought, held nothing but the sound of cars on the street beyond the bushes and trees. I hunched over and took another sip. I swished the liquor like mouthwash, then let it flow easily down my throat. I did this over and over. Soon the bottle was empty. I threw it into the hollowed out cellar and heard it burst. I put my head between my legs and tried to cry. It started to rain harder again. The rain pelted my back and ran over my face and dripped between my feet.

Sometime later, I heard steps coming closer. I felt a hand on my shoulder. I thought it must be a policeman. With great effort, I raised my head. It was Jerry Morris.

"Hey Glover," he said, "You'll catch cold if you stay out here too long."

I tried to get up. I was too weak. I tried to talk. I mumbled something. Jerry put his ear closer
to my lips. "I'll go later; I'm too tired to move now."

"Come on," he said, "I'll help you. Come on." He grabbed me under the arm. After a few steps, I could make it on my own. I had to rest two or three times in the four block walk home, but we made it. Jerry fixed me some coffee and guided me to the shower. After the coffee, I began to come back some. We talked about our homes, our families. He was from New Jersey and didn't care much for school. He wanted to go to California and said he would next summer. I got into bed; he flicked off the light and left. Under the covers, I felt new, brand new, and safe. The rain beat against the window pane and I listened.

Spring, 1969  Kirkville, Missouri

Jerry and I started to hang out together. He was an artist, a painter. He had long brown hair and deep brown eyes, but the most conspicuous yet pleasing aspect of his appearance was a very full, blond moustache. We would spend most evenings after we had finished studying, doing a few reefers and drinking some wine. He would sketch objects in the room. Once he did a pencil of me. Only thing was, he gave me long hair and wire rimmed glasses. At that time I had short hair and brown rimmed glasses. Mostly I wore construction boots with jeans and some type of work shirt with a sweater. It was a marked contrast to the fraternity/sorority crowd.

About two weeks after I met Jerry I scored six tablets of L.S.D. I sold two to Mark Goldstein. They had cost me two dollars a tablet. I sold them for six.

L.S.D. is something that I had never tried. Actually
I was a little freaked out about the government report that it caused birth defects. I didn't know what to believe though. I knew this woman in her middle thirties who had taken L.S.D. during her pregnancy and had a perfectly normal baby. Then, on the other hand, I knew a guy who had taken L.S.D., but his wife hadn't, and their baby was born without a thumb on her right hand.

I went over to pick up my twelve dollars for the two tablets from Goldstein on Friday afternoon. I was supposed to meet Jerry at his art class at four. It was already three-thirty. I heard music from Mark's room. I knocked.

"Who's there?"
"It's me," I said, "Glover."
"Who you looking for, Glover?" the voice asked.
"Mark," I said, "Is he in?"
"No man, sorry," the voice said, "he just stepped out. I'll tell him you stopped."

I walked down the hall and waited. I knew he was in there; I'd seen him pull this shit before.

About ten minutes later a fellow left, but the music kept playing. I waited a couple of minutes more, then walked back to the door. I knocked and thought I heard a voice say, "Yeah." Once inside, I knew I heard a voice say "Yeah," but it was for another reason. There was Mark, bare assed, between Ruth's thighs. For the last week I had thought about giving her a call. This caught me off-guard. Mark stood up, grabbed a bathrobe, and pushed me out into the hall.

"What's with you, man?" he asked.

I felt like smashing him. I asked, "Where's my twelve bucks? I've waited long enough; pay up, will you?"
"The shit was no good," he said. He knew I had never done acid. "It made me feel a little nervous, that's all."

I couldn't believe this. I had seen a friend get off; yet, I didn't want to push him. "Man," he added, "you should try the stuff before you sell it." He grinned, "I wasted a whole evening on that shit." Then he added with a smile, "I mean, Ruth and I wasted a whole evening."

I took a couple of deep breaths, then looked at the floor. "Why the hell not?" I asked myself, "he's good-looking. He's acted on Broadway and has been an usher at NBC in New York." I could see why Ruth had gone for him, then the acid, "O.K. Mark," I agreed, "O.K., I'm going to try the stuff tonight or this weekend. If I get off, I'll be back. If I don't, I'm sorry."

"Man," his voice changing its tone now, "I don't know how you'll get off, but, like I say, it just made me nervous."

I walked over to meet Jerry. It was after four. I figured he had already left. He told me to meet him in the studio. He said they were to paint a nude model.

When I arrived Jerry was still painting in the studio. There was no one else in the room. I walked up and looked at the painting. "What do you think?" Jerry asked.

"I don't know," I answered, jokingly, "Where's the model?"

"I'll be right back," he said. He went behind a screen in the corner of the room. I heard some talk. Jerry walked back and then out walked the model, nude.
The model held a deep red apple in her right hand. She walked to the platform with a total lack of self-consciousness. She assumed the position. Jerry asked, "What do you think?"

The painting had not come within a mile of the woman. Her body was large-boned, broad across the shoulders and hips, yet in good proportion to her height. Jerry's painting had not approached the harmony that stood motionless before me. Her hair was shoulder length, brown with a hint of red. Her face was oval and flawless with high, prominent cheekbones and full red lips. There was a reddish hue to her skin, too, and her breasts were full and firm with some loose skin below the abdomen and a firm, round buttocks. I guess she noticed that I had been staring. She smiled; her teeth were even and white, she said, "You look hungry. How about an apple?" She tossed me the apple, as she stepped again behind the screen. Jerry laughed. I looked away.

When I looked at her I felt earth, black earth, running through my fingers. I felt pioneer woman in her; the sturdy, well-built earth mother accustomed to heavy work and honest expression.

She came out from behind the screen. She wore a long dress with no shoes and nothing in her hair and no makeup. "Do you think Jerry's painting does me justice?" she asked, "He plans to give it to me, right Jerry?"

Jerry nodded. I said, "I don't know very much about art, but I think it would be difficult to paint you."

She laughed again. Her laugh was deep, uninhibited. She placed her hand on my shoulder and said, "I hope he
left the stretch marks out, but thanks for the compliment anyway."

Jerry pointed to the abdomen of the figure. It was smooth and tight. "After three kids," she said, "a woman has trouble getting back in shape."

"You've done marvelously," said Jerry.

"What do you say...I'm sorry...what's your name?"

She asked.

"Glover," I replied, "Jack Glover."

She laughed again. "This isn't the Army," she said, "Your first name will do just fine."

There was a pause, then Jerry said, "I should have it completed by a week from Sunday, Joy."

"Fine, Jerry," she said, "Fine, bring it over to the house," she hesitated, "and bring your friend too. You can watch basketball with Don."

Jerry and I walked to our rooms. Jerry seemed super amused about something. I asked, "What's so funny?"

"The way you looked at Joy," he said. "It was like you had never seen a naked woman before."

"There aren't too many that look like her," I returned.

"That's for sure," Jerry bit his lip as if he were trying to decide something. He turned and said, "You know, Jack, I'm in love with her."

"What!" I exclaimed, "Isn't she married? I mean not only married, but married with three kids."

He seemed a little hurt that I had taken this position. We walked in silence, then I decided to change the subject, "Hey Jerry, how about doing some acid with me tonight?"
"I can't...not tonight...," he said, "I'm not in the right frame of mind...that means a lot, you know." I didn't want to show him that I didn't know too much about it. He asked, "Have you ever done it?"
What could I say to that? "No...have you?"
"Sure," he said, "I've done it a number of times with Don and Joy."
"What? You mean the Joy I just met?"
Jerry nodded. He wasn't saying much tonight.
"Isn't she beautiful?" he asked. I agreed, then asked, "How about tomorrow night?"
"I can't," he replied, "I'm going to work on Joy's portrait all weekend." He started to walk off.
"Hey Jerry," I called, "Hey man, what's bugging you?"
"It's rotten luck," he said, "that's all...Rotten Luck."
"What is?"
"That Joy's married."
"Is she happily married?" I asked.
Jerry looked at me in disbelief. "I'm sorry I asked," I said.
"No...no...that's not it...I mean, that's it," he said, "I think they're having trouble."
"What's Don do?" I asked.
"He's a senior in business administration. He'll graduate in May."
"Maybe that's the problem," I replied, "Sometimes the fact of graduation makes for a lot of trouble. You know, man, having to choose a place to live and work. That can bring a guy right down."
"No," said Jerry, "there's another woman."
"Does Joy know?" I asked.
"Sure," Jerry said, "she knows. It started when
she was pregnant with her last child. That was last fall. She had the baby in December. She had some problems and she blames herself sort of, I guess."

"What do you mean?" I asked.
"Jesus Christ, do I have to spell it out?" Jerry snapped, "I'm sorry, Jack, really...she couldn't make it so Don got it elsewhere."
"I suppose things are O.K. now," I said.
"I can only guess," said Jerry, "but I don't think so."
"How long have they been married?" I asked.
"A little over a year," replied Jerry.
We walked in silence again. Jerry saw a friend and talked with him for a while. I listened for a short time, then said, "Hey Jerry, if you're going to work all weekend, I think I'll go to Iowa City and see my brother."
He nodded and said he'd see me Sunday. I felt a little uneasy as I walked home. I felt as if I had hurt Jerry in some way. I decided that I needed to get away from Kirksville for a couple of days.

I had my bag packed, a green army duffle bag, and I was ready to hit the highway. I knew it was kind of late to start hitchhiking the almost one hundred and fifty miles to Iowa City, but I didn't want to stay in Kirksville another minute.
The phone rang. I thought it might be Jerry. It was a woman's voice, "Is this Jack Glover?"
"Yeah," I said.
"This is Joy. Do you remember me from this afternoon?"
I nodded like a fool, then said, "Sure," then added,
"how could I forget?"

I loved her laugh. My whole body seemed to come alive. "I just talked to Jerry," she said, "and he tells me that you plan to go to Iowa City this weekend. Is that right?"

"Yeah," I said, "I was just going to leave when you called."

"Do you have a car?"

"No," I said, "I'm hiking."

"Oh," there was a pause, "don't you have enough money to take a bus?"

"Yes, but why waste it when I can get a free ride?"

"I'm going to Iowa City too," she hesitated, "I thought we could go together. Do you want to take a bus with me?"

"I'd like to," I said, "but I have to stop at a couple of places on the way." This was not true. Immediately after I had said it, I wished I had agreed to go with her. Something was keeping me away from her. Her tone was very friendly. I could see me taking care of her kids while Don and she had a good time.

Almost as if she had read my mind, she said, "Don will not be coming with me; I'm taking the baby up for my sister, Mary, to see."

I was a little afraid to say anything now. I thought about how beautiful she was, but, at the same instant, I also thought about her husband, Don, her kids, and last, but surely not least, Jerry.

"I'd like to go with you," I said, "A little company on a trip sure makes it shorter." I knew this sounded trite, "But I've got to make those stops."

"Maybe," she said, "I'll see you up there...I'd like to talk with you about what you said today."
didn't ask what that was, she added, "You said it would be kind of hard to paint me. I want to know what you meant?"

I started to explain that there wasn't much of a mystery to the statement, when she stopped me, saying, "Listen, I'll probably see you in Iowa City. Save it."

I started to tell her where I'd be staying, but heard only a dial tone; I didn't call back.

Spring, 1969    Southeast Iowa

I walked to Highway 63 and got a ride almost immediately to Ottumwa, Iowa. I had to walk eight blocks before a rusted out, old Ford pulled over. There were two men in their middle twenties in the front seat. They motioned for me to get in the back. When I opened the door, out fell a pop bottle and it burst on the curb. "Jesus Christ," said the driver, "that's three cents you owe us." The back seat had a spare tire on it and empty oil cans on the floor with pop bottles, wire, oil rags, old newspapers, and, in the seat near the tire, what looked like a dead, dried-up muskrat.

The car started down Main Street, then turned up a side street. I was holding about twenty bucks. The driver wore only a T-shirt and had a tattoo on his upper right arm. His black hair was slicked back right out of the fifties. The other guy was younger than I had thought, perhaps still in his teens.

"I'm not heading this way, fellows," I said.

"He's not heading this way," said the driver as he slapped his buddy. "He's in our car and our car is heading this way and he says he's not heading this way."
The younger fellow laughed. "Maybe he'd like a beer," said the driver. The younger fellow popped a beer and turned to face me. His face was covered with pimples. His teeth were rotten. He splashed part of the beer on me.

"Have you looked at that guy?" asked the rider. The driver shook his head that he hadn't. "Don't Harry," said the rider, "you'll hurt your eyes."

"Is he ugly?" asked the driver.

"Oh...I don't know...I guess he could use a haircut and shit, he stinks of beer and needs a bath," said the rider, "Maybe we should go down to the river and give him a bath and haircut?"

"Do you think he's got enough cash to pay for our services?" asked the driver.

We pulled up to an intersection. The light was red. Across the way sat a cop. I knew they would stop. Before they had completely halted, I jumped out, yelling thanks. "Get back in here," yelled the rider.

"Listen Joe," said the driver, "if you don't get back in here by the time that light changes...well...you wait till that cop leaves."

I knew I couldn't wave the cop over, not with the smell of beer all over me; but then I thought, a night in jail is better than what my friends had in mind. I waved for the cop. The two fellows drove off as the squad car drove up.

"What's your beef, buddy?" asked the cop. I stayed back from the car and asked, "Do I take this road to Iowa City or that one?"

"Just follow that one...stay on 63 till you get to 34," he said, "then take 34 to 1. What you want to go up there for?"
"Visit my brother."

"I'd stay away from there if I was you. Those hippie peace freaks are tearing up the town. The Guard's out, so's the Highway Patrol."

"Just going to visit my brother, sir," I said, "that's all."

After the cop left I was uneasy again. I felt the two guys might come back, then, I decided, that they probably thought I had squealed and were half-way across the county by now.

I watched a red Thunderbird stop at the lights. As it approached I stuck out my thumb not expecting it to stop. I had stood there close to an hour. I was cold and it had started to drizzle.

The car stopped and the window buzzed down. I heard a high pitched voice ask, "Going north?"

"Iowa City," I replied, surprised that the driver was male.

"Fine," he said, "Fine...now Cupid, you hop in the back but don't crush mother's bread."

Cupid was a snow-white toy poodle. The back seat was filled with bread. The man was small with red trousers and a bright lime green shirt. Right off, I thought he was gay, but I didn't care. He seemed harmless enough.

"I'm driving to Kalona," he said, as we pulled onto the highway; the dog wanted to climb on my lap. "Now Cupid, the gentleman doesn't want you on his lap."

With his free hand, he grabbed the dog and placed it in his lap. "You little flirt," he added.

It was silence for a few miles. I asked, "Are you a bread salesman?"
He laughed a high pitched, affected laugh and looked at the dog, "Did you hear that, Cupid?" he asked. "Am I a bread salesman? I must tell mother that one. Now you won't let me forget, will you?"

The man placed the dog in the back and flicked on the radio. It was the piped music that offices work by. "No," he said, "my mother has a large freezer and whenever I visit her I bring bread for the whole family. It's day old bread. I get it from a friend who works at the bakery in Ottumwa."

It was a relief to be with a civilized human being again. I asked, after we had talked for a time, "Say, do you mind if I ask you a personal question?"

"No," he said, "go right ahead. I like you." He put his hand on my knee, then removed it.

"Are you gay?" For a few seconds he forced a laugh, then he dropped his whole artificial manner. He asked me how I knew. Now it was my turn to laugh. I told him about the car, the dog, mother, the whole trip.

"I have always felt a little different," he said, and went on to tell me about how he had gotten out of the service and how he really wanted in bad but they had found out in boot camp. When we arrived in Kalona, he said, "Say," he grabbed the dog again, "I don't have to go straight home. If you want to go have a cup of coffee, I could arrange it. I'd have to drop Cupie off at home, and, of course, the bread for mother. But, I'm sure we could arrange something?"

I hated to say no. He seemed so lonely, but it was getting late. "I'd like to stay, Jasper," I opened the door, "but I have to meet someone in Iowa City tonight."

"You know," he added, "I thought you were a little
gay. I picked you up because of your face. You have a fine boned face, almost classic, and your hair is simply divine. I love the way it curls and waves. You must have your mother's hair."

"Thanks," I said, stepping out, "for the compliment, Jasper, but it's still no."

"Would it make any difference if I said I love you?"

I laughed and so did he. Actually I believe he was part in earnest.

A few minutes later, I watched a car skid to a stop at the intersection, then roar around the corner. It was headed straight for me; I leaped into the ditch. The car stopped. Three guys inside the car were keeled over with laughter.

"You want a ride, boy?" asked the front seat rider.

It was a big, beat-up, Pontiac Bonneville and reeked of beer as I opened the rear door.

"Where you off to?" asked the driver.

"Iowa City."

"O.K... don't be bashful; how about some suds?" asked the driver. The guy in the back with me opened a beer. The car lurched forward. We were off and up to about one hundred miles an hour before the driver let off on the gas.

I felt a little ill at ease, not because I was afraid they would rob me, but that I would be picked up with them for intoxication. Nevertheless, I felt they wouldn't like it unless I did some drinking. Anyway, the beer tasted good. I had drunk about half of one when another one was handed to me. Then there came a shot of hard stuff from the front seat.

They were three construction workers from Iowa City,
who had been paving a road in southern Iowa all week. They were all in their late thirties or early forties with leathery-skinned faces and worked dulled eyes. A fine, white, dust covered everything in the car, and the tape player blared over and over, "Six days on the road/And I'm goin' make it home tonight." They all screamed and yelled, and the rider in the front said, "I'd hate to be my wife tonight."

"Yeah," said the driver, "I'm not going to let her out of the sack till Monday."

Another round of screams, then the driver trumped on the gas - 100, 110, 120, off the gauge; we were flying low, when we passed a highway patrolman going in the opposite direction.

I asked, "Did you fellows see that patrolman we just passed?"

"No shit," said the driver, "no shit, what now, Joe, what now?"

"Hide the beer, hide the booze," said Joe; then rolling down the window, he yelled, "Toss the stuff, toss it."

We started tossing beer and hard stuff out the windows. I turned to look for the police when all of a sudden the car went into a broadslide. I braced myself, just as we hit the gravel and zipped down a dirt road.

"Beautiful George, beautiful," yelled Joe in the front seat as he beat the dash with his fist.

As we zipped over the hills, I read a sign "Dead End." I yelled, "Dead End."

"Relax," said my partner in the backseat, "George has got it under full control." We hit the barricade, flew in the air, landed, did two donuts, and ended up
facing the way we had come from. George jumped out like Joey Chitwood, the stunt car driver, threw his left hand in the air and bowed to an imaginary crowd. Joe said, "Piss break."

"Me too," said my partner in the rear. He got out, took two steps, turned and pissed back into the car. He never noticed what he was doing. After he had finished, he crawled back in, put his feet in the puddle and fell asleep.

From the highway, we heard the siren and saw the lights of the patrol car. Joe and George sat on the hood and drank some more beer, which they had stashed under the hood between the grill work and the radiator.

About twenty minutes later, we drove down the dirt road and cruised into Iowa City. They took me to my brother's place and slipped me a beer as I got out.

Spring, 1969 Iowa City, Iowa

I shot speed that night. My brother left a note on the table, "Have gone downtown. There's some crystal in the refrigerator, if you're interested. My fit's behind the L in the encyclopedias."

This was a smooth moment in my life. I shot the Cadillac of speeds, crystal methedrine. I lay back in the chair and listened to "I Wonder Who" by Bloomfield and Kooper, and heard them croon over and over that soothing "who," "I wonder who, now baby? Goin' be your sweet, lovin' man, when I'm gone? I wonder who, now baby...," then an abandoned guitar rift from Bloomfield.

I slept all day Saturday. In the early evening I read part of The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
by James Joyce. I went downtown alone. Mike still hadn't
returned, or, he had returned and left again. Who knows?
I went downtown feeling deep within my mind. I think the
book did that to me in part. My eyes were sharp. I
couldn't stand to be on the street. Someone would laugh
and I would think they were laughing at me. I had dropped
L.S.D. about an hour before. It was starting to come on;
I had heard about the going-up paranoia.

My skin tingled. My face felt dead, expressionless;
my eyes became large, translucent. My body was at peace.
Even as I walked, the effort seemed outside my mind as if
I were traveling through space and everything was con-
trolled from earth. For a short time, I was too high.
I had to sit down and hope no one disturbed me. I felt
like fine crystal; if someone touched me, I would fall
off the mantel and break into a thousand pieces.

Then minute objects began to fascinate me. I had
arrived at the Pentacrest, which is part of the campus
and is a large grassy area with tall, old trees, bordered
by stately buildings. The old capitol of Iowa is here.
I walked up the sidewalk that was over one hundred years
old. The stones were laid at different angles, were
irregularly shaped, and had been worn smooth with the
passage of time. My mind drifted back to the beginning.
The middle of the nineteenth century. I was dressed
in the frock coats of that period. I had ridden to
Iowa City on horseback. It was now tied to the hitching
post.

Three months before I had been elected Governor of
the state of Iowa. I passed through a crowd of people
lining the walk. I nodded to some of my respected
friends and colleagues. We were here to dedicate this
new facility, where the government of Iowa would be
assembled. I walked slowly forward, of and yet not of, the moment. I ascended the marble stairs and gazed at the amber hanging lights framed by the French windows above the door. I heard bells ringing and voices whispering, "The Governor has arrived. The Governor is here." I read the four bronze letters above the door, Iowa. I approached the podium. The crowd became silent.

"My respected colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, as I walked up this path of stone, my mind transcended this moment. We are faces and figures of this era. Before us, this was virgin land and belong to great chiefs such as Keokuk and Mahaska. Now I see strong men, broad shouldered men with their families, who have pushed up this, the most beautiful of rivers, the Iowa river, and have chosen this hillside upon which to build our government. These buildings, may God grant, may some day appear to be a part of the earth. Now, they are little more than stones, placed with a certain amount of harmony, by skilled workmen. The analogy is sound. We must work with honesty, patience, equality, and fairness. We must strive to do what is best for ourselves and our neighbors. If this be carried out with the same perseverance that erected this structure, then I know we have nothing to fear. Now, open the doors for the citizens of today and tomorrow, so that they may pass within and speak their minds."

"Hey buddy," I felt a hand on my chest, "You can't come in here." My eyes focused on three men with clubs, who wore helmets and looked like people from outer space. I only heard one voice, "Get lost, you peace freak."

I was shoved down the stairs and finally fell backwards onto the grass. I lay there, content in looking at the tree branches that looked like veins feeding some huge, dark sky brain. One of the guardsmen came down
and asked, "Are you O.K.?" He nudged me with his foot near my right arm.

The foot was solid. After he had nudged me, his foot became longer and larger. He sat beside me to tie his boot. His voice spoke musical notes, "Do you have some weed, man?" he asked. "This detail stinks. I'm for you guys; get us out of Viet Nam, will you?"

That was when I recognized him. He was the fellow who had given me a ride home last fall before I had gone to college. I tried to talk; my voice only wheezed between my teeth. Finally, "Hey," I said, "Hey, don't you remember me. How's your baby? How's your wife?"

He looked at me for what seemed an eternity. "Where and when?" he asked.

"Last fall, your wife had just delivered."

"Yeah, O.K., she's home," he said, "My company was called up for this protest. One of my friends got hurt pretty bad last night. He was hit with a bottle."

I stood up and had trouble with my balance. "Look," he said, "I didn't mean to shove you. I thought you were trying to get into the capitol. You understand, don't you?"

I nodded and walked off. I had no idea where I was headed. I heard a voice. It seemed to come to me in waves as if it were carried on a gentle sea breeze, "Jack...Jack...Jack Glover." I turned and saw a small group of people, perhaps three, two women and one man. They were smoking some grass. I walked over. I listened to the breeze filter through the trees. In the distance, the muffled traffic sounds. I had a smile on my face as I walked up to Joy. She pointed to her sister and another man. I sat down beside Joy. She took my hands in hers and looked me in the eyes. She pushed the hair
away from my forehead. I felt very gentle and serene as if I wore white robes and sandals and was in India or somewhere.

"I thought we would meet," she said. "I knew it. I felt it in my bones. It means something, doesn't it?"

I was amazed at the power in her face. Her eyes sparkled; the breeze caused her hair to shimmer in the light. I stood up. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Sit down, please sit down."

"I can't stay here," I said. "I'm afraid."

"What's to be afraid of?" she asked.

"I'm afraid of you. I'm afraid of what I feel for you. Now, I know; I have wanted to be with you since I first saw you. You have never left my mind. Now I see how much I have thought about you. It isn't right. It isn't."

I started to feel ridiculous, "I'm sorry...I'm sorry...I can't stay, really. I have to go."

"I'll go with you." She stood up and took my hand, "Where to?"

I decided to walk down to the river's edge. As we descended the hill, I heard a voice off to my left. A crowd of people poured down the hillside. They passed, shouting, "Run... run... the police are coming... run." I saw helmets and clubs. People around me threw rocks and bags filled with something and bottles. Joy was pushed from my side. I turned and saw her face floating away from me in the crowd. I came toward it. It disappeared. I felt something hard come down upon my shoulder. The ground came to my face. I heard, "This one's cold." I jumped up and ran.
I returned to Kirksville on Sunday. I had only seen Joy briefly on Saturday night. I didn't know her sister's last name and she had no way of finding me, because Mike's phone was listed under Larry's name.

The first part of the week passed with tests, papers, and much reading. I had become a little behind in the books. Then, on Thursday, as I walked to the library to look up a source for a paper I was typing, a young woman stopped me. She handed me a paper that stated that there would be a march on the draft board at two P.M. that afternoon. She asked me if I would come. "Well, I don't know," I said, "I have a paper to finish and a book to read by tomorrow morning."

She looked at me with an expression of disbelief. "Listen to yourself," she said, "listen...there are men dying over there at this moment and you're worried about your fucking paper."

"Do you think a small protest in Kirksville, Missouri will make any difference?" I asked.

She walked off, muttering obscenities under her breath.

I felt a little guilty about my attitude, so, at two P.M., I joined the group assembled in Baldwin Hall. The long hall outside the auditorium was filled with perhaps sixty to seventy people. Most of these people had long hair and wore blue jeans, with some women in long, florid peasant dresses. Some carried books with bright covers and I figured quite a few were stoned.

The leader's name was Frenchy. He was a naturalized American who had served in Viet Nam. Well, not really
in Viet Nam, but off the coast on a carrier. He always talked vividly about his R and R's, rest and recreations, in Japan. He was a short, thin guy with glasses and long, stringy black brown hair. He also always wore this Navy issue blue coat no matter what the weather. I asked him about that once and he said, "Man, if you were as thin as I am, you'd need some cover too." I couldn't imagine anyone thinner than I was, but, Frenchy was. Always yelling, always moving, jabbing, directing, the march started behind Frenchy.

It was a ten block march from the college to the draft board downtown. After about six blocks, we had to turn left and go past the U.S. post office and recruiting center. I noticed that our ranks had increased. We were perhaps eighty to one hundred strong now. On my right was my history professor and next to him was a baptist preacher. They had come out of the post office and joined the march.

When we were perhaps two blocks from the board, Frenchy produced a list of names of the men who had been drafted by the Kirksville Board and had died in combat. I noticed the crowds on both sides of the street had become larger. Frenchy waved the sheet and yelled, "This is a list of the men who have died in Viet Nam from this board." His eyes flashed as he looked at the men who leered at him from the sidewalk. A few police cars were parked in the alleys and intersections, and there were many policemen blended in with the crowd. I became a little uneasy.

Then, before I could see what actually happened, I saw two men, beating Frenchy to the pavement. One of the men was in his middle forties or early fifties. He yelled, "My son's name is on that list, you peace
eating chicken shit." He tried to take the list from Frenchy. Two women rushed forward to help Frenchy; they were pushed away with ease. The other man kicked the now almost unconscious Frenchy in the head.

"Look at those fairies," I heard someone yell from the crowd. "They don't even protect their own."

A tackle from the college football team roared by me from our group and knocked the two guys off Frenchy. Then, after all this had happened, two policemen came forward and asked if they might be of assistance.

"You keep those rotten shits off my buddy," said Wilbur.

"Take it easy, Wilbur, be cool," the policeman said, trying to speak his language, yet keeping his distance.

The other officer restrained the man who had lost a son in the war. I couldn't see the other guy who had beaten Frenchy; he must have disappeared into the crowd.

The man who had lost the son was screaming at us, "You creeps, you lousy creeps! I raise a son," he now turned to the people who lined the street, "I raise a son. A good boy, Jim was. I raise him and he thinks it's good and right to defend his country. He's not afraid like these...these...queers, fairies, commie lovers." He broke away from the officer and kicked Frenchy again. His body jumped and rolled over.

We marched on, but now, without a leader. Wilbur picked-up the list. He looked around and then gave it to me, I supposed, because I was the closest. I decided to give it to the woman who had asked me to come. I looked for her in the crowd, but was then
turned and headed toward the draft board. I continued to glance over my shoulder, looking for that woman.

We reached the door of the board. Everyone milled around not knowing what to do next. I guess that could have been mostly my fault, because I was now the leader and didn't know what to do next. I then spotted the woman, and asked her, "What next?" I offered the list to her. She just smiled, so I led the crowd, waving the list, through the doors and up the stairs to the Secretary's office. People pushed up the stairs behind me; I wasn't sure which door it was. I didn't have to know; the force directed me to the door at the end of the hall. I felt a tingle throughout my body as I was shoved through the open door that led to the Secretary's inner office. I now faced three loaded shotguns and heard a voice from behind a file cabinet say, "One more step, buddy, and you're a dead man."

The crowd behind me became silent. "We have been ordered to protect the records of the U.S. Government," the voice said.

I tried to talk but at first my voice wouldn't work. A thin woman with a sad-looking face and greying hair, stepped forward to meet me. I handed her the list and said, "This is a list of the men who this board has sent to be senselessly slaughtered in Viet Nam." The crowd began to push behind me again. I wanted out, but a woman beside me yelled, "Yeah, lady, think about that when you try to sleep tonight." I didn't agree with this statement, thinking about my best friend's mother back in Buckston. Also, I was now half-way in the office. "If you come any closer, buddy," said the voice, "I'm warning you. We have been ordered to protect the records of the U.S. Government."
I turned to leave, and, after a few minutes, the crowd began to file out into the street. I headed straight out the door and crossed the street. I looked back as I rounded the corner. People were standing around outside the door. I headed back to the college, when I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was that woman again, "You were great," she said, "just great.

I felt the whole thing had been meaningless. There I had been at the front of a protest, when earlier I couldn't even decide if I wanted to go or not. I just laughed.

"What's so funny?" she asked. "I think you did a very noble thing. My name's Joan, Joan Eisen." I had seen her around quite a bit, but had never known her name. She was probably the best looking and most popular woman at the college. When I first saw her last winter, she was in a sorority. At that time, she always wore her hair pulled back; now she had it in a shag, which I had to confess made her look even better, but I'm sure she had it styled this way for the movement. She was a little shorter Lania Kazan in blue jeans that were tight and faded, and a blouse, black, which didn't leave much to the imagination about what she had on underneath. Still, the most attractive features were her blue eyes and olive skin. Her accent was also definitely eastern.

"I'm Jack Glover," I mumbled.

"You really come on fast, don't you," she stated, then added, "I mean, I didn't think you would come, and you ended up leading us."

"No thanks to you," I said, "I was about ready to hand the list to you when we were outside the board."

"Where did you come up with that speech?" she asked.
"Off the cuff," I laughed, and she, I guess, thought that I wanted to learn more about the war in Viet Nam; so, as we walked back, she told me all about it. When we arrived back at the college, a friend waved to Joan. She walked over to talk to him. I saw that he was some type of reporter. I slid into the crowd returning from the board and then slipped away to my room.

Back in my room, I really started to get down on myself about becoming a public figure. That was all I needed, the cops searching my room to get something on me. I stashed my load of L.S.D., grass, speed, and a few downers in new spots throughout the room. Then I'd say to myself, "Hell, that's the first place they'll look."

The phone rang. It was Jerry. He told me to come over for a little while. I stashed the stuff at his place and we confirmed our date with Joy for Saturday night.

Spring, 1969 Kirksville, Missouri

There is some power in Kirksville, Missouri. Maybe it only holds power in my eyes. It is a city where nature has not quite lost the battle with city planners. Lining and arching almost every street, there are trees, creating the impression of passing through some sort of natural tunnel of love. There are large expanses of grass, enclosed by fences, leaning and laced with ivy and flowers, so dense and odoriferous that these areas sometimes reminded me of the first time I tried my father's after shave lotion.

Jerry and I strolled in a forever-setting sun to Don and Joy's. I breathed deeply and smiled when
we passed through pockets heavily scented with the fragrance from a lilac bush. There was the smell of earth after a spring shower. There was the odor of a piss elm, the deep, obscene, almost indecent smell of a piss elm. And, finally, the fragrance of flowers, which was elusive, indifferent, yet the most pleasing of all. The images evoked from the fragrances of flowers were manifold. The red rose is the cheek of a new love. Violets are two lovers hand in hand, crossing a gentle, down-sloping meadow. Tulips are before a house with a white picket fence and a pretty wife waving from the open door.

Jerry and I rang the door bell. Don answered it and ran his arm affectionately around Jerry's waist. He was just under six feet; still, it was difficult to determine his height because he slouched a lot. The slouch appeared to be a familiarity with him, saying, "Here I am, old humble Don." He had black curly hair, a thin face with big dark eyes and thick dark eyelashes that partially covered them. He moved like an unhinged bag of bones, yet, there was a real naturalness there. He was, his whole manner and speech illustrated, the totally relaxed man.

Joy breast-fed the baby. I sat there waiting for Don to open the bottle of wine we had brought. Joy's skin was like ivory around her breast. The breast was firm and appeared heavy with milk. The baby sucked lazily on the bright red nipple. Joy was naked to the waist. Her other breast jiggled as she spoke. She looked at me with a smile, full and rich, warm and relaxed. Her skin tone seemed to radiate a vague band of light around her. I was enchanted.

Don and Jerry watched a basketball game on T.V.
I went outside and sat on the edge of the porch. My legs dangled above the tulips. It was half dark, half light with a big orange horizon. It was so damned sad, I almost cried right there. I thought about that for awhile. I had known this guy who was adopted. He fell off his bike when we rode together one day and didn't even cry. Another day he missed my fast ball and it hit him right in the nose, but his eyes didn't even water or anything. I asked his mother why Little Gerald never cried. She was proud of the fact that he didn't.

But I didn't cry either. I just sat there and just couldn't decide whether it was worth it all or not. There must be more than this—just eating, sleeping, working; eating, sleeping, working.

"Nice evening," said Joy, as she sat on the porch next to me.

She smelled cool, menthol; my head began to clear. Objects and colors brightened and sharpened. My senses became a placid lake; the rhythm of my heart sent a soft ripple of emotion over my pale, yet tranquil cheek.

"You haven't been out here long, have you?"

"I don't really know how long." Her hand touched mine. I stood up. "I think I'll take a walk," I said, "You don't mind, do you?"

"That's what I like about you," she smiled, "You're such a formal, gentlemanly fellow. You give the impression that your actions have been reflected upon, not just thought about, but reflected upon before you move. That's grace to me."

I looked at her, then started down the steps. "I'll go with you," she said, grabbing my arm, "O.K."

We must have walked an hour. Occasionally, she
would stop, hug a bush or a tree trunk, then return to my side. I thought this was kind of silly. I told her so. She grabbed my hand and walked me up to a large lilac bush. It was dark and there were high bushes between the sidewalk and us. She pushed into the bush, heavy with blossoms, and took a deep breath. She pulled me into the same action. I breathed and felt her lips on mine. I hung back from my emotion but hers was too strong. Her desire surged through her lips. She pulled me to the ground and I began to respond as strongly as she. She ground her hips against mine and spread out completely on top of me. I sat up and pushed her away, "I wasn't going to do this," I said. "I wasn't."

"I'm sorry," Joy said, then, "no, by God, I'm not sorry; I really wanted to kiss you."

I looked at her long, lean legs as she stood up and adjusted her jeans. Her hair fell across her face and obscured one shining eye. She said, "What's wrong with it, if you feel it?"

"Let's just forget it happened?" I suggested. She opened her mouth as if she wanted to say more, then smiled and extended her hand to help me up.

As we walked back to her place, she started to tell me her history.

"I was married when I was sixteen," she said, looking at the full moon.

"Sixteen!"

"Yes," she said, "I was sick of living at home, so I got this fellow to get me pregnant."

"How old are you now?" I asked, hearing my mother's voice, "Never ask a woman her age."

"Twenty-four," she said, "Twenty-four last month. My oldest daughter is almost eight years old. I had one
more with my first husband. He worked the day shift at the plant my father managed. He had been to college for a short time, Viet Nam when it was just a shoot-out, and he was good-looking, kind of like James Dean, but he was real mean."

Now her jaw set and the skin became tight around her eyes, "I left him at twenty-one. We had a fight and he beat the girls. Shit, I don't want to think about him. He was really light and smart to me at sixteen, an older man. We got married, and it was washing, cleaning, and every night he'd come home, eat, and watch T.V. until he fell asleep."

Once again, her voice drifted away from me; I listened to my own thoughts, "Why is she telling me this? Shouldn't I stop her? I mean, doesn't her wanting to tell me this mean something?"

"Are you listening to me?"

"Yes," I said, more to answer my own questions than as a reply to hers.

"I suppose our split was partly my fault....Anyway we broke up and I went to college. I passed the high school equivalency test with the highest marks. My family had sent me to an eastern private school when I was young. Father lost his money and had to take the factory manager's job. It was quite a step down for all of us; I had to go to public school."

"So she's from a rich family, gone bust," I thought. Still, I now realized why I had been attracted to that tinge of arrogance in her. I tried to imagine her living with a factory worker. I tried to see their house. I almost asked her to describe it.

"I completed three years of college in two," she continued. "That's when I met Don, the end of my second
year. We drove to Kansas City to get married. That was a little over a year ago, and now we have our new baby boy."

The way she said "our new baby boy" made me feel less threatened. She squeezed my hand, stopped walking, and we kissed again. I thought it was a friendship kiss, but then her tongue probed my mouth. I pulled away, but her hand on my upper leg pulled us as close as you can get down there. I looked into her eyes. I was sure she saw or at least felt that I was not totally oblivious to what was happening. She smiled, pecked me on the neck, and released me.

When we got back to the house, Don asked, "Where've you been?"

As Joy breezed into the kitchen, she said, "Oh, we just took a little walk. Who won the game?"
"My team," said Don, "as usual." He looked at me with a smile.

"I have to get back, Jerry," I said, "I've got some pages to read before a big test on Monday."

"The big student?" asked Don.

"He's straight A," said Jerry. "They call him the genius."

I took the compliment badly. I didn't respond with a joke or anything. My mind wouldn't work; I just wanted out.

Spring, 1969   Kirksville, Missouri

It was final week. I had a test on Wednesday, two on Thursday, and, because of my high marks, I didn't have to take a test on Friday, but, upon the professor's request, I would have to write a class evaluation.
Sunday was a long day. After Jerry and I had left Joy's, we hit a few of the bars. Jerry wanted to know what Joy and I had talked about. He wanted to know every detail. I mentioned that she was interested in witchcraft and that she had a friend named Elliot who believed he had the power. Jerry said that he knew Elliot and our conversation drifted into that channel. I was relieved. My nerves were about shot, and now this added pressure from the one person who used to soothe me. I frankly didn't know how I could cope without alcohol.

I felt terrible on Sunday. I was afraid my breath would catch the sheets on fire. My stomach was like a volcano moments before eruption, and my head, my poor, poor head and eyes. I almost wished my heart would stop beating just to stop the pulsing pain.

I tried to read after a shower and a shave. My eyes wanted to sleep after ten minutes of work. I drank coffee, buckets of coffee, and finally, around four P.M., I had to rest. I slept until six.

I got up. The day was greying outside. I fixed some soup, my first nourishment of the day. That sweet, idle weakness that sets in after a particularly difficult hangover began to permeate my body. I spooned the soup reflectively. I was at peace at least in body. My mind continued to revolve around the events of the night before. As much as I wanted to put Joy out of my mind, I simply couldn't. I had never had this problem before, but I concluded, I had never been kissed like that before. I had never felt real passion in a woman as I felt from Joy.

With these thoughts in mind, I tried to read some history. "The fall of Rome may be attributed to..."
I must have read that sentence twenty-seven times. I wasn't going to let this thing beat me. "The fall of Rome may be attributed to three...."

Outside there was a big, bright part of a moon. I walked over to the library to read the magazines. I saw Joan Eisen reading Newsweek. When she spotted me, she walked over and sat beside me. "Where have you been the last couple of days?"

"Mostly in my room," I replied.
"You haven't either," she said.
"I was gone for awhile Saturday night."
"For awhile, he says...for awhile," I waited for her to continue, "I tried to call you from six on...to almost midnight."

I still didn't know what to say. When I looked at her, I wondered how she would look when she was Joy's age.

"I'll bet there's another woman," she said, laughing quickly.

When I didn't reply to that, she added, "Say, you all right? I mean, do you feel well?"

"I've got a lot on my mind lately..." I said, then added, "I got drunk last night."

She smiled, "Well, that's good to hear. All work and no play, you know...I wanted to get you uptown to a little place I know. They sing folk songs, eat popcorn, sit around and talk about things. I thought you might like to go?"

I just couldn't think of anything to say. Joan said, "Time's running out on us, isn't it?"

"I don't know what you mean?"

"My God, are you always this distant...I mean, the year's about over. Final week's this week."
"I'm sorry," I said, "I have to see a friend in a few minutes. If I don't see you, have a nice summer."

"Yeah," said Joan, "I suppose you'll be coming back next fall?"

"'Though we've got to say goodbye for the summer/...da..da..da..da.dum," I couldn't remember the rest of the song. It was a feeble attempt at a joke; she laughed anyway.

I walked up Jefferson street, then down Filmore. As I waited at a corner, a car pulled up. It was Don and Joy with the two girls in the back and Joy in the front with the baby. It was such a surprise that I nearly turned tail and ran; but it was too late for that. I stared as if I didn't recognize them. Don returned the stare, then laughed. Joy screwed down the window and asked if I needed a ride somewhere. I hesitated a second, then said, lying, "I have to mail a letter. I thought it would be a nice evening for a walk. Studying pretty hard for finals." I spoke the last phrase in such a manner as to apologize for my greeting. Don agreed, he had to study tonight too.

I became concerned. I was totally out of control. About the only bright spot on the horizon was the fact that this was final week. Next week I would be away from here. I lipped the words to "Feelin' Alright" by Traffic, "Seems I've got to have a change of scene/Cause every night I have the strangest dreams/Imprisoned by the way things could have been/Left here on my own or so it seems/I've got to leave before I start to scream/Someone's locked the door and took the key/I'm feelin' alright;I'm not feelin' too good myself."

I could hear my old high school Latin instructor, "If something's bothering you, write it down, then burn
it up." I got a notebook and wrote on how I felt about Joy. I always came to the same dead end street. What I felt for her was real, as real as I had ever felt anything in my life; yet, I had the presence of mind to realize that she was married, had children, and it just wasn't logical to approach her. I could foresee the outcome. The phone rang, "Jack." That was all she said. I knew who it was although, before I heard the voice, I thought it might be Joan.

"Yes," I said, trying to sound distant and indifferent.

"I was just thinking about you."

I didn't want her to know the same, so I said nothing.

"Did you get your letter mailed?" she asked. "I suppose you were studying; Don is. You looked very sad today...at the stop sign."

"I always look sad when I'm coming out from under a hangover."

"Jerry said," she added, "that you two really tied one on last night."

"What else did Jerry say?" I regretted asking that.

"He wanted to know if there was something between us," she replied, "I told him that I thought a lot of you...Oh, bull shit! How can you stand apart from what you feel? I want to see you. Tonight. Meet me at the sunken gardens in twenty minutes." She hung up.

It was almost midnight when I decided to go to meet her. I was twenty minutes late. I walked along the high bushes that surrounded the garden. The entrance was a six-foot arched tunnel in the bushes. I had to duck to enter. Inside the noise from the outside was filtered and dampened. It was cool and moist. I decided to take
a side path. In the distance I heard the fountain. The classical sculpture of a young boy with a goose appeared real in the moonlight. The water trickled from a spring near the boy's feet and shimmered into a large bowl from which the goose eternally drank.

I saw Joy at the far end of the path. I hesitated. She had not yet heard or seen me. She was seated on the grass, leaning back against the bench. She languidly ran her right hand through her hair. I walked up and sat on the bench.

"I didn't think you'd wait?"
She didn't answer. "What do you want?" I asked.
"I want to do some acid with you," she said. "I want to split a tablet of sunshine tonight. We could take Don's car and camp out at the lake."
"Don's car," I repeated.
"He doesn't care," she said, "he knows that I'm with you. He has to study tonight."
"I don't know, Joy," I said, shaking my head, "I just don't know."
"Don would have come with us, but he has to study."
"He must know," I said to myself, "he must. He can't think we will just trip on acid and that's all. Maybe it's not that important to him. After all, Joy has been married before. Maybe she just wants to trip. If that's all, then, well, I do enjoy her company."

We split the acid and sat around in my room until we started to get off. The stuff was real smooth. It had no speed to drive you buzzing through the trip. It was real mellow like Donovan says, "They call me mellow yellow/Quite rightly...."

Joy wore a pair of shorts with a loose fitting green and white striped shirt. The shorts were cut-offs,
and she didn't have any shoes. She was stretched out on my bed, and, as the acid came on, she began to yawn and stretch. I sat in the chair and listened to the radio. Joy began to laugh. "What are you laughing at?" I asked.

"You," she said, "here I am. I'm stoned out of my mind. There's only two pieces of cloth separating me from nakedness, and there you sit, playing with the dial of that radio." She laughed again.

"I think we'd better take a walk," I said, grabbing a coat for her.

We walked for two hours which I filled with an endless monologue about who I thought I was. I noticed that my conversation became more and more bizarre; we sat on a tree stump and looked up at the stars. "You see those stars, Joy? I am those stars and you are the earth. We can't be together, and yet," (I hesitated to admit this) "the last few days, especially since Saturday night, I can't get you out of my mind. I've tried everything, or, everything that I know how to try. You are just there. When I try to read, when I talk with other people; when I am asleep, you are in my dreams. You are always beautiful and very, very sensual. I can't get you out of my mind. What do I do? What do I do?" I looked at the ground between my feet.

"Stop talking...let's go to the lake?"

"No," I said, "I can't...I can't do that." Then I thought, "As much as I realize that this is what you want; I can't do that. I just can't."

She held me in her arms. I felt her body next to mine, and I felt a great relief there. I began to calm. My whole body relaxed. I began to choke like I was trying to cry, then I did cry, saying, "I can't
do it, I can't." She released me; we walked toward her house.

Now Joy was distant. I tried to bring her out of the mood she had settled into. She began to talk, "I can't begin to tell you how I feel about you. Ever since that first day, I have never felt like this in my life."

"What about Don?" I asked.

"I love Don, but not in the same way. I need you now, physically."

"But why me?" I asked. "I'm skinny...I'm not very affectionate and well, I'm not that experienced."

"I don't know," she said, "Won't you stay with me tonight, just one night? We probably won't see each other again. Don will get a job after graduation next week. We will move away. We will probably never see each other again."

Even though I sort of wanted to now, I still couldn't bring myself to agree. "Just once," she said, "Once!"

"I can't Joy," I said, "I can't."

"Well, fuck you then!" she said, walking off. "You can kiss my ass. Drop dead, you're just a fucking tease."

"And you're a married woman," I returned.

She looked at me as if she wanted to kill me. I backed away. She started to swing at me. I kept backing up, then I fell over a raised piece in the sidewalk. Joy straddled me and held my arms down. Her eyes burned as her face came closer to mine. I felt her cheek cool against mine. She nibbled at my ear as she slowly started to grind her hips against mine.

I rolled her over and started to kiss her, right there on the sidewalk in front of someone's house in
Kirksville, Missouri. She tried to wriggle out of her shorts. I stood her up, and we walked around the bushes. We undressed rapidly, and continued until we saw the first signs of morning as we looked up through the bushes. As the sky became brighter, the lines became bolder and color came into the world. The leaves turned green and the earth beneath us became moist and fragrant. I began to caress Joy again. I tried to tell her how much meaning I saw in everything, but she silenced me with a kiss, then rolled on top of me; and later, as we walked to her house arm in arm, she said, "You are beautiful... truly beautiful."

When I awakened at noon, I found that the light perfume that Joy wore still lingered about me. As I lay wide-eyed in bed and thought about her, I had a strong desire to buy her something. I shaved, showered, had a light lunch and walked uptown to buy a present.

I must have looked in ten stores before I decided to buy a book on witchcraft for her. I wrote simply inside, "To Joy, From Jack" and walked to her place to present it. When I arrived, Don was there. I didn't want to give it to her in Don's presence, so I sat in the chair and made small talk with the two of them, still feeling a little timid around Don.

About ten minutes later, Don said he had a test, and he wanted to know if I wanted to walk down to the campus with him. I kept telling myself that he must know but I wasn't sure.

I waited for him to ascend the stairs of the business building; he said, "This is it, Jack, my friend. This is my last test... Four years of work... for what? I can't even find a job. It's crazy."
"It's really something to look forward to," I replied. "You study hard, get good marks, graduate and can't find a job....Have you tried the placement office?"

"No dice there...I take that back," he said. "They've lined up an interview in St. Louis for Friday and Saturday. I'll probably be gone until Sunday." He thought a second, "I hear Yellow Submarine is in town this weekend."

I nodded that it was. "Why don't you take Jerry and Joy? Drop some acid. I hear the colors are great."

"I'll be gone Friday," I said. "You could stick around until Monday, couldn't you?" he asked. "Joy really had a great time last night. She said she's never been so stoned in her whole life."

"Well," I hesitated, "I don't know. My family is sort of expecting me."

"Call them," he said, "I'll buy the wine. Joy's already got a sitter lined up. Come on."

I really liked Don. I agreed to stay. I watched him go into his test, then I walked back to Joy's to give her the present.

She was nursing the baby when I arrived. We talked about the night before and I gave her the book. I watched the baby play with its mother. Don walked in. I was startled. I started to stand up, then sat back down. Don smiled and asked, "Did you forget something?"

"See the book Jack gave me," said Joy. I could feel the color come into my cheeks.

Don took the book and looked through it. I stayed for a few more minutes, then got up to go. "Come on," said Don, "let's go shoot some baskets, then some beer."
It really sounded good, so off we went.

After playing one-on-one for an hour, in which we played pretty even, we went to a local bar and had a few. "It's over," said Don, looking over four empty glasses and a couple of empty peanut bags. "It's over. I can't believe it. School's out." He thought about that for a moment, then added, "Now, Joy and I can get a place and settle down; I can't decide whether I'd like to open a business or go to work with my father."

"Maybe your father could start you in a branch store," I said.

He thought about that, "You know, that's not a bad idea." We walked home together, passing the basketball back and forth. Don invited me for supper. I thanked him but had to study. "O.K....O.K., but everything's set for Saturday night, right?"

"Sure," I said, "O.K."

I watched him dribble up Jefferson street. I couldn't get over how much I liked him. I couldn't see any reason why Joy could be unhappy with him.

Spring, 1969 Kirksville, Missouri

I completed the evaluation which I handed in at noon Friday. I had done excellently on all my tests. I was assured of a berth on the President's list for the highest academic achievement. When I had time to think about this, I thought it was humorous. I had done so badly in high school that the officials wanted to keep me back for another year. Then I couldn't get into any of the state schools in Iowa, because of my high school grades. I put all of this data along
side of my performance at college and was a little suspicious of my achievement.

Jerry came over Friday night and we drank wine and smoked some grass, and I tried to get some of the packing done. Joy called around eleven and wanted to confirm our date for the next night. She said that Don had had the Friday interview cancelled; the company had found another man. He would leave early Saturday morning and not return until Sunday night. Jerry talked with her for awhile and we all decided to drop acid for the movie.

At six on Saturday, Jerry and I strolled toward Joy's house. The sitter had already arrived, so we popped the tablets and took off. The movie didn't start until eight so we had plenty of time to get off and also drink a little wine. Jerry suggested a park nearby where we could sit, drink and talk. The park turned out to be a cemetery, yet it was pleasant, quiet, with steep hills and lots of trees. We played around at being dead. Jerry and Joy were in high spirits. I wasn't, for some reason.

Usually, after I finished a long haul like a semester of school, or even a shorter one like preparing for a test, I felt let-down when the struggle was completed. Sometimes I think I liked the struggle more than the end product, whether it was success or failure. This let-down manifested itself in different stages. Immediately after the struggle was over, I was extremely elated. This period of ecstasy lasted for perhaps twelve to twenty-four hours and was followed by a like drop below a balanced mental state to extreme depression. I felt very withdrawn. I didn't want to talk. If I looked at people I was afraid of
violence from them. I felt as if the world was closing in on me, yet, when I went outside, I still felt as if something was squeezing my heart of all its juices. I was cold, indifferent, and people around me began to feel threatening. In short, it was not a good time to take acid. If you are happy, acid will make you happier. If you are sad and depressed, acid will make you even more sad and depressed.

What was I sad and depressed about? That school was out and I would have to go back to Buckston? I suppose that was it in part. Maybe I was also uneasy about moving my place of residence. I'm a fairly settled person, or, at least I thought I was at the time. Why beat around the bush? I knew I would miss Joy. This was our last night together. I couldn't stop thinking about that.

As the three of us sat close together and watched the cars in the distance, Joy laid her hand on the inside of my leg. Jerry talked on and on about California. He got up and went to take a leak. Joy and I began to kiss. I felt myself rush from the cabin in the mountains that I had chosen to withdraw to. I crossed fields of blooming flowers and surmounted a peak and the sun shone brightly in my eyes. It was Joy and peace that I felt under my hands as we began to caress each other. Jerry returned and saw us, fully clothed, rolling on the ground, and he began to roll with us. He kissed Joy from behind and then, strangely enough, he began to kiss me. I had never been kissed by a man before. My first reaction was repulsion. I didn't have to wait for my second. Joy became really angry. She sat up and cussed Jerry. Jerry looked at me; he was scared. He stood up and started to walk off. I asked him to stay.
I was afraid to leave him alone. It was not that I wanted him physically; I was just afraid to leave him alone. He must have felt pity. He continued to walk away. Joy ran to him and I watched them talk. Joy motioned for me to come, and the three of us went to the movie.

The movie house was packed with freaks. I sat on one side of Joy and Jerry sat on the other. At intermission, Jerry met a friend of his from art class. They left arm-in-arm after the show. Joy wrapped my arm around her as we left the theater. I felt tall, strong, and perhaps, for the first time since I played basketball in high school, proud of my body, of its thinness; its strength and agility.

Joy paid the sitter and we sat around and talked. "I suppose this will be the last time I'll see you," I said.

"What makes you think that?" she asked.

"You'll be going wherever you're going and I'll be back here next year."

"We could visit each other. Don wants to," she said.

"Joy," I asked, "does Don know about us?"

"Know what?"

"Know that we..." I couldn't quite put my finger on what I wanted to say. "Does he know that we have committed adultery."

She became angry, "Is that what you think we did?" She started to get teary eyed; I didn't know how to respond. I wanted to change what I had said, yet I didn't know how, unless, "O.K., does he know that we have made love?" That hit me. Had I made love with her? Did I want to make love with a woman who had three children
and was already married to a guy that I liked? The whole meaning of the expression "make love" hit me. Had I wanted to build something?

"You want me to either love you or Don, right?" asked Joy. "You want me to choose?"

That was the question. It would either have to be answered now or later. I thought that the time was right. "Joy," I said, "I have never felt as strongly for a woman as I have felt for you. Maybe," I added, "maybe I will never feel this way for another woman." At first I thought that this might be going too far, but, after I had said it, it seemed true, at least for the moment.

Joy started to kiss me. We heard some noise from the girls' bedroom. Joy's oldest daughter walked in, "Mommy...Mommy," she said, "I can't sleep. Will you hold me for awhile?"

I went into the kitchen and drank a beer. I thought what rotten luck I had. I began to feel sorry for myself. I was also coming down from the acid. "The one woman that I love is already married and already has children." This thought kept going through my mind. I became more and more pathetic and sentimental. I drank more beer, then took one out on the front porch.

The birds began to sing and their uproar about drove all thoughts of myself from my mind. I could see that the day was about to break. The sky turned from black to purple and purple to a dark blue. For the first time I had a really visual sense that spring was at its height. In the midst of all this fertility, I felt sterile. I felt that my life was over. I had found the love that I was sure of and she was
already married and had children.

Because I felt sure I would never love like this again, I felt sure that no woman would be to me what Joy was, I began to see myself as a priest. I inhaled the delicate fragrances of incense. The deep shadows and thick stone walls of the monastery with young boys singing high-pitched and clear in the cathedral. The austere life of a priest began to attract me. Joy came from the house nursing the baby. I looked at her, my eyes and mind intoxicated with the vision I had just had. I was ready to resign myself to what I had seen. The future seemed bright, pure, and tranquil.

I walked away. Joy caught up with me and said, "We'll see each other again, won't we?"

I didn't know the answer. I felt affectedly deliberate in my actions. I smiled the benevolent smile, the pontifical smile. I felt as if I witnessed the passing of a similar and poignant moment in nature and myself. I said, "Summer has finally arrived, Joy. The long, hot days of summer are here."

The eternal flame of knowledge burned orange against the blue sky at the entrance to the college. I decided that this was what I wanted. I wanted to learn. I wanted to learn about people, about thoughts past and present. I wanted to think about the future of man. I wanted to think about my future. I took a long, hot shower and went to sleep.
Part II: Adventures Of The Flesh

His heart being dead and loveless, he fell into adventures of the flesh, descended into the depths of lust and searing sin, and suffering unspeakably thereby...now and again he would feel a faint, yearning memory of a certain joy that was of the soul, once it had been his own, but now, in all his joys, he could not find it again.

-Tonio Kroeger by Thomas Mann

Summer, 1969 Buckston, Iowa

My parents were very proud of my academic achievements, yet not so proud of the lifestyle I had chosen. They didn't like how outspoken I was about the war and they didn't care much for my long hair or my late hours. When I couldn't find a job, my father hired me to paint the house. It was a good job. I would paint in the morning and read in the afternoon. I had originally chosen history as a major field of study, but gradually felt my interest turning to literature and foreign languages. I knew that I would be far behind most students in these areas but had decided to read all summer and take a German course from a native Austrian that I knew in Buckston.

Most of my evenings were spent at home too; at least that was true for the month of June. Then, in July, Craig Gott, who I had not seen since shooting speed with him last winter, showed up in Buckston.

We drove around for awhile and talked. My father wouldn't allow him in the house. Craig had still not stepped forward and taken the oath. He figured that
he would have to make a decision by September. Either
go to Canada or go to the Army. "And man, if it comes
down to it; there ain't no doubt which I'll choose."

We drove north of Buckston and turned off onto
a gravel road, "Where're we headed, Craig?" I asked.
"You'll see," he said, "You'll see."

About ten minutes later we arrived at a farmhouse
rented by Jim Hanson and his wife, Julie. There were
perhaps five or six other cars there. I recognized
most of them. Inside I heard the Cream. The stereo
was cranked up so high the walls almost shook, "I'm
so glad/I'm so glad/I'm glad, I'm glad, I'm glad."

Jim Hanson came up to us in the kitchen. Jim
was quite a few years older than I was. He was perhaps
twenty-eight or nine. He had been to the Army, had
worked driving heavy equipment for a construction firm,
and was now laid off from a carpenter's job. He shook
my hand warmly like we were old friends. He was really
high.

The next person I met was his wife, Julie. She
was younger than I. Jim had only been married to her
perhaps six months. She had just turned sixteen when
they got hitched. No, she wasn't pregnant. The way
I heard it from Craig, her family was very poor. She
would have done anything to get away from that house.
Jim came along and she took him up. It was that simple.
Her whole world was Jim; she was almost always by his
side. Her thoughts were merely regurgitations of Jim's,
but now she felt threatened. Jim was changing. He
was into the counter culture for its physical delights,
or, the dope and the free love. I watched her as Jim
flirted with a woman named Suzy. She banged the pans
and slammed the refrigerator door a couple of times.
"Honey," said Jim, "there ain't no reason for you to make all that racket."

"There ain't, huh," said Julie, "there ain't, huh." She slammed the pans around again. A few of the guys came in from the stereo room. Craig nudged me and said, "Watch this."

Jim crossed the room and grabbed her by the shirt collar. "You get outside," he said, "Get on." I had watched him put the dog out the same way not ten minutes before. I thought that he probably didn't want a scene in front of all these people. That wasn't it. He just put her out, yelling, "When you can behave, you can come back in."

I watched Jim return to Suzy. They each dropped what looked like some more speed. Craig and I went into the stereo room and talked with a few of the guys.

I sat on the couch with a blind guy named Joseph. No, he had not been blind since birth. As a matter of fact, he was pretty much of a stud and a good athlete in high school. He had lost his sight after a guy in front of him had stepped on a land mine in Viet Nam. He had a fairly decent attitude though, "Man" he said, "I don't have to work another day of my life. I get close to ten grand a year from the government. It's really not that bad. Sure, I can't see, but," he slapped me on the thigh, "you'd be surprised at the amount of ass we blind guys get. Take Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder... Joseph Balderson, man, we're swimming in it."

We passed around a few joints of grass, and Craig contributed some hashish which really sent us up river. I had to take a leak but the bathroom was full. I decided to go outside. I almost tripped over Julie as
I descended the stairs, "Shit," I said, "I'm sorry."
   "Go ahead and walk all over me," she said. "Everybody else does."
   "I said I'm sorry."
I went to take a leak and returned. I decided to get Craig and leave. I really didn't care much for the scene. "You got a minute, what's your name?" Julie asked.
   "Sure," I said, "my name's Jack...Jack Glover."
   "I've heard of you," she said, "You played basketball or something, didn't you?"
   "Yeah," I replied, "how'd you know?"
   "Oh, you dated a girlfriend of mine last fall. Carol Holtkamp."
I was a little embarrassed to admit this; I felt like I hadn't treated Carol too nicely.
   "She was real broken up for a spell after you quit her," she said. "I guess a high school girl's not as good as a college one."
   "That wasn't it at all," I said, then thought to myself, "What the hell'd I say that for?"
   "What was it then?" she asked.
   "That's my business," I said. "Anyway, it's not important now."
   "Yeah," asked Julie, "you think so. I saw Carol last week and she still talks about you."
I wanted to change the subject; she beat me to it, "I've got to buy some cigarettes," she said. "You want to ride into town with me?"
I didn't know how long Craig wanted to stay. "I'll ask Craig if he wants to stay. If he does, I'd appreciate a ride home."
   Julie went in to get some money and the car keys.
Craig said he wanted to stay. I took one last look at the place. There were posters of rock groups on all the walls. People were sprawled all over the room in various stages of being high or low. It was like the new church and the high priests were the rock groups, spreading the word via the LP.

Julie had changed from long blue jeans to cut-offs that were really short. She was a good looking woman. Her legs were long and tanned. Her hair was black and cut short. She was small-boned, short, but proportioned in all areas to her size. She seemed really pissed about something. She slammed the car in reverse and popped the clutch. We nearly backed into the ditch, then, as she shifted to first and spun out, we nearly fish-tailed into the other ditch. I didn't say anything. I had a good idea it had to do with Jim.

After a couple of miles, she slowed down until she almost had to shift into second gear to keep the car running. The car was a relic of Jim's past life. It was jacked-up in the rear end. The engine had been altered for speed and the exhaust system sounded like a diesel truck's. It was a fast car with a three-speed transmission on the floor. I had seen some of the trophies it had won back at the house.

"You know what that fucking husband of mine is doing back there?" Julie asked.

She must have known that I didn't, because she continued, "I went in to get some money and there he was," she squeezed the wheel. "He was on top of that bitch Suzy, dry hunching her."

"I don't like your friends, what's your name?" she asked again. "I don't like them at all. Jim was a good fellow. He worked hard and we went dragging on
weekends or something. Now he just sits around with those long haired freaks and does that stuff. He wants me to do it. No sir, not me, not at all."

We slowed for a stop sign, and, rather than turn left into town, she went straight across the highway and down a dirt road. "I'm human, just like all the rest of you people. If I don't want to do that stuff, I don't have to, right?" she looked at me.

"I don't think you should have to do it if you don't want to," I agreed.

"I don't think you should have to do it if you don't want to," she repeated in a high nasal tone.

"Well, do you want to do it?" I asked.

"Well, do you want to do it?" she repeated. The car coughed and died. She got out and sat on the hood. I watched her for a minute or two, then got out.

"I like to sit on a warm hood," she said, rocking back and forth. "When me and Jim'd go to the drags and it was cold, Jim'd always start the car for me and let me sit on the hood." She slid back to the windshield, lay back and pulled her knees up, "Did you see my name on the dashboard? Just after we were married, Jim bought our names and glued them there; Jim's on the driver's side, me on the glove compartment." She began to breathe deeper, "I bought us matching sweaters for his birthday." Now she began to cry, "Oh shit, what happened? These freaking hippies with their free love and all. I want my old Jim back."

She stopped crying about as quickly as she had started, "Fuck Jim, if he can do it, so can I." She pulled the T-shirt over her head and snapped off the bra. She wriggled out of her cut-offs and tossed them
My mouth became so dry that I could hardly spit. She rolled around on that warm hood like a snake on a flat rock. "I miss Jim," she said, "I really do. You know what I mean, don't you?"

I couldn't have spoken if I'd have wanted to. I just moved forward frozen in my own desire, then I heard a car, and the lights were just over the next ridge. "A car's coming, Julie!" I said. "Let's go."

She got behind the wheel, bare as a baby, and we roared off. I had grabbed her cut-offs, which she slipped on at the next sign. She got a T-shirt from the trunk.

We were in town in a record fifteen minutes and that was including the time we took to get her a shirt. She downshifted in front of my house and pulled into the driveway. "Thanks for the ride," I said, hesitating for better offer.

"You won't tell Jim what happened, will you?" she asked.

"What happened?" I asked with a smile.

"Don't ever say I took off my clothes, please," she put the car in first as I stepped out. "I was just mad at Jim. Forget it, will you?"

Summer, 1969 Buckston, Iowa

At the end of July, I received a note from Joy. All it said was, "Don and I have settled in. I'm pregnant again. Hope you are well. Love, Joy." For a few minutes I wondered if I was the father of the baby. I then laughed at the thought, but didn't immediately dismiss it. After all, I concluded, why would she write
to me about her pregnancy.

I also got a letter from the college. They informed me that I would receive a full academic scholarship for the next year. I was elated. I called Craig and invited him over to help me celebrate. He arrived about forty minutes later.

We drank some beer and smoked some dope. We were feeling pretty good when my parents came home. They had been gone most of the day. The first thing my father asked was, "How much painting did you get done today?"

I decided not to tell him about the scholarship. When he saw Craig, he became very sarcastic. He talked about W.W. II and how brave they had been, implying that we were a bunch of chickens. I became angry and argued with him. We both got pretty red in the face. I left.

"I get the same shit from my old man," said Craig. "He tells me how ashamed he is of me for being a C.O. I keep telling him to think of me as a commanding officer in the revolutionary army, rather than a conscientious objector in the regular one."

Craig drove out of town. I figured he was heading for Jim's. "How's Julie getting along these days?" I asked.

"You mean, has Julie come over to our side?"

I didn't mean that, but Craig continued, "She's doing acid now. Last night she did it for the first time. I've never seen anyone so fucked up. You promise you won't say anything to Jim?"

"About what?" I asked. I felt that it was something I wouldn't want to hear.

"That Julie's a nympho, a real live nympho."
I didn't say anything, just shook my head. "Jim had Suzy in the bedroom under the sheets just after I got out there last night," continued Craig. "I had to take a leak, so I went through the bedroom and there were the three of them in bed, Jim, Suzy, and Julie. Jim sees me and says, 'Say Craig, how about a little action?' I still don't know why I didn't agree right then; I guess I was too stoned."

"So why are you freaked out about Jim?" I asked. "What's to be freaked out about?"

"I was taking my dick out in the bathroom when in walks Julie. I mean, Jack," said Craig, "she wanted to do it right there on the bathroom floor. I told her to meet me outside in my car in ten minutes. We met and about half-way through our first go around, I see all these faces at my windows. It was just the other guys, you know, Sammy, Davis, Snapper, the rest.

"I finished," he continued, "and crawled off, when Davis just slipped his cock in and she hardly missed a stroke. I heard the car start, so I ran out to see what was up." Craig paused to get the rest of the story straight.

"That's when Sammy came up on the stolen motorcycle. He must have taken it earlier in the evening. He was drunk as a skunk and stoned out of his gourd and roaring up and down those rock roads on a motorcycle. I had to stop the dumb shit before he killed himself, or worse, hurt the bike.

"I took off after Sammy with Julie and a guy moaning in the back seat. The car was packed. There was one fellow I'd never seen before. And there they were, crawling back and forth, using every hole Julie had in her body."

"About a half hour later," continued Craig, "I found Sammy all cut up, walking up the road. He had this big shit eatin' grin on his face and laughed when he saw us. He crawled right in the back and mounted this guy who was riding Julie. It was really a scream."

"What happened to the bike?" I asked.

"He'd hit a hog with it, and let it lay where it stopped."

We had arrived at Jim's. Craig was a little uneasy about being around Jim. There were only two cars in the driveway. Inside Jim was finishing a hit of speed by the needle route. Julie was in the bedroom. I heard someone put on a record, Laura Nyro, "Gettin' off the poverty train/It feels so good." Suzy returned to the kitchen and rolled a joint. I could see Julie from the stereo room, lying on her stomach in bed.

"Julie sick?" Craig asked. Jim looked at him and smiled. Craig lost all expression in his face; that caused Jim to laugh even louder.

"She can't even fucking walk today," said Jim. "She can't even get up to shit."

I had to walk through the bedroom to take a leak a little later. Julie saw me, "Hey, what's your name?"

"Jack," I repeated.

"Yeah, hey," her voice was real slurred and weak, "hey, could you get me some downers. I need'm real bad. I hear you sell shit."

At that moment I decided not to sell ever again. "No," I said, "I don't sell. I only have two left." I gave them to her and brought some water from the bathroom.

It was a Saturday night in August. I had been studying most of the week. I had finished painting the
house on Tuesday and now had the full day to read and study German. Craig picked me up at around seven. We cruised the streets and talked about a rock festival that was going to come down out east in New York State.

"Jim Hanson says he's taking his van," said Craig. "I think Sammy and I'll cruise on out. It should be a blast. Lots of chicks, good smoke. How about you going too, Jack?"

"I don't think so, Craig," I said. "I've got quite a bit to do before school starts."

We talked about how Craig's C.O. was coming along, then Jim Hanson stopped us. He had traded in his drag car on a van. "Hey Glover," he yelled, "I met a couple of your friends uptown. They say they know you from college."

"What's their names?" I asked, thinking it was probably Jerry and one of his friends.

"Joy and someone," he said, "I didn't catch the guy's name."

"Where'd they say they'd be?"

"I told them to head out to my place," he said. "They said they would try your address first."

Craig drove me home. As we pulled up, I saw Joy talking to my father. They were like night and day. He had been at some business meeting all week and just returned that afternoon. He still wore the suit and tie. Joy was a step below him wearing a flowered blouse, blue jeans, and tons of copper colored jewelry. I walked up, "This woman says she knows you," said my father, expecting me to deny it.

"That's right, dad," I said, "she's a friend from school." My father didn't invite them in, so I got into their car, telling Craig to meet us at Jim's place.
On the way out, Don showed me something in his hand. He sang a song from the rock group Cream, "Spoonful, Spoonful, Spoonful...Just a little spoon of your precious love/Satisfy my soul." I gathered that he had some speed. "We thought you might like to do a little run with us," he said. "We've got enough for a couple of days."

I had some acid so I offered that too. When we arrived at Jim's, nobody was there. I rolled a joint while we waited for someone to show up. Joy talked about her pregnancy. Don was outside taking a leak. She said, "I guess it's about four months along."

I did a quick calculation as I handed her the joint. Four months, that meant conception took place near the middle of May. I was waiting for her to say more. Don got back in and took a hit on the joint, just as Craig pulled up.

As we walked to the house, I couldn't get over how good Joy looked. She seemed to shine. Don and Craig went into the kitchen and mixed a bit of acid with a hit of speed and shot it. An hour later, Joy and I did the same thing. This went on all night. Craig really became interested in Joy. He said to me, "Man, is this the woman you met last spring? How'd you keep your hands off her?"

"Simple," I said, "that's her husband sitting next to her."

This didn't seem to bother Craig, and Craig's no slouch either. Like I said before, he was great looking. I had yet to see him not get what he wanted with a woman. Then I saw it. Joy wasn't interested in him at all.

When morning came, we all went outside and smoked some weed. Jim and Julie hadn't come home all night.
Craig figured he was with Joseph, the blind guy. Joseph always had money and always had at least some downs for the times when his eyes were giving him a lot of pain. He didn't have much pain anymore, but he still kept getting the pills and complaining about his eyes.

We had done all the acid the night before. I didn't have any drugs left. I had given my last two downers to Julie and the speed was gone long ago, except for what Don had, and now the acid was gone. It gave me a good feeling to get out. I just had a little weed left, but I didn't see anything wrong with that. I actually liked it better than alcohol. So, the four of us did the last four hits of speed and felt like doing something afterwards. I suggested a drive to the lake, so off we went.

It really felt weird to be coming down off acid and going up again on speed. For a half hour or so there was a feeling of melancholy as if my body couldn't decide which way to go. The acid was mostly a mind trip, the speed a body. I started to feel sort of closed in in the car, so I asked Don to let me out, saying I would walk around to the beach. Joy got out with me.

We walked the path around the lake. She talked again about her pregnancy. This time she mentioned Don's surprise and pleasure. She also talked about how they had found a job in Cedar Rapids, and Don liked it all right. It was a branch store from his dad. This made me feel good because I had suggested it, yet I said nothing to Joy. I had decided that it probably had been in Don's head long before I said anything. Anyway, I didn't have any reason to make myself look better in Joy's eyes.

We walked around the hill and I stopped cold. I saw a black-skinned man with a mask and air tanks on his
back drag a blue green body from the water. He laid the body on the beach, and it was immediately covered with a green blanket.

Joy turned and hugged me. After a few minutes, we walked nearer to the scene. Craig and Don saw us and Craig ran up saying, "Shit man, Joseph's dead!"

"The police asked us if we'd called," said Don.

"I wonder how Joseph got out here?" asked Craig.

"He's blind; he can't drive."

"Well, he had to get out here somehow," I said, "but I'm not going down there right now in my condition."

We left as the crowd grew larger and larger. Don and Joy said they wanted to take off before they started to come down. We didn't say much upon departure. As I watched their car round the corner and disappear, I still felt the power in Joy's look when she said, "I still love you. I still do."

According to the police report released in the Buckston Register, a foreign substance had been discovered in Joseph's body. They said it had been ingested and appeared to be a stimulant similar to that used in nasal inhalers.

The authorities and leading civic groups were up in arms. They offered a reward for information leading to the arrest of persons responsible for the murder of Joseph Balderson.

Everyone who knew Joseph knew that he ate inhalers. He'd buy them at the drug store, break them open, squeeze the juice into a spoon, and swallow it.

A few days later the authorities raided Jim's house. Jim was not home, but Julie was. Craig said they found her naked in the corner of the basement. Later she told the police that she had been skinny dipping with Joseph
and that all of a sudden he had just disappeared. Jim had already left for Woodstock, New York. A few days later, so did Craig and Sammy. I just had a little stash of weed, so I was clean. Julie committed herself to kick downers, was released six weeks later; then I heard she had a bed job in Cedar Rapids. Later I heard she spent some time in the Women's Reformatory for writing bad checks. So went my summer. I bought a new pair of blue jeans and headed back to college.