

FOREVER AND



JERRY KATZ

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Chapter One

the front door slowly closes and clicks shut. she listens intently to his footsteps on the pavement as if it were words getting fainter and fainter. snuggles up to the man sitting next to her, pulling her dress up to her crotch, as her eyes, furtively gazing into his, implore promiscuity. then shoulder straps pulled down below her bare breasts, they wantonly screw on the sofa, bright light streaming in from the large bay window, shadows of the trees and plants, making disembodied, but sensual, patterns on them.. she smiles at him, momentarily satisfied. "is that all there is?" "perhaps in a week or so from now we can see." she nods her affirmation, gets up, brushes, and pulls down the hem of her dress, to the extent it can be pulled down. "I'll call you," she says, looking in her purse to make sure she hasn't lost her keys.

as the week progresses, predictably, her concupiscence increases exponentially and a scheme comes into her head. if she does have sex with **he no. 2**, and can time it so they climax at the moment when **he no. 1** arrives and enters the room. that would serve to sufficiently alter her jaded view.

she opens wide the windows in all the rooms, and imagines the birds chirping, to temper her erotic obsession. she's somewhat shaken, but then elated, with the proposition her still somewhat current lover may catch them in the act. when **he no. 2** arrives she's wearing a silk, semi see through, tunic, and nothing on underneath, mauve nail polish on her toes and fingernails, a medium coat of nude lipstick brushed on her delicate lips, her thick, but straight, auburn hair,

framing her sensuous, aesthetically contoured face, neatly combed out. they stand on the carpet in the middle of the living room. she rubs the front of her warm body up against him. they breathlessly kiss. she watches him take off his clothes and hopes to still be hotly engaged when **he no. 1**, arrives, then asks, "would you like me to blow you first?" she gently, gives him head, his penis pulsing. he can apprehend the subtle change in her attitude, incrementally, towards a greater purposefulness, but without comprehending the cause. she casually, but suggestively, removes her wrapper. their bodies once again come together, and first they fuck standing up, moving modestly, almost tenderly. then, her insouciance returning full force, they continue on the bed. after a satisfactory first orgasm they lay there, window open to the afternoon light, resting, then making out. she's biding time that they will still be conjoined when **he no. 1** comes back. to make sure, she nuzzles all the parts of his body, then, seditiously coaxing, allows him to guide his warm cock deep into her anus, receiving it's thrusts with the subtle movement of her buttocks before deliberately falling forward enough his slippery cock slides out. he'll be back in ten minutes or less. she kisses **he no. 2** tenderly and sincerely, so as to allow their love making to be unhurried and grounded. when they start to intently fuck, her nipples hard against his chest, she can hear **he no. 1's** car pull into the driveway. the sound of his footsteps, then the sound of the front door opening and closing, prods her into an erotic frenzy, and simultaneously they come with loud moans just a moment after **he no. 1** enters the room.

stunned (as one might imagine) **he no. 1** stands silently and

stares, watching them, strangely, oddly, absorbed. "I hope you won't be cross with me," she says, raising her head, smiling dreamily, rapturously, her hand resting on her partner's chest. gradually his ability to think and speak returns. still feeling a bit awkward, he tries a little humor; "this is not exactly a nativity tableau." she continues to smile dreamily while stroking the hairs on her partner's chest. "hardly," it's nothing personal. I wish you'd cheat. then I could stand here and watch you." "I don't have your attributes." she and both men laugh. "then you'd like us to be swingers?" "no", she makes a face, "that's a shuck." "I agree. what about group sex?" "it doesn't address that the thrill is in what you're doing the other may want but can't have. "but why should one get a thrill out of that?" "just compensation, I suppose." "compensation for what?" "I just told you," she snaps, then demurs, sits up, stretches and yawns, hair falling on her forehead and cheeks, half covering her face. "I think we'd better get dressed," her partner says, sitting up, also. "unless he wants to take off his clothes. what do you say?," she asks, turning to **he no. 1**. "I can give you a nice licking, swallow your cum." he shakes his head. "watching the two of you makes me want to fuck." "sorry, you missed the first act. I'm more than satisfied." she turns to her partner and they both smile. "besides, those internet group porn orgies are totally faked." he thinks a moment. "ok, I'm game." he removes his shoes, socks, pants, and shorts, and sits, legs spread, immediately erect. still naked she kneels in front of him, and to make up for any discomfort her indiscretion may have caused him, slowly lowering her mouth onto it, gives him the blowjob of his life, then, her lips moist with cum, kisses him, affectionately. "that's for being so nice."

alone, and in a more serious and reflective mood, a woman can have genital sex with a man regardless of her physical, emotional state while the converse is not true for the man. she empathizes with the male regarding this simple physical fact,. she recalls several years earlier, age just 20, she attended a party at what she supposed one could call a mansion, just north of Sunset, in Beverly Hills, with a man she thought she was seriously committed to, and had become somewhat gratuitously engaged in short conversation and increasingly suggestive eye contact with another man, until they stood, alone, face to face in the long, empty, entrance hall, the man, and the then innocent, pretty, sweet, swept up hair brunette, in flowering pink dress, looking blankly into each other's eyes, while her male escort in the front room, occupied with social talk, was obliged to help serve drinks, her look, acknowledging his with impassive assent. they went to a back bedroom, shut and locked the door. she, thoughtfully!, unzipped the top back of her dress, unhurriedly lifting it over her head, then, with cool deliberation, removed her see through panties and bra – cut to two naked bodies totally separate from the party, ravenously fucking.

a week later she was thinking humorously this may seem strange, even perverse, but it was then she first realized her calling. sitting, legs crossed above the knees, running her hand along the length of her calf and thigh, with an aroused shiver, as if it were being stroked by a man...or woman. as **he no. 1** does not want to be a participant, and she's found **he no. 2's** blasé attitude to be ultimately unappealing, she's looking in her mind to `open up the field'. and when the opportunity soon presents itself, she more than happily takes it.

Chapter Two

there's a full moon in a hazy sky over the Blue Whale, the jazz club situated on the third level of a strip mall in downtown L.A.'s Little Tokyo. vocalist Kat Edmonson is almost through her first set. sitting next to her, on one of the padded benches adjacent to the stage, is a much older looking man she'd briefly noticed holding a drink, which appeared to be either vodka or gin, but as she later found out, was just mineral water. he'd thoughtfully traded seats with her, so that the couple seated directly in front of them, would not partially block her view. although Edmonson's minimal songs and arrangements seem to him somewhat conventional, there's an unmistakable freshness and quality to her voice and delivery, as well as a fetching poise, which if one is in the right mood of reflection, can seem poignant. there's been a buzz about the Texas based singer, lately, and, for this occasion, the small club with it's spare, industrial ambience, has drawn a sizable crowd. she concludes her first set, with her most acknowledged song to date, Nobody Knows That, riveting everyone in the room. as both of them are staying for the second set, during the break they strike up a conversation. "how did you know about her?," she asks. "I was searching for a song, Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most"... she laughs, interrupting... "and," he continues, "one of the youtube options was a video of her singing it, a cappella, an unusual and arresting way to do it. then I `stalked', as one online comment put it, her other videos." as he talks to this attractive woman with whom he feels very sexual vibes, he's also wondering what she's doing in a jazz club, alone, watching another woman perform material, he senses, she'd only

be peripherally interested in – that she'd, he erroneously thinks, be more at home in a club with a DJ spinning mixes. "I mostly listen to groups," she says, psychically picking up his thoughts. "I go to some of the sessions here because I like the ambience. I don't mind going to clubs, alone. it allows me to tune into that place in myself while still being around people. my father was a jazz musician, and I grew up around that music. he nods, moved by the part about listening and being alone, which is the same with him, except this is the first time he's been in a club in many years. "what do you do?, she asks. "I write and do visual art, mostly photos with the latter. what instrument did your father play?" "piano, but I'm more into horns, especially tenor and alto sax. the youngest man in my father's group was a reed player. he was very good looking, and I had a big crush on him as a girl. even when I didn't know anything about sex the sound of a saxophone turned me on." "it makes you want to have sex?" "yes." "have you actually put that into practice?" "yes." "you mean with saxophone players?" she blushes slightly and looks him in the eyes. "that's another reason I like coming to clubs, alone." "how often do you do that." "I haven't done it in a long while." "what do you do now?" "mostly, I waste my time. I've come to the realization that is the case, and I want to do something about it."

"I'd very much like to see you again, Anna," he says, as they stand together outside the club after the second set concludes with a cover of You Can't Break My Heart, breathing in the damp coolness. "I'd very much like to see you again, Jerry," she says, before they each return to their parked cars.

the next few days she feels happy and creative. she's very attracted to the older man, and her interest in who he is and what he does, has been piqued. considering her recent past it's odd she's once again become interested in the most quotidian aspects of life, the things around her, the food one eats, and the more mundane thoughts one thinks. so when, standing in his bedroom, watching him fold and put away the clothes he's just brought up from the dryer, she notices how most of his Jockey shorts have sizable rips and tears, and when, somewhat astounded, she points that out, he replies, "nobody' sees me in my underwear." she barely suppresses a smile, given her obvious intention of seeing him in just a little bit less. contrasting her more recent affluence (he stacks his foldable clothes on his closet shelf, he has no furniture, really, with the exception of a couple of chairs, the arms of which are worn to the stuffing), still, she discovers, she feels innervated by, and prefers, her current perspective to her former, and she's beginning to see, given her propensity for physical-sexual wildness, the ways in which she's still more conservative than he. "I know this may sound like a contradiction, but I would never try to hurt someone who actually could be hurt. you're the first one in a long time I feel that way about," she says, thinking of the men she's been most recently involved with.

"I don't feel I'm in a position to adequately use social media. login to Facebook, it's absurd the way people collect 'friends' like trading cards." "do you have a website?" "yes, and I suppose I should blog, but who would I be reaching, and I'd rather my work speak for itself. I'm confused as to the right way to do it." "you don't need a lot of technical knowledge."

"I know, but then what? even if there's traffic it doesn't necessarily translate into the right kind of recognition. I'm even thinking of posting an entire book, and allowing it to be downloaded for free – that would be foolish wouldn't it?" "if you're interested in making money, yes." "I'm more concerned about plagiarism from people who have greater access than me. in fact I have fears that has already happened. maybe they're just coincidences, but there's been a lot of them, lately. a few of my books are out there, circulating, plus the books I sent to people, but I've also wondered if, in some way, my work has gotten online, I mean elsewhere than my site." "it could just be the zeitgeist." "true, but when the wording is almost the same it makes one wonder. also book formatting is an issue. I don't indent paragraphs, I don't use caps at the beginning of sentences, and I don't separate dialogue from the body of the text. this is the way I naturally write." Anna has no trouble responding aesthetically to what Jerry's saying, but wonders if he's not masochistically putting up roadblocks. "I'd be abusing my own creative process to do it the accepted way just because that's the way it's done," he answers her thoughts. "I used to think if I had the work getting it seen or read would be minor. I didn't realize that just having no outlet could be the source of pain, because it's the work that matters. I didn't realize just being here, maintaining this tension, the anxiety would build. when I'm engaged in my work It's fine, and I get real satisfaction in perceiving what I've done. then I get up in the morning and feel the futility of `what am I going to do today'. this frustration I experience daily, affects my motivation. but I'd still rather have the goods, even when nobody knows about it, than have the social opportunities gained through self-abuse,

and be in too bad shape to enjoy it's fruits." "it sounds like you know something about that." "yes, I do. I Just couldn't do it anymore. the process of healing took me away from it. what's become more of an issue is the feeling of being deliberately shut out, black listed, actually. though I'm used to being the odd man out. when you create alone you're more apt to tell the truth than if you're involved with, beholden to, groups. this can lead to social ostracism. my process seems to be one of **networking in reverse**. "you'd have to explain why you feel that way, of course."

"it's no secret you're my muse, now Anna," Jerry says , quite aware of the negative connotations presently associated with that word. "I don't know what I can do, Jerry. I have no standing in the world you seek access to." "that's ok, at least now I have someone to talk to about it." Anna, affected by Jerry's malaise, suggests, "I know you don't eat lunch, but let's go out to lunch, anyway." "sounds intriguing, Anna." he then asks her, for no particular reason, "what do you want to do after lunch?" Anna, taken off guard concerning her covert plans, blushes, partially shielding her face with her hand. "I thought we might spend the rest of the afternoon in bed, laying naked together." both of them are now feeling very good. sitting with Anna in the generating hum of a crowded public place allows Jerry to feel uplifted in a way he had not much opportunity to feel of late, a subtly protective shield falling away, their afternoon's peaceful, restful, idyll, ending at dusk, on a more intensely erotic note, Anna on her back, what she's been craving deep inside her, her mouth locked in Jerry's neck, biting and sucking hard, while they fuck until the day's frustration, mostly obliterated, she sharply comes.

“do you ever watch porn?” “yes, I use some of the photos in my work.” “that’s right.” “quite a bit transformed. I recently watched a video” “was it since we met?” “no, it was just before.” “I’m glad it wasn’t after.” “don’t you ever watch porn?” “yes.” “a lot?” “I have, but I’ve been able to act out my fantasies in real time.” “I wish I could say that.” “I have no desire to watch porn now.” “neither do I. that’s what I was saying.” “you were talking about a video.” “it was one of those ‘horny wife gets banged hard while her husband watches’, videos.” “it could very well have been me in my most previous life,” she laughs, “go ahead, I’m sorry.” “no need to be, I’d like to know more about that, Anna.” “I want you to know everything about me, Jerry.” she then asks as an afterthought, “would you like to watch that video you mentioned, together?” “if we can find it.” it begins with a close up of her ‘husband’ eating her. then pulls back to a full shot of her sitting on the bed, and he, still kneeling before her, looking up, she voluptuous, wearing a flimsy, clinging, but loosely hanging, red print, summer dress, dropped below her breasts, which are barely covered with a black lace bra with long, thin straps, dress, of course, above her crotch, her shapely long legs in high black hose. of course she’s wearing 6 inch black heels. the man is a little shorter than average, with a clean, generic, almost handsome, boyish face. wearing just pants, his bare upper torso is slight, but compact, with no extra body fat. as he gazes up at her, the look on her face, which is framed by long, blonde, wild, naturally curly hair, is one of dissatisfaction, slightly contemptuous, even. they have a brief discussion about his inability to satisfy her, and, finally, he says, he’ll be right back and leaves to purchase either a sex toy or get-hard pills. as soon as he’s gone, standing, she

flaunts her body, showing off her legs, hips, etc., then picks up her phone and calls someone, her partner in adultery, sex object, servicer, lover, whatever, by her facial expressions, heavily flirting. he arrives shortly, a tall, black, male, with a sensuous face, and after giving each other lustful looks, stand kissing for a while, then the both of them, still standing, she unbuttons his white, summer sport coat, which he removes, then his shirt, which he removes, revealing an athletic, not overly muscular, body. she smiles lustfully up at him, as he unfastens his pants, and pulls out an exceptionally long, possibly surgically elongated, but relatively thin, semi-hard, cock, and she exuberantly sucks, at the same time, stroking it's length with her hand, plunging her mouth deep, sucking the head. at this time her husband returns, who she barely acknowledges, holding a package. she slights him contemptuously, inviting him to "sit in the corner," and she continues performing fellatio, as her husband resignedly sits on the bed, while she and her partner passionately kiss, his arms binding her tightly, squeezing her breasts, which are exceptionally large, indicating hers, too, may have been 'enhanced'. she's now wearing only a skimpy, black lace, bra, with the shoulder straps, down, and a black thong belt from which garters are attached to her hose on either side, and they fuck, sensuously, in that it's not fast, not slow, both of them moving in unison. there's a lot of eye contact between them, which is somewhat unusual in porn videos. the video is trying to make clear that they dig each other, especially, she, him – not quite the more obviously abusive, overtly racially motivated, sado-masochistic display often present in this kind of video. after a while her legs are pretty much up at a 90 degree angle,. her stocking'd toe is resting against his mouth and he

kisses and gnaws it, as they continue fucking, an esoteric, faux ecstatic, look on her face. then he pulls out, and as the camera glorifies her white, black seamed stocking-'d strapped thighs, and rump, her legs raised and spread, showcasing her cunt, he lowers his head, his sensuous facial features in profile, black hand extended, fingers spread, the obvious black on white depictions, clutching her rump/thigh, and eats her, the sound on, amplifying their moans as well as the conversation with she and him, and with she and her husband, who, by this time, is sitting on the bed, back to the wall, a blank, defeated, expression on his face, completely naked. they fuck some more. then he fucks her doggy style, pulling her hair, her rump raised, cheek lowered to the bed cover, both making very loud sounds, until he pulls his cock out, presses it to her mouth, beginning to ejaculate, a little cum on her lips and cheek, as she hurriedly takes it to her mouth, sucking fervently, taking in each spurt. then, her mouth full, she moves to where her anguished husband is lying in a fetal position, his cheek pressed against the sheets. she hovers over him, and, slowly, let's a stream of the other man's cum fall onto his other raised cheek and with an extended finger, rubs it in, slowly massaging it into his skin, like one would a cream. she releases more semen then does it again. is there a symbolic gesture, here? her facial expression appears to be somewhat disdainful, but there's an ambiguity to it, in which one could construe an act of tenderness, as well as just 'rubbing it in'. one could interpret it as transferring one man's potency to the other. at any rate pretty weird. 24 minutes. but who knows in real time. neither Jerry nor Anna look at each other immediately after the video ends. "it is a deliberate propagation of racial and sexual stereotypes,

Anna finally says.” “yes, that’s the most obvious fact, and most of the `language’ used to tag these videos is vile, but many people who watch it are too sophisticated to relate to that as anything but being consciously exploitive, repugnant, yes, yet they watch it. despite the crudeness, the graphicness, yes, the themes, are what people who watch identify with – and for all it’s raunchy-ness there is something of the actual in the daily lives and fantasies of people, no matter how grossly depicted, absent in the mainstream media. the performers are paying a price with their bodies to impact that aspect of culture that’s been cynically exploited and sexualized, yet repressed, and they’ve forced mainstream media, even in the higher toned arts, to up the ante – for instance, in Lars van Trier’s most recent movie, *Nymphomaniac*, he now can, or has to, show the male and female protagonists graphically fucking. but, from what I’ve read, the images of body doubles who did the actual fucking, were digitally `stitched’ onto the images of the film’s stars, who were simulating actual sex . given the degree of effort taken in the packaging of the sex lives of stars, it’s curious they need help when it comes to sex in film. it’s also interesting that sex in film is viewed as a specialized function in the same way that tennis or boxing is, which requires a `professional’ to stand-in. conversely, acting is a skill which I think it’s safe to say, in most cases, porn actors, don’t have,” Jerry adds, drawing a laugh from Anna. not quite ready to let it go they watch a shorter video of sex on a teacher’s desk. the plot – a sadistic gym instructor with a body builder physique, fucks and abuses a fashion model thin, small breasted girl, with a very pretty face, long pretty hair, and a curvy figure who he’s `called into his office.’ the imagery and `acting’, if mundane,

was believable, both ways. she was very natural, and she really looked like she was in her late teens – she could have been standing with a group at a bus stop outside her school at 3:30 pm. “it makes me wonder where do all these sex performers come from – young, old, and in-between. and the answer is, anywhere. there are thousands of them. it’s a real cultural phenomenon.” Anna, inexplicably, blushes. “when the axe finally falls on porn it will be total, however”, Jerry concludes. Anna is surprisingly affected. she is extremely aroused sexually but emotionally subdued and vulnerable, and scuttles their plans to go out for a while. “why don’t we just go to bed, instead,” she says, face and eyes glowing in the lamplight, arms around Jerry, pressing her breasts and groin against his, kissing him tenderly.

“I’m going to lift the pastel green shirt you’re wearing, above your rump and put this into your raised ass, and move slowly, for a long, long time, until..” “don’t come in my ass.” “not if you don’t want me to, Anna,” he says, rubbing her warm bare breasts under her unbuttoned, green shirt, and they kiss, intimately, tenderly, passionately. when the good natured skirmishing ends, Anna, naked, exchanges the shirt for an avocado grey-green silk blouse, and pulls up thigh high, red, pink, and charcoal, striped cotton stockings, then stops, as Jerry, for the first time, notices two odd looking (odd in the sense of unusual) objects on Anna’s lamp table – an azure latex condom, with mint-green soft rubber spikes, protruding from a sponge-like base, attached at the top, looking, more than anything else, like a small multi-colored, extremely exotic, jellyfish. beside it is a smaller, translucent purple tube-like condom with dark blue rounded nubs on its sides.

already aroused, Jerry looks hard at Anna. “where did you get those?” “a friend gave them to me as a souvenir.” “a friend?” “not exactly. I dated someone several nights ago I once had a sometime relationship with. he had a box with an assortment of them. we used one with bright pink feathers, and he gave me these. why don’t we try them, Jerry,” she asks, before he can raise more questions, looking soulfully into his eyes, ravenous, almost naked, in the silk blouse and stockings.” “how did that come about?” he asks, as he removes his pants, shorts, and shoes. “it didn’t come about, it was more or less expected,” she brusquely replies. “we were going to go to a performance first, but as how I looked made him so horny, we decided to park in a deserted spot in the hills, right then, instead.” “and he just ‘happened’ to have a box of them with him.” “he sells items to sex shops for a living. he keeps the articles in the trunk of his car.” Jerry nods with interest. “did it work?” he asks, referring to the use of the pink feathers in her most recent nocturnal engagement. “no more than in having sex without them. you know I don’t need those kind of things.” “then why do you want to use them now?”. “I just thought it might be fun, or maybe I should say, mentally stimulating, being I have them, just to try them.” “I’ve read the tops sometimes break off. in intercourse that could turn into a real problem.” “evidently they can when they get old and brittle. he said these are reliable.” “I’ve also read they don’t fit well, that they’re uncomfortable to wear, and that most women who’ve tried them, either find them uncomfortable as well, or get no additional satisfaction,” Jerry persists, masking the increasingly erotic urge he’s feeling to try them. “what have we to lose?”, Anna asks, looking sexy, and angelic as a virgin.

“ok, which one do you want to use?” “let’s start with this,” she says, feeling an unpredictably irresistible excitement in her anus, as she slips the thin, dark purple one with the speed bumps onto his painfully erect penis. there’s a moment’s hesitation between them as to what they’ll actually do. they stare forthrightly into each other’s eyes. picking up her suggestive, naughty, vibe, he turns her around, and she bends forward over the bed. he lifts her cheeks and moves his cock under her as she allows the purple condom with the speed bumps entrance. “it was more the thrill of the word, French ticklers, and the illicitness of having sex in a parked car,” she mutters between thrusts, “something I’d hadn’t done in years, and that we might have gotten caught doing.....Oh, Jerry, Fuck me,” she cries out, too excited to play with it any longer. self-absorbed, they silently move together, his fingers reaching down between her thighs, one finger pressing on her clit, while penetrating deeper with his cock, his fingers soaked with a light mucous-like fluid. as he continues pressing his fingers, and they continue to hump, suddenly Anna’s doorbell insistently rings. with the blinds on the front windows raised, and the bedroom door ajar, they realize they can be clearly seen from the street. he pulls out the studded condom. Anna closes the door. horny but laughing, they sit on the bed, Anna, legs straddled, on his lap, facing one another. “did the bumps make a difference?,” Jerry asks. “I was so aroused I almost didn’t feel them. just the suggestion may have helped. sex is so mental.” “I suppose we should put the other one on hold.” “we may not feel this way in a little while,” she says, kissing him.

several hours later, as it turns out, the image of the unused

condom is still tantalizingly lodged in their heads, and they can hardly wait to get back from Samys camera, where Jerry's purchased ink cartridges and paper for his photo printer. as soon as they return and hurriedly close the door, Anna removes her skirt, panties, bra and heels, and Jerry once again strips down below the waist. she pulls off her cotton striped stockings, goes to the bedroom, slips on sheer, seamless, beige, nylon hose for a more boudoir effect and returns with the white, down comforter she's retrieved from the bed. Anna can be very performance oriented during sex changing what she wears in moments that inspire it. "let's do it on the floor where we'll have more room to move and won't fall off anything" they double fold the comforter and lay it out on the floor she rubs up against him, and first giving him head, slides the comically decorative French tickler onto his penis. she languidly falls back onto the comforter, cushiony and soft, thighs spread, pulling him to her, eagerly accepting his cock, plant like antennae and all. she wraps her legs around him and as he fucks her, she closes her eyes. a French tickler is in her. she's in horny suspense, moaning for satisfaction. besides herself, legs still tightly wound around him, their bodies move off the comforter, wriggling, inching, halfway across the room, the tentacles of the condom exciting whatever it touches twisting writhing flailing thrashing, insatiable, she loosens the grasp of her legs and raises them vertically, stocking'd feet crossed hugging his neck, as hands on each side, pressed to the floor, he alternately probes and thrusts, slowly rubbing the top of the condom against her clit, then plunging, pushing against her uterus walls until, with excited cries, she begins the series of orgasms which only finally abate several minutes later.

when, flushed with pleasure, her moans have ceased, he pulls out, and drops the dead jellyfish, saturated with semen, onto the floor.

"I've a secret. I starred in a porn video." he looks at her like he would look at someone in a porn video, and thinks he'd really like to see her in one. "how did that come about?" "I modeled for a while – sometimes dresses, sometimes slips, bras, and other lingerie, and was approached, like most models were, to do one. I, of course, at first, said no, but they kept sweetening the offer until I finally said yes." "was it serious porn?" "it was hardcore. the more you do the more money you get." "can you tell me what it was about?" "there was little plot, just a tag, 'instructor takes college girl to dinner, then beds her'. it was only 18 minutes." "and, of course, it was very explicit." "very, yes. we did the standard repertoire." drawn to the thought of seeing her in a porn video he wonders if it can still be seen. "how were you dressed?" "dressed up, the 'professor' had invited me to dinner," she laughs, "in a deep purple , satin dress, gold satin heels, and, of course, black lace underwear, black hose and garters, for those close ups. my hair was up." "what was the man who was playing the instructor like?" "middle age and generic in appearance, you know, a suit and short hair. he wore a bow tie, a little seedy – the contrast to make me look especially desirable." "can you give me the details?" "there was dinner, drinks at his apartment, making out half undressed, oral sex both ways, then fucking, genital and anal, and, finally, my swallowing his cum. the typical hardcore format." "was it hard to fuck in front of the camera?" "not at all, being I'm not shy about sex – just not authentic." "in what way?"

“there was no intent. it was all out front. there was no feeling either emotional or erotic, no communication. there has to be communication to establish a rhythm. I wasn’t hot, though I looked to be, that’s the come-on, it’s not what you feel, it’s how you’re seen, and I didn’t have any orgasms though I faked one another issue, I have to say, understandably, he couldn’t stay hard. in fact, he was never completely hard. they had to obliquely redirect the camera to compensate.” “why do you say, understandably.” “if I were a man I imagine it would be very difficult to get hard under those circumstances, even though the crew was reasonably sensitive and perceptive, unless I’d taken Viagra or something, or was a phallic narcissist, which some men are. he liked me, that turned me on, and would have liked it if I’d more participated in the fantasy with him. but I wasn’t fantasizing.” “I can picture you dressed the way you described, and I’ve got an erection. you must have looked sexy and gorgeous.” “they seemed to think so.” “did you see it?” “yes, just once.” “where, on the internet?” “no, they showed us the video, and they wanted me to do more.” “why didn’t you?” “I think I was initially mostly curious. but repeated it would have gotten tedious. I knew, eventually, it would have been fucking with both my mind and health.” “what was your reaction when you saw it?” “it really turned me on.” “really, then what did you do?” “as soon as I was alone, I masturbated.” they both laugh. “do you think it’s still being shown?” “I don’t know. it seems it would be.” “does that worry you?” “not at all. it’s just play acting. bad art.”

“Jerry, can you come over?” “when?” “right now, I have a surprise for you.” when he arrives he’s never seen her, or

anyone else, for that matter, looking so gorgeous. she's seated, wearing a multi-colored print blouse, hair, full, and combed lightly back, and her tight, very short, cerulean blue skirt is pulled tautly across the upper portion of her thighs. the only catch is, there are two uber masculine, smirking, males, who are standing next to her. "they're going to fuck you. that's the surprise," she responds, to his questioning look, "and I'm going to watch." he gets up and starts for the door, but one of them clicks shut the lock. "just relax and let it happen. if you can be passive when it comes to physical interaction with men, then just let them fuck your passivity. it won't hurt. it will bring closure to your hidden anxiety." she smiles, looking absolutely radiant. he tries to unlock the door before getting shoved away. "get undressed." Jerry shakes his head. "then we'll undress you. don't worry, brutality isn't our thing." he's about to ask what is their 'thing', when the second man adds, "just humiliation." "he looks too much like a man. let's put a skirt on 'her.'" he turns his head to Anna. "do you have anything?" she smiles happily, gets up, goes to the closet and removes a bright red skirt from its hanger, and hands it to them. they fasten the skirt around his waist. "too bad he doesn't have boobs," he says, thoughtfully. "how about lipstick?" she immediately gets up, rummages her purse, pulls out a tube, and while they hold him fast, she deftly applies a carmine coat as he struggles to turn his face away. she goes to the chair, face glowing, legs crossed, skirt now above her crotch, transfixed, as the two men approaching, slip condoms on their erect dicks, shoving Jerry onto his back. Anna gets up from her chair, and seating herself on the bed, cradles his head onto her lap, inserts her tongue into his ear, and whispers, "I forgive you," as he is, raised legs

pushed backwards, forcefully fucked. she returns to her seat and once again, sits as they get up, dress and leave. to them I was a woman and my ass was a cunt, that simple, he thinks – but he doesn't envy them in their one way trip that excludes femininity – an ass is not a cunt and the result was indeterminate. he did not come, and he now looks at her legs with an incredible hunger, and springs an erection. but before he can do anything about it, a wild look in her eyes, she says, "let me fuck you, too!," and pulls a double ended strap-on from her bag, without waiting for an answer, quickly straps it on, inserting one end into her vagina moves to the bed, and firmly pushing his back to the mattress, she mounts him just like the men did, and fucks him furiously, until she comes with razor-edged groans and moans, then pulling it out, loosens the straps, defiantly flips it to the floor, and pushing her skirt down, returns to the chair, and once again sits, sedately.

"I love you, Jerry. anything you want me to do, I'll do it. smother me with a pillow while you fuck me, I'll have multi-orgasms before I expire." "nothing that dramatic," he responds, wearily. "first, I want to rub my cock against, and then come, on your gorgeous thigh, then kiss you. it's love I want. pretty simple. he moves to her chair, and rubbing his erect penis against her warm thigh, hearts beating wildly as they kiss, he ejaculates, moaning loudly. she bends forward, sucks up the semen and with her tongue, licks her thigh clean.

"wake up Jerry, it's almost noon." he opens his eyes, smiles, and slowly nods. "you must have been dreaming a lot. your facial expression kept changing and you were making a lot of sounds. you were sensuously moving, almost as if you were

having sex.” when he pulls back the comforter she sees the soaked spot on the sheets. “you had a wet dream,” she says, smiling tenderly. “was it anything that would make me jealous?” “it was mostly about us, Anna.”

when Jerry arrives at Anna’s, unexpectedly, the next day at about noon, after staying up most of the night, working, she’s wearing a short, tight fitting, multi-hued (op art) dress, which changes colors from luminous red, yellow, orange, or green, to blue, purple, depending on the angle the light hits it, and black high heels. he can’t keep his eyes off of her. “why are you so dressed up , Anna?” “no particular reason; Jerry. I just felt like it.” “are you going somewhere?” “not right now.” “then let’s go out ” “I’m not sure I want to.” “why is that?” “I’m feeling lazy today. I’d prefer to just stay here and lay around for a while.” “you’re behaving in a very mysterious way, Anna.” he follows her to her bedroom and sits on her bed, while she stands by the window, the light directly in her eyes, bringing out their amber, almost saffron, radiance. she sits down next to him. “have you eaten?,” he asks. “not yet.” “then what do you want to do,?” “I’d like to swallow your cum.” he breathes in the perfume on her neck and in her hair. she gazes into his green/blue eyes, then looks down, unbuttons and unzips his jeans, yanking them to his knees, followed by his navy briefs. already half hard, she rubs her mouth along the length of it, and it springs erect, almost vertical, and curved, stiff as a rubber truncheon. she begins, slowly, releasing saliva, so as to reduce the friction, then deep throating it as they become more engrossed. he reaches up under her short dress and feels her warm thighs, and tugs at her lace trimmed panties, his hand moving beneath them.

he wants to feel her up, but the top of the dress is fastened high on her neck, mandarin style. it seems to take longer to come when being blown, than when fucking, maybe because he's less active, and the attentiveness is absolute. they build together, as in fucking, but more a linguistic communication. as the air becomes increasingly quiet, the multi-hues of her dress seem to explode from his brain, and as he nears orgasm, he tries to drive the inevitable from his mind, so as to increase the pleasure even more, fixing his eyes on her bare thighs, as her mouth relentlessly plummets, then orgasms fully with cries that sound of both pain and pleasure, as Anna, hungrily, swallows his spurts. neither of them speak for several minutes. "I think I've got my nutrition," she finally says, her dress raised, as Jerry's face burrows in her lap. he lays the length of the bed. "I'm very sleepy, Anna. I don't think I want to go out." "why don't you go to sleep, now. I'll be back later this afternoon." "where are you going?" "I have to meet someone." "so that's why you're all dressed up, stockings and all." "yes." "to have sex?," he asks, completely taken by surprise. "that is the unstated intent. I need something right now with a person in a way I don't need right now with you. I've been turned on by someone who makes me want to be as reprobate as possible and I can't just let it go to waste." Anna's phone rings. she moves to the opposite side of the room as she listens then laughs, responding flirtatiously, speaking low (Jerry can't quite hear her words), listens a short time more, then says, "Fine," a serious edge to her voice. she goes to the bathroom, urinates, gargles with mouthwash, and dabs a tincture of Jasmin eau de parfum to her neck, then returning to the bedroom, combs out her hair and straightens her dress. "I'll see you in several hours," she

says, and exits the room. he listens to the front door shut, and the click of her heels on the stairs, though perplexed, then falls into slumber.

when she returns, her dress of many colors, rumpled, but otherwise looking good as ever, it's almost dark, and he's still in bed, the thought of getting up and hanging around while she was out and with someone having been too unappealing. "how did it go?" "very well," she smiles shyly, somewhat evasively, a bit subdued. she takes off all her clothes, lays down beside him, and quickly falls asleep. he loves her. but would he love her if, to him, she weren't beautiful. is her looks, and what she's able to do with it, all that attracts him to her?

they both awake, refreshed, at about midnight. "was there anything you did with him we haven't done, or don't, do?" "no, it was just how we connected initially, and there seemed no good reason to pass." "where was that?" "at CineFile on Santa Monica Blvd." "what were you doing there?" I went to purchase the Jean-Pierre Melville film, *Le Samourai*, as a birthday gift for my friend and co-worker, Ilona, as she is really into 60s French film noir and loves Alain Delon, tripped on something in the entrance and he grabbed me as I started to fall. he held me a bit longer and tighter than was necessary for the alleged purpose. somewhat embarrassed I engaged with him in suggestive chitchat, then he gave me a hard 'I want to screw you' look triggering an unanticipated need I did not want to suppress. we stood outside, the extremely bright light causing us to squint even through our sunglasses. I felt a bit like we were characters in a noir film. somehow the activity and his strapping, dissolute image, along with an

almost tacky sporty dress made me empathetic as well as turned me on. it occurred to me he was dressed like some of the 'boys' in the band when I was a little girl. then it was cool. nothing specific only that I **wanted** to do it with him." "in his hotel room." "yes, pushing me onto the bed, and while looking me in the eyes, he tugged, then tore the fabric of my panties to shreds, then, ripping my hose, ate me out, licking my clit. of course I was hot. he forced my mouth onto his cock and held my head there until I couldn't swallow. but the excitement of the subjugation didn't surprise me.. after releasing his grip and withdrawing his cock from my mouth he held me down pinioning my thighs daring me to struggle, then grasped my ankles, pushing my legs backwards. my knees were flush against my belly. holding me there while working his cock in. we screwed, mindlessly, I experienced almost incalculable flashes of pleasure before he turned me over and fucked me anally – I knew, even before we got there implied homo eroticism would be foremost on his agenda. I fingered my clit, the entire labia, enjoying the pleasure of being ass fucked, and at the same time being the agent of my own gratification. we fucked with our clothes still on, his hands tightly grasping my heels." "the porn sites call it 'fully clothed sex.'" "well, I had several orgasms. I was his 'piece of ass'. I had no say, for my part just satisfying what was provoked to be done by a **rowdy** image. "did he come in your ass?" "no. he could have. I would have liked that. he pulled my dress above my breasts, placed his cock between them and moved it up and down until he was almost ready to come, then lowered it and shot his load on my belly, a lot, enough to fill a condom, all of which I liked very much, then reached for the box of tissues and wiped me clean so his cum

didn't get on my dress." "that was gallant of him." "thoughtful, at least," Anna replies, unfazed by Jerry's sarcasm. "are you hurt Jerry?" "not at all. are you going to see him again?" "I've no reason to. he obviously doesn't live in L.A." "you were gone a long time. did you do anything else besides have sex?" "no, there was no conversation. I don't think we had very much in common. we showered together. then we just sat around drinking tap water. we didn't kiss, let alone make out, the whole time. it was strange. there was no purpose. but it was very pleasant. I was in no rush to leave." Jerry nods with understanding "where is the hotel?" "around the corner from the Nuart theater. kind of insalubrious." "did the fact neither of you came while genitally engaged make you feel incomplete?" "no, it would have been beside the point!" they want to kiss each other, but know it best not be generated by her caprices. before they go to sleep, Anna rubs her groin up against Jerry, and says, "eat me Jerry," lays back on the bed, spreads her legs and raises her thighs, her skin sweet from having bathed and cleaned her genitalia. "he didn't come in me." once again it gets very still. it takes a long time because of the previous ones, but her orgasm is very intense. in the morning they walk to the food Co-op to get takeout for breakfast, Jerry musing on his dependency to Anna's fantasy world. "I know I'm a nympho, and I know the pain it's causing you, Jerry." "some days I feel like I'm doing time, even though I'm free," he finally replies.

Anna and Jerry are standing in Jerry's bedroom. it's almost dark and Jerry reaches up and pulls down the light-block shade behind the vertical blinds. he pulls it too hard, causing it to go below the sill, locking it in with the blinds. while

pulling, he frees it, but it slips from his grasp and snaps up, the bottom of the shade no longer accessible to pull. he takes a long screwdriver from the toolbox in the kitchen, and pries the shade loose, pulls it down to the proper level, then closes the blinds. Anna, standing a few feet away, has watched this whole procedure with fixed fascination, feeling his anger and frustration with a number of issues that have befallen him, his determined matter-of-factness, his image in the dark, the light-weight windbreaker she particularly likes to see him wear, at that moment, in love with him. he turns and catches her in her quiet speculation, walks over and intensely kisses her, and she kisses him back. then they're kissing each other all over, faces and necks, before leaving for dinner.

"you want to know everything about me, Jerry. like when I 'lost my virginity'?" he perks up. "of course." "when I was fourteen, visiting my maternal grandmother, going through some of her old keepsakes – a hard bound book that still had its faded dust jacket illustration of a ravishing looking woman, her full bodice mostly bare within a low cut satiny gown, and a romance novel-type-handsome looking man dressed in the country style elegance of that period, standing possessively behind her, came up, and she stopped the flow of nostalgic humor, fixing on it. I asked her what the book was about and she said it was the first time she had read about sex. that it was about the affairs of a social climbing woman named Amber St Clare which was somewhat lauded for its portrayal of 17th Century English society, but was banned in a number of states for its deemed pornographic content, and I, of course, conspired I would read it, which I did, shortly after."

“Forever Amber.” “yes, did you read it?” “just three lines when I was twelve, while sitting on the back patio at my best friend’s house....how did that relate to your loss of virginity?” “the story, for the most part, seemed too complicated and arcane for me to get into. it was just the sex sequences of which there were quite a few, esp the first one, of a 16 year old Amber leading the ‘handsome’ and ‘virile’ nobleman she was wildly passionate about and to who’s love she continued to yearn for the entire book, into the woods, deliberately setting it up for him to seduce her there. for the next two years, when horny, I never stopped thinking about that – how as he overpowered her, she first struggled then relaxed, I even masturbated, thinking of it, and I believe it conditioned my mind as to how the situation that finally, and inevitably, occurred, turned out when I was sixteen.” “where was that?” “at an after school art class. on the evening of the final meeting we had a kind of going away party at the studio as the instructor was moving to N. Y. we were smoking pot, drinking a lot, and when the party finally ran down, myself and the instructor, who was twenty something, I guess, and very good looking, were the only ones left.” “I can imagine what happened next,” Jerry says, just a trifle facetiously. “that’s right. we had been flirting a lot, and then making out, but I had no intention of going further, and when he started seriously feeling me all over, I didn’t think I could do anything about it. it was late, on a commercial street, no one within hearing distance, even the traffic had ceased. he forced me down onto a pile of cushions, pulled off my undies, then undid his pants, and, with what seemed to me a huge erection, grasping my calves with both hands, pushed my legs backwards and entered me, surprisingly, given the situation,

without any discomfort on my part, and started moving inside me. I struggled as best I could, twisting, squirming, and flailing my arms, trying to get him off me, then, exhausted, abruptly stopped. but the pressure of his body on me felt good, encompassing, he was moving in me very organically, not harshly or fast, and at the moment the image of Amber St Clare submitting to Lord Bruce Carlton, came into my head, I relaxed, and submitted. then, aroused, I started to move with him until I had orgasm." "did he have an orgasm?" "yes." "inside you?" "of course." "what did you do afterwards?" "I had to decide whether to report him, he raped me, or go home, shower, clean myself, and forget it. the first option would have been too much trouble. I think it was that simple." "but it was true...you liked it'." "yes, and it was something to build from. at a later age I read more of the book and I think I had, unconsciously, a strong identification with Amber." "sex with her was negotiable." "I'm not sure that isn't, at least sometimes, the case with everyone." "so you think the image actually empowered you to handle the situation?" "you were saying?" "it was these lines: *first she struggled. then she relaxed. she liked it.* no words could have aroused me more. it was my earliest adolescent erotic image, at least from words, and the object of one of my first masturbations along with an image of actress Jean Peters in a low cut peasant blouse from the movie, Captain From Castile, when I was twelve. the motivating factor of first struggling then relaxing is an interesting coincidence as well as a sexist cliché. this was a long time before you experienced it. however, I've never been able to relocate that phrase, neither Googling it nor scrolling through the novel. so it must have come from some other source I had confused it with?"

"it's time not to go yet." "no, I have a while longer." Amber dropped onto her knees in the grass, her mouth pouting, eyes rebellious – and after a moment he sat down beside her. for several seconds she continued staring sulkily, mulling over her dismal future, and then swiftly her eyes went to his. he was watching her, steadily, carefully. she stared back at him, her heart pounding, and there began to steal over her a slow weakness and languor, so consuming that even her eyes felt heavy. every part of her was tormented with longing for him, and yet she was half scared, uncertain, and reticent, filled with a sense of dread almost greater than her desire. at last his arm reached out went around her waist and drew her slowly towards him; Amber, moving her head to meet his mouth and both her arms about him. the restraint he had shown thus far now vanished swiftly, giving way to a passion that was savage, violent, ruthlessly selfish. Amber, inexperienced but not innocent, returned his kisses eagerly spurred by the caressing of his mouth and hands, her desire mounted a pace with his and though at first she had heard, somewhere far back in her mind, Sarah calling out to her, warning her, the sound and the image grew fainter, dissolved and was gone. but when he forced her back onto the earth she gave a quick movement of protest and a little cry – this was as far as her knowledge went. something mysterious, almost terrible, must be beyond. her hand pushed at his chest and she gave a frightened little sob, twisting her face away from his. her fear now was irrational, intense, almost hysterical. "no!," she cried, "let me go!" she saw his face above her, and his eyes had become pure glittering green. Amber, half crying, half-mad with passion and terror, suddenly let herself relax. with slow reluctance Amber again became conscious of the

surrounding world, and both of them as separate individuals. she drew a deep luxurious sigh, her eyes still closed – she felt that she could not have moved as much as a finger. after a long while he drew away from her and sat up, forearms resting on his knees, a long blade of grass between his teeth, staring ahead. his tanned face was wet with sweat and he mopped across it with the black velvet sleeve of his doublet. Amber lay perfectly still beside him, eyes closed and one arm flung over her forehead. she was warm and drowsy, marvelously content, and glad with every fiber of her being that it had happened. it seemed until this moment she had been half-alive. aware his eyes were on her she turned slightly and gave him a lazy smile. she wanted to say she loved him but did not quite dare, even now. she wished he would say he loved her, but he only bent and kissed her, very gently. “I’m sorry, he said. softly, “I didn’t expect to find you a virgin.” “I’m glad I was.” Forever Amber - Kathleen Winsor – 1944

now our love memories present no exception to the general rules of memory, which in turn are governed by the still more general rules of Habit, and as Habit weakens every impression what a person recalls to us most vividly is precisely what we had forgotten, because it was of no importance, and had therefore left in full possession of its strength, that’s why the better part of our memory exists outside of ourselves, in a patter of rain, in the smell of an unaired room or of the first crackling of a brushwood fire in a cold grate: wherever, in short, we happen upon what our mind having no use for it, had rejected, the last treasure that the past has in store, the richest, that which when all our flow of tears seemed to have dried at the source can make us weep again. Within A Budding Grove – Marcel Proust – 1918

there's a moment's silence as they sit opposite each other, from across the room, Anna's legs crossed above the knees, skirt unintentionally crept up her thighs. they inadvertently stare at one another, and unconsciously smile. then continuing to stare, amused at catching themselves unconsciously fixated and shy, they break out smiling happily, faces shining. he walks over as she rises and they meet, standing in the center of the room. they salaciously kiss. he slips his hand into the open top of her dress and feels her up. then, quickly dropping their obstructions to the floor, embracing, they fuck, standing up, for a long time, until they both come with intense satisfaction. "that was very good," Anna says, pulling her underwear back on.

Jerry is sitting in his front room, plate in his lap, counting each bite so as to not fantasize or eat too fast. in 15 minutes he'll watch the UCLA – Nebraska football game. but he's miscalculated the game time and when he turns on the TV there's 8 minutes left in the first quarter – UCLA behind 7-0. he watches agile UCLA quarterback Brett Hundley evade several rushers before finally getting sacked. he has to take a shit – and reads a few paragraphs from his short story, The Tyranny of Benevolence, while on the toilet. then, in his bedroom, writes down what here has just been described. when he gets back to the TV there's less than 3 minutes left in the first quarter. the score is now 7-3 – UCLA must have kicked a field goal. at this point he quits recording the moments of his day. Nebraska builds a 21-3 lead, and it seems as though it's going to be a blowout. but by late second quarter the momentum has begun to shift. at half-time the score is 21-10, and in the second half UCLA scores 4 unanswered TD's and a field goal,

completely dominating the game. Hundley finishes with over 350 yards, passing and rushing. the final score is UCLA 41, Nebraska, 21, though his only real satisfaction was when UCLA began to close the gap, inducing hope, where, at the onset, it appeared to be a lost cause.

watching the game has made Jerry lazy. but before putting on his sweats to go for a short run the phone rings

he answers his land phone, a surge of joy wiping out his anxiety and mild malaise. Anna wants to know the size of the shorts he wears. "medium, Anna, can you come over and keep me company?" "I'll come over, but then we have to go out." "ok," he replies, reassured, "where do you want to go?" "to buy you some briefs." he decides not to object. seeing her smiling face when she enters is so obviously the lift he's needed. "where's a good place to buy them?" "being we're in Santa Monica, Sears is good enough. they have a big parking lot. that's where I buy my 505s. it's a few dollars cheaper there. I hate to hassle." "if they have what you want." they pick out a dozen solid colored briefs to replace the holey one's, then go to the natural food co-op he belongs to, to shop for dinner. "did my torn shorts turn you off?" "they were sexy, they turned me on, but I also felt sad that it was a reflection of the hopelessness in your general attitude, rather than a fetish." the word fetish prompts him to look at her hard. she's dressed modestly this time, wearing a knee length, cotton print dress with folds, and off white, low heel shoes, but the two rows at the top of her dress, unbuttoned, and the delicate silver chain around her neck, connote sex. it doesn't matter what time of day or night he first sees her, his

initial impulse, other than the joy he feels, is sexual desire.

they enjoy the stimulation and rapport of, together, mixing in the ingredients to a large salad, consisting of shredded carrot, diced radish, red bell pepper, and Fuji apple, tiny grape tomatoes, torn green leaf lettuce and pea sprouts, mixed with a lemon-chive dressing. getting the proportions exact tunes them in, a little like constructing a collage. the protein is garbanzo beans, pressure cooked, with fresh seitan (weekly delivered from a kitchen in North Hollywood), crushed garlic and olive oil, added. they enjoy their dinner. Jerry is not a very talkative person, she's discovered, unless he's dealing with ideas, or has something on his mind he wants to talk about. if she were doing the same thing with someone else, there'd probably be a lot more horsing around. but that's part of the reason she loves him. "you don't ever eat out?" there are several reasons but one is I don't particularly like being waited on." she feels, but doesn't understand, his pain, other than everyone suffers, but thinks it's not purely existential – that the lack of fulfillment in his past has caught up with his age, and that the closer they get, the more he seems to feel it, perhaps, because the price he'd have to pay if he lost her would be greater. but she's really just getting to know him, and, as yet, he doesn't know her, what she can do, as anything more than as an object of love, and, of course, sex – he's ceased to make a separation. this is disconcerting to her, also, as she knows from hard experience, however desirable, the two are not the same.

"why don't we listen to some jazz, being it's both our backgrounds." "our backgrounds are different, though, Jerry. you

got into jazz because something in your makeup was drawn to it – that’s the best way. I was simply around it, so we may understand it in a different way.” “then you don’t want to listen to jazz?” “you were equating our backgrounds. our backgrounds regarding jazz were different.” “I’ve been fantasizing for a long time about doing an album of songs with Charlie Haden. I didn’t know about his illness until recently, however. so I suppose that’s the end of it.” “of your fantasy.” “yes. he still plays with his musician friends, one to one, I hear, whenever they come to town.” “what made you think of Haden?” “his approach is emotionally deep, non-linear. I like to go into a song so I think we’d be compatible. I was a regular at a club on Washington Blvd. when I was still going to school, where he played in Paul Bley’s group, which was kind of the house band, and then Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry also started playing there.” “what would have been in the album?” “I would have picked songs with lyrics I really felt, like Jimmy van Heusen’s, But Beautiful, Oscar Levant’s, Blame It On My Youth, and Rodgers and Hart’s, It Never Entered My Mind. mostly ballads. maybe an upbeat treatment of Irving Berlin’s, The Best Thing For You.” she nods, warmly, thinking she’d really like for that to happen, that nobody would benefit more with that kind of exposure than Jerry. he puts on an album Lee Konitz did with the Netherlands Metropole Orchestra in 1990, when he was, Jerry imagines, in his sixties, Saxophone Dreams. “do you know who Lee Konitz is?” “yes, my father used to play his records all the time – the stuff with Tristano, who was an influence on my father’s playing, and Gerry Mulligan.” it’s Jerry’s turn to nod. they listen to several cuts before he asks her what she thinks. “beautiful and sad, nostalgic.” “not the

neurotic energy of his early years but just as flawless." "yes." he plays more of the older stuff, music of the fifties and sixties, when he was coming up – hard-driving jazz; Coltrane from his Traneing In album, Monk Live at the Five Spot with Johnny Griffin, and Mingus' Ah Um, as well as some quiet music from Bill Evans. it seems to be getting her on, sexually, which is not his intent. in fact he's never particularly associated sex with jazz. he's impressed she knows all of it. "did you see any of them live?" "yes, all of them. Coltrane many times. we saw him and his quartet the night of the day we got married, at the Workshop in S.F." "I didn't know you were married." "it was a long time ago. my former brother-in-law was a jazz musician. he later played with Charles Lloyd, and, I heard, Miles." "what instrument did he play?" "piano. he was part of the free jazz, loft jazz, scene in NYC. he cut a couple of albums with ESP." "when was that?" "in the late sixties." "does he still play jazz?" "no, he's a civil rights lawyer, now." "do you play an instrument?" "just by ear." "what instrument?" "I have a keyboard. I took violin lessons as a boy. I imagine you play a musical instrument being the daughter of a musician." "I was never inclined to," "do you have siblings?" "I'm an only child." he reminds her of what she said at the Blue Whale, about the sound of the saxophone making her want sex. she laughs. "only with the sax player." undeterred, he puts on the Stan Getz 1957 version of It Never Entered My Mind. they dance, arms tightly around each other, then go to the bedroom and fuck. it's very late when they've finished. they almost forget to move her car to avoid a street cleaning ticket in the morning. it's been a good night for the both of them.

Jerry is busy writing and working on his photos. Anna recently was hired as a design consultant at the Pacific Design Center (the other Blue Whale, on Melrose). through her contacts there, she and Jerry are invited to the opening dinner preview of a new blue chip gallery (actually a transplant from New York) in the area. the dinner is buffet, outdoors, with, of course, valets serving drinks and parking cars. there's nothing Jerry feels he can safely eat, or drink, for that matter, but Anna finds it's easy to revert to old habits. a few of the older art stars are in attendance, and instead of the usual DJ's, several groups entertain. the gallerist has taken a shine to Anna, and spiritedly engages with her whenever possible, significantly ignoring Jerry, and it would be a total bust for Jerry except that he runs into an old artist friend, George Herms, from his Topanga Canyon years, who's glad to see him, as he is to see George, despite the fact he considers George to be a part of the reason Jerry was not included in an important museum show he should have been in, and introduces him to Anna. "what are you doing here?" Jerry asks. "looking for scrap material, like lost or damaged Rolexes for my sculpture. that would make them worth considerably more, wouldn't it, Jerry?" Anna laughs.

a quick look over her shoulder, not unnoticed by Jerry, confirms the gallerist is carefully watching them as they leave, and she knows with the certainty of experience, he'll find a way to get her number and call, sooner or later – sooner, as it turns out. "what did you think of the art," she asks. "very correct minimalist/conceptual art. too pat to be interesting." she nods, "I didn't care much for it, either. what about him?" "he seemed to me someone who's totally power

driven – as a gallerist, kind of a young Larry Gagosian, if you know who he is.” “he has a gallery on Camden in Beverly Hills.” “that’s right. did you find him attractive?” she thinks for a moment just to make sure. “not particularly,” she replies, although she’s still not sure. “you’ll probably hear from him.” “I know.” “what will you do?” not wanting to feel trapped by committing herself either way, she says, “Jerry, I can’t tell you that. I can tell you I love you, but you should know I’m open minded enough in most cases to want to know a little more.” sex is her stock and trade (literally), and he knows she’ll continue to ply it, regardless of the way things go with them.

Michael (Michael Meghan gallery) is a protégé of former Ferus gallery owner, Irving Blum. its artists include those whose works are in the permanent holdings of LACMA, and MOCA. but his forte is connections with some of the wealthiest private collectors. as a new arrival, he’s renting a moderate sized, fifties mod house in the Bel Air hills. when he calls Anna, he’s glad she answers, and he doesn’t have to leave a message, to which she might not respond. her tone is bright and friendly, and she accepts his invitation for her to visit him at “the mansion”, as he self -deprecatingly calls it, and then “take it from there,” as to what they might do, or where they might go. `the mansion’ is situated in a woody alcove, with a spectacular view in back. she parks her car, a 2008 Camry, in the driveway next to a late model, metallic grey Jaguar XF. she knows his whole procedure is something Jerry despises, as he exhibited at the opening, but nonetheless, her heart skips a beat as she rings the bell. the door opens and they stand facing one another with manufactured

smiles. cleanly shaven, with close cropped hair and a trim, athletic body, he looks even younger than he did at the opening, wearing an open at the collar dress shirt, light weight, light colored, sport coat, and chinos. she sees he's very good looking, like Jerry said, 'a young Larry Gagosian'. Anna, as always, is gorgeous. her decision was to dress up, rather than come casual, for reasons she hasn't quite defined. the dress is black, short, made of exceptionally clingy material, tiny cut crystal in her pierced ears, the delicate silver chain she wore at Jerry's the night they made dinner, around her neck, and, not too high, black heels. she drops her purse on a gull grey sofa so minimal it seems naked, as he leads her back through the glass panel doors, out to the pool, but keeps on the teal blue cardigan she had the foresight to wear. "can I take your sweater?" "no, it's fine for now. it's just a little breezy up here." "yes, refreshing, a far cry from the east coast weather this time of year." "yes, I know." as soon as she arrived, she was struck by the quiet, as she always is when she's up in the hills above the city. a totally different universe than the one below, even on an upscale residential street on the west side – but at the same time, she experiences this disembodied aspect of it, not quite the noirish quality Thom Andersen conveys, and seeks to debunk, in his film, Los Angeles Plays Itself, but a separation, an estrangement, nonetheless. is this just the manifestation of the guilt of privilege, and the corruption required to obtain it? Michael leans back in his deck chair, takes a deep breath, and breathes out. "you know, you're beautiful." he wishes he hadn't said the same thing to other women, because he feels he really means it, this time. she sits on the edge of her deck chair, legs crossed at the knees, thinking why does he think he deserves (her)

more than anyone else (does), then considers how also vain a thought it is on her part. "let's go back into the house. I'll show you some of the things I've collected." "good," she says, primly uncrossing her legs, and rises. "where was your gallery located in N.Y.?", she asks, as they reenter the house. "Chelsea, are you familiar with New York?" "I grew up there." "where?", he wants to know, his face brightening. "in the West Village. my parents were both bohemians. my father was a jazz musician. where did you grow up?" "in Queens – Jamaica. we were poor." "but now you have a house in the Hampton's, no doubt." "in Nantucket," he corrects. "I'm not as rich as you might suspect. what does your boyfriend do?" "he's a writer and an artist." "I gather he shows at some funky gallery." "he doesn't show anywhere." "does he earn money through his art?" "no, after his parents died, he and his brothers sold their family home." "how did he survive before that?" "hand to mouth like all his artist friends." "he's lucky he doesn't have to work." "the money won't last indefinitely." after looking at his collection of ancient African tribal weaponry, which is impressive, but to her, extremely phallic, kind of self-assertive, she's beginning to feel a little overheated, and seeing her discomfort, he once again offers to take her sweater. this time she accepts. he goes to a small guest closet, which is empty except for a net filled with several soccer balls on the floor, and gently places her sweater on a hanger. sweater-less, her desirability to him ratchets up a notch, if that's possible, and he takes in her image with undisguised ardor.. "we can go somewhere if you like. anywhere you'd like to go?" she contemplates riding in his Jag but then they'd just come back. he wants her. he wanted her from the first time he saw her. what other

purpose did she accept his invitation to come over for, than to play her role in a seduction, and she's not sure she doesn't want him for the same reasons he wants her. it appeals to her, she suddenly realizes, that a seduction is extremely formal, as it goes by a set of rules. formal without necessarily being predictable. "no, let's stay here," she finally, frankly, replies. he smiles. now that he's sure, his cool aura returns. "would you like a drink? I make a very good apple martini." "yes." it amuses her to think of the superficial similarities between this and the porn video she did. they sip their drinks, very slowly, feeling good. she sits back on the sofa, crosses her legs, her dress up on her thighs, waiting for him to walk over and kiss her. then, without prompting, she undoes his pants and lustfully blows him.

they don't bother to undress for the first round of sex on the sofa. it takes him a reasonably long time to come, and she has a very complete orgasm. "would you like another drink?" "yes." "the same?" "yes." "good, so would I." half naked, or half dressed, whichever you like, they once again slowly drink, relishing it's sweet flavor. they remove the rest of their clothes. that she hasn't shaved her amber pubic hair turns him on even more. kissing her, then sucking her nipples, he lowers his head and starts to go down on her. she pushes his head aside. "I'd rather just fuck," she says, feeling, all of a sudden, her own power. they fuck for a very long time, neither of them having orgasms, until he finally pulls out. fucking for a long time without coming was very satisfying for her, including her satisfaction that he's getting a little more than he bargained for. his sex organ has shrunk to 'normal', and they both lean back on the sofa and rest their sweaty

bodies. then, he looks her in the eyes, and says, "you're even more beautiful naked than you were dressed. clothes is implication, but nakedness is actuality," he says, brushing a strand of her honey colored hair away from her eyes. she believes he means the tenderness he's showing, though she thinks his aphorism a little corny, that, in fact, he tried to be poetic. but what does she mean. she's enjoying herself and is not looking forward to its end, that's all. finally he gets up, walks to a small table that holds a chalk white hexagonal lamp, opens a drawer, the kind that might have hidden a revolver in a thirties or forties Hollywood movie, and removes a packet of white powder. she gives him a look of recognition, having done it, for a time, during her late school years. "a little of this will energize us so we can keep going without feeling depleted," he says. she hesitates. "you don't have to if you don't want. that's up to you, but I'd like to do a little." he sits very close to her, lays a small line on her thigh and snorts it. then, turning her over, lays a little more in her crack, and she giggles while he licks it. totally erect, already experiencing a surge, he hands the packet to her. at first, not wanting to mess up her sinuses, she sprinkles a small amount of cocaine on the head of his penis and sucks, immediately comprehending why this is called 'giving head'. then she lays a small line on the hairs of his chest and carefully sniffs. she pulls back and looks at him, his face, all of a sudden, soft, compassionate, and handsome. they leisurely and effortlessly fuck, almost in a state of timelessness, impossible to delineate in conventional terms, rhythmically in sync, until both have orgasms (at separate times) of indeterminate duration. when he pulls out, spent, she's totally satisfied, but knows it won't last long and she determines not to start up using

cocaine again, she's witnessed a few casualties in that area. it happened, like most truly satisfying experiences, without forethought, and couldn't have been a more fitting and pleasurable way to end it. he's wrong about depletion. she's already beginning to feel depleted. but not for long. can one just eat garden salads and pressure cooked brown rice or beans, and have the same experience. organically she and Jerry, no doubt, would be capable of having a similar experience, Jerry is actually a very good lover, if it weren't for the fact that it wouldn't be spurred by adultery, which was the signifier – or the cocaine which propelled the transformation. she's empowered by the feeling Michael will want her more than she'll want him. she doesn't need or want his riches, status, power (limited definition), while he needs it.. he'll be thinking about his afternoon with her, and will call and pursue her. but she's satisfied with what she got, and won't respond. she's thinking, who is a man who can enjoy the adulterous aspect of seduction (is there any other aspect?), sexually aroused by power over others (and she enjoyed it too!), or is it the downside of power necessitates a sexual response to compensate? whereas, Jerry is just the opposite. his demise is any breach of his inner world, which she sometimes feels shuts her out. the irony is, it's Michael who, in order to succeed, has to compare himself to others. despite her resolve, she momentarily reconsiders continuing with him, if, and when, he calls. aside from the fact that he was attractive, that she could have found an absoluteness, a sublimity in sex, with a man she didn't particularly care about, or, possibly, not respect (was it just the coke?), is curious. her sex with Jerry, while erotic, is either more filial, or more pornographic. did the `seduction', then, have less to do with

sex than it had to do with love? part of the appeal in continuing, is in the formality, literally the structure, the form, which is the opposite of her free form, free improv, relationship with Jerry. for the first time she thinks, wonders, approaches an epiphany, as to what, or how, this relates to jazz! is this really just a manifestation of her fear of the unknown? are her adulterous urges actually triggered by a need for stability? she decides, no. even if our craves are delusional, the one thing we can do is make them clear.

she flashes on her telling Jerry she'd never intentionally hurt someone she knew could be hurt – the word, intentionally, just implied. it's certainly not been her intention to hurt him. and she knows what he'd probably say – “you've a right to spend your looks and charm anyway you see fit, Anna.”

spending the day together, Jerry and Anna are riding on a eucalyptus lined street in Santa Monica. both are in a quiet mood. it strikes her that both Jerry and Michael are quiet. but with Michael it's pent up emotion, which if it doesn't get the better of him, he uses. Jerry is just quiet. his movements are quiet. his body is quiet. Jerry keeps looking over at Anna who is sitting in the passenger seat, wearing a full, almost matronly, ice yellow dress, pink jade earrings, dark Polo Ralph Lauren sunglasses to block out the white glare, and a pensive, somber, expression. taking in her vibe, although not ascertaining it's cause, he feels unusually empathetic towards her today, as they drive, arbitrarily, north towards the mountains. she reaches across the seat separation, and lays her hand in his lap, as if to protect his genitals from misuse and abuse. he wishes he could tell her he loves her, but

because he's chosen mostly humorous quips over sentiment as a means of showing his affection, he fears it would seem out of character, as they continue on Sunset to Will Rogers State Park in the Santa Monica Mountains. they park, and while standing next to the car, wrapping her arms around his neck, they hug tightly. then they spontaneously kiss, a long, soulful, drink, before letting go of one another. inexplicably, he has a (visible) hard-on. "I'm not in the mood for sex right now, Jerry. can't just love suffice for now?" "I had no intention of having sex with you, either, Anna. it just did it on its own." they look at each other with blank expressions, before both breaking out laughing, and warmly hugging. after letting Anna off at her place, he wonders, are they too familiar with each other to keep alive the spark of their romance? fatigued without being sleepy when he goes to bed, his old, pre-Anna, inability to sleep well returns, the only remedy being to go to bed late, and get up early, which is just as well, as Anna, unable to sleep well, either, calls him first thing. instead of eating alone, then going on his morning run, they have breakfast together, and she tells him about her visit-affair with Michael Meghan. she says she doesn't mean it to be a confessional, but only to let him know – she reminds him of what she said to him about wanting him to know everything about her. he tells her he thinks what she says is reasonable, but can't help thinking (like he did the night before) what is it that's missing between them? why doesn't he want other women? why does he tend to hook up with women who are the opposite regarding that issue? psychically on the same plane, Anna says, "it would do you good if you had other relationships, Jerry." "I'm not monogamous, but I'm not psychologically geared to pursue. we

met, and it was mutual. we both had mutual needs. it was the timing. the timing was right.” she listens intently. “I think something still needs to happen between us, Anna, a catalyst, not so much to prove our worth to each other, which we have, but to validate a more sustainable intent.” she nods. “yes, I understand.”

“it was just the situation, mostly the cocaine. it was just the same old horny, erotic sex before that...” “like with us,” he interrupts. “that’s right. it transformed the way I looked at things, including Michael – he became beautiful, the light, the warmth, the ease, with no baggage – no commitment, no attachment.” it was also the house, the freshness of the hills – being above it all, the sleek Jag, the clothes, and, yes, the stability of her relationship with Jerry, which allowed her to be cool, she acknowledges, but doesn’t say. instead, she adds, “it could just as well have happened with us, but it would have had to be triggered by a need.” “I don’t think so. we’re too familiar with each other for that. we’re too much alike. there’s no mystery, formality (she starts at that word), no inviolable sense of privacy, no borders we can’t cross. the creative detachment isn’t there. besides I no longer use drugs.” “what drugs did you use?” “the psychedelics, mostly pot.” “did they trip on MDMA then?” “not to my knowledge. at least not in that form. I’ve never had a truly transcendent moment having sex. transcendence was what I experienced alone, every single night for seven years – but not in the context of having sex. I don’t think it could have been shared.” “did your wife use drugs?” “mostly, no. do you use drugs, Anna?” she thinks it a silly question for him, at this stage, to ask, but answers, “no.” a depth of genuine feeling arises in

her for him she's never quite had, for him, or anyone else. she thinks for a moment before realizing he just isn't right, esp. about the privacy, and the creative detachment. and most else of what he's said, she sees as positive. she doesn't see those as being the constraints. those are nothing a little consciousness and love can't fix. she has no reply to his remark about drugs, however. do people who regularly use drugs, and people who don't, live in parallel universes? for the first time she sees through the barriers which she knew were superficial all along. what she knows most, is that a transcendent experience, sexual or otherwise, can be had in any given situation, any context – it can happen with she and Jerry, if the egotistical, critical, mind let's go. but just as it happened with Michael (and she's not sure just what his experience was), it can't be planned.

and Jerry was right about needing a catalyst to prove their worth to each other. perhaps it's their karma, but only because it's in the mind to think that way. what she's been least tolerant of, Jerry's incessant critical sense ("you discourage people from appreciating you," she's told him), she now sees with admiration and gratitude. she thinks he's very brave in never relinquishing the burden of consciousness and its consequences. it's been enormously important in helping her to restructure from the life she was living before she met him. he's been, in fact, her hero. she's had a care-fully hidden, almost school girl infatuation for him. as for Jerry's looks. the focus has been entirely on her. they wouldn't be together if she didn't feel a strong physical attraction to him. she thinks he's good looking given his age, and she's observed, quite often, young women take notice of him when

he's with her.

"then what's authentic?" "stare hard at the bed, it's shape, the sheet, the pillow case, the comforter, the folded, small blue plaid blanket. that's authentic." "what about books?" "posts, photos unless doctored, anecdotal stories, are authentic. in Tao Lin's book, Tai Pei, with their Macbooks and iPhones as tools, the fuel that makes them run is drugs; they just hangout, copiously eat, drink smoke, snort, ingest pills, excrete, have sex, drive, ride the subway, walk, and talk – that's the plot. it portrays a young, somewhat apathetic, computer savvy, possibly counter-culture generation, swallowed up in commerce, without being about anything. I'm not recommending it. I'm not even saying it's interesting. I'm just saying it's authentic as to what some people who obsessively text, write and post on the internet, are really doing, if not who they really are. it's interesting, 2 tokes, with an occasional booster, and I was high all night, into the next day. it wasn't social. mine was a totally different experience.

"doing everything stone sober can be stressful. can one be too clear?" "too clear ,no. you do have to let go and enjoy."

at the time Michael calls her again she's just gotten home from her job at the Design Center, and wants to rest before making her dinner. he asks her if, after she's rested, he might take her out to dinner. as it would save her the work of having to make her own dinner, and also when face to face with the opportunity, she admits she wants to see him again, breaking her resolve , she spontaneously accepts the invitation, fully understanding, for the both of them, this will be a

test; for her, whether she's had enough, or not, for him, just how far she will go in responding to him. after they get off the phone, the phrase, 'take you out to dinner', grates in her ears. here we go again, but if it were Jerry at the other end, or just about anyone else she knows, it would be, more likely, 'have dinner together'. it's that man takes the woman out, buys, etc., role, the thought of which makes her feel vulnerable. she rests just enough to absorb her mild fatigue and allow the energy to flow. then carefully prepares. trying to turn him off by being blasé would not correspond to her needs, nor is she in the somewhat apprehensive and demur mood she was in when she first visited him. she also feels simplicity. she doesn't want to dress up, no matter where he's decided to 'take her'. but she does want to feel, and look, sexy. she puts on a very tight, very short, grape hued skirt, that fairly screams sex, and a plain taupe silk blouse, even just in case, sexy black lace underwear, no makeup, except for a light coat of pink on her lips. when she greets him at the door the charge between them is palpable. she likes that he's dressed almost as before, no pretense, rather than trying to impress her with the wardrobe she's sure he has, he's just dressed like he usually dresses. he pulls out a small gift wrapped package from his coat pocket and hands it to her. she takes it, smiling, and opens it. they walk around Anna's front room, and he looks at the art work and photos on the wall, including a number of Jerry's photos, finally zeroing in on one of Jerry's erotic photo collages, which he admits is exquisite. it surprises her when he asks, "do you have any place in mind where you'd like to eat?" she most certainly assumed he'd had that planned in advance. "there's a Native Agent Foods on Ocean Park Blvd," she replies, just

mentioning the first thing that comes into her head. "I'm a vegetarian, their soup de jour is always good, and I'm in the mood for something hot." "do they serve drinks?" "wine and beer." her suggestion opens up enough of a category for him to come up with a better alternative (in fact, this is how he functions as a gallerist). "why don't we go to Osteria Mozza on Melrose, instead. they have very good vegetarian dishes. I can attest to that." "isn't the attire dressy?" "don't worry about that, Anna. am I dressed up?" "I think that's a very good idea, Michael. I'd offer you a drink but I don't keep liquor," she says, making a face.. "we can drink there." as they talk, they've, somewhat involuntarily, drawn closer to one another, until they're almost touching, and Anna, impulsively, provocatively, rubs the front of her body up against his – if anything is going to happen with them, this time she wants to make the first move. at first he doesn't know how to react. in his mind she's still the reticent, demur, lovely, woman, of their previous rendezvous, although her looks and vibe has had him aroused since he first got there. then he holds her, and they deep throat, French kiss. she goes to her bedroom, takes a lightweight cool grey coat from the closet and her purse from the dresser. on the street his silver Jaguar XJ is nowhere in sight. instead, a shiny black, BMW compact is parked directly in front – of course he'd have more than one car. he electronically unlocks the doors, and they both get in. she likes it that he doesn't hold open the door for her. she's glad, on a week night, they're heading north, towards Hollywood, rather than south, towards the Santa Monica airport. she smiles to herself, thinking he may not have been happy squeezed together on bench like tables, with long haired, pierced and tattooed, 'environmentalists'.

Michael flicks the radio on to an FM music station. her view is it's a bit tacky to play music while driving in a car for the sole purpose of creating an atmosphere, especially if one doesn't know the musical tastes of the passenger. she also doesn't believe anything spontaneous can be orchestrated, and music, to her, has to be really listened to. she's becoming aware that there's a reverse snobbery in her attitude towards Michael that's coming out all over the place. but her parents scraped through, being true to their art and vision, and paid the price for it. she respects that Michael is very unpretentious, even self-effacing, towards his wealth, and what it can buy, but the old moonlight drive, even the Doors version, she can do without. he sees her enigmatic smile, and asks her what she's thinking about. she turns her face to his, upgrading her smile 100 watts, and says, "I'm thinking about all the pixies and elves in Ireland." Michael, who is Irish, smiles, unsure what she means by that. the valet takes the keys to the car and as they enter the restaurant, he asks Anna if she knows who Nancy Silverton is. "yes she's a chef and co-founder of the Mozza restaurants. I've read about her. do you know her?" "we, a girlfriend and I, when we were in town, used to frequently eat at Campanile on LaBrea." "she's still your girlfriend?" Anna asks, knowing she's not. "no."

Michael was right about where to go. the other Blue Whale, where she works, is also on Melrose, so it makes her day feel more complete. they sit at a small, private table, the ambience is almost intimate, the wine (expensive) is very good. as she's not, generally, a big eater, the Burrigota, with braised artichokes, pine nuts, and mint pesto, is just right. she doesn't know why, but when he pays the bill and leaves the

tip for the waiter, she has a sharp pang of sympathy, almost pity, for him.

gradually, she's begun to see he's not the person of his image – that he's a decent, if conservative, she thinks caring, person. she's probably just projecting, and imposing, her own set of more bohemian values onto him. it's ironic, because to most people, her looks and the way she dresses, would possibly cause them to believe her world was rather upscale.

they decide to take a walk, as people often do after dinner. at Michael's suggestion, they park just west of Beverly Drive, and walk by the high end, larger, clothing stores on Wilshire Blvd. they stop and gaze at the jewelry in the Tiffany window, their eyes simultaneously fixing on the same stunning diamond jeweled necklace, then, spontaneously turn their heads towards each other. he looks into her eyes and says, "I'd like to buy you that." buy, buy, buy, give, give, give. he doesn't need to do that for me to love him, she thinks, as they walk back to the BMW. his arm around her shoulder, he says, "why don't we go back to my place, Anna?" "why don't we just go back to mine?" she replies. "we were at your place, last time." meaning, frankly, they did it at his place, last time, this time they can do it at hers, which she can see by his smile, but also by a less perceptible hurt, that's just the way he's taking it. driving back to Santa Monica on Olympic, past Century City, where Jerry's brother and sister-in-law have a condo, in the light industry section around Barrington, the night air through her open window, spaced out and inattentive to human suffering, refreshes, and comforts her. she puts a hand on Michael's cheek and tenderly caresses it.

he gratefully smiles, and she moves as close to the driver's seat separation as she possibly can. in the old days, Jerry remembers, before the seat dividers, the driver could put his arm around his date, her head nestled against his shoulder, and still keep both hands on the wheel. if it was a stick shift, he'd put down his foot on the clutch pedal, as she shifted gears.

at her place, she thinks, he won't have his coke, or whatever else he uses. and she expects he's not a tripper. there won't be any alcohol, either. she opens the door to a lighted front room. it's as if it had been waiting for their return. when she goes out, unless she's feeling particularly paranoid, she generally leaves it dark. she takes his coat, folds it, and lays it on the arm of a chair. they both remove their shoes, and he his socks. they stand together, as they stood before, when she rubbed the front of her body up against him, in the center of the room. he feels her up through her silk blouse, his hand caressing the warm skin up under her short skirt. "undress me slowly, but first turn out the light." *when the music's over turn out the light, turn out the light.* they pet and make out. he unbuttons her blouse and she slips out of it. she unbuttons his shirt, and he removes it, flinging it onto the chair. as he undoes her skirt she kisses the hairs on his chest. he squeezes her breasts, and fingers her under her lace underwear. she undoes his pants, and he pulls his pants and shorts off and tosses them onto the same chair his shirt and coat are laid on. she pulls off her panties and unfastens her bra, dropping them to the floor. he lifts her in his arms and they hungrily kiss as he eases her onto his erection. her hand caressing the back of his head and neck, they fuck, slowly,

grounding themselves. he carries her to the sofa, and still inside her, lays her down and settles on her. they fuck, unlike in the porn videos, his cock staying inside, but both of them, extremely active, sensuously moving their pelvis' and but-tocks. they don't talk while resting, becoming very quiet when she lets him eat her. time passes and they both have only two, very intense, at least for her, orgasms. just before he has his second orgasm, he asks her if he could pull out. she takes it, pulsating, into her mouth and swallows his cum. and that's the end of it. they go to the bathroom. she cleans him, and washes her face and mouth. from the hall they can see through the open door into her bedroom, her bed, neatly made, looking very chaste. it was clear from the beginning to her, he wasn't going to, nor did she want him to, spend the night with her. sex isn't power, it isn't love, it's just sex. they dress. she offers him juice. he drinks some bottled water. she walks him to the door. they look into each other's eyes and affectionately kiss. she decides not to walk with him down to his car. they both have to work in the morning. she knows he won't call her again. she knows the role she played in deliberately setting it up that way. but the aftermath, it's a fact she can't deny, of the pleasure of sex, if it's genuine and good, is love.

Chapter Three

it's a whitish overcast day. neither cool nor warm. Anna's short, white print summer dress with small midnight blue lobelia, seems a perfect match, and when a breeze ruffles and raises the hem, exposing the black garters attached to her flesh tinted hose and white skin, Jerry senses today may contain serendipitous elements which could run counter to their demise. as they mingle with the extremely well-heeled guests, no one would guess the depth of their desperation regarding financial matters, which moved them by virtue of an invitation Jerry's secured from one of his artist friends, to attend, as though, by osmosis, some of the wealth would run off on them. unconsciously, in the back of both their minds, however, it is Anna's sex appeal, which never ceases to be a source of Jerry's fascination, not the invitation, they expect will stake them. earlier, Anna had said, only half seriously, but as it turns out, prophetically, she'd consider turning a few tricks if it necessarily came to that..

the looks begin almost as soon as they arrive. turned on by them, while sitting on a lounge next to a vent from which air incessantly keeps blowing, she snuggles up to Jerry and they momentarily make out. after they've stopped necking, several men, appearing outwardly casual, but who are irrevocably aroused, awkwardly approach them. one of them recognizes Jerry and complements him on his work. Anna in a modest mode, smiles, demurely, with just enough suggestion to further inflame their appetites, and when a strong gust of air from the fortuitously situated vent once again sends up her dress, this time to her waist, before dropping, they all roundly

laugh good naturedly, the men barely concealing their lust ... and subconsciously the deal is sealed without a word being spoken. Anna blushes and smiles nervously, while Jerry, is naively scheming what can they do to fully exploit the situation to their financial advantage, without having to, in effect, allow it to escalate to where Anna is propositioned. he knows that he, Anna, and the men standing next to them, are all on the same page. still it surprises, even shocks, him, when breaking the sexually charged silence, the man who first approached them, says to Jerry, "how much would it be worth to you for us to have sex with your girlfriend?" not knowing what else to do, Jerry looks at Anna. there's no movement in Anna's face and her look is noncommittal. after another long, charged, silence; the man once again addresses Jerry, saying, "\$1000 from each of us." Jerry, regretting he's been thrust involuntarily, and reluctantly, into the role of pimp, asks, "for how long?," hoping to set the time so short they might decline, but also knowing that would serve no purpose. not wanting to become involved in a lengthy negotiation that might dampen their ardor, the man says, "suppose we raise the offer to \$1500 each, for three hours max, turning to Anna smiling, and Anna, graciously and uninhibitedly, smiles back, exciting Jerry while causing him to feel a sharp sting of jealousy. he does some quick math. \$4500 would cover most of their expenses into the quite foreseeable future, and it looks as if Anna does want to go for it. in fact, though it's hard to tell, she seems to be aroused by the situation. again when Jerry doesn't answer there's a tense silence. "we'll be very careful with her. that will take a reasonable amount of time." Jerry turns to Anna, who is standing quietly next to him, but, face beautiful, she gives no

outward clue as to what she might be thinking. “the time is too long,” Jerry finally says, “two hours max should be adequate.” there’s another long pause and an accord is silently reached. the men agree to meet her in an adjacent suite, to which they can get the key, in half an hour, time for one of them to go to a nearby bank and return with the funds. speaking directly for the first time, Anna wants to know whether it will be group sex or one at a time.... she has no intention of taking on three men at once for any amount of time or money. putting her fear to rest, they signal, even prefer, it will be the latter, and for privacy and ambience also allow that only one of them would be in the room with her at a time. the assumption being she would spend approximately equal time with each. while they and Anna continue to negotiate, more cautious flirting than particulars, partly as a means of breaking the ice, Jerry does his best to tune it all out.

about ten minutes past the appointed time limit, Anna reemerges to where the main event is still going strong. she looks as beautiful as Jerry’s ever seen her – weary, but with a glow. she hugs him and laughs, “where do you get these ideas Jerry?” “it was neither your idea nor mine, Anna. you didn’t have to go along with it. I would have told you to pass.” Jerry looks around warily to confirm they’ve gone. “you were there, you didn’t object.” she again hugs, and kisses him. “I’ve got \$4500 worth of hundred dollar bills in my purse, plus a substantial bonus which they made clear they wanted to be just for me. they wore me out, Jerry,” and for a moment she looks as though she’s going to cry. “did anyone abuse you?” he asks, his voice appropriately rising. “they bent over

backwards," she laughs at the metaphor, to assure my comfort, but lust is lust. to them we were just fuck machines." Jerry drops his head. "you can keep all of the money, Anna, you earned it, " he says, shamed he didn't have enough pride to not let her do it. "we share everything, so it's community property, and they approached us," she adds, trying to allay Jerry's guilt. "we drew them to us by our making out on the sofa." "they were looking me over before that." "but I don't think they would have had enough of a rationale to approach us without that." "I instigated that, too", she replies. "I'm the pimp who drove you to prostitution," he says, half joking. "had you any inkling when we started out today things would have worked out this way?" "no. I'm just a bit surprised at myself." "I'm a bit surprised too but I don't see this as anomalous. it's an extension of the way we operate together." "I know, people pick that up." "we don't have to make it for a long time. I'll take care of you if need be," he says, caressing her face and hair. "I don't know, Jerry, it's amazing how quick I could get back in a horny mood.

"did it make you horny or concerned, knowing I was lying half naked, and half-dressed – of course they liked that – with three men, in mostly darkness, alone with each of them?" Anna asks, in a deliberately inciting tone, already enough distance, bothered, that she wishes it did. "yes, and covetous." "there's only so much any one person can do sexually at any given moment. for me there was a progression. as each one entered the room what occurred had to be somewhat built on the previous interaction, this not even taking into account individual differences and preferences. also, my desires obviously were not that much compatible

with theirs, and I think they were all susceptible to the feeling it's demeaning to have to pay for love. I picked up that right away." "you don't mean pay for sex?" "no. the need is hidden as to why they'd want to pay to have someone they think is attractive as an object of their affection, as well as of lust, and from whom they need affection they can't openly express." "not all men are like that." "well, fortunately for me they were." Jerry nods. "the dominant factor, of course, was my physical attractiveness which is what they wanted to screw, did screw, and to which I responded. this is what gave them power. these guys are really rich I found out. they could have easily spent that for dinner, drinks, and tip, at Spago."

after a few days the amorous, imploring, flirtatious, and/or promiscuous, calls and texts start coming in. Anna is just a little wary that someone may have used his cell to take pictures. "can you describe some of the things you did?," Jerry asks, shamed of his interest though wanting to insure there be no barrier between them, but also erotically drawn to it. "I'm not sure I want to. it was, oddly, given the circumstance, too private. maybe when I'm less affected. there's a different kind of intimacy, interestingly enough, you can have with a stranger, because of the contrast that occurs when what you're showing or doing is with someone you don't know at all... a consciousness of both yourself and the other, out of modesty, that maybe I'd feel guilty to share at this moment, that maybe you'd not appreciate." "then you enjoyed it," he says, making no attempt to hide his dissatisfaction, but cuts himself off, thinking about the weariness she showed when she reemerged from her tryst. "they were hampered, I think,

somewhat, by the idea I was untouchable a person with iconic qualities which tested approachability." "back at the art show it seemed like your seductiveness and looks made them so horny they just wanted to screw you in the worse way. not anything idealized." "that was their urge, but they also needed it to be civilized and subtle, and even with what they were paying they weren't sure I was accessible." "you mean emotionally, mentally." "no, I mean physically!" he nods, comprehending. "fucking, of course, was what they were paying for, she reiterates, somewhat salaciously, "but they also seemed intimidated somewhat." "by what?" "I guess that they had to beg in the beginning to have me." "doubts of being worthy of having sex with you?" "yes, in a waymore an issue of what they could handle, or do, in terms of their own infatuation with me without, they may have feared, my much caring about their responses. these were inhibitions they needed to do away with to free their urges, the heart of which was, of course, as you said, 'to screw me in the worse way', and if fully realized would have made them indifferent to whether they could or couldn't meld their arousals with their own expectations, that is, involve me in them, which could not have been of particular consequence to me, given the situation, although I did want to experience pleasure. they had to know that out front. regarding their expectations the whole thing was a contradiction." "but they gave you a bonus, and the display on your phone has been lighting up ever since." "they seemed to like me, at least physically, and of course the power it gave me was an aphrodisiac." "all the way around?" "yes." "did you like them?" "yes," Anna replies, giving Jerry a physical jolt. "yes. I was hot because the arousal of unconditionally giving

into lust without restraint was my one option, and yes, because I was flattered they were that attracted to me and I knew how well **we** were being compensated. I also fantasized being raped. I came when one of them pulled my hair while I swallowed his cum! but the sex was, mostly, genital, very complete, very erotic, so I think they felt they got their money's worth. I was not immune to the 'thrill' of laying in the dark with an unfamiliar, but attractive, man, after having once come, building to another, longer, more intense, orgasm... the intimacy of it. my answering any hesitation on their part with subtle, but, I'd like to think, irresistibly suggestive, responses. I wanted to get off as much as possible, and I wanted my partner to get off as much as possible." "then you **were** attracted to them and eroticized by your role as the object of their desires?" "of course. I never would have gone along with it if I thought it would not be pleasurable." "was the time allotted each adequate?," Jerry asks, somewhat self-pityingly. "quite, and there were the spaces in-between. they needed it as much as I.

"I'm as much fed up with this denial of love, as I was just prior to the time we first met. you were a solution then, but your interest, however vicarious, is no different than theirs, Jerry," Anna says, addressing what she perceives to be the growing shallowness of both their outlooks on life. "then you don't want a relationship with me anymore?" truly shaken, his heart is painfully pounding. unconsciously he's also fearing if she left him then, she'd take all the loot. "I didn't say that. it's no more you're doing than it is mine. but we need a new focus. not the continuation of laissez-faire which is resulting in a lack of deeper caring." he nods, grateful she's not

dumping him. “when we first met the process was spiritual. we were both looking to change. it’s gradually moved away from that.” he’s also troubled by the inadvertent role he played in her being propositioned. he knew all the while his self-esteem was plummeting. and worst of all, although it was always in the back of his mind, instead of allowing her to be put at considerable physical risk, a quantum leap from Anna’s own various self-propelled one-on-one caprices, his basic concern should have been for her physical welfare.

the next day after complaining of a soreness in her vagina which hasn’t entirely gone away, Anna visits a gynecologist at UCLA Healthcare, is thoroughly checked for signs of venereal disease, and tests negatively for HIV. the doctor tells her that, fortunately, there’s no lesion nor tear, but there is an inflammation, and advises, subtly, but somewhat inquisitively, she refrain from having genital sex until it completely heals. she makes an appointment with him for the next week as a follow up.

“Jerry, you need a girlfriend.” “you’re not my girlfriend?” “yes I am, but you need one in addition to me.” “you’re right.” “the focus of our relationship has too much to do with your vicarious attachment to my sexuality,” Anna says, somewhat surprised he agrees without a fight. “it wasn’t always that way, but you’re so much more out front than I am” “that’s why if you had another girlfriend it would counteract it. I’m going back to work at the Pacific Design Center. they called a week ago and asked if I could return to work for a short time as they’re currently understaffed. we won’t have to spend the money we have now so fast.” “I’d been

thinking about that. how we could possibly use it as seed money to make an investment rather than just spending it.” “investment in what?” “I don’t know. a sustainable energy startup, or something to do with the arts. it’s very vague.” “my father said honest money is only the result of honest work. I’m afraid `investments’ don’t fit that category.” “was he a Marxist?” “he wasn’t political at all.” “I’m a bit unhappy, Anna, that you didn’t tell me about your going back to work sooner. I don’t remember your ever having done that before. I feel that was rather stingy.” “maybe it was the only child in me.”

when Jerry comes to pick up Anna at the Design Center on one of those rare occasions when she didn’t drive there, as he’s early and not wanting to pay to park, he leaves the car two blocks away, before walking there and riding the escalator up to her interior design display on the 3rd floor. it’s almost closing time, and she’s standing just inside the wide panel glass, talking to a very attractive female colleague whom she introduces to him as Ilona. it isn’t long before he picks up Ilona’s covertly sexual response to him. the next day after work, Anna says, “Ilona said she’d like to fuck you.” “those were her words?” “her exact words, yes.” “I don’t imagine that endeared her to you.” “she didn’t say it in a hustling way, and I meant what I said that you need to have another girlfriend. you really turn her on. I was thrilled she said it. I told her I’d tell you what she said.” “I don’t get it. after one very short meeting? that’s pretty bold.” “she’s always been attracted to you. she’s seen you a number of times when you’ve been there with me. she told me once she found you very attractive.” “when was that.” just before

I quit.” “you never mentioned it to me.” “I should have.” “this is weird, the timing, after what you said about my needing more than one girlfriend.” “that’s right, when we’re ready, sometimes things crop up.” “that’s rarely been the case with me.” “it was with us.” “It seems you’re the one who’s ready.” “I am.” he’s stabbed briefly with a feeling of desolation. “are you trying to get rid of me, Anna?”

by pre-arrangement through Anna, Jerry and Ilona meet at the Design Center after work. Anna has already left. dressed as usual in t shirt and Levis, he frankly looks her over for the first time. Ilona’s long, dark brown hair is pulled back from her full face, conservatively knotted in the back. her eyes are the color of coffee, slightly stirred in soft light. she’s wearing a silky, collarless, beige blouse, through which he can conveniently see her bra covered breasts – almost the first thing he notices when he meets a woman is the size of her breasts, which with Ilona, as with Anna, are invitingly substantial, without being large – but what’s most striking is the relationship of her coolly erotic face to the cool heat of her well-formed, very white legs, which at this time are more than adequately showcased by the short, tight, generic, black skirt she’s wearing, the kind the sexiest girls in high school wore in that visually rich, but physically arid and unsustainable, time of his youth. they walk amid the gridlocked traffic on Melrose, her unfamiliar, exotic, perfumed scent, sweet, with the bitter traces of dried leaves. his sense of the sudden newness and difference from that of his relationship with Anna belies the essential sameness. it’s an aura, that by its very nature, cannot fully be assimilated, and will shortly dissipate itself into physicality, yet a moment to succor. what

he's not sure of is whether the same erotic sense of unfamiliarity is working its way through Ilona's mind until an inadvertently shy, but intensely personal, look she gives him affirms her lustful intent towards him, and he relaxes in the mitigated late afternoon light as they quietly talk and turn the corner south, walking another block, before returning to their cars. Ilona thinks they should get the initial oversexed need between them out of the way so they can best relate. they flip a coin to determine where to go for their maiden engagement. heads, her place, tails, his. it comes up heads which corresponds to both their wishes. she invites him to come over for breakfast the next morning, her day off.

ghost white day as usual. Jerry, who generally wears a t shirt under anything else he wears, is standing by the open window, in the morning light, wearing a soft textured, unbuttoned, azure blue, long sleeve shirt. Ilona stares for a long moment, as though she's viewing a picture, then walks up to him and begins licking his bare chest, his breasts, his nipples, his abdomen, undoes his pants, and pulling his pants and shorts down to his knees, continues to lick, his thighs, groin, gnawing his balls, running her tongue upward on the inside of his genital which is outside when raised, in long strokes, concluding with fully blowing him until his sex organ is at its stiffest, then abruptly removes her mouth, leaving it swaying against the sudden inertia. they stand facing each other, Ilona devilishly looking into his eyes. 'nice way to say good morning, Ilona,' Jerry says, as he pulls up his pants. "best before breakfast," she responds. looking her over, dressed almost as the day before, only dark skirt even shorter and clingier, slate blue off-the-shoulder blouse he's not sure

he wants to or even can, wait for breakfast. she makes his choice easier, watching her move as they proceed to the bedroom, then screw, clothes on, coveting every detail in the morning freshness

early afternoon. spent most of the morning languishing during a homemade Mexican breakfast of chilaquiles, tortillas, and enchiladas. Ilona's dark brown long, straight hair is tied up neatly, ends fastened on top. her entire front body is exposed through the open cream hued peignoir she's changed to wearing no makeup and black high heels. unlike Anna, who projects a warm, confident sensuality, Ilona is blasé almost to the point of cold porn. "I like to be felt up." is it a fetish?" "yes." they heavily pet on the mist-grey sofa pressed against a celadon painted wall. undoing his pants he settles into her, her legs lock around his waist, her mind filled with the thickness of his cock. slipping off the sofa they continue to fuck, besides themselves with the thrill of new meat, until they both come, bare ass on the hardwood floor

a soft breeze flutters the flimsy white curtains, breathing on their bodies, as they sit together, predictably relieved and refreshed, on the substantial lower sill, Ilona still wearing her wrapper but sans heels, delighting In Jerry's naked body, neither of them caring whether or not they can be seen.

the interior of Ilona's apartment is Danish mod graphic minimalism, replete with furniture and accessories one might have viewed in a 50s Charles Eames film. there is nothing generic about it, however, because of the extremeness which is an extension of Ilona's cool. for instance well placed quality

reproductions of Shunga porn done by several of the great Japanese wood-block artists of the Edo period, along with two severely sensual photos by Robert Mapplethorpe enhance and contrast the otherwise naked severity of her walls.

they quickly discover the first day their fascination is mostly visual and is not going to result in much conversation. because of this an hour later the mellowness and calm having mostly dissipated, they are beginning to feel a mild estrangement. Ilona unbuttons Jerry's shirt and coaxes him to the bedroom. it's still early afternoon. the bedroom like the front of her apartment is flooded with a cool, almost cold, white light, a single Mapplethorpe photo on the wall opposite the bed, locks her arms around Jerry's neck, murmurs, playing on his name, as well as the word, `cherry', "Cherie," making Jerry feel a bit vulnerable. it isn't he minds being teased qualified by her intentions but not sure what her intentions are – she bends forward over the bed, raising her buttocks. Jerry inches his penis into her anus and they fuck solidly, while he fingers her. she comes first, fully and luxuriantly, as his fingers sensuously push. he continues to fuck her, slowly, taking his time, moving his pelvis, lewdly, for another minute before intensely ejaculating. "has anyone ever come inside you like that?" "not without a condom," she replies, her cheeks colored from exertion. they shower and she douches. without dressing they spend the rest of a quiet afternoon in the light filled, artfully furnished, front room of Ilona's apartment peacefully engaged. when they finally kiss goodnight it is with genuine appreciation and affection.

he's gratified that an objectification of his body is so much

the point with Ilona. that she has an infatuation with his looks, in the same way he does Anna's, is a new experience, he knows sex isn't love though it can give rise to it and wonders if it isn't actually the opposite of it – that is the more erotic the further from caring about anything but pleasure. and he knows he loves Anna to the extent he'd be pretty much devastated if he were to lose her. it's also not clear why she's pushed him towards Ilona. because she wants the freedom of his not being dependent on her and/or so that, hopefully, he finally realizes he loves her, not because she's sexy, but because he loves her?

the following day at work Ilona tells Anna about their time together. Anna listens intently, making her go through every detail, and then is silent the rest of the day. when Jerry sees her that night, she's dressed as modestly as she's ever been with him, hair down, no makeup, wearing a grey pullover sweater and a simple, but tight fitting, navy skirt, seeming, and maybe this is just his projection, somewhat subdued, as he fixes his gaze on her sensual calves and bare knees, and inadvertently springs a hard-on. his erections are sometimes stronger and thicker after he's had sex than when he's overwrought with horniness. "can you stay over tonight, Jerry?" "of course, Anna." when they go to bed they lay naked on top of each other, periodically switching positions, Anna's fingers caressing his genitals, without fucking.

during the week Jerry and Ilona frequently send humorous, sometimes racy, emails back and forth which means he has to constantly go to his desktop as he doesn't have a smart phone, or any other portable electronic device which she

teases him about in her emails. it's odd, with Anna, that's been so little an issue, they've never talked about it.

on Ilona's next day off they meet at a quiet, small, very up-scale hotel in downtown Beverly Hills that's commissioned her to redesign the interior to a bedroom suite which is situated partly in a garden. when he arrives there are paint cans and various materials, but neither the luxurious furniture nor the bed, has yet to be moved. like on their first day together, the light is cool, white, and permeates everything, especially Ilona, standing in it, wearing a fresh high collared white blouse, canary yellow skirt, and white heels, evidently her work clothes for the project. Ilona puts the filled notebook she's holding onto the work table, walks up to Jerry, and standing almost tiptoe, with an amused look, stares suggestively into his eyes, then deep throats him with her tongue. "how can we make this interesting, Jerry?." she slips her hand under his t shirt, her other hand clutches his crotch. "it would be too easy and pointless to just start having sex, now, wouldn't it?" "I was thinking the same thing until you got me aroused." "we can relate, even leave here for a while. I make my own hours." "that's what the concierge, I guess you'd call him, said." "we'll probably want to go get some food later, and today I have no appointments. I'm really actually just finishing up. we can eat out or bring the food back here." "I don't usually eat lunch." "Anna mentioned that." "Ilona....I like the musical sound of your name. what is the origin?" "Greek, but in my background it's Hungarian" "how far back?" "grandparents." "both sides?" "my paternal side is Norwegian."

“my paternal grandparents immigrated from Hungary in the 1880s.” Ilona’s face lights up in an uncharacteristic manner. “then you’re Hungarian, too?” “they liked to brag a relative was an advisor to Franz Joseph. but they, of course, defined themselves as Jews, not Hungarian.” “what about your maternal side?” “grandfather was Belarusian, grandmother was Ukrainian. same thing, they identified themselves, and were identified by non-Jews, as Jews. they lived in Kiev.” Ilona nods. her interest has become fuller, less erotic. “when did they immigrate?” “same time as my paternal grandparents. in Eastern Europe the pogroms were very severe at that time. they owned two jewelry stores. of course they had to leave everything behind.” “where was your mother born?” “San Francisco.” Ilona’s face again becomes uncharacteristically conspiratorial. “so was I. and your father?” “New York City.” “I’m part Jewish, on my mother’s side,” Ilona says, feeling an additional bond with Jerry because of it, making him wonder why, someone, who may be only a quarter Jewish, and as assimilated as most Jews are, she would emotionally identify with that and find it important, reinforcing his sense Ilona has a peculiar insecurity regarding belonging. “let’s take a walk”, Ilona says.

leaving L’Ermitage, she puts her arm in his and they walk north towards the shopping district, and as dining at the hotel restaurant is way beyond their resources, end up, after having worked up a good appetite, getting take-out at Nate and Al’s deli on Beverly Drive, and eating it on a park bench two blocks from the hotel.

Jerry sits on the edge of the invitingly plush, but spare, bed,

as Ilona adds to, and corrects, her notes, hungrily taking in her whole non-committal, sensual, image, her full skirt not higher than her knees. he walks over to where she's sitting, kisses her, raises up her skirt, and kisses her thighs which, despite their cool white color are hot to the touch of his lips. "I guess we better pull the shades and lock the door. you can never tell who might come to see how we're getting along. they have a very friendly, attentive, staff here," she says, gripping his hard on. having removed everything but his socks. he hovers over her, his chest pressing hers, pushing her backwards onto the mattress, he raises her billowy skirt, roughly removing her panties. they fuck profusely and intently the comfort of the bed augmenting their satisfaction. when they're done they dress quickly. "the thing I like best about you, Jerry, besides your looks, is that you're open space so anything is possible." at these words Ilona accidentally jostles her purse and a strap-on tumbles out. "you carry a strap-on around with you, Ilona?" "just in case I meet somebody, Jerry," Ilona says, turning beet red. "I'm not sure what you mean by somebody, Ilona. might you use the strap-on on me?," Jerry asks, feeling an excited rush, "but don't take it for granted, I might use it on you." "I'd like that," Ilona replies, ignoring she's been caught red-handed. they lock the door and pull the shades. it's very late when they leave, separately. fortunately, at Ilona's request, management is forthright enough to post a digital do not disturb sign. they also send them free lemonade and cookies ...at an extremely inopportune time.

breathing in the cool night air from the rolled down window, Jeerry tries to assess the undomesticated sex he had with

Ilona, which when making an attempt to qualify is really hard to do, really not sure why he is in an affair with her. he goes to bed with a multitude of pleasant sexual images going through his head. included in it, dreamily, is the face of Anna.

Ilona having awakened refreshed and not knowing for sure why she is feeling so horny flashes on the image of someone with whom she'd been desiring to further connect, but for one reason or another has not, yet. impulsively she calls to see if he is up. her call awakens him both literally and figuratively. they discuss plans to spend the day together. in the back of her mind although she hasn't defined past her relationship with Anna what the rules with Jerry are, she senses, even suspects, her day may end up with her being 'unfaithful.' Niguel suggests they attend a friend's book reading and take it from there. another cool white day when he picks her up and they head Downtown. the reading is in a large very old converted Victorian house in Lincoln Heights. ethnically it is a very diverse crowd, black, white, scruffy dressed, most being, as is her male companion, Latino. during the reading she can't keep her eyes off the young crowd, male and female, esp. several very attractive women dressed in oddly DIY combined old clothes and colors, humbling, somewhat, her more set ideas of fashion, one gorgeous, truly pristine looking white girl, long golden hair, grey sweatshirt full b & w patterned skirt and matching socks, demure, atypical yet not out of place in the insouciant beer drinking pot smoking crowd, sitting next to a black woman wearing a raspberry hued coat, black pants and boots, all vinyl, his female friend's reading going quite well, and when they leave she's considerably keyed up, turned on, and a little less sure of herself, that

is of her more mainstream values. her poet friend is of course reading her current state and while he hasn't `pushed it' with her it has become eroticized. his interest in her, which has always been considerable, has crossed the line where it will be a colossal failure if he doesn't bed her today, tonight. he doesn't think it would take much doing now because of the uncertain flux she's in for whatever reason, and today Ilona's needs and inclinations are running along parallel lines. they go to an after-reading party enhancing Ilona's already considerable attraction, even letting him jokingly feel her up, drawing approval from the group around them, but mostly sitting quietly, observing, until late afternoon, the celebrants all being friendly to her and inclusive. when they leave they are both a little high and feeling really good, her face flushed and cooled by the fresh air, walking arm in arm a couple of blocks beyond where they've parked to get their legs back, then standing by the car pressing their bodies together. "why don't we get something to eat and then go up to my place?," he asks. kissing her forehead, flicking a loose strand of her tied together hair in place. they both engage in a long soulful look, he not having sufficient knowledge to comprehend the precariousness of her state. everything has become new and vitally significant to Ilona. speechless, she doesn't answer. they eat at a retro 40s kitchen. Ilona feels she is almost living a dream. the door has hardly been closed before he kisses her, starts to unbutton her blouse, remove her skirt and they begin to fuck laying naked on the bed, slowly, tuning in, very much tenderly, and climaxing unusually gratified, Ilona knowing, but pushing aside, she is betraying Jerry, or is it Anna? then the both of them, speedily, convulsively talk – about poetry, art, fashion, their personal lives, but with dashes of

cold water she gently suggests he take her home, and she deeply sleeps in what's left of the naked empty night arising to a new day, thinking she wanted to cheat but instead got either burned or reborn, or is it just she's become too decadent to change.

Anna and Ilona have agreed to stop swapping info about they and Jerry, for sake of privacy. Jerry on the one hand feels duty bound to share with Anna what has recently transpired, and on the other hand that it's not a particularly good idea. at Anna's suggestion the three of them get together in a park. Jerry feeling it's weird being talked about in his presence, says, "creating an issue out of this makes no sense. I care about the both of you I desire the both of you" "equally?," Anna asks. "differently, I think would be a better way to put it." a subtle look of triumph emerges on Ilona's face but quickly disappears. "it will change, Anna. it's just predictable infatuation," Ilona says, gently laying her hand on Anna's. "I know. I've been living in a dream world because Jerry's response has been so different than mine has, now that the shoe is on the other foot." Jerry rises, walks over to Anna, kneels in front of her chair and hugs her. Ilona gets up, straightens her blouse and skirt, covertly, no doubt unintentionally, arousing Jerry, moves to Anna, runs her hands through Anna's honey colored hair and kisses her neck, then kisses Jerry, a hot kiss, and leaves.

an intense crystallization has Jerry feeling a deep love for Anna, and at the same time admiring Ilona's frankness, wanting to have fucked her on the spot "why don't you go with her, Jerry." "because I love you Anna." "I know you do,

Jerry, but this has to run its course," she says, for the first time wholly appreciating the conflict between freedom and commitment. "Ilona and I plan to see each other tonight. I'll call you first thing tomorrow," Jerry says. Anna, composed, and seemingly fully restored, nods. knowing the ménage a trois can't continue with positive results, and programming himself to resolve it, he's now feeling guilt that both he and Anna have been using Ilona for their own selfish ends.

on the way back to his apartment Jerry has no appetite and almost skips dinner before fixing a salad, with a little seitan. but as it darkens and with it the cool night air stirring his senses, his hunger for Ilona increases. worrying that perhaps what had transpired during the day may have cooled her passion. as it turns out, just the opposite has occurred, and he realizes his showing his sexual fancy, however understated, for her in front of Anna, has upped her erotic impulse, if that's possible. what he doesn't know is his then consequential demonstration of his love for Anna, has hurt her, as well. of course, it is logically preposterous, given all of this was assumed by the three of them, out front.

when he arrives at Ilona's apartment she's deliberately left the door ajar so that he could see her half reclining on her sofa wearing a sheer but roomy low cut thigh length black dress with black straps, that sensuously contrasts the cold white of her skin, and crème art deco patterned shoes with stiletto thin, clear plastic, 'do me' heels. he enters, closes the door, and as he approaches the sofa she rises to meet him arms to their sides, the fronts of their bodies touch. her hair is combed down sleek below her shoulders, and as she

rests her bosom against his, inserting her tongue deep into his mouth then slowly removing it, he can feel she's wearing neither bra nor panties. "in the bedroom or here?, she asks in a dusky grumble." "where we are now is less convenient, but sexier." she laughs, running her fingers through his hair, gyrating her tongue into his ear, her other hand stroking his crotch. "take off all your clothes. the last time we had sex you left your socks on." he undresses, clothes piled on a chair, his shoes on the floor next to it. he picks her up just to feel her weight, the front of her body grazing against his as he slowly lets her down to the sofa. they sit on the sofa/lounge facing each other, a partially feigned, amused, but I dare you crave, in her coffee eyes. he raises the hem of her dress above her thighs. he kisses her. she coldly kisses him back. he raises her dress higher, to her waist, and they fuck. they are so sensitized that his cock can feel the neural impulses in her labia. they fuck, they screw, the rest of the night, resolved to lose themselves in pleasure, driven by the, now unavoidable, realization of the adulterous motivations behind it, and more unconsciously, a guilt driven acknowledgement, by the both of them, it will be the last time they'll have sex with each other (except for one moment in the near future, where she'll briefly service him). minutes after they've been momentarily sated, they begin again, continuing to fuck, Ilona incited by Jerry's naked body, Jerry by her insistence to remain clothed, straps pulled below her breasts, refusing Jerry's efforts to remove her dress, passionately making hickeys on his neck as he rips apart the fabric. when he tries to stop, she prods him with her thighs wrapped around his groin, until one last hard to reach orgasm finally sates their desire for more, and exhausted, not bothering to get off the

sofa, sleep 'till dawn. Jerry awakens first, disengages from Ilona, who is laying on her side, a sweet look on her face,

kisses her forehead, as he did his mother's, while she was in a coma, the last morning of her life, dresses and leaves. he suddenly remembers he told Anna he'd call her first thing, but now feels too compromised to talk to her.

when he finally calls, she's gone and doesn't answer her cell. he leaves a message. Anna answers his message on her break about noon. tells him Ilona didn't show for work, and delicately inquires if she's all right. Jerry says as far as he knows, she is, and asks Anna if they could get together that evening. Anna says they could, and he invites her over for dinner.

when Anna arrives and he first sees her, the warm light of her aura fills and appeases him. they spend a quiet unsuspectful evening together, and Jerry tells her everything that transpired the night before. Anna listens with acute interest. they decide not to sleep together, as Jerry is physically, psychologically, and emotionally, drained. the next day at work, Ilona tells Anna she doesn't want to see Jerry anymore. Anna tells Ilona, if it's true, she should tell him, herself. it takes a few days before he and Anna are ready to resume sex, but it's not going to revert back to , as Anna put it after her one time session as a woman of ill repute, a laissez faire romance. nor do either of them want to have sex that isn't primarily rooted in tenderness. he senses, however, sooner or later, not as it was before, Anna is going to become seriously involved with a younger man, and it could kill him. he feels some guilt regarding Ilona. but Ilona never seemed to care much about

how things worked out with he and Anna, except, understandably as it affected her personally, and, erotically, she still has the potential to turn him on. she's also, as it turns out, according to Anna, furious and vengeful, that he left her apartment in the early a.m. without so much as leaving a note. when Jerry calls Ilona she neither answers nor replies to his message. finally taking the bull by the horns, so to speak, he picks out some photos he's done she's admired, and he'd intended to give her, all along, and fatally drawn to her, he arrives, unannounced, at her apartment on a late weekday night. Ilona's resistance to having sex with Jerry has morphed into her not wanting to have anything to do with him at all. her coolness has turned to coldness, not as a come-on, but inaccessible, both for lack of desire, and for caring for him. if this was another place on the planet there would be loud claps of thunder, flashes of lightning, and a downpour, or a zero visibility blizzard. but this is implacable L.A. where all emotions are reflected in a neutral hue. Ilona stands facing Jerry's side, so that he slightly has to turn his head, statuesque, though not tall, uncharacteristically, and modestly, wearing a button up blouse, full skirt, and cardigan sweater. "I still like your body. take off your clothes now, and I'll masturbate you," she says, coldly, but with an edge that arouses him. he undresses and stands before her, naked, hoping the contact will make her thaw. the front of their bodies touching. she begins slowly, gently caressing, moving her hand, engrossed in perfect communication with him, who loses himself, until he convulsively spurts, quietly moaning. she squeezes until he's fully sated, then lets go. looking him in the eyes, she says, "I wanted to see your cum shoot out into empty space, all for naught, as it's turned out

with us,” and leaves the room. the contrast between her coldness and the gentleness with which she performed their last sexual act, along with the physical release, affects him so much he’s momentarily unable to move. he stays naked for a long time, as though doing so would allow him to maintain a physical connection with her, in a half meditative state, absorbing the ambience before, finally, putting on his clothes, gathering the things he had intended to leave with her, and exiting her apartment.

the day Anna’s temporary work at the Design Center concludes several weeks later, Ilona lunches with her, and after warmly kissing her, hands her a note which is addressed to Jerry. Anna gives him the note that evening, and says, “if you want I’ll go to the bedroom while you read it.” “don’t be silly, Anna,” he laughs, somewhat apprehensively, but with obvious anticipation, opening the note. *“Dear Jerry. this is not a letter of apology, just of clarification; that my reasons for terminating our relationship was not as it would seem from our last time together, though I do not for a moment regret the expression I gave to it – it was the inevitability of the for-gone conclusion. I sometimes dream of your naked body, and the sexual pleasure we shared. `the moon’s a harsh mistress’. you are a strange, weirdly beautiful, and precious, person, and there will always be a place of tenderness in my heart for you. ♥ Ilona*

he hands the note to Anna. she intently reads it and hands it back to him. “I knew she felt that way,” Anna says.

Jerry’s Anna instigated liaison with Ilona changed nothing. it

just laid bare a clear lack in his and Anna's relationship. and in spite of its stated lofty intentions was just another affair for much the same reasons as any other affair which merely pricked a growing alienation leaving Jerry sexually and spiritually depleted and Anna, potentially, on the prowl.

"I'm convinced the erotic games we play, not just with others, but privately with ourselves, which is more hypocritical than safe, is playing with fire. someone has to get seriously hurt. it's not just about pleasure." "are you referring to Ilona?" "I'm not sure. it could be any of us." "how do you feel about Ilona as a friend, now?" "we've become closer. before we were just co-workers who happened to get along. she said she hopes we continue to be friends, and she also said she'd still like to be friends with you. but 'the moon's a harsh mistress' is a very strong phrase, the part of her note that sounded most despondent." "do you know where she got that from?" "no." "it's a song. you can see a live concert performance of it by Pat Metheny and Charlie Haden on YouTube, but the most moving version is by Norwegian singer, Radka Toneff, who recorded it in 1982, the year she committed suicide at the age of 30." "you know a lot more about music than I do, Jerry."

Jerry goes to the bedroom feeling very intense, puts on his head phones and listens to the soundtrack to the film, *Ascenseur Pour l'échafaud- Lift To The Gallows*, for its gravity.

anyone who doesn't recognize the umbilical between sex, love, and spirituality, is missing something, he thinks, picturing Ilona sitting in the sun at the park, wisecracking. even

porn is a distant cousin to spirituality.

“what are you thinking about, Jerry?” Anna asks, sitting down next to him. “jazz clubs in Kyoto, Osaka, and Nagoya.” “have you ever been to those cities?” “no.” Anna laughs, starts tickling him. “but you’ve been to Japan.” “yes.” “then you mean it’s because you feel an aura of those places.” “that’s right.” she continues tickling him with both hands until he’s squirming and laughing like an idiot. when she stops they fall silent. snuggling close she lets the hem of her dress creep up above her groin. this is the sexiest she’s looked to him since before he met Ilona. Jerry strips waist down and Anna rubs her warm thighs against his very hard cock. they kiss, pet, and play, then seriously, sexually re-connect. when sated, they stop fucking, breathing hard, hair covering her face, she says, “I was worried that was never going to happen again.” “I knew it would, Anna,” Jerry replies, pushing her stray locks back off her forehead.

Chapter Four

there would have been a time when Jerry may have, perhaps, been a little jealous, while also beguiled by her assertiveness, turned on without really feeling betrayed, confident of the stability of their relationship, not the stabbing pain he's experiencing now. despite Anna's sincerely motivated proclamation to Jerry about a deeper more serious communion, circumstances are such her more erotic impulses have once again resurfaced and taken charge, and she has every intention of nurturing them, not unrelated to the fact that at the moment, for the first time, really, in what already seems to both of them as their long relationship, they are not getting along. Jerry has become more deeply involved in his work, which would please her more if it didn't tend to make her feel left out, this coupled with her, at the moment, manic need for social interaction. added to this she's met a much younger man she's become quite attracted to, and infatuated with, tellingly, through Jerry. the immediate and obvious clue was when Jerry introduced them to each other, the deliberate extension of their conversation was partly devised to keep Jerry waiting, "sex is sex, Anna, you could put a bag over someone's head and the result would be the same." "of course I don't agree, Jerry." "he wants to do a film with me and his friend – a sex movie shown from several different points of view, with each of us taking turns with the camera." "and taking turns with you, I imagine" for the first time Anna has the urge to slap Jerry, really hard. "not that way at all, the scenes will meld." "then you can turn the camera on them as well, Anna." "we're planning on doing just that, Jerry. your mind just zeroes in on sex, and nothing else." "are

Ahmad and Daniel bisexual?" "I'd rather not get into labels." "I don't want to argue, Anna." "neither do I." "Here's That Rainy Day." "my father loved that song, and so do I." it was one of the songs Jerry fantasized doing with Charlie Haden, but he doesn't answer. "I think maybe we shouldn't see each other for a while, to give you a chance to accept or reject my relationship with Ahmad, which is getting serious," she says, her abruptness and intensity blindsiding him. she knows she's being cruel. "then so be it," Jerry says and leaves. Anna is very saddened, but her infatuation with her newfound potential lover is dominating her emotional state at that moment. in fact she can't wait to see him again. although one would think and feel the opposite, the fact that he and Jerry are friends, somehow verifies and validates their prospective liaison – that it's intertwined. if George Herms hadn't curated a show that included both of them, they'd probably never have met.

"I admire both Jerry and his work," is almost the first thing Ahmad says, when he and Anna meet for a hillside hiking excursion. "he's cut a hard row not aligning himself with any group, social or artistic." "if I were that way I possibly wouldn't survive." "you don't have to because your ego is not threatened like Jerry's is by group participation. he wasn't always as much like that. he was a participant back in the fifties and 60s." "that was a long way back." Anna can barely see the activity going on over their heads, and Ahmad lifts her `till her waist is parallel to his face, then let's her down , slowly, the front of her body rubbing against his, before they hungrily kiss. "when are you going to let me fuck you, Anna?" "soon, very soon, Ahmad." they resume walking and talking.

“one of Jerry’s photos I particularly like are the two flashlight self-portraits. I don’t know how he got them so precise.” “he placed the camera on top of a low book shelf. when he knelt, knees on the floor, his face was exactly flush with the camera lens. with the finger of one hand on the camera release button, and holding the flashlight with the other, while looking at his face reflected in the lens, he was able to see exactly the shot he wanted. you speak softly. do you ever raise your voice?” Ahmad laughs. “not really. if I’m angry I just glare.” he picks up a purple wildflower and slips it into her hair. “I’m hoping soon will be close to now, Anna.” they stop, facing each other, and stare. “it is now, Ahmad.” she lifts her face to his and thrusts her tongue into his mouth. they find a covert grassy spot off the trail and passionately fuck, until a chill wind starts up and they head for the car. “can I see you tomorrow?” “yes.”

back in her apartment Anna basks in a blanket of the warmth of both Ahmad’s sexiness and gentleness. in order not to feel guilt she also focuses, unfairly, on what she perceives to be Jerry’s selfishness. Anna and Ahmad soon become close. as a digital filmmaker he naturally wants to involve her in the current project he’s doing with his friend, Daniel. on the drive there, Anna, wearing her light-changing, multicolored print mini-dress, answers her cell, first time she’s heard from Jerry, since. he reminds her he’s got her bicycle. “Jerry, could you just drop it off. I won’t be back `till late. I’d appreciate it. I hope you’re well.” “I guess I’ll survive,” he jokes, putting on the conventional mask. “I’ll see you soon, Jerry.” “good, I’d like to see you, too, Anna.”

Ahmad, Anna, and Daniel set up the lights and camera in the living room of Daniel's rented house, then close the blinds. when Ahmad carefully explains to Anna just what the film is to be about, she has serious second thoughts. she knew there was going to be an erotic element to it. but what they have in mind is to film themselves having sex with one another, each one taking a turn holding the camera on the other two, so as to show each one's point of view doing the same activity – this includes, as Anna discovers, herself holding the camera on Ahmad and Daniel, just as Jerry had sarcastically supposed. as it turns out it's not as pornographic as the description may leave one to believe, with interesting contrasting nuances, and their own eroticism is tempered by the work and attention to detail, and when they've finished, they're very excited, Daniel envisaging it being shown at a major film festival in some category. the end result as far as Anna's and Ahmad's physical needs is, a lack of sexual fulfillment and extreme horniness, and they plan to go back to Anna's apartment and fuck the rest of the night.

when Jerry arrives at Anna's with her bike, still having a key, he unlocks her front door, and while looking for a conspicuous space to wheel it to, decides, first, to stay there a while and absorb the ambience, then decides to wait until Anna gets back. he finally makes himself comfortable in her bedroom, sitting on a plush chair facing the bed.

several hours later, Anna and Ahmad arrive after the shoot. when she slips her key into the door and discovers it's unlocked, at first she starts to panic, then eye on the bike, she thinks Jerry just forgot to lock up. standing in the front room

Ahmad crushes Anna in a bear hug, and they feverously hug and kiss. "why don't you undress in here. I'll go to the bedroom, then you can come to me," she says, with a salacious emphasis on the word come. he laughs. "don't undress, Anna, stay just the way you are." she walks to the bedroom and when she opens the door almost screams, but quickly recovers. when he heard Ahmad's voice in the front room, Jerry thought of hiding in her closet, but it was too late. Anna sits on the bed, somewhat spent from the night's action, legs crossed, dress up her thighs, looking possibly sexier to Jerry than she ever has, takes a tube of lipstick from her purse and applies a fresh coat to her lips. Ahmad walks into the room, his lanky body with a respectably sized dick, stark naked. at first, not seeing Jerry, standing next to Anna, clearly startled, he makes a small move to turn and exit, but, laughing, Anna tugs at his arm and pulls him to her. "Jerry, you can stay or leave, but we're going to have sex, now." deeply humiliated, Jerry does not reply. "we can't have sex with Jerry here, Anna." "I don't know why not. this may be the real drama we were only intimating about with the film." "you've made a film?" "yes. why don't you stay, Jerry, as to be here was your wish, and watch. it would do you good," Anna says, really high, now. Ahmad, having overcome his initial inhibition, smiles. "it's alright with me," he says, although he'd hoped to continue building an intimacy with Anna, becoming very erect. Anna unbuttons the top back of her dress, slips her arms out of the sleeves, baring her breasts, raises the hem even higher, and reclines, not quite laying back, and Ahmad, taking both her thighs in his hands, spreads them, and seamlessly enters her as they both fall, Ahmad forward, Anna backwards. Jerry watches them fuck, transfixed, his

whole universe squeezed into a concentrated ball. they fuck a long time, sensitively adapting to one another. their sex is both inordinately tender and wantonly dirty at the same time. when Anna climaxes it's with a fully satisfied, concerted moan of pleasure, contrasting Ahmad's more understated, but no less intense and sustained orgasm. they cease moving, and before separating, they tenderly kiss. the two of them then move to the front room, leaving Jerry, alone, immobilized. Anna throws her arms around Ahmad. "naturally I thought we'd spend the night together, but I don't want to tell Jerry to leave." "I understand, Anna." both of them fully clothed now, Ahmad thinking about the emotions Jerry must be feeling, an older person he's looked up to. they kiss, pet, make-out, make plans to view and perhaps do some editing on their film. before leaving, Ahmad calls to the bedroom, "you'll get over it, Jerry." "I'm not sure I want to," is the almost inaudible reply.

Anna returns to the bedroom where Jerry is still sitting. she quietly moves to him and hugs him gently. "it's interesting, I just didn't figure you might not have come home alone, Anna." "it's like I said about the games we play and getting hurt, Jerry." "it's not totally the way it seems, Anna. there was an element of pleasure in watching the both of you after all this time of speculating and fantasizing things just like that." "what if I told you although I have no intention of relinquishing my relationship with Ahmad I love you and I want you back. would you believe it?" "that would be pretty hard for sure to get down Anna after what's happened. do you love Ahmad?" "yes, potentially. I am completely captivated by him. we are both motivated by the same impulses.

along with the freshness, that's what's given it its flavor." "what about the film?" "we're looking forward for something happening with that. we'd love for it to be seen. the shooting went off quite well. what you don't understand, and I didn't until just now, is we'd assumed ourselves as a couple, and everyone else, a flair, something that temporarily came into that. it created limitations which was wrong as well as not being realistic. if Ahmad and I are becoming a couple with specific commitments and trust, it's just as we had. there's nothing wrong with that" Jerry nods, extremely hurt by her applying past tense to those qualities. "I didn't mean that commitment and trust isn't still there with us, Jerry. it's entirely possible, at least theoretically, with the proper attitudes, we could, in the future, resume as a couple as well, it's just that right now we've undergone a dissolution, while there's the excitement of a new relationship in bloom. with Ahmad it may be ultimately just about sex. with Michael it was, mostly, just about power. it's totally unpredictable." Jerry nods again, and without looking, gets up and leaves. it would have been better to have let things play out more before having tried to see Anna again so soon.. he was just asking for what he got. but he missed her, and, perhaps sadly, he still loves her now. as soon as she hears the front door shut, Anna bursts into tears.

after allowing sorrow to completely engulf her, she quickly dispenses it, intercepting any tendency to diminish her feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. she admits Jerry's presence made the sex with Ahmad actually more pleasurable for the both of them, even to the extent where it was more relaxed and deliberately stretched out. but there's nothing

she regrets. nothing she would have done differently. knowledge is progressive. nor does she think, although she wishes she'd the opportunity to be asleep in bed with Ahmad now, this is, necessarily, the end of her relationship with Jerry.

days progress into weeks and now several months have gone by since she's last seen Jerry. she and Ahmad have become more involved, but not necessarily closer. they have fun together, mutually exploring, enjoying, and sometimes satirizing the younger art world scene, which through him, she's become a part of. how his background affects his attitude towards women and sex is of concern to her, however. while he's thoughtful and empathetic in how he relates to her, he becomes possessive, even jealous, if she gives any response at all to other males. this comes to a head after she and Ahmad fly to Beirut for a brief visit with his family, who are well situated in an upscale section of the city, and when she innocently flirts with one of his sister's male friends, he angrily commands her, "come over here," to where he's standing. first she thinks of cutting him slack, but realizes everyone has karma because of their backgrounds, and she has it out with him right there in front of everyone. she also returns with a fuller understanding of how the acute tensions of the middle east affect everyone, even those who are not directly involved in the conflicts surrounding them. the most important realization she's having concerning her relationship with Ahmad, however, is that rather than being motivated just by a need to share, out of affection and mutual interests, he has a culturally based master plan geared to finding a wife, the perfect mate, and with this she wants no part.

Jerry is one hundred pages into what was once a short story but is now becoming a novel. he's putting together his best photos, and throwing away what he doesn't want, whether they're good or not, because if he can't relate to them they're just dead weight. aside from this and trying to stay in shape, he's not doing much of anything. and he thinks a lot about his age. in spite of being grateful that he's motivated to create, he can't deny the emptiness. he'd been looking at a lot of jazz videos on YouTube – among them, watching a group of young Japanese jazz musicians play at the Beehive, a club in Osaka – particularly an 18 year old Lester Young influenced tenor sax player, Tomoaki Baba, and although just beginners, there's an aura that moves him, unpretentiously cool in their identification with, but with little or no knowledge of, its origins, earnestly blowing 50s straight ahead jazz riffs, honking like Sonny Rollins, or running the scale like Coltrane, as though it's happening for the first time, so unlike the histrionics of Japanese pop, or for that matter, the deeper, more seriously reflective, experimental jazz played in some of the best venues around the world, and one night when the impasse is particularly strong he decides to go listen to jazz live at the Blue Whale. this night, there's a very good group of up-and-comers who swing hard, the vigorous sound clearing the air. concentrating on moving to sit on a bench in the same area as the one he and Anna sat on, he almost trips on the foot of an attractive young lady who's just emerged from the bar, causing her to swerve, partially spilling her drink. he looks up to see Anna's laughing eyes. they practically crush each other as they hug and kiss. "this is one of your sax player nights, Anna?" "I may have had that in mind, Jerry." "just let's not talk about fate, ok?" "I agree." they sit

through one set, but preoccupied with each other, then become anxious to leave. flipping a coin to see in whose apartment they'll spend the night, it comes up heads, Jerry's. they stand outside the club, enjoying the ambient feeling of a late date in Little Tokyo. "if you want to drive with me, I can take you back to your car in the morning." "I'd rather meet you at your apartment, Jerry. I don't want to feel any obligations about tomorrow."

the relationships between Anna, Jerry, Ahmad, Daniel, and the rest of their universes, instead of either totally dissolving or reverting back to their original states, redefine, at least, philosophically, in which the concept of couples, with the connotation of exclusivity, is modified, somewhat, at the bidding of Anna, to a structure similar to the networking of nerve cells; mutuality, along with an insistence on differentiation. and independence. the film, which Ahmad has enlisted Jerry to edit, has legs of its own. the melding of the disparate images shot separately by the three participants, has attracted positive critical and audience response. unfortunately, no mainstream or indie distributor can rationally be expected to pick it up, because there's still only a niche market for conceptual art films, as well as for one as erotically graphic as this one is. although he thinks it quite absorbing, as one image morphs into the other, male into female and vice versa, sans sound, including Anna's sensual views of the two male 'actors', Jerry tells Anna she'll probably have to shelve her plans for a sunny two weeks in Cannes, and settle for the more modest invitations they've received to screen their movie at several of the film societies in Los Angeles and elsewhere.

Daniel, however, wants to take the film to Cannes and show it at private, unofficial screenings, to give it international exposure, and when May rolls around, Daniel, Ahmad, and Anna have booked a flight and hotel reservations. Jerry, although his editing is an important factor in the successful end result, doesn't really consider it his film, and declines to go, for a number of other reasons; the festival itself, which he thinks is a circus, turns him off, but also because he doesn't want to be part of a ménage à whatever with Ahmad, Daniel, and Anna. Anna has ambiguities, herself, along those lines, but thinks the film should be promoted, and is happy of the opportunity to go to France in some other capacity than just being a tourist.

when they return 2 days after the festival end, Anna believes the trip was worth it. they established connections with young European film artists who were impressed with their movie. one thing that was frequently commented on, was how the editing of the content sensuously altered the meaning. as for sun it rained several days and Ahmad was detained for 2 hours at LAX, even though he made sure in advance, all his necessary documentation was in order, before being allowed to leave the airport. she also returns with added respect for Jerry for holding his ground. she suggests they move in together so their relationship can once again become closer and more absolute – just what she'd been reacting against not that long ago. "I don't see any great advantage in that, Anna, except economic. we can live together, alternately, at both our places, I'm all for that." "that will be fine," Anna replies, with a tinge of disappointment.

Ahmad emails Jerry asking him if he'd like to edit his future projects. Jerry emails back that he no longer makes film, and that the work he did with their film, largely because of Anna's involvement, was a onetime thing. when Ahmad tells Anna he feels a bit letdown, she explains to him that Jerry was a filmmaker, first. his forte was what he did with a camera. he had a five dollar hand splicer and glue, that was all. in the sixties you could get by with that. "has any of his films survived?" "no, though Peter Kubelka took a print of one of his films for his museum in Vienna." he nods, impressed. one thing she's noticed, Jerry never actually says the word, Ahmad, when he is speaking to him, whereas Ahmad almost always includes the word, Jerry when he's speaking to Jerry."

Ahmad has a new girlfriend. one who shares his background, values, and interests, and they soon plan to wed, with the somewhat relieved blessings of his parents, although he and Anna, still, on occasion, have sex, clandestinely on his part, as neither Jamila nor Anna know anything about each other. one day, while at Ahmad's, after working on a graphic design to promote their film, they go to his roof to sunbathe, naked, and after coming back down, while sitting in a chair, Ahmad, hot, springs a stiff, and Anna, hot, rushes to him, lowers herself onto it, and they fuck, both moving very hard and rapaciously, just as the sensuous but light framed Jamila, a bundle of groceries in her arms enters the room. she continues through to the kitchen and drops the groceries on the sink, before turning and reentering, where Ahmad and Anna, hurriedly, but voraciously, move to finish up, because it's one thing to be caught, another to be caught without the relief and satisfaction of getting it off. Jamila has the urge to leave

but knows if she does, that will be the end, marriage and all. Ahmad quickly dresses, walks over to Jamila, and tries to hug her as she pulls away. Anna, feeling foolish as she never dreamed she could feel, naked, being stared at by a woman she's never met, nor knew about, has enough presence to appreciate at least the humor of it, and quickly dresses, also. of course Ahmad does not introduce Jamila to Anna. Anna offers to leave if it will make them more comfortable, but Jamila asks her to stay. there isn't much any of them have to say, however, especially Anna. it just gets down to what Jamila will, or will not, accept about the fact, witnessed quite graphically, she's been cheated on. this will take some negotiating and time, however it works out, and Anna, saying she'll talk to them later, politely gets up to go. "you're very pretty," she says to Jamila, as she leaves the room. "you are, too," Jamila calls after her.

Anna of course informs Jerry of the latest current event... most of which amuses him. he didn't know Ahmad had a girlfriend either. "I won't have sex with Ahmad anymore." no sacrifice to her now that she knows about Jamila. sex between she and Ahmad had been pretty much over as far as she was concerned, a least in her mind, anyway. "will that make you happy?" "you mean until the next time you have to get together to work on the film?" Anna takes a long sigh. "I didn't instigate it, Jerry." "you sunbathed with him naked so you set it up for it to happen." "we were playing with the margin not intending to just fall into something." "I'll never reject you just for your response to another person, Anna," "what a beautiful thing to say, Jerry. would you like to fuck me," "of course."

one week later Ahmad calls Anna to ask her if she and Jerry would like to accompany he and Jamila on a picnic at Griffith Park. they'll bring the food and drink, which will be vegetarian, he emphasizes. Jerry says he'll drive as he and Anna live further west. they don't leave until mid-afternoon. they plan the picnic to be a dinner, and stay during the early evening. after a forty-five minute gridlocked ride to get there, they're more than happy to unload in an expansive verdant area near some hiking trails, off Griffith Park Drive. Jamila who is dark haired, slight, soft spoken, and a dancer, fluid in her movements, had an assortment of Middle Eastern food delivered to them from Sunnin, a Lebanese café and bakery on Westwood Blvd. both Jerry and Anna agree the food is very good. "I think the best food, by far, is Middle Eastern," Jerry says. "really?", Ahmad asks, "why do you say that?" "at least for a vegetarian. cooked grains and beans that taste good with olive oil, garlic, spices, and generally fresh fruit, vegetables and nuts. I can't think of any other area of the world that offers food that substantial, yet relatively light, and healthy." "does that include Israeli cooking?" "yes, to the extent it's Middle Eastern. Yiddish cooking, like all European cooking, is heavy and fattening, which translates to bad." "you don't think you're stereotyping just a little bit, Jerry?" "not at all," Jerry replies, sensing what Ahmad really wants to know is what Jerry, being Jewish, thinks about Israel's role in Palestine. but Jamila, though more politically active than Ahmad is in Middle Eastern affairs, is flattered, while Anna hopes the discussion doesn't get political, and mostly abstains. she's rarely seen Jerry so willing to engage in small talk, as the three of them rap on. when Ahmad tells Jerry and Anna that Jamila, who is quite young, barely out of

her teens, is enrolled in the performance and dance program at UCLA, Jerry tells her his former wife, who is also a dancer, plans to submit her doctoral thesis in performance and culture there in a couple of months, and that she should look her up. "she's still in school?" "after two long marriages and a number of jobs, yes. she started by getting a degree in architecture." "that's pretty amazing," Jamila says. "what does she intend to do with it?" Anna asks, finally joining the discussion. "I think whatever she does is a place to be." they nod with comprehension. "it appears it's also her brand, her entitlement, evidently," he adds. "meanwhile I continue to photograph trash – throwaways!" "you know what you're doing." "yeah." this is the first time Jerry's said anything at all about his former wife. he and Jamila have established a rapport. it's mostly not a sexual one. it's a feeling of empathy Jamila has, for whatever reason, towards Jerry. Jerry has never seen Anna, in a group situation, so subdued. the truth is, at this moment, she's not happy. she's having flashback images of Jamila seeing her for the first time, naked, sitting on Ahmad's lap, riding his cock, which is reducing her self-esteem to rubble. it makes it almost impossible for her to communicate with Jamila. and one thing Jerry and Jamila have in common is both having watched Anna and Ahmad having sex. she's feeling used and left out, a state one would more normally identify with Jerry than with her. but one can't deny the impact of their film (she wonders if Jamila has seen it). she shouldn't allow a bourgeois sense of shame to derail her. Jerry is aware that Anna is suffering and is pretty sure why. Bill Evans's song, *Your Story*, lately, whenever he's low or depressed, runs through his head, sad and regretful – he prefers an earlier Evans, even his heroin

addicted one, where there were still nuances, where he didn't just 'attack' the keys. but the effect of the song, ruminative and beautiful, is there, as he looks at Anna's impassive face and into her eyes, the fire for her still burning brightly in him. though, in many regards, not alike in the physical way they choose to react to stimuli, the thoughts and feelings that motivate their reactions are generally the same. they've both taken the hard road of no certification and personal vision. they both think and live beyond the box. as the lingering traces of late afternoon light turn to supple evening breezes, the four of them become silently immersed in mellowness, the breeches between them bridged.

"hello?," Jerry answers the phone, as he usually does, warily. "hi, Jerry, this is Jamila. would you like to come to a party?" happy, though surprised to hear her voice, he replies, "yes." she sounds a little high. she gives him directions, and he hangs up. the party is in a two story Spanish style stucco house with a red tile roof on Blackburn which is one block south of Third St. between Crescent Heights and Sweetzer. it's a hot, humid night. he approaches on the decoratively tiled walkway to the patio. the front door is half ajar. he pushes it open and enters a large room lit only by colored lights and two flashing video screens mounted at opposite ends of the room, giving the scene the effect of a rave or multi-media event, which is crowded with young, what at first glance appears to be, evenly divided, male and female, talking, laughing, holding drinks. there's a fragrant mixture of hard liquor, perfume, incense, and the smell of pot smoke coming from somewhere. Jamila greets Jerry as soon as he walks in. she's really attractive wearing a very short deep-

violet, print summer dress, her dark hair, hanging down in damp (because of the heat) strands. she stands face to face with Jerry, a new sensation, like she's suddenly emerged from the background, drink in hand, grinning. everything seems out of character, but just right, like the one time in high school when the girl for whom he had designs, who for a short time would later become his girlfriend, first showed she liked him. Jamila introduces Jerry to some of her friends, most of whom she knows either from UCLA, or from the Levantine Cultural Center, where she met Ahmad. Jamila is high, just below the level of being drunk, and is very bold in a way she usually keeps hidden, but this doesn't at all surprise Jerry. she mixes a drink for him and suggests they go out on the patio to avoid further distraction. he knew as soon as she called what was on her mind – Anna, Ahmad, and Daniel, are in New York, showing and plugging their film which is beginning to get considerable underground recognition. she and Jerry are in Los Angeles, alone, she came to the party, alone, and with the hot night, the perfumed scents, and a couple of Daiquiris, she decided to call Jerry, the only person, at present, because of their situations, she can mutually identify with and share. they sit close together on the patio. "Anna says she's no longer sexually interested in Ahmad, but that the film, to them, is important." "then our having sex would be a betrayal of Anna?" "not as long as she's involved with Ahmad." "but you just said...." "when people travel together anything can happen." she nods, sympathetically, both for Jerry and herself. this is the first time he's seen Jamila's legs, bare, and it excites him, as does the booze on her breath when they start to make out, becoming physically immersed, before they stop and talk some more. regaining

that upright, serious, demeanor, she describes the sex she's had with Ahmad. she tells him she's never had an orgasm with him, that she's frigid with him, and that she's never had an orgasm having genital sex with a man. "you're frigid?" "yes, in that context." "you have orgasms." "of course." it's impossible to envisage Jamila frigid, because her sexual energy is so much on the surface; the supple swing of her hips, the sensuality of her image, raven hair, serious dark eyes, set in a pretty, somewhat austere, but seductive, dark face, the light fuchsia on her delicately shaped lips, the color of her dress, open to the straps of her see-through bra. they stop talking and sip their drinks together. "would you like to go to my place or yours?," Jerry asks. "why don't we just go upstairs," Jamila replies, blushing. "what if someone comes?" "people sometimes pair off and have sex at these parties. everyone is very discreet about that." she leads him to a spiral staircase with a wood bannister. a crystal chandelier is hanging in the air well from the ceiling of the second floor. the bedroom they enter is empty. there's a do not disturb sign on the dresser. they hang it on the doorknob and close and lock the door. "is this a private residence?," Jerry asks, looking around. "I'm not sure all of it is occupied. I think it's used as a kind of arts collective." the windows are up and a damp fragrance is coming in from the plants. they both sit on the edge of the bed and sensuously kiss, their tongues furtively searching. Jamila is by far the youngest person, differentially, that is, Jerry's ever had, or about to have, sex with. he slips his hand inside the open top of her dress and feels her erect, warm breasts. she sits on his lap, her heart rapidly beating. "I want you to have an orgasm, Jamila." they make-out like they did downstairs. "do you want me to first

masturbate you?" "yes." he lifts her dress and while they kiss, he adroitly moves his fingers, until she's very aroused. then they get off the bed and undress. her legs and armpits are shaved, but she has a full, dark, pubic patch. "do you want me to leave on my heels?" Jerry laughs. "not unless you want to." Jamila blushes, and, possibly angrily, kicks them hard to the floor. then they fuck quietly, both of them concentrating, Jerry tuned to Jamila, Jamila to her erotic center, Jerry's dick throbbing, discreetly arousing her most sensitive spots, then both breathing hard from exertion, Jamila fully, triumphantly, comes, Jerry coming a beat after her. they hear voices outside the door, then footsteps walking away, as they release themselves from a tight embrace. "this is the first time you've come with a partner," Jerry says, redundantly, not knowing what else to say. "yes," she answers, a happy glow on her face. they sit on the bed, naked, and resume their talk. "the fear of domination just froze you up." "I know, Ahmad is too dominating, not just sexually, and I'm not going to marry him." "did you just make that decision?" "no, I made it after they left." "does he still want to marry you?" "he hasn't said he wants to break it off. what about you and Anna?" "I don't know, Jamila, so far I've accepted everything. that seems to be the way we work things out." Jamila, once again, assumes an attitude of empathy towards Jerry.

a half hour has passed since they fucked, a word Jamila refuses to use, or any other slang for sex, for that matter, and they have to decide whether to leave and call it a night, rejoin the party, or fuck some more. they first go downstairs and fix a couple of drinks, so that they're seen, and nobody will

come up to check if they're all right when they go back upstairs. the main thing, really, is to insure Jamila has more orgasms. the drink makes Jamila high like she was when Jerry first arrived, her libido freer, now, she gets pretty wild. they fuck, interspersed with oral sex, in several positions, Jamila having orgasms at the end of each sortie. then they dress and quickly leave the party, Jamila worrying she's not being very polite in doing so without saying anything to anyone.

before parting they sit in Jamila's car, unconsciously fixing on the instrument panel, while soaking in the ambience, time ticking in their minds. it's obvious to Jerry they can't continue, but he wants to be absolutely sure the sexual 'liberation' she's experienced, will hold. Jamila is reading the conflict taking place in his mind with that peculiar empathy she has for him. "I know this is a onetime affair, Jerry," she says, running her fingers through his hair. "I hope things work out with you and Anna." "I hope things work out with you and Ahmad." "I don't know that I want them to, I'm not interested in power." "but you work with others to obfuscate the powers that be." "just for social justice." "Jamila, I want us to continue to be friends. I see you as another bright spot in my life. it doesn't preclude at some other time our ever having sex again." "I feel the same, Jerry." "they look hard into each other's eyes, then affectionately kiss. "you're a good fuck, Jamila." "so are you, Jerry," she says, finally accepting the word. Jerry gets out of the car and stands beside it. they wave to each other and Jamila starts up the engine. transitions are always painful. there's an element of loss in all transitions. transitions involve death, and, sometimes, painful, rebirths. he knows they're both feeling pain,

love, and satisfaction, in their hearts – a fair exchange.

on the way back to his place, he, oddly, thinks just how much amour-propre Anna has. and while he acknowledges that he still loves her, thinks, maybe, just because she's far away, that she doesn't love him. she lives only in the present, which is an exaggeration, of course. sentiment is an emotion she neither knows nor understands. more exaggeration. but he thinks this may be the thing she's most given him, what has made them so compatible, so able to objectively function from moment to moment with each other. he realizes, or thinks, if what he and Jamila, at her instigation, did, was payback to Anna and Ahmad, in that category they're mere amateurs, whereas Anna can just be vengeful and cruel, without having to mask it in sentiment. Jerry realizes while his process is objective, it's being undermined by strong emotions, it's just something he's inherited, and it's killing him. Anna's as capable of tenderness, of love, as he is, as she's shown many times, but without the feedback. he never thinks of the sex he has with Anna, or others, in the same way he thinks of the sex Anna has with others, even though there may be little difference in the attitudes and actions. he thinks of the pain his old college friend, Mike Porter, went through, in his many relations with women, which were delusionary, but he gradually got through them so maybe there's hope for him.

as soon as Anna returns from NYC she rings Jerry, and as they're currently, once again, living separately, comes over to see him. she's really excited about the film and flushed from the exposure and activity. the response has been overwhelming, but something is missing, they're beginning to feel

the film is incomplete, that they need another voice to get to the place they've only hinted at getting to, and Ahmad's hoping Jerry will agree to shoot a scene, from his perspective, then let them turn the camera on him. this would push the film, with a soundtrack, to feature length category. it surprises Anna when Jerry accepts without resistance. "extending the film does not necessarily mean we have to have a soundtrack if the aesthetic remains the same," he says. Anna is unambiguously happy, happy with her life, happy with the film, happy Jerry will be playing a major role in it. Jerry wants to ask her about her relationship with Ahmad but thinks better of it. he's really happy to see Anna in this state, and is happy they can finally be involved in something creative together, regardless of what the personal realities of it are, but Anna, as usual, reads his concerns, and says, "I don't love Ahmad, Jerry, I just enjoy his company. you could have come with us! lots of people have commented on the editing. Ahmad looks up to you as an artist. you're just too proud." "but you continue to have sex with him." "yes, sex and power can be addictive, but it also can be valid.. the ability to have goals, to do things, and the pleasure that sex brings to it. but you refute that". he quietly thinks for a moment, then shakes his head and says, "no I don't." he agrees with almost everything he's hearing. but just as some are upbeat others are melancholy. one is not better than the other, and there's really nothing one can do about it.

it's exactly one year now since UCLA played Nebraska in their first exhibition game of the 2013 season. a lot has happened to him since then. this year it's Virginia, and this time they begin the season ranked number 7 nationally, a lofty position

he doubts they can live up to unless their coach frees their elusive quarterback, Brett Hundley, to use the run option (for himself) more inclusively. they manage to get by a relatively weak Virginia, on the strength of their defense converting a fumble and two interceptions into TD's. Jerry finds himself dozing and just flipping off the radio during the game, pre-occupied, thinking of Anna.

when Jerry and Anna arrive at Daniel's to shoot the additional scene, the lights and props have already been set up. they all disrobe, including Jerry, and he begins filming them, the camera feeling good in his hands, just the right weight, elliptically moving and panning them, intermingled and dispersed. because there are three, instead of two as in the previous, being filmed, there will be an increase in density and perspective in the film, which is already non-linear. it takes a while for them to silently become immersed in one another especially with Jerry's added presence, and for Jerry to feel his camerawork is complete, which he finishes with a close up of Anna's head, her hair mussed, backlighted with the light coming from the window, onto her, sheer slip pulled off bare shoulders, staring blankly into the camera. Ahmad likes the shot so much he wants to use the 'portrait' for the poster, but Jerry, Anna, and Daniel, all think it would be misleading, and, no secret, Daniel is somewhat jealous of Ahmad's attention to Anna. now, it's Jerry's turn to be filmed in the interaction, with Daniel holding the camera, so they can further explore the ménage a trois which can be more explicit, expanding the content of the earlier footage. Ahmad (who has assumed the role of director by default), however, is not totally satisfied. he needs a shocker: Anna, naked, on

her knees, will give Jerry, standing up, head. unlike Andy Warhol's brilliant, and transgressive, *Blow Job*, it will be a full shot, nothing off camera. Anna kneels on the hardwood floor, pushes her amber hair back. Jerry stands barefoot and Anna leans forward, licking, nibbling, and sucking the outside of his penis and balls, as the camera zooms in for a close up, until it's vertical and hard. the camera pulls back and remains fixed, as Anna blows him, each, seemingly, immersed in their own separate worlds, the camera recording the sound of her mouth on Jerry's organ, until his head jerks, and she swallows, the camera still running as she looks up to him, a small bit of semen in the crease between her lips. the intensity of this transgressive act, transgressive, at least, in the circumstance of the entire group performance, silences them – what is different than the countless porn videos that graphically depict the same pas de deux, more than mood, context, is the urgency. what is authentic and indefinable...what is art.

all of them had orgasms in one or another of the previous deliberately ambiguous, and by rewinding, multi-layered shots. Jerry, sitting on the floor, resting, legs extended, hands propping him up, is amused to see everyone lounging around naked looking, to him, no different than they'd look fully dressed. Anna rests the side of her body against him, cheeks on his chest.. Ahmad yells, "hold," and films the image, only Anna's hair and the backside of her body visible from that angle, complementing and contrasting the film's initial images of Ahmad and Anna passionately coupling.

next day, after viewing the new rushes and agreeing it will need much editing to bring the film back up to form they

head to a café where they can sit out on the patio and unwind. Ahmad is interested in Jerry's creative past, and mentions a poem Jerry wrote which he saw in a collection of small hand-printed books by artist Wallace Berman. "did you know him very well?" he asks. "I knew him a lot better than most people think." "how did you meet him?" "he came over with a girlfriend of Debby's and we drove up to Music City, a record and music appliance store on Sunset and Vine, and got tickets for the Bolshoi Ballet. Debby and Lynn were both dancers. he insisted I drive and that he'd drive the night of the performance – I wasn't even supposed to be home that afternoon. I took off work that day, early." "did you make the plans to go to the ballet after you arrived?" "no, they evidently cooked up the idea, earlier. the night of the ballet, when Wally and Lynn picked us up, he was driving an old black Cadillac, wearing a tan, velvet, suit. actor Sal Mineo, his date, and a man with a Russian accent, who Mineo addressed as Ilya, sat in the row in front of us. not long after he was at an exhibit Wally showed at his house. there was no indication they knew each other at the ballet." "I really like that story," Ahmad says. "so do I," Anna agrees, laughing. "I know George Herms was part of that group." "that's right. for a long time, later, George was my favorite artist." "who's your favorite artist now?" "I still like George's work. if I like what I see now I don't necessarily need know who did it. it's pretty much the same with music." "then I guess you know Dean Stockwell." "we had an especially good rapport until we had a falling out, and stopped being friends. he knew all my films, as did Wallace." "what interests me is there's never any mention of you when discussion of that scene comes up. I'm wondering why that is." "you're right, I have no answer.

part of it could be that I destroyed all my work from that era, so there's no reference point for research. there was a show at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, *Semina Culture: Wallace Berman And His Circle*, I think, in 2005. one of the two curators, Kristine McKenna, who wrote art reviews for the L.A. Times, and before that, covered the punk music scene in L.A. for them, told me she and her co-curator had tried for seven years, that's how long the show was in the making, to figure out who wrote my poem – only the initials of the contributors were given that issue. she said had she known who I was at the time I could have shown anything I wanted." "but they managed to figure out who everyone else was." "that's right." "why do you think that was?" "nobody mentioned me. it was deliberate. and my relationship with each of them was mostly one on one. for instance, I don't think George, though I met him through Wallace, knew a hell of a lot of what my relationship was with either Wallace or Dean. and I made little attempt to promote the scene or be outwardly very communal. my social activity had mostly to do with art. otherwise, I didn't 'hang out' . I also evolved differently. I think after Wally's death, those who were closest to him, and were most committed to perpetuating his legacy, consciously or unconsciously, decided who his friends were and who were not.." Ahmad nods. impressed, not with the details so much, as the intensity of the account. these are things Jerry's never discussed with Anna, and she's paying close attention. Anna slips her arm in Jerry's and rests her head on his shoulder it's weird, Jerry thinks, when he and Anna are together, no matter who they're around, they are obviously a couple, which embodies the exclusivity she's been critical of. when she and Ahmad are alone together they're a

couple also, yet are not a couple in Jerry's presence, nor in the presence of anyone else, for that matter. This is, he surmises, symbolically the difference between the concept of marriage, and that of an affair.

still mellow and satiated from the day before, the four of them are looking at each other with a warmth they earlier wouldn't have dreamed possible. It's not hallucination, but the opposite, the last episode of filmmaking having generated a genuine bonding, having exposed, interacted with, and most importantly, shared, their naked bodies. Now, the four of them, sitting outdoors, together, Anna, signature impassive look on her face, as when they were negotiating with the three men for her to have paid sex with, seeming to be in serious reflection, squeezes Jerry's hand. Daniel, who had yet to enter the discussion, wants to know whether Sal Mineo's date was male or female. "She was very pretty, Daniel, a ballerina, I think." Everyone laughs, including Daniel. Daniel can be very talkative about projects, or dealing with logistical issues, precluding anything personal, but he does have a penchant for gossip, and seems to be up on everything.

on the way back, Anna driving, both she and Jerry are very quiet, both tuned into what the future might hold for each of them, apart, or together. "Ahmad asked me to marry him," Anna finally says. "When was that?" "When we were in New York." "What did you say?" "That I have no intention of marrying anybody. Ever?", he asked. "Ever", I replied." She takes a hand off the wheel and caresses Jerry's forehead and cheek. "Are you hungry? I can fix us dinner." "I'm not, I just want to rest." "Alone, or together?" "Together. I'm looking

forward to the completion of the movie, and what may happen with it, and with us, Anna” “so am I, Jerry.”

the additional digital images, like the other ones, are building blocks, reimagined to both illustrate and illuminate the similarities and contradictions of the individual views in which one act affirms, negates, or neutralizes, another. the parts seem to fit together of their own accord, the narrative naturally developing almost out of the order the film was shot. when Jerry screens the footage to the other three, there’s very little they want changed. now comes the hard part, as Jerry’s discovered with both his books and photos. the internet has rendered ubiquitous exposure almost meaningless. on the other hand films which end up in the archives of universities and film societies, as far as broad attention goes, are DOA, so it’s with genuine euphoria when through Daniel’s negotiating genius re some thorny issues, the film is accepted in the feature film category (U.S. Dramatic Competition) at Sundance. this means a wait, however, of six months, as the annual festival is held in January. and only Jerry would think of this, but up there in winter, it’s pretty cold. in the meantime they can show their film informally as long as no tickets are sold.

Anna is aware Jerry was born on a Friday 13th in July, but not what year, as she’s never asked, and he’s never told her. there’s to be an event, a gathering of artists, filmmakers, and writers, of art scenes present, past, and future, at Barnsdall Park. when the day arrives, the attendees fill the space on the lawn between the Municipal Art Gallery and Hollyhock House. the crowd pretty much scans the generations. the

worn faces, and in some cases, broken bodies, of the older guests, accentuated by the sexy freshness of the younger ones, superficially recalls to Jerry the party thrown by the Princesse de Guermantes at the end of Proust's, *Time Regained*, where the faces of those M. was once so intrigued by, and involved with, were now grotesque hallucinations, parodying the meaning of time. Jerry, though affected, retains his perspective and humor, and triumphs over the momentary dissolution. he's long been aware of the Faustian aspect of his nature – as a very small boy he had recurrent nightmares of the witch suddenly appearing in the bathroom window, for years after seeing *Snow White*, his first movie, and for a couple of years after having been startled and shaken by, to him, the unexpected ending to the movie, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, when he was twelve. but age is not just a number. he's given himself to working on, and nurturing, his energy and vision, to be in the state he really is in. Anna instinctively moves to his side. she looks at him long and hard, intensely assimilating his. "my semen is as healthy as when I was a teen, Anna. I live, and I still look good. you'll have to decide whether it's a number, or a physical, mental, spiritual state, that is real." "I already have, Jerry." she hugs him and rests her face in his chest. the day winds down, and unlike the ball in *Time Regained*, the faces and bodies merge, young and old; students, young artists, old bohemians.

Jamila, who first received the gift of orgasm during genital penetration, with a man born X times six years before she, is happily talking, laughing, with a small group just a few feet away from them, as charming and fresh as Gilberte's assessment of her sixteen year old daughter end of *Time Regained*.

since Jerry's revealed his age to her, Anna is almost embarrassed to be naked in front of him – after the, literally, miles of sex they've had together. he knows little of Anna's background, other than that her maternal grandparents immigrated from Ireland, that her father was of French-Canadian origin, both parents, artists, who exposed her to that world at an early age, encouraging her to grow and see things on her own terms, and though Roman Catholic by birth, imparted in her the basic attitudes necessary to her non-philosophical existentialism. though she was, evidently, close to both of them, there's something of the orphan about her.

Anna still occasionally models, and she's landed a gig for a satirical pop culture magazine, which could be termed semi-pornographic. in a kind of a prelude to an indolent 'sex in the hay' episode, shot on the porch of a rundown wood frame house in a dirt field, back of which is a stable with one horse, a barn, haystacks, and the odor of straw and manure, she poses, hair up, with several long strands partially covering her eye, in a clingy, tattered at the bottom, indigo print, summer dress, ripped, to show most of her upper thighs, all of a bare shoulder, and part of her breast, while a man with slicked back hair, formally dressed, right down to his white gloves, and the boutonniere in his coat pocket, stands to the side of the porch, viewing her with a pair of opera glasses. the shots are exceptionally clear, the angles provocative, and of course she looks sexy in them. they also have Jerry in the shoot, standing, not clothed, except for colorful boxer shorts, leaning backwards on the porch rail, wearing a wide brim hat, a long stem between his teeth, and when they return, Jerry having already dressed, Anna having not bothered to change,

first laughing as a defense against the corniness of their arousal, hotly screw on the floor. it once again dawns on them they better get serious. but it was fun while it lasted.

Jerry is often conflicted about something and has been for years, really. as an illustration, earlier, he'd been reading Tao Lin's novel, *Tai Pei*, on and off, partly as a kind of reference point, because it seemed to be, whether or not made up in terms of what really happened, or how much drugs were really consumed, an actual notebook of how one lives from moment to moment. contrast that with the carefully contrived national book award finalists in fiction, it, if for no other reason, has some value to him. however, while Lin can be explicit in the implication of how he stands or modulates a look, the same detail when he mentions, for instance, spending two hours having sex, is totally nonexistent! he does not recall having ever read a novel, including Alex Trocchi's *Cain's Book*, and Richard Hell's, *Go Now*, in which the mention of one drug or another is as ubiquitous as in this one, though he does see the obvious link to Ryu Murakami's 1976 novel, *Almost Transparent Blue*. as a test he's counted the number of pages in which there is no mention of the name of a specific drug. the name of this drug or that drug, a portion of this with a portion of that, neither the meaning nor the subject which are the quotidian events, musings and hallucinations, sets the rhythm of the book – the sense of time and space, and the density. Jerry can't imagine one smoking pot, then swallowing a pill, then another drug, and food, how one can fully benefit from any one drug taking hold. in fact, to him, it would seem biologically destructive. the issue, however, is whether the author is really physically

communicating the density of that drug experience to the non-drug user, or whether that experience is going over the top. the job of the writer is to put the reader into the state the author has depicted solely by virtue of the writing. if one is stoned one cannot discuss being stoned. and if one is not stoned , one cannot discuss not being stoned with someone who is stoned, because they inhabit parallel universes. Jerry was once very stoned. more so, he believes, than the artists he associated with – though their reputations related to drugs were bigger. because he was stoned alone it was more absolute, but it was less integrated into his social life than it was with them. he thinks this is significant. he recalls, specifically, two separate times, late at night, when he and Wallace turned on together, and were getting deep, or deeper than they had with each other before, and in one instance his wife, Shirley, walked in to where they were sitting, and in the other, his son, Tosh, unintentionally interrupting the more intimate state between them. in those instances both seemed uncomfortably aware there was a gap that couldn't be bridged. in both instances Wallace deliberately pulled out, moved back to the surface, and that was the end of it. when Jerry turned on alone, virtually every night, without exception, he didn't have to do that. he had all the space he needed. he had no obligations to communicate. he had no family like Wally and George. in that way he had more a rapport with Dean when turning on. he and his former wife were comfortable with his being stoned in her presence. but it's been a millennium since he's used drugs, alcohol, had a Pepsi or Coke, or eaten meat. he wants to be in his senses, but he doesn't want to be locked in one universe while being locked out of another.

in Park City, Utah, on a cold, brightly lit, drizzly night, the film, somewhat to their surprise, is not particularly well received. at the two screenings the audience response is respectful, but uneasy, mostly silent – the most frequent critical comment afterwards, being, while ‘visually arresting,’ there’s no ‘compelling dramatic element’ to it. Jerry knows, with much experience, because of his writing, that even educated and sophisticated viewers, are so affected by, or conversely, put off by, graphically depicted sex, they compulsively isolate it from context, putting their feelings on hold, making it virtually impossible for them to intellectually or emotionally respond to the whole. they, of course, disagree. but at the time of their departure no distributor has picked up their film. “maybe we should just go directly to an online porn site,” Daniel jokes, sending a shudder through Anna. “we better make sure our licensing of the film prohibits that,” she replies. on their last night there, walking through the unnaturally crowded streets of the picturesque boutique town, the collars of their jackets tightened against the cold, absent-mindedly looking at the lights playing on Anna’s comely face, rain droplets on her cheeks, awakens something in Jerry, something fresher and purer, a feeling he’d like to stay up there with her and lose much of the considerable baggage they’ve accumulated..

a parallel universe exists between drug users (and drinkers) and non-users, which can’t be bridged, or can it? if one has to use drugs to get to a place where the thieves and poseurs can’t get to, then is that not an explanation, if not sufficient justification, in itself...

time is the measure of existence. can there be time without existence? no. is there anything other than existence? no. is time a state?" no. can the concept of nothingness exist without the concept of being?" no. we do experience the cumulative effects of existence. there is duration to specific existence like one's life. do we exist in time? no. we exist, that's all. time is a measurement of the duration of that. yet the concept of time is incredibly important to us all. we think of, and in terms of, time, whether we want to or not. language is structured in such a way it's impossible not to reference time in almost every moment of verbal communication. what we recall is not time but neurological impressions, but which are inextricably a part of when they were formed.

one of the most appealing qualities of their film is the tonality, including the hues of their clothing, at various stages of dress and undress (jade, white, light blue, yellow ochre, amber-hair, umber, red, black, flesh-tone, grey, pink, brown; grey-hair dark blue, maroon), which fully woven into the editing, have become surrogates for the wearers, the after images of which maintain a presence throughout the predominately naked sequences. within a small pass of early shots, Anna, impassive and non-committal, casually takes off the tight multi-colored mini dress she wore for the first shoot, colors changing as the dress moves, tilting her head as she smooths back her long hair from her face. then leans back. thighs raised, arms straddling her breasts as two pairs of hands push up her skirt and pull off her sea-shell white panties. camera lingers on her trend defying unshaved amber pubic hair. fade. interspersed with the dreamier more abstract and subversive metamorphosed-gender images naked

but also wearing one another's clothes, are stills of internet porn plus Daniel tossing an airborne paper glider, Ahmad playing an Oud, Anna and Daniel arm-wrestling then jitter-bugging, Jerry sitting on the bed face in an open book. longer shot of Ahmad, Anna, and Daniel, standing, clothes on the floor circling their feet in the center of the room, Anna in the middle, Ahmad on one side of her, Daniel on the other, staring sweetly, faux innocently, at the camera as in a school group photo but daring the viewer to accuse them of anything improper. on camera there is a hushed, brief discussion of anal sex. Anna suggests using a strap-on to peg an unnamed person. but by implication Ahmad's derriere is her desired target. it makes sense and all agree to it. side shot of Anna short unbuttoned white blouse, bare at the midriff, shorter slit skirt hanging from her hips, bending forward, knees and bare feet pressed against the cushions of the sofa. camera slowly moving in the frame, Anna leaning, skirt split open, naked breasts dangling, cushiony male butt cheeks spread, strap-on sensuously sinking into anus slow motion then thrusting normal time, totally silent except for the rustle of Anna's skirt against the male's naked body. cut to a naked Jerry drinking a milkshake with a straw. they've 'compromised' in adding a soundtrack mostly ambient; breathing, sudden laughter sexually emotive noises, movement, occasional snatches of music, a few disjointed words. it seems, in these sequences Jerry is mostly cast, not entirely intentionally, as a social-sexual outsider. Anna kisses Ahmad (lingering) as that set of sequences ends..

"what is it, Jerry?" "the way you kissed Ahmad, you really meant it. "that's right, but it was public. I don't have much

feeling there, private, and neither does he. this is what keeps the movie honest.” Jerry, oddly, thinks of when his youngest niece, drunk, kissed him, sensuously, at his older niece’s wedding, while her boyfriend, at the time, looked on, a bemused half smile on his face.

Jerry is slowly coming to the admission the audience and critics at Sundance had a point. while the tensions set up in the cutting and sequences are resourcefully done, existing as artful tableaux, they’re somewhat predictable. the right elements are there, but, so far, it’s not enough. Anna agrees. Ahmad and Daniel resist. “a film doesn’t have to have a ‘plot’”, Daniel says, contemptuously, “the experience can just be visual.” “Daniel, I think you’re naïve. even viewed just visually the film is incomplete. the conflicts involving adultery and sexual ego are too predictable as they ‘visually’ present themselves, and therefore, insufficient.” “what is your solution, then, Jerry?,” “we could reduce the film to nuances by making it more abstract, reduce it to ambient tones, that would be the easy way, or we could continue until we find the missing ingredient, because the shots are very good. they just need a more interesting context,. the latter would be my suggestion.” regarding the former option, Jerry recalls the 1969 composition by ambient music composer, Alvin Lucier, titled, *I am sitting in a room*, where he does just that and records his voice reading a paragraph he’s written describing what he intends to do, beginning with the line, ‘I am sitting in a room’, then plays it back, rerecording it, “again and again” for almost an hour, until, as he writes, “the resonant features of the room reinforce themselves, so that any semblance of speech is destroyedwhat you’ll hear, then, are the natural

frequencies of the room, articulated by speech," the words becoming muddier and muddier, as they become less and less discernable, while the sound becomes clearer and clearer until it is just pure bell like tones. reduction of the film to abstractions visually would be interesting, but of course though it would still maintain its DNA that would hardly achieve their intent.

it's after dinner. the sun has set. Anna and Jerry are sitting in her living room, front door open as the outside lights go on the sky still blue, feeling mellow. gazing at the darkening sky is always a transition, simultaneously generating deeper feelings of time, life, and loss. those feelings are particularly acute this moment, as for a long time, the romantic feelings between them have fallen into neglect. this is due, a good deal, to their involvement with their movie, which has de-personalized their relationship with each other – they had become part a group; primarily, striving for success, while subverting the intimacy between them. the emptiness of semi-darkness awakens a spirituality, one that is very far off, and affects each of them similarly, but only individually. only the emptiness, the feeling of alienation, is shared. Jerry looks at Anna reclining in the half darkness, perceiving, and appreciating, her beauty, abstractly, as something in and of itself. Anna, likewise, sees Jerry as inscrutable, like a cross-word puzzle she's not quite been able to complete. both of their minds are beginning to merge with the realization there's little rationale for them to remain together at this time, other than seeking success of their movie, which, ironically, has served to be the wedge facilitating their dissolution. this is exacerbated by their inability to shake the shock and extreme

despondency they've suffered since they learned that Ilona had hung herself at work in the early morning, one week ago. they, could, first have sex, and they do, Jerry approaching Anna, the two of them undressing, and then their having very intense, very good, undiluted sex, fucking, quietly and strenuously, for a very long time before coming, prolonging the one instance where they can still be together. they sit there, naked, for a while, before dressing, and Jerry leaves. with tears in her eyes Anna looks at the late rising, half moon, symbolizing, to her, something half accomplished. when she goes to bed she cries herself to sleep.

when Jerry gets back to his apartment, he's sexually satisfied, but miserable, and without love he knows it's going to get worse, he can't imagine working, and thinks maybe he could stay for a while with an American ex-patriot friend who has a house in Glasgow, Scotland, as he had previously been invited there for a visit, but had put it off.

working on the film, though, in fact becomes easier. he's glad he still has an excuse to see Anna, and, magically, once again, that which was pushing them apart facilitates in the form of meaningful work his and Anna's mutual recovery. Anna giving expression to a newly developed sense of humor, finds something funny in almost every shot, and Jokes maybe they should turn it into a comedy, which infuriates Ahmad to the point he and Anna are barely on speaking terms, much to Daniel's delight. but the film remains an enigma – it has become more delicate and subtle. Jerry has sunk his heart and soul into perfecting it, which is, in addition to being the "most deliciously thought provoking graphic sex in cinema

history,” according to Little White Lies, from his perspective, a homage to Anna. the result of all this commotion is the film is becoming a cause celebre within the experimental cinema world, grabbing rave reviews outside of the mainstream media, as well as a feature article in Rolling Stone with a portrait of the four filmmakers on the cover, as they await the inevitable financial windfall, which will, specified contractually, fall equally on each of them.

“there’s still something missing, Jerry.” “I know that, Ahmad. we don’t really have anything in it that challenges prevailing public opinion and therefore lacks an element of risk or danger.” “right. as the central aspect of the film deals mostly with sex I think one of us needs to engage sexually in something unacceptable.” “we’ve already been rejected by the jurors at Sundance!” “forget that Daniel. Anna’s assets are being wasted. what can we come up with related that works?” the four of them remain quiet for a long while before Anna says, “we should do a scene where I am fucked by a black male for the sole reason that he wants to fuck a white woman, and I, solely, because I want a black cock in me...I mean in which that particular sexual fetish is **the** point.” “couldn’t you come up with something a bit less racist. Anna?” Jerry asks, after the shock waves subside, the least enthused for obvious reasons. “I could but that wouldn’t make me want to do it any less.” “are you serious?” “we can’t shock unless we deliberately push a stereotype – a fantasy that is demeaning or outright illegal.” “and consciousness of that wouldn’t deter you?” “no it would not. as long as it was not forced...and grew out of a real need.” “wouldn’t it have more edge if it was?” all four laugh, testily. “I can arrange it,” Ahmad, says,

excitedly, really turned on by the idea. in the half-darkness Anna's face glows, the contours of her body quite visible through her clothes, to Jerry, at this moment, a love goddess. Ahmad, through contacts, engages a black male porn worker who will readily do it for a reasonable rate as he likes fucking married white women, emphasizing equally, both married and white. "she has a lover," Ahmad tells him. "a submissive, but horny, married woman is my default but from how you described her she'll do!," is his reply.

it is set up for them to shoot the scene like all the rest at Daniel's apartment. the focus of it in their minds is not to rationalize it away with progressive commentary but let it be the ubiquitous, erotic, racist fantasy it will be to all who view it and let it hang there neither expository nor self-justifying. the `actor' arrives nattily, but conservatively, dressed in a soft open in the front slate grey button down shirt, charcoal slacks and a black felt fedora. he is at least 6' 2" with the frame of a football player. when their eyes mesh, Anna, excited but a bit nervous, standing demurely, legs exposed, wearing a sky blue summer dress all the more desirable for its modesty, bobby sox, tangelo colored ribbon fastening together the back ends of her hair, answers his stare with a flirtatious smile before they look away. she strips to a sexy short sheer black slip with long straps only partially covering her breasts as the black man whose name is Antonne undresses removing everything including his shoes and socks. the room is dark except for the Klieg lights directed at the bed. the fixed camera manned by Daniel, does not roll until after Anna lays back, first on the husky male's naked rear as he leans over her, casually pushes up her slip, raises her buttocks and inserts his substantial

cock into her vagina. holding her sensuous pale thighs he fucks her, handling her as if she were weightless, working her body – cock, balls, vagina, her raised legs wrapped around him, her palms tactilely feeling his shoulders, arms, small of his back, his hand pulling down the straps, clutching her breasts, her head on the pillow, face ecstatically turned to the side, the lights, of course, contrasting and eroticizing the dark and light of their bodies. it takes little more than ten minutes for them to do it all and be done, in which time Anna has three crazed orgasms, the sexually gifted fornicator, she judges, from the frequencies of his spurts, equaling it. they then separate. he gets off her, dresses, a pleased but disdainful look on his face. “you guys are pansies, cucks,” he calls as he leaves, without even looking at Jerry, Ahmad and Daniel. Anna continues to contentedly lay on her back “it’s getting chill in here, Anna. you better put back on your clothes.”

on the way home both are silent. “did you get what you wanted?” “it wasn’t a matter of getting anything – a tradeoff of no personal baggage, perhaps, to assuage an acknowledged societal one. when we’re really horny we seek the most pornographic remedies. whatever his reasons I hope he thought I was a good fuck.” “but **we’re** faced with the meaning of it and the accolades may now possibly be withdrawn” “work it into the film, that’s your job, Jerry, and we’ll see where that leaves us.” “it may sink any chance of it being shown.” “to preclude it now wouldn’t be honest, and no matter what the social meaning it never ceases to amaze me how encompassing and uplifting sex can be.” “you’ve never had sex with a black male before?” “yes, of course, as a connection to the jazz scene.” “real relationships?” “yes, but

real relationships don't necessarily prohibit the need to succumb to stereotypes. I've also dated Asian and Latino men. having sex with them was no different than my having sex with you, or Ahmad!" "does sex always occur when you date men," Jerry asks rhetorically, but is surprised by Anna's initial silence, then thoughtful, but evasive, "you and Ahmad were looking for something transgressive." "does this make most of the sex we've done for the movie seem effete or silly?" "the more serious, ethereal intent of the film is there. I don't see it can be separated" "the scene is singular, however, as there is only one focused action, and is the only one which includes someone other than us. it will have an adverse impact unless we can integrate it."

Ahmad is seriously considering forming a production company, moving to Beirut with Daniel, who is originally from the UK, and Jamila, who, for the right wages, would take a hiatus from her studies, to run the office there. now that survival is no longer their chief concern, Jerry and Anna resolve to pay the attention to each other they feel has fallen into neglect. as they are now 'famous' they don't have to look outside of themselves to seek recognition. and as their funds will modestly expand shortly, they move out of their respective apartments, and into a two bed house with a backyard fruit orchard and flower garden in West Hollywood.

Anna is becoming increasingly aware part of her love for Jerry has to do with his age, and his resistance to any attempts by others to be sidelined by it. she's also aware it's a tool to gain respect, and perhaps an edge, which is a reverse form of being handicapped, and, has, unconsciously, been holding her

captive, to the degree she knows and fears her own aging will result in a diminished physical appeal, which is the flipside of the same issue, though not sufficient to negate the positive aspect to their relationship as a result of these same issues. when she discusses this with Jerry, he says he's known this to be the case all along, and suggests her attraction to younger men, younger than herself that is, is compensation. she answers that almost in every instance it is the man who first responds to her. "it doesn't matter who responds first. attraction is like a Rorschach which can be read." "but the youthfulness becomes a negative factor." "that would follow." Anna is sick of Jerry's smugly, to her, always having the last word. "this is becoming like a marriage, Anna." oddly, one reason Jerry knows he cares for Anna on a different plane than issues about age and beauty that will fade, is her name. every name has an indefinable quality to the perceiver, which is other than the sum of the definable qualities associated with it. and when one loves someone in the way he loves Anna, the name, itself, becomes the embodiment of that love. he wonders if the name, Jerry, has the same meaning to Anna, as her name does to him, and he suspects, in fact he's sure, it does not. he's grateful for the love she gives, and if she were to leave him it would break his heart, but he'd rather that than she should feel captive, for any reason. Anna, on the other hand, loves Jerry in spite of his name, which embodies, to her, all of his deficiencies. she loves him more for what she recognizes as his soul, than what is manifest. she sees in his name all the self-denial and low esteem he's acquired as a reflection of the contempt and rejection, real and imagined, he's received from others. she feels a deficiency in people's names, generally, anyhow, the

arbitrariness and karma in something not asked for. other women in his life, his former wife, for instance, spoke his name with a respect for the privacy of his being that gave him a feeling of being valued and accepted. when Anna says the word Jerry, while she does so with affection, it's also with a tolerance and a trace of irony, implying his weaknesses. so much, anyway, for 'reality', he thinks. one must get beyond .

but always something new has to service the tied up, twisted, fixated need built up of its own accord, regardless of how one resists it, and it has to be, no matter how much a variation on the old, a new experience, something initially unfamiliar.

at LACMA Jerry and Anna walk by the ticket window and as there are no exhibits at the time that would provide them with sufficient urgency to pay, they keep walking through the pavilion into the Ahmanson building and turn right, conveniently blending in with the small group ahead of them, to a textile exhibit. they carefully examine each exquisite piece of woven material – from Africa, Indonesia, Peru, etc., some of it ancient, some of it early 20th century, including a Han Dynasty textile of elliptical lines and circular shapes, dated 2nd century B.C., which is of particular interest to Jerry for the same reasons he was moved, way back in 1968 or 9, by a show, also at LACMA, of 4th century B.C. Tantric Art on paper, done by Japanese Buddhist monks, which consisted mostly of grids of lines and circles (symbols of the self) precisely placed in and out of the rectangles, singularly and in groups, in infinite context, which had a strong symbolic and spiritual purport to him. but the message here, is of peaceful creation, the one from Iraq, for instance, a sad reminder of all

that's happened there. they continue through the Ahmanson building, check out the Broad Contemporary for accessibility, but on the way back manage to sneak into the permanent collection of early Modern Art, Kandinsky, Klee, etc., and the German Expressionists, still among Jerry's favorite art. but, given the truism of timelessness, and they are timeless, there's a gap between how he once responded with wonder to those artist's works, and the lack of impact, or relevance, he feels now in how it relates to the seriousness and urgency of his own senses, the nostalgia, or at least, vision, so important to the meaning of memory, at least temporarily, absent – which is, maybe, his problem. it's that way with music, and pretty much every-thing else. unless context opens up and transforms memory back into an ecstatic state. it's a warm Saturday afternoon, with the usual visual mix of tourists, teen girl groups with badges, interspersed with arty looking very young couples. satisfied it's not going to be a profound experiencing-art day, they leave, Anna's arm hooked in Jerry's, her head leaning on his shoulder, particularly feeling his aura this day. they stop off at Erewhon, where Jerry did his shopping, as well as at a funky, organic produce food store staffed with erstwhile Hippies, called Help, when he and his former wife lived in an apartment over an electric company on Beverly Blvd near La Brea, the last four years they were (technically) together.

their faces reddened from the afternoon exposure, Anna's still feeling very affectionate towards Jerry. she changes to a cool, short, white cotton dress, making her look equally, little girl and sexually charged mistress. Jerry starts stroking and rubbing her legs. "why are you doing that, Jerry?" "because

of all the nice young female legs at LACMA, and at Erewhon, too." Anna agrees there were quite a few of them. after dinner they sit out on the patio, kind of the equivalent of having a smoke, except neither of them smoke, their full stomachs urging them to expand their external space.

when they go back inside, Jerry has a surprise for Anna. he pulls two joints from his pocket and says, "let's turn on together, Anna." she hesitates, then replies, "if you want to, Jerry." still surprised, she says, "I thought you had given that up." "I have. but I thought it could be something we could both get into, a onetime thing." "where did you get it?" "from a pretty, very young but weather beaten, female 'traveler' who was with her boyfriend. she just came up to me on Ocean Front Walk, a week ago. she wanted to sell me a bag, but I said a couple of cigarettes would do." they sit together on the sofa, light up a joint, leaving the other one on the table.

after passing it back and forth several times they're both stoned, looking at each other, smiling with surprise. they thought they had things to work out but there isn't anything at all. both of them are totally at ease but hyper-aware. they at first oscillate between dreamlike rhapsodic hallucination and extreme lucidity, then even out, becoming increasingly erotic. they each take another long toke, the smell of weed filling their nostrils, then kiss. neither of them undress. the erotic impulse completely takes over and they end up doing what they would have been doing without being stoned – only their sense of time and space is altered. there's a greater density and gravity, and everything is slower. when

Jerry caresses Anna's naked breasts they feel dimensionless. and the texture feels as pliable as kneading dough. fucking is immensely pleasurable, and it seems to take forever to climax. when they're done, however, is when the drug really takes effect, the sexual release freeing their perception, as they finish off the rest of the joint. their perception becomes fine and distinctive . their minds tune into the ethereal and imperceptible, content to not move, blissfully in tune with each other. after they come down Anna is the first to speak. "why is it, no matter what we do, we always end up fucking, Jerry?" "I don't know, Anna," Jerry replies, sincerely.

Ahmad, Daniel, and Jamila, follow through with their plans. and move to Beirut. Jamila and Ahmad exact their earlier plans to marry. that leaves Jerry and Anna to watch over their film in the U.S., which has been picked up by an independent distributor, and with the awards season approaching, they have guarded expectations. it's to be an elaborate wedding, which Ahmad and Jamila don't mind poking fun at. of course Anna and Jerry are both invited. Anna can't wait to go, but Jerry has real fears about traveling there. he's said he'd never go anywhere in the Middle East now, because of the kidnappings. the issue is resolved unexpectedly, when Jamila, offering no explanation, returns to Los Angeles and resumes her studies at UCLA.

the ringtone of her cell awakens Anna early in the morning. **he no. 2**, whom she had broken off an affair with, partially because of what she perceived to be his apathy and indolence, just prior to meeting Jerry, has been thinking about her quite a bit, lately, and wants to know if she would like to

join him for lunch. mildly curious, she agrees to meet up with him in Koreatown (several miles west of his office in the northern 'revitalized' financial section of downtown), where he has to drop off a parcel at his brother's restaurant, and is surprised at the instant sexual surge between them – at her attraction to his looks, build, and boyish smile. interesting how context determines interest, in this instance precluding any sign of the indifference of their previous interaction.

it's a very rainy day. it had been raining since the night before. they release and shake out their umbrellas and step into the empty pub-like room, from off the street, the fresh, damp, air still in their lungs and nostrils. the closed restaurant with its reddish-brown pinewood walls, scent of garlic and spices, chairs piled on tables, elicits a calming sense of both implied activity and absence, as he turns on the lighting system, and opens the blinds. they stand for a long moment, looking at, and listening to, the rain pound the pavement sparsely filled with pedestrians, some clad in colorful rain-gear, and the vehicles churning up large chunks of water. Anna wearing a conservative, warm, close fitting powder blue suit jacket and skirt, much the same as Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, wore in a recent photo, an outfit, she thinks, sarcastically, the Queen Mother would certainly approve of, looks especially beautiful; cool, radiant, and fresh, neither decrying nor affirming she could very well be about to cheat (she's not sure that's the right word) on Jerry for the first time in a long while. they stand in the center of the room, in an effort to feel, symbolically, whole, looking at each other in both a consentingly collusive, and meaningful way. rainy days which don't generally, first thing, stir up

erotic impulses, are more apt to nurture feelings of warmth and a response to cheery colors, and/or the melancholy of nostalgia, making one feel deeper and more introspective, even moody or blue. he flicks off the lights and hugs her. they both spontaneously start to undress, spurred on by the rainy day ambience. he removes his shirt, exposing, and posing, a strong, muscle-toned upper body. she unbuttons and removes her jacket, does the same with her blouse, unfastens her skirt and steps out of it, then peels off her panties, so that she's standing naked, except for unhooked lace bra, and heels. after hurriedly dropping his pants and shorts to the floor, he hungrily crushes her in his arms, inducing in her a pleasurable, momentary vertigo, and they salaciously fuck, standing, in silent cadence with the downpour and the slushing sound of car wheels. when they finish they go to the private office, close the door with the now reverse need to shut out the ambient distraction, and seriously fuck on the sofa, giving sex everything they have until they're totally exhausted. he pulls back on his shorts and pants, but leaves his chest bare, as a satisfied Anna, sensuously strokes it. she puts back on her panties, then her shirt and jacket, and sits, demurely, on the sofa, in a seductive pose. "I like that you're so dressed up, but not wearing hose," he says, savoring her bare legs, before she finally slips on her skirt and steps into her shoes. "did you want it to rain today?," he asks. "at first, no, now I'm glad it has." "that was worth the wait," he says, referring to the length of time since he last saw her. she nods, agreeably, but thinks for a moment, unsure, wondering how relevant the mutual but wanton lust they've just engaged in would seem from a feminist perspective; just another hook-up, both of them mere sex

objects, then smiling, her face takes on an elegant glow. “do you have a boyfriend?” “yes.” “and what about this?” “you have to take risks to keep things alive.” “no guarantees.” “that’s right. they go to lunch, Dutch, as she desires to avoid any feelings of dependency, at a quite upscale, all glass enclosed restaurant, on the 13th floor of the high rise his immaculate office is in, where they watch a video of Hikari Aoki, a Japan based female jazz vocalist, with a cool, nuanced style, sing *My Foolish Heart*, and can continue to enjoy their rainy day odyssey, in a deeper, more engrossed way, without the edge, until, still raining, time having pleasantly passed to late afternoon, he has to return to work, and she, fingers crossed, to meet Jerry, her soul, her linchpin, her survival.

a half hour later, when she arrives home a half hour late, Jerry’s left a note saying he’s with Jamila who invited him to see her and her group perform at the Redcat in Disney Hall, and will be back late as they probably will “go somewhere” afterwards. he’s sorry if he’s disappointed her, but as they had no specific plans other than to ‘do something’ together, he hopes she won’t mind. he would have phoned her but did not want to ‘intrude’ on her impromptu reunion, as he sensed it might get ‘intimate’.

Anna goes back outside. the rain has finally ceased. the last light of day, as in a 17th century Flemish landscape painting, illumines the grey clouds, fragrant cooking from their Tibetan neighbors’ kitchen wafting in the evening air. street lights go on, and the eclipse takes place, as day turns to night.

Anna, untypically, finds it hard to sleep and is still awake

when Jerry returns at about 2 a.m. he doesn't turn on the bedroom light so as not to awaken her. she watches his shadowy figure and listens to the sound of him undressing, before he goes to the bathroom. she takes in his familiar naked body with approval as he approaches the bed, gets in and lays beside her, and when he sees she's awake, kisses her, his breath, though he rarely drinks, even after having brushed his teeth, tainted with alcohol. they, although she's still sexually sated from her day-time diversion to the extent of not wanting, nor being able to, get fully aroused, fuck for a long time, Jerry equally sated having succumbed to Jamila's advances while parked in the Hollywood Hills in which he came inside her several times. "I like Jamila but it wasn't my intent to make it with her, Anna." "but you parked with her." "it was the right ambience after her performance." they then neither bothering to get up, contented, fall into slumber.

the next day they talk things out. she assures Jerry she had not planned to have sex with **he no. 2**, out front, but that it just happened that way, that he was correct in anticipating it, and that anything he did with Jamila would have been all right with her. he says Jamila wanted to have sex with him, she was open and aboveboard about that, but he knew it had a lot to do with Ahmad, and he didn't want to be motivated by either that or Anna's vagaries, and she likes to drink to get into the mood and he doesn't. but he gave in to the temptation, and would again if their relationship continued. "I think you make too much about motivation and not enough about the physical reality." "I'll keep that in mind, Anna," Jerry replies, all of a sudden realizing he's just never thought of telling Anna that he already had made it with Jamila, and

that it actually was an auspicious moment, both for she and him, because of the breakthrough she experienced as a result. Anna listens but as she was in NYC at the time, and hardly chaste, does not react negatively. the situation is different, now, however, as Ahmad and Daniel are in Beirut, and Jamila is very much present back in Los Angeles, so it's not with total surprise when Anna, walking in one late afternoon, finds an entangled Jerry and Jamila fucking on their bed. both completely naked, disengage. Jamila, still breathing heavily, quickly dresses and leaves without saying a word. Jerry just sits on the bed, focused inwardly. "was she a good fuck, Jerry?" "very. unfortunately we had not quite finished up."

although they had mutually found the house they're renting, Jerry agrees to move out. he's sunk into a deep funk having no desire for sex with anyone. but was it betrayal? what are the rules? theirs is not the monogamous relationship, in the beginning at least, he had wished it to be, which is more Anna's doing than his. Anna's thoughts eventually come around to his, and before he's able to find a place, she reneges, and tells him she wishes he wouldn't move out, that this is just another manifestation of their situation, and they decide, wearily, that because they tend to resolve every issue by having more sex, they, in addition to initially agreeing just to not have sex with others, should postpone for the future having sex with one another, as well, and to try to aid and encourage each other in their creative endeavors, instead of competing for love and attention. when Jamila sends Anna an apologetic email, Anna reciprocates by inviting Jamila to go shopping with her. she says she doesn't want Jerry to

cease being friends with Jamila, either, as the two of them have a rapport. but is Anna, once again, biding her time?

a few nights later, just before he wakes up, Jerry dreams he's sitting in a room or small apartment. the 'music' coming from the sound system in the building next door is at an ear-splitting volume. "whew," he says to the young, thin, female with short, blonde hair, who's also in the room. "what?," she asks, slightly annoyed. "the loud sound," he complains. "it's just noise," she addresses his complaint in a smugly casual tone. when she says it he feels she's the product of an entirely different technology and reasoning than he is. "then you're just a thing," he replies. "pretty much," she says, screwing up her mouth. he thinks her response is pathological, but trendy, at the same time. "it's just amazing the indifference some people can have to absolutely anything."

another rainy morning, spaced and inward, suited to both their moods and needs. there's an ethereal sensation in looking out on a familiar, but rain saturated, landscape, that transforms it, but is difficult to define, at least in Jerry's mind, calling forth the inner presence of things, the beauty and subtlety both in visions and emotions. weird, the theme of so many pop love songs has been how love transcends inclement weather, "turns winter into spring," etc. Anna flashes back on her rainy day with **he no. 2**. to him she was just a pretty, she makes a sour face, piece of ass, while to her, as in the past, he was still just a dildo. sometimes that can be enough. the thought actually makes her horny again, and with Jerry thinking the same way, the prescribed chastity between them abruptly ends, and, most likely, the mood will,

like with two moths drawn to lamplight, soon extend to others, beginning another cycle. the idea of being **free** sexually only with just one person is a contradiction.

it doesn't take long for either Anna or Jerry to briefly activate their roving desires. Jerry, having formatting problems with his book, has enlisted, through Jamila, a young lady friend, also a performance student, named Dana, to reformat it, and create a workable, publishable, file, an easy task for any person knowledgeable of word processing procedure, but arduous and time consuming for him, to the extent he's glad to pay to have it done for him. meanwhile, Anna, as a result of her 'exposure' in their film, has an opportunity to make good money modeling for a series of semi-explicit photos by a very well-known, well thought of, fashion photographer; and as due to the nature of their endeavor, Jerry is more than certain, Anna, given the photographer is assuredly quite attracted to her, will yield to the erotic tension, no doubt, on a number of occasions before the project is finished, which is, as it turns out, an accurate assessment on Jerry's part.

the young lady in Jerry's employ, who also models, is as lovely as she is proactive, slim, but not as slender as Jamila, with supple curves instead of angles, a quiet sensual face, blue eyes, fragile nose, conical breasts, and long, very straight, brunette hair. whether it's a quirk or caution, she prefers Jerry come to her apartment, rather than her going to his (and Anna's) house. on the night she calls for him to pick up the completed file, which she could have emailed, he knocks, and she shouts, "come in." the lights are dim. she's sitting in a comfortable looking chair with a lot of stuffing next to an

amplifier, stereo speakers, and a turntable, listening to retro music, her colorfully embroidered vanilla skirt well up her thighs, sewing a tear that occurred, when taking a walk, earlier, snagged on the sharp, protruded, overhung twig of a bush. she smiles as he walks up to her. "it would be easier if I'd removed it first, Jerry," she says, a merry look in her eyes, obviously having difficulty lining up the stitches. "I'm in a better position than you are, Dana, why not let me do it." she thinks for a moment, then, smiling, nods, the record still turning a tearfully sentimental 1930 Dietz and Schwartz love song, *Oh give me something to remember you by*, and taking it upon himself without asking, he picks the tone arm up off the record, then kneels in front of the chair, face now bent towards, and inches away from, her thighs, as she hands him the needle and thread, and he sews, taking care the stitch is even, and almost invisible on the outside, until finished, he knots the last stitch. instead of immediately rising, he hesitates, raising his head slightly and their eyes meet, a rapt expression on Dana's face, her blue eyes fixed and inviting. he again lowers his head, breathes in the scent of her now slightly goose-bumped thighs, and the sweet, musty odor of her crotch, the plain white cotton panties just visible under her raised skirt. he hesitates once more, then raises the skirt higher, and carefully, gently, pulls off her panties, dropping it to the floor, lowers his mouth and begins to eat her, as she leans her head back against the plush top of the chair, and and relaxes. in the still quiet and dim light, he eats her, building slowly, unseen waves of ecstasy moving across her face. he's being very thorough, it takes a long time. halfway through, he lifts the tone arm back onto the still turning record – *Oh give me something to remember you by when*

you are far away from me – he reaches under her shirt and feels her incredibly, sensuously soft, erect breasts, her rhythms becoming increasingly intense, the intervals between them shorter, the ambience of the room quieter, as twisting her upper body, she starts to make distinct moans – *Just a little something to remember you by wherever you chance to be.* giving herself to the downbeat but languorous seduction of the music, they move together as they would fucking, oral and genital communication, his mouth buried in her labia, the music now embedded in her unconscious, she begins to orgasm, sharply and deeply, moaning loudly, making little crying sounds and “ohs,” before ceasing, Jerry’s mouth pressed to her clit. she sighs and is still, the music, keeps playing, almost mockingly, now. “just a minute,” Jerry says, then gets up and goes to the bathroom and washes his mouth, though he likes the taste, which arouses him, just in case he wants to kiss her.

when he returns to her living room, Dana’s face is glowing. it happened innocently enough, Jerry thinks, but now what, after she’s given him the disc, realizing she’s smitten. “I’m game for anything, Jerry.”

a couple of weeks pass. Anna, who’d earlier mentioned she’d wished for the unlikely possibility of Annie Leibowitz doing the shoot, and the photographer have gotten into a routine where the only way they can handle their project is to fuck after each session. she wants work to be as pleasurable as possible, if it’s going to be anything at all. she and her ‘wardrobe’ is sufficient provocation as they act out the nuances and implications of the photos in real time, much as she was

compelled to do with Ahmad in the earlier shooting of the film. neither she nor Jerry keep their dalliances secret. Anna and the photographer wind things up and that's the end of it. in fact that in that kind of situation for her c'est du passe. but Jerry has somewhat of crush on Dana, and she, on him.

he's relieved he's finally finished his book, and with Anna away overnight, goes to bed, tired, but peculiarly aroused, at about 1:30 am. asleep and in kind of a pleasurable immersed state, he slowly awakens to see a long haired brunette apparition standing by the bed, as though she's part of his erotic dream. she's wearing a ruffled white blouse, and a tight, short, skirt. "how did you get in, I always lock the door before going to bed?," he asks, half awake, looking at her in the three-quarters dark. "I want to fuck, Jerry," she says. she undresses quickly, then gets into bed with him, and they intensely fuck, on and off, the sex between them undeniably delicious, till the first ray of light, to near depletion "you never want to come here." "I did this morning. I didn't care what time it was or who was there," she says, although she knew Anna wouldn't be there. "I would have knocked forever until you opened the door." "I'm glad you did." "so am I." Jerry straightens up as he (fatefully) listens to a key turning in the unlocked front door....then the musical sound of Anna's voice, "Jerry," as she walks through the living room, hair up, a few loose strands hanging, wearing her lightweight grey coat, and carrying her overnight bag, before going into the bedroom where Jerry and Dana are standing transfixed, her smile quickly dropping to a frown. she blankly looks at Jerry who is barefoot, wearing only a colored t-shirt and briefs, then turns to Dana, by then fully dressed, carefully sizing her

up, systematically going over every inch of her, her bra-free still unbuttoned blouse, her legs and tight skirt, before letting a slow smile envelope her hurt. "I see," she says, and sits, wearily but reflectively, on the unmade bed. she looks at Dana and says, "I should tell you to leave." "it's not the way you think, Anna. I'm going to walk Dana to her car."

"I thought Anna knew all about what, what we'd done." "it's not just what, but when and how, in what context. she was hurt because she felt we took advantage of her while she was gone." Dana nods. they hug, give each other a mutually comprehending kiss before she starts the car engine and drives off. when Jerry goes back in , Anna, still sitting on the bed, is sobbing, her face buried in her lap. Jerry puts his arms around her and hugs her tightly, not letting go until she finally stops crying. she says she's very tired and wants to sleep. he kisses her and exits the room. Anna sleeps most of the day, and Jerry, who hadn't slept at all, dozes in the front room. it's late afternoon, warm bright light, and long dark shadow time, sliver of a crescent moon rising. Anna goes outside to sit in the garden, which should be their Eden, but something, they both shamefully acknowledge, almost never do. Jerry, seeing her there, joins her. in addition to the garden with its myriad flowers, their backyard is a mini fruit tree orchard, all bearing – apricot, avocado, crabapple, and fig, as well as the more omnipresent orange and lemon. the healing sun and fragrant scents allow their spirits to thaw as well as their bodies, though Jerry can stay in the sun for just so long without a hat because of his skin. neither of them really want to talk. Anna's sleep has given her the equanimity to face up to a decision – one far more resolute than any previous, this

being the second time she's come 'home' to find another woman in 'her' bedroom if not, this time, her bed. but she needs to know more about what the circumstances were. in her short visit with the photographer for the purpose of selecting, which of what turned out to be 'extraordinary' photos, hopefully, for an upcoming issue of Vanity Fair, she's now glad she didn't try harder to resist, and in fact, encouraged, his amorous advances while there. by any measure that would seem to cancel out what she's subsequently experienced. – but she's affected. it's not so much Jerry's dalliances – that would be pot calling the kettle black, but with what she feels is the adolescent gratuitousness of his behavior, which she now realizes has been the source of embarrassment to her. it isn't, for instance, that her rendezvous with he no.2 was any less gratuitous, just, in her mind, less juvenile (a quality in people she's not particularly tolerant of), although she's not quite sure why that is, and occurred in a time and space not an imposition on Jerry as she feels his deviances were on her. she doesn't want to see Jerry in this light. she's wished, deeply, he'd be the wise person she thinks he is underneath. one reason she feels the way she feels, is because she, contemptuously, thinks of his 'lovers', with the exception of Ilona, as girls rather than as women, an attitude which she now sees is really putting him down. "I know you think I was cheating on you because you were away. I didn't invite her over. she just came in the middle of the night, waking me up." Anna's mood picks up at his words, and she laughs at the absurdity of the picture she has in her head, the sense of betrayal part of her feelings, at least, considerably diminished. "if you were asleep how did she get in?" "that's what I asked her. evidently I left the door unlocked. I don't

recall ever having done that before. maybe I, unconsciously, left it open for you.” “maybe, unconsciously, you wanted her to come.” “that may have been, Anna, I think it was the former, but asleep I was in a semi-erotic state, and when I awoke to her standing by the bed, it was like an extension of my dreams. it was sublime, it was erotic. a dream that became physical!” “that’s a pretty strong image, Jerry.” “then why don’t we admit we’re both serial adulterers, Anna. that gives us three options; own up to the fact and stop, own up to the fact and continue, or each of us go on our way, doing whatever we want,” Jerry says, though knowing, at this stage, that line of reasoning, has become stale and played out. she feels the pull of Jerry typically moving towards a `rational’ summation, but though she suffers a pang at hearing his final option, the one she is seriously considering, she is not susceptible to his reasoning now. “I generally don’t like the word, adultery, Jerry. I associate it with shame and deception.” “but you were hurt and felt betrayed when you walked in on us last night.” “my house!” “my house, too.” “right, our house. “there may be no shame or deception involved and still be adultery based on the charge one gets out of it, if not because it’s, at least traditionally, forbidden, then because of the contrast it serves to what has become mundane.” “I don’t think responding to contrast is adultery if it is open and not negotiable.” “that is partly what makes me love you, Anna – negates the oppression of feeling trapped, and as you just implied, if you are an open and giving person chances are you can’t limit your needs to one individual. and for one’s partner, being able to identify with, and internalize, a sexual act outside of oneself can give one a feeling of completion, like looking at a perfect photo.” “but I don’t have the feelings

you say you have, Jerry. I try to accept what is rational and reject when I think it's betrayal." "but it gave you pleasure to `perform' sex with Ahmad in my presence." "yes, we had a committed relationship, we'd planned to spend the night together. but that's on you, Jerry. I didn't choose your being there." Jerry can't help but admire Anna. although the incompleteness he sometimes feels, something he knows she is not structured to appreciate, remains, her clarity cuts through it. he sees it as a direct result of the independence she had to develop because of her background of always having had to be on her own, what he's perceived to be the orphan in her, and feels he can perceive a hidden suffering she experiences as a result. the sun has almost set and what little there is left of it warms their faces, forming halos outlining their hair. unlike the half-moon night they last experienced this ennui, there is no desire, just the failure of love. they feel a chill and go inside. Jerry takes Anna's hand. "if this isn't a love story then what is it, Anna?"

postscript:

one very positive outcome of their most recent trauma is their appreciation of the everyday pleasures they'd previously ignored. there is a constancy in which they now use their backyard as a healing agent. the son of an old artist friend has agreed to publish a limited edition of Jerry's novel, which is titled, Forever Anna. the birds are twittering as they inhale the sweet and tangy scent of the orchard and garden. for, perhaps, the first time he has no ambition other than to be. he and Anna receive a postcard with a picture of Ahmad and Daniel, arms around each other, smiling. they are working together on a fictionalized semi-erotic film related to the sexual

effects of French and British colonialization in Northern Africa
Middle East, and South Asia.

a heat spell. Anna is wearing a short white cotton dress and pretty much nothing else. Jerry is at the printer working on the details of publishing his book. somewhat unexpectedly, away from home, she feels that irresistible erotic shift, to the point of wanting to actively seek someone out, but, as usual, doesn't have to. when in that state things happen quickly, and this time is no exception. while waiting for help at the Google store in West Holly-wood, a person standing parallel to her has been shyly, or discreetly, observing her. she finds him attractive – slender, pale complexion, sensitive/ vulnerable appearing young man with longish fine textured light brown hair, wearing a slate grey (exact same tone as the black porn actor in their movie wore) soft collar shirt that droops even when buttoned, faded slim fit blue jeans and flip flops. when their eyes finally engage and he tentatively, cautiously, smiles, she returns his with a warm, just suggestive enough to encourage him further, look. “what is it that you're waiting for?” “I'm having difficulty installing an app.” “can I take a look?” she hands him her phone. click click zip click and the app is installed. he hands it back, their fingers, semi-deliberately touching, both of them laughing, Anna, confident now, feeling extremely good and looking to secure the liaison. “what is it you're waiting for?” “I'm not sure,” he replies, politely ignoring the double entendre. “mostly a compulsion to spend more money and I think I'll let it go.” “because you fixed my phone?” “Yes.” their eyes again engage, this time hold. “I'm kind of just hanging out. is there any particular thing you'd like to do or place you'd like to

go?," he asks, the tone of his voice precluding a need to mention a purpose. Anna, already irreversibly aroused, discreetly, but suggestively, codifying the purpose, replies with unanticipated frankness, "anywhere might do." "surer of himself now, he responds "we could go to my place but my housemate might walk in." "likewise at my place," Anna laughs, feeling slightly guilty, but enjoying referencing Jerry in that way. "a friend who is out of town has an apartment a few blocks away. I am feeding her cat." a girlfriend?" "no, I'll call her." ending the brief phone conversation with his resident friend, smiling engagingly, he turns to Anna, raising his thumb. "is your car in a secure spot?" "yes." "then why don't you ride with me, it's permit parking there and I'll take you back." "of course," Anna replies, facetiously at his taking for granted how it would proceed and how it would end. again an intense look. he grasps Anna's waist with both hands, pulling her slightly forward. she looks enticingly into his pale blue eyes and their lips meet to kiss, a long sensual one. the best kiss she's had in a while. he runs his hand across her breasts. she clutches the bump in his crotch. they kiss again., their purpose formally acknowledged.

on the short drive there Anna seeing how much younger than her he is, flashes on Jerry's commentary about the reasons she's attracted to younger men. "what do you do when you're not feeding your friend's cat?" "right now I perform with a small theater group near here." they pull into the driveway next to the owner's car. she feels a surge of pleasure entering the world of a stranger for the sole purpose of having sex without first having to commit or accommodate herself to the surroundings providing a stimulating ambience while allowing her the added freedom to focus entirely on her desire. they

go directly to the bedroom. standing facing one another by the bed. Anna slowly unbuttons his shirt accentuating each release with a provocative twist of her fingers and a stare.. then unzips his pants, pulling his trousers and shorts down to his thighs, kneels and lowers her lips to his erection, her short dress raised by the motion to her bare midriff, only the remotely perceptible sound of her mouth on his cock disturbing the silence. he lifts her in a bear hug setting her on the bed as she leans backward raising her knees, hastily pulling off her scant undergarment allowing it to snag on her bare heel and toe before dropping to the floor. leaning forward his hard tensile cartridge in her they screw until they both come with extreme satisfaction. they both undress. do not finish until the sun is down, salaciously reconnoitering; fucking and petting intermittently throughout the afternoon, Anna provoking and soliciting untried youthful invention. when they are finished she sits up looking around the room having been slowly tuned into the vibes and possessions of the female occupant whose created environment has pleasurably served as a backdrop for an intimacy unknown to her. lately, as darkness occurs, Anna has begun to consistently feel depressed. this time it is more soulful, the meaning of it more pronounced.

“I know you have a soulmate but I adore you, anyway, Anna,” the young man says, searching for the leverage to extend the connection hopefully into an affair. sitting as close to him as possible, their lips brushing across one another’s, in response she slips her hand into his unzipped pants and steadily runs her palm along his cock until it stiffens in a way cocks involuntarily get hard when ceased to be oversexed they drive up the ramp of the almost empty raised structure and park. releasing their seat belts Anna turns sideways, leans

forward, her moth and his cock move in uninterrupted sync for a mesmerizingly long time, the air becoming increasingly charged until he straightens, lets out a helpless erotic moan, and she swallows hard what little is left.. they sit in the dim light for several more silent minutes, then kiss. not a sensual, not a blasé, kiss, but a long heartfelt one, before she opens the car door and exits.

as this has been the first time she has actually deliberately and gratuitously solicited a seduction since she began her relationship with Jerry, it may be difficult to explain to him, and it has become more apparent to her the function of her need to appease her insatiable lust. Jerry's view of Anna is that contemplating the concept and context of Anna's sexual relationships with others erotically trumps contemplating any sex she has with him or he with others, probably because that is the point of it – abrogating a psychological horniness. this, though unstated, is recognized and accepted by the both of them. she knows the day will come when she can no longer engage in such activity. not speaking for Jerry, but regarding her own needs, as long as he accepts her he will continue to be her significant other.

