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CALLIOPE (kə-lī' ə-pē) the Muse of eloquence and epic poetry.

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Submissions of poetry and fiction are welcomed from Aug. 1 through Mar. 31 and must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Manuscripts are read and evaluated with the author's name masked so that beginning and well-established writers are read without prejudice.

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Theresa Pappas

ELEMENT I

The tea tastes green; steam glosses
my skin. I wrap the cup in my hands, turning
it slightly to warm each finger,
nodding to the heat, converting the light
through my lashes. I am nowhere near that
earth, damp, studded with leaves,
needles, the black stones sinking
under our shoes on the way to that hill
where tree trunks hang back,
but high branches arch toward us and make
sharp noises as the sun breaks
and breaks across our bodies. It is as though
I have no body now except when
tented in this mist, taking tea, or in a dream
like the one this afternoon:
I was nothing but a body, that someone
touched through clothing.

Ken Poyner

KANSAS

The cats are whispering in the garden.
Their long, thin voices drift in our bedroom window
Like dust. The geraniums have placed themselves
On the kitchen sill, demanding full sun.
It is not like them.
Last week, at their tea break,
The horses demanded a spot of brandy to go in.
I gave it to them.
The wheat in the North field
Has grown under the fence and is heading
For the highway. Harvest must be a slaughter.
This morning two of the dogs stole
One of your boots, dragging it west,
To the neighbor's. I found
One of Mr. McClellan's socks in the kennel.
I cannot get the cows
To lock up at night. Husband,
It is getting out of hand.
The corn has taken the hoe and hidden it.
We are up to no good.

Victor M. Depta

ANYBODY CAN GO

Anybody can go to southern West Virginia that is if they wanted
to see the strip mines and the social security and black lung
old people and the lumpy biceps of the young miners and their
women with silver wigs and faces like dust in the road their
coal buckets of children washed away every once in a while

and of course the oaks on the mountains a lot of them dying from
oak wilt and the hickory and gum and poplar and all that
but what I need is a visitor to sit down with and glimpse
in the babbling rush the sunlight mottling our clothes and
hands and faces like pawpaws ripening among slapdash leaves

I could even cut off and score a small branch and twist a 6 inch
tube of bark off of it and whittle a mouth piece and use the
other part of the naked slicky limb as a slide for whistling
a tune on then maybe it wouldn't all be words

I really want to be an entertainer maybe like a paper bag with
pebbles in it tied to a stick in the garden maybe the visitor
and the old couple and the rabbits and crows would look up
once if the wind blew just right and listen to the rustling
and scraping where the words are and turn to the cabbages
and the corn and the Ford Mustang that would be ok with me

and I'd like to have eyes like caterpillars dangling on silk
threads over the creek so I could read the glittering
heiroglyphic among the splashed rocks and the babbling and
rise like patches of gold air to the furry underleaves of
the sycamores and the pale beech and sink to the wild rose
on the bank

drifting to the sage and then to the ragweed by the road our
maddening dance in the wind and dust as the cars pass and
then our other our antique bowing in the opaque fiery green.



photo by Lili Corbus Bezner

E.L. Doctorow, author of *The Book of Daniel*, *Ragtime*, *Welcome to Hard Times* and *Big as Life*, is a graduate of Kenyon College where he studied under John Crowe Ransom. In *Loon Lake*, Doctorow's fifth novel, published last fall, the author continues to use American history as a backdrop for his fiction as he did in the earlier novels, *The Book of Daniel* and *Ragtime*.

Kevin Bezner

AN INTERVIEW WITH E.L. DOCTOROW

Bezner: In *Loon Lake*, you alternate between first and third person narrative, and the time sequences of plot are not always--to use your word--linear. How did you come to write the book in this way?

Doctorow: As with all my books, I never start with a preconceived notion of how it should be put together. I'm totally pragmatic. I just do what works. I've learned to commit myself to the act of writing, to give myself to it so that you write to find out what it is that your writing. When you're in that state, the book composes itself. It tends to direct you. If something works, you go with it. If it doesn't work, you throw it out. There seemed to be no way for me to make it work in quite the way I wanted it to except by breaking down time and jumping around and doing the narrative discontinuously. I did that once before in *The Book of Daniel*. I find that this creates tremendous narrative energy. That is to say, if you are constantly deferring your resolutions and without explaining anything or providing any exposition moving around in time and place, the tension provided by that--or the curiosity that is generated in the reader--is really immense if you're doing it right. So that's why the book is like this. It simply turned out to be the best way I could tell the story. It was not planned that way. I never plan to tell anything in a certain way before I begin. I might begin with an idea or a set of images or just a feeling. In this case I was up in the Adirondacks. I hadn't been there since I was a child. It's very beautiful country. I was simply very alert to everything. We passed a road sign that said "Loon Lake" and I had a moment of recognition. Then I

Bezner/DOCTOROW

imagined a private railroad car going up to the forest and onward to the mountain retreat of a very wealthy man. And on this train was a party of gangsters. I don't know why, but those images worked. I knew they moved me, so I pursued them.

Bezner: Did the novel change stylistically as you wrote it?

Doctorow: It changed not only in terms of person but in terms of voice. I started with the same narrator I have now, Joe Paterson, but not quite the same voice. When you do something in the first person, the hardest characterization to do is the one that is speaking because he can describe everyone else. He responds to and reacts to everyone else. But we're experiencing the world through his eyes. He is, in a sense, invisible, except in how we hear his voice. I started that way and I began to see what the problems would be. And then the character became more complicated. The question arose in my mind why he was writing. The moral complexity of his life began to duplicate itself in the complexity of his narration as he took different voices and rendered the experiences of other people. This seemed to me to be the way to deliver his peculiar fate. Consequently, for instance, the character Warren Penfield is very prominent in Joe's narrative meditations. Penfield being a signal to him of the distracting noise in his own TV. Joe Paterson being enormously successful and Penfield by contrast being this glorious failure with whom he's so taken. To tell the truth, it's very difficult for me to recall the step-by-step development of the book. It's a very chaotic process. You're not always conscious of what you're doing. You don't have principles and rules to go by. You just have feelings and instincts. If something resists you, then there is something wrong. If it goes easily, then something is right. It's all chaotic

Bezner/DOCTOROW

and full of torment and agony, and occasional moments of elation. But, at least for me, it's hardly systematic. I find trying to remember the process very difficult. Every book I've done has gone through enormous amounts of re-writing. False starts, false leads, going off the track, making mistakes, somehow finding what I want. It's not a system I would recommend to anybody. The alternative is to overcalculate, to overplan and write to illustrate some thesis or theme or idea or situation. That is guaranteed to turn out a dead piece of work.

Bezner: It's interesting that Joe Paterson tells the story. As the voices change, one gets the feeling that Joe is a moldable character who can become anyone or anything he wants. Is that a larger comment on American culture?

Doctorow: Yes. I hate to be schematic about it, but it's precisely his own moral being that is in question, or the self that he has made. He's composed himself as we all do and he doesn't necessarily like the composition. It's not secure or firm, it lapses, breaks down. One of the things that appeals to him about Penfield, whose life he feels obligated to render, is the clarity of that self, that being. That wonderful drunken, self-aggrandizing, self-dramatized, foolish but somehow clear and morally secure self - by way of contrast with Joe whose own voice slips out of sync with himself.

Bezner: Why is the use of history such an integral part of your fiction?

Doctorow: It wasn't anything I planned. I happen to be the kind of writer who doesn't write autobiographically. I need some sort of prism to go through, by which I distance myself. My imagination

Bezner/DOCTOROW

has to be engaged. In other words, if I had an experience of some kind, it would have to go through this prism of my imagination. By the time it came out, it wouldn't be recognizably autobiographical, whether I'm doing a character or an event. I need that kind of distance even in time and place. I'm not saying that this is always going to be the way. In fact, I wasn't even aware of this as anything that was consistent in my work until it was pointed out to me when I delivered the manuscript for *RAGTIME* to my publisher. I hadn't seen it as any kind of special or identifying mark for my work. It's maybe that I simply feel that history is something we all have in common, so there's a basis for communication. A pact made between writer and reader. While it's common for critics and teachers to say that if something very specifically regional or ethnic works then it is truly universally recognizable, I seem to be looking for something else to start from. And it has turned out to be my own extreme attraction for a historical period.

Bezner: Do you ever feel alienated from other Jewish novelists such as Bellow, Malamud and Roth? They're dealing with something that is specifically ethnic and you're not.

Doctorow: I don't feel ethnically alienated. I admire all three of these writers. I practically grew up on Bellow's *Augie March* and Henderson's *the Rain King*. They were very important to me. And Malamud has made a very strong impression on me. And Roth, my contemporary, I admire. I don't feel alienated. I think an analysis can probably be made for the Jewishness of my writing. The kinds of conceptions I have, the tone of my work. It is true that I haven't written about Jews as a religious block, or even confronted in my work the theological and religious and

Bezner/DOCTOROW

sociological questions that we all have to attempt to answer. I may be doing that some day. It's an interesting question because there are some Jewish writers, myself included, who aren't identified particularly as Jewish writers. They don't write specifically and directly about Jewish themes. For instance, Norman Mailer doesn't direct himself to that although he has Jewish characters. Mailer, as I am, is a different kind of Jewish writer than Malamud and Bellow. But Mailer's work is also very Jewish in its spirit and outlook and its generally adversarial stance. Of course *The Book of Daniel* has Jewish characters and *Ragtime* has a Jewish family. That's three out of five.

Bezner: And there are the political and economic considerations, too. Socialism and communism are keen elements of you writing. The tension between socialistic systems and the capitalist system. But something that strikes me about *LOON LAKE* is that capitalism comes off much better in this book than in any of your earlier books. You almost seem to feel that there is hope for this system and that people can work within the system. Have you had a change of heart toward capitalism?

Doctorow: I'm interested that you say that because a critic I know told me that this is the bleakest book I've ever written. It's interesting that you find some light in it. I'm not against capitalism. I think if anything, it should be clear at this point in history that no system is impervious to greed, venery, murder, or disaster. No collective system has been invented that can resist these things. I'm interested in this country, in the way we live. That is the contradictions and the mortifications. My interpretation of *LOON LAKE* as far as I have one--and you never

Bezner/DOCTOROW

do until you're asked questions like this--is that events show us all in our relationship to our own empire. Where each of us stands within it. The poets, the kids on the road, or aviators. The people who work in factories. A lot of the book is about love, or how men love women. I didn't know I was going to write about that. It deals with this subject more thoroughly ostensibly than any book I have ever done. And the state of love and affection and passion. In a sense, one way to show Joe Paterson's progress is to chart him from woman to woman. That has to say something, if you grant my premise that we take our being from other people. Now that may be more optimistic in a fashion. I never have the intent of proving or disproving anything. I don't think any writer who is serious can afford to say this is what is, this is the way things are.

Bezner: Do you use historical documents for you work?

Doctorow: I didn't rely on much library work, but I did look at photographs. Some of the descriptions of Paterson's drive west were taken from major collections of photographs, the great photographers of the 30s like Walker Evans and Margaret Bourke White. You can fill in the names as you go along. I was moved by them and studied them very carefully. I loved the way people looked and love seeing the implements of their lives. That's about the extent of my research.

Bezner: Warren Penfield's poem "Loon Lake" is an important part of your plot. How did you write that poem?

Bezner/DOCTOROW

Doctorow: First of all that section represented is the work of a bad poet. Warren Penfield is a bad poet. That should be made clear. I actually wrote that section called "Loon Lake, a poem by Warren Penfield," before I wrote anything else. And I didn't know what I was doing. When I wrote it originally, I saw it not as a poem but as a story to be read aloud. *The New Yorker* saw it through Donald Barthelme, who had seen me read it aloud. I have never published in *The New Yorker*. They wanted me to change it to standard block form, to make it more like prose. I wouldn't do it so we parted ways. They liked it, but they wanted it to look differently on the page so that people might not, heaven forbid, become confused and think it was a poem. So I published it in *The Kenyon Review*.

Bezner: How does a good writer write bad poetry?

Doctorow: It's safer to tell readers that it's bad than to claim that it's good. So if you call it the poem of a failed poet, everything works out beautifully.

Bezner: Have you ever written poetry seriously?

Doctorow: No. I don't think of myself as a poet. I read the poets. We have some wonderful poets in this country. I like to see what's happening in contemporary poetry. I'm very attentive to them. But I've never regarded myself as a poet.

Bezner: The lake itself is essential to the storyline of your novel. It spiritually captivates the millionaire, Mr. Bennet, and Warren Penfield, and Joe Paterson becomes purified or re-born in the lake. If the lake did not exist, one wonders if Joe would have made the decisions he made in the book. Does the water of the lake have a significant meaning for you?

Bezner/DOCTOROW

Doctorow: You're into a line of inquiry that I haven't thought about. When you're doing a book, you don't want to know analytically why you're using something the way you are, or what it means. You never really want to know what it means. You just want it to be there. It's hard enough writing these things without being a good critic, too. As soon as you get too self-conscious, you've ruined yourself. Most writers discover that there is true chance involved in writing. Writing is not an entirely rational activity.

Bezner: Is history a valid area for writers to explore?

Doctorow: Everybody else does it, why shouldn't we? Governments do it. They're always writing people in and out of history. We used to laugh at Russia, but it wasn't until the 1960s that black history departments were established in the universities of this country. History is a composition. And if politicians and professional historians can compose it to their convenience, why am I not supposed to do the same thing? We do have a burden of personal responsibility. My feeling is that no matter what I've done to history, I've made something that is true because I have not violated the mythic qualities of what I've written about. Reality is not an objective thing. It's the composition we all make. Writers are known to be liars, which may be a blessing, because we can be relied upon to tell the truth.

Barbara Hamby

REHEARSAL FOR EARLY SORROW

I woke up this morning in the fourth grade. My thick-lensed, blue-butterfly glasses with sparkles in the frames are on the night table, the ballerina bedspread over a body all arms and legs. The window's open; my sister, still sleeping, lies mouth open beside me.

It smells early still, damp and green. The wisteria, our dolls, my Viewmaster, her jump rope: already our lives are filled with things. Beads of sweat cover her forehead and upper lip--there is no trace of the fatigue that will one day appear. How creamy she is now,

blond and slender, arms thrown over her head. I look at her and the lilac window and pick at the bicycle scabs on my knees. I am pleased with everything; happy to be myopic, dreamy, still warm with sleep, almost hungry for breakfast.

Marita Garin

GRACKLE

1

Late one afternoon I walked
near a field. The moon, faint
as a thumbprint, had already risen.
In that clear sky I looked
for whatever pain had been lifted
from the grackle beside the road
when its feathers parted
for the glint of metal and long grass
opened for the body.

Its weight, and the shadow
that followed it, given
to earth. No more than an idea
in my mind which fell out of the light.
Nothing that would matter
once the torn horizon darkened.

2

In this mild air the grackle
almost rises from its open grave.
Stiff knot, it burned all winter
while snow flickered through the field.
Charred feathers curl back,
a black flower among weeds
releasing its parts:
a bleached beak, claws that grip
the dirt, bones fallen in
like a shattered star.

Having walked this way before
I know where it lies, where the wind
means nothing to it now. I watch
light fall upon the dull remains,
merciless in its hunger.

Marita Garin

DRIVING THROUGH MAINE

The light's intention
that summer
was to impress shape on matter,
but small weathered posts lining the road
carried the weight
of twisted steel cables.

In between, where space sloped
against ground, light continued
to reach for the swift surface of weeds
as if the shadow had not
already fallen from the thing itself
onto the road.

The repetition of that shadow flipping
past the car window,
invading the mind,
nothing of substance moving
through the body, just sharp light
carving itself deeper for miles.

Nothing you could hold.

Marita Garin

HILL

No matter that the curve
slicing through grass

and into the earth
is a motorcycle track

The last time you came here
alone, you made your own way

every weed clinging
as if you were not alone

sticky seeds and burrs

Their one touch
was enough

you would carry them
anywhere, a random sort

of love, not unlike
what you desire of women

an easy attachment
to the body's clothes

The small marks left
on your skin?

William Ferguson

BRUNO THE CARVER

There are certain basic things we should know about Bruno.

1. *He was a carver by trade.*
2. *He had an important cousin.*

To have a trade was important in Atlantic City in those years, but you could never get anywhere without connections. Luckily the cousin always knew someone who could give you a job. So the years went by and nobody ever went hungry.

It was close though.

3. *His name was Bruno.*

Bruno's cousin lived in Rutherford. He knew just about everybody. Once he was invited to the White House. He never approved of Bruno. He thought he fooled around a lot. Bruno had a big block of soapstone in the basement. A lot of times people would come to the door and his wife would say: "Bruno's working downstairs."

That stuff is so soft you can shape it with a penknife.

4. *He learned carving from a Master Carver.*

He worked in wood or stone. His old teacher, the Master Carver, was originally from Europe. Bruno had two children. He like to whittle away at things; you know the kind of person.

5. *His favorite artist was Cezanne.* He liked Mozart also. He thought music and painting were OK but he preferred sculpture because it reduced the block.

6. *His wife was one of the Rutherford McPhees.*

Bruno wrote his cousin and asked for a job. The letter came back marked DECEASED. So he was out of luck you might say.

The Master Carver had given him a pearl-handled scoring tool which he had brought all the way from Europe.

He wrote the cousin again at the same address

William Ferguson

and the job came through. It was at the Casino. When he went to work the first day they thought the scorer was some kind of weapon.

7. *He got fired however.*

8. *His wife's name was Ruth.*

He got fired because he moped. Ruth told him that would happen but he didn't listen.

He went to the basement to work on the soapstone.

Many years later he went to work in Manhattan as a carver. That was after Ruth died. As usual his cousin got him the job. Bruno never got a single job on his own in his whole life. His children were sick for awhile but then they got better.

9. *Before that he had gone to work in a factory.*

His cousin owned a factory in Hackensack. They made carvings. Ruth was delighted. He quit after a month.

10. *His cousin's name was Mort.*

When the Master Carver signed his working papers he said, "Remember, dull tools are dangerous." Bruno kept his tools sharp. Mort was disgusted when he quit though. He began to spend a lot of time in the basement.

11. *His wife's name was Ruth.* He never knew what they wanted him to do at the Casino but he brought his tools just in case. After that he worked in the factory and then she died.

12. *His name was Bruno.* He was a carver; trained by a Master Carver from Europe. His cousin, for once, was really proud of him.

Hylah Jacques

TORSION

We work the old leather of speech;
it softens, becomes pliable
between our teeth.

This is no idle craft.
There is a brooding deep inside; you
look up / around / cornered
momentarily, too conscious of your self. That flare
(a match?) highlights this, mixed
with the quick feline eyes, the echoes
of your nobility.

Or is it the dark-bellied cumulus,
the fleet rain, that tugs you
midstride your phrasing the sorrow
for once clear?

Outside sways the tall light
green body of an October willow,
swollen with the thought of weather, sizing up
the sobbing wind; only the torso
whorled by a mysterious
history transformed into knowing, stands serene
under cover of
its many vexed tendrils.

The hide lays folded between us now:
we are simply quiet at the end.
A quality of light dances across your smooth face
in a darkening room
and recedes.

David Kirby

A PARIS EVENING

A schoolboy says goodbye to the last of his companions
and turns toward home. As he crosses the Rue Vignon,
he begins to think of his mother:
her smart dresses and jewelry,
her quick happy movements in the kitchen,
the way she smiles and calls him
sweetheart, angel, treasure.

A block away, a bomb set by terrorists
explodes inside Fauchon. No one is injured,
but all the beautiful food flies into the street:
the eggs in aspic, the canards aux olives,
the mussels stuffed with butter, garlic, and parsley.
A crowd gathers. Pigeons step carefully
through the macedoine de legumes, picking out the corn.
A clochard takes a roast chicken by the leg
and waves it over his head in a merry drunken dance.
A man with a briefcase looks around
and slips a tin of caviar in his pocket, then walks away.

The schoolboy has heard and seen nothing.
Crossing the Place de la Madeleine,
he kicks the leaves that have gathered in the gutter.
The streetlights begin to come on. He is tired now,
hungry, dreaming of his mother.

Sheila E. Murphy

ONLY CHILD

A boy is throwing pears at the abandoned swingset.
He fires them hard, aims well enough
to make the rough seat buck like a mean animal.

He never rides it, only listens to chains squeaking.

The sound becomes his brothers and sisters.
Feet scuffing, braided laughter.

As a man, he will touch the wooden swing some night.
He'll try the floating bench,
discover motion in its chains.

He will have lived a private rage
at inexperience, filling time too late
with moments of a past
he thinks he needs.

Sheila E. Murphy

WHEN HIS MOTHER DRINKS

He leaves a growth of beard,
wears heavy woolen jackets in the house.
He builds a fire and hopes
no one comes to the door.

She is pale as the graying nightgown.

His boyhood face returns
but she can't see it.
He insists he cannot stay.

She calls him by his father's name.

He listens harder to the news
and writes no letters.
He lets her talk and helps her when she falls.

She says she hasn't eaten in a week.

He tries to give her lunch
and lifts her face from the cold plate.
As she sleeps he dreams
she is his child
riding on his back along a beach.

She repeats herself.

He knows her stories better than he knows
the nursery rhymes she read him as a boy.
Her words, tangled in the curdled breath.

Malcolm Glass

THAT JULY

We had the sun by the hair, the wash
and stream of stunning light thick
in our fingers. The sky ran like tides
around our arms and legs, and over us
the earth leapt in a dome green and
quick like northern lights turned to heat
lightning. Our blood shouted in our
veins, the chant of shocking praise
for July and for the whisper deep
in us of skin on skin on skin.

Craig Weeden

ARTIFICIAL

Pick, if you please,
cattails: thick
chrome stalks,
spikes of flowers
shaped from a chain
of brass beads
wrapped round
and round. The vase
should be antique
and tall and suit
the foyer. Check
it daily. You'll not
see the cattails'
peculiar autumn,
the slow discoloring.
You'll think you've done
the right thing.

Craig Weeden

CELLAR WINDOW

Imagine us
prisoners, a diet
of dust, our skin
a field for spiders,
our only hope
to climb the shaft
of light smudging in
through the cellar window.
Imagine this light
reaching once
the wall opposite
where now
chalky white
layers peel
back from the bricks
like skin sunburned.
Touch this flesh;
it crumbles, dry,
a small avalanche
on the caterpillar
that leans out
beyond physics
far from the wall,
as if crawling
such a shaft
were possible.
The caterpillar
is brown and spiked.

Craig Weeden

Only not
a caterpillar,
a nail set
hard and bent
between bricks,
rusted. Only
not a nail,
not if we
plan to escape.
A caterpillar,
one that steeled
itself so it might
even at its distance
know light.

Jon Daunt

THE ULTIMATE CHILD WAS REINCARNATED
IN MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

My world is full of
souls trying to reach
Cleveland Ohio,
but my cash register,
whom I have named Desire,
has no pity for them.
Daily a Greyhound bus arrives,
with another shipment of infants.
Women with their hands on their hearts
line up, while their older children
shoplift my candy.
The extra woman
slams my door and hitch-hikes,

filling me with the stale odor
of disappointment. We
eye each other, the woman and I.
Desire rings up each baby,
and my door flaps happy again.
Dogs leap at candy-sticky hands
celebrating new arrivals, when
a child on a tricycle

stops. The hitching woman stands
behind her on the little bar,
and together, as slowly as a house,
they move down Water Street,
waving in the correct directions.

Jon Daunt

The child says: "We're heading
west to become a city."

The woman says: "You'll have a
bath first, Young Lady," but her
hand, thumb and all, is on
her heart again, and her smile
beams the warmth of summer into every soul.

A house, even on wheels,
grows up to be a home.

I am the last general store
between Pittsburgh and Buffalo,
where childhood ends. Dogs
chew my corners by night,
and born again, I
wander the earth as tongues, licking
the faces of children who are kind to me.

Richard Grayson

LAS CUCARACHAS ENTRAN--PERO NO PUEDEN SALIR

He slapped the mosquito against the white wall and saw red: his own blood. Smeared. He got up from his bed ("It's your own fault the bed sags in the middle," Vince had said, "you had to get a soft mattress"), went over to the kitchen, grabbed half a paper towel from the roll dispenser, wet it under the faucet, rubbed a little.

The blood came off the wall.

Eight o'clock. Switching the dial of the black-and-white set which had never given him any trouble. On UHF he got that channel with the movies scrambled so that non-subscribers couldn't watch. They didn't scramble the picture so much at the beginning to make curious viewers interested. He saw the name of the movie: *Between the Lines*. A skyline of Boston.

That was the picture Diana was in at the beginning. He'd always meant to see it, had told Diana he saw it on a flight to Fort Lauderdale. Diana had written him about it so he knew what to say.

On the TV screen he was waiting for Michael J. Pollard to sell Diana and her sister an underground newspaper. They were supposed to be driving a red Fiat. He saw Pollard with the papers and he saw him stop, but then the picture got scrambled again.

All the while the voice-over was Frank Sinatra singing "The Lady is a Tramp."

He shut off the television.

Nine o'clock. WQXR playing Richard Strauss. A call to Vince. Two rings: another one and the answering machine would come on. No. it's Vince.

"Hello?"

"Vince. Hi."

"Hi."

"Were you in Rhode Island?"

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"No--just for a night."

"Is Danielle with you?"

"She's out shopping for food. Where are you?"

"Home."

"Oh, I thought..."

"No, I'm home. I thought Mom said you were in Rhode Island?"

"No. I spoke to her this afternoon to find out if Dad is coming in."

"Dad is coming in?"

"He doesn't know yet."

"For what? When?"

"Maybe Wednesday. For business. To see if he can get the Jordache line."

"He just got the Sergio Valente line."

"Yeah...So have you spoken to Grandma and Grandpa?"

"Yeah, I called them this afternoon."

"And Grandma's feeling better?"

"Yeah, I asked Grandpa what they were doing and he said, 'We were going to go to Disco 54 but Grandma changed her mind.'"

"Hm."

"So everything's okay? I just called to find out..."

"Yeah, everything's fine."

"Okay then, take care."

"Okay."

Brothers.

Ten o'clock. As the Duchess of Windsor said, the only good thing about America was Sara Lee cakes. He takes out a banana cake with cream cheese frosting. Takes a slender slice. Eats it in his hand. Another slice and a third. He slides his finger at the bottom of the aluminum and licks off the cake crumbs.

Eleven o'clock. Diet Seven-Up, the aftertaste not as bad as Tab. Warning: This Product Contains

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Saccharin, Which Has Been Proved To Cause Cancer In Laboratory Animals.

He remembers his grandmother, at the hospital, looking at the pink Sweet 'n' Low package she was supposed to put into her tea. She read the same warning and laughed bitterly, saying, "Look what this could give me." A diabetic, she couldn't say the word *cancer*. Though it had already metastasized.

He gets undressed, takes a leaflet out of his back jeans pocket. (Sassoon.) "At 1 a.m. the Israeli military came to our homes to take us away. We were put on a plane. Black bags were put over our heads so that we couldn't see. Then we were taken to South Lebanon and told to go to Beirut..."

Midnight. The windows open, he watches the red and white lights of Manhattan in the distance and waits for the noise of the Concorde. There it goes, the sound not as loud as it had once been feared, but still startling enough. Three hours to London or Paris. Three hours away from here. In three hours he would be nowhere.

One o'clock. The mosquito bite on his upper arm itched. He scratched it. He thought of last week with the kids. Vince brought them over to their grandparents. Danielle's kids called Vince "Daddy," though Vince and Danielle were not yet married. It was strange to hear his little brother called Daddy.

"Will you itch me?" said Patrick, the four-year-old.

"You mean, Will you *scratch* me," he told the boy.

"Yeah," Patrick said, jumping up on his lap.

He scratched the boy's arm. His skin was soft, he was blond (like his real father?), he kissed his step-uncle-to-be and later insisted on driving to McDonald's in his car.

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His and Vince's grandfather, wary of these Gentile children no matter how cute or affectionate, asked Patrick: "So who do you like to live with, your grandparents in Rhode Island or your mother and Vince in New York?"

"I want to live with *him!*" the little boy pointed. "I forget his name."

Two o'clock. REM sleep. Twitching. Erection in his briefs. A dream:

Halls that smell of carpet-cleaning fluid. The air quality is unacceptable. He walks into an empty room where he once was given a battery of psychological tests. He had been sixteen and he was asked, among other things, who wrote *Faust*. "Marlowe?" he said timidly. "Marlowe did write an adaptation," said the woman psychologist, smiling. Years later he heard Dr. Joyce Brothers mention this woman and her figure drawing test on the Tonight Show. He remembered his own male and female figures: the man was blond, the woman a widow. And the inkblots: one of a giant that had a huge drooping penis which he refused to acknowledge. "What's that?" asked Dr. Machover. "His shadow," he slyly said.

In the room the sign from his mother's house in Florida:

*COME IN, SIT DOWN, RELAX, CONVERSE--
OUR HOUSE DOESN'T ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THIS,
SOMETIMES IT'S EVEN WORSE!*

Carl Sagan had said on the Donahue Show that he was unable to read in his dreams. But evidently he could. He knew he was dreaming.

The room became a cafe in New Orleans. There was a genteel Southern woman at a table with four places set. He was the waiter and had to go over to the table and take the woman's order.

She was ordering four meals. He struggled to write it all down on his pad and had trouble getting

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out the words when he shouted out the order to the kitchen. Then, curious, he went back and asked the woman whom the other three meals were for. She smiled. "One is for my late husband. One is for my late father. And the last meal is for my spiritual mentor, Dr. Jones. Dr. Jones went to Indiana to study altruism, you know."

Then he realized that she was the lady psychologist who had asked him who wrote *Faust*.

Three o'clock. The refrigerator hums. He hasn't defrosted in months and his freezer compartment resembles Antarctica.

Four o'clock. He wakes up and thinks of what he had said to his friend George the day before: "Someday you'll be a landlord and you'll have tenants of your own."

Five o'clock. Still awake. Tries masturbating but isn't in the mood. He cracks his head, his back, his knuckles and toes. He turns on the TV:

"Most bathroom tissues talk about softness, but White Cloud..."

Shuts it off quickly. He doesn't want to hear toilet paper talking. Not at five in the morning.

Six o'clock. Another dream. Vince is there, Danielle is there, his parents, grandparents, even Diana. And little Patrick brings out a birthday cake with many thick candles and the words HAPPY BIRTHDAY SURROGATE on it.

Surrogate? Has he been elected the judge who handles the affairs of widows and orphans? Surrogate? Why him?

Vince knows what he's thinking and says, "No, you're a father."

"A surrogate father?"

"Yeah,"

"For who?"

Richard Grayson

"What do you mean?"

"Whose surrogate father am I?"

"Your own."

"Oh." It seems to make sense. His grandparents and parents are dancing. Patrick is playing the tambourine. Diana introduces him to her latest lover, a pediatrician. Vince snorts some coke. There is Sara Lee cake as well as birthday cake. Someone else has blown out the candles: maybe Danielle, who is holding her wet head out the window in the cold. "I want to catch cold and sound sexy like Tallulah Bankhead," says Danielle.

"Gorgeous, gorgeous," Vince is saying.

Off goes the alarm. Another day.

Seven o'clock. Dressed, shaved, breakfasted, having killed another mosquito, he stands on the A train as it goes over the Jamaica Bay trestle. He looks at an ad that shows two mean red cockroaches kicking over dead and the legend: LAS CUCARACHAS ENTRAN--PERO NO PUEDEN SALIR. The cockroaches enter the roach motel but they cannot leave.

Just like me and my life, he thinks, but then discards the analogy as simplistic.

Peggy Heinrich

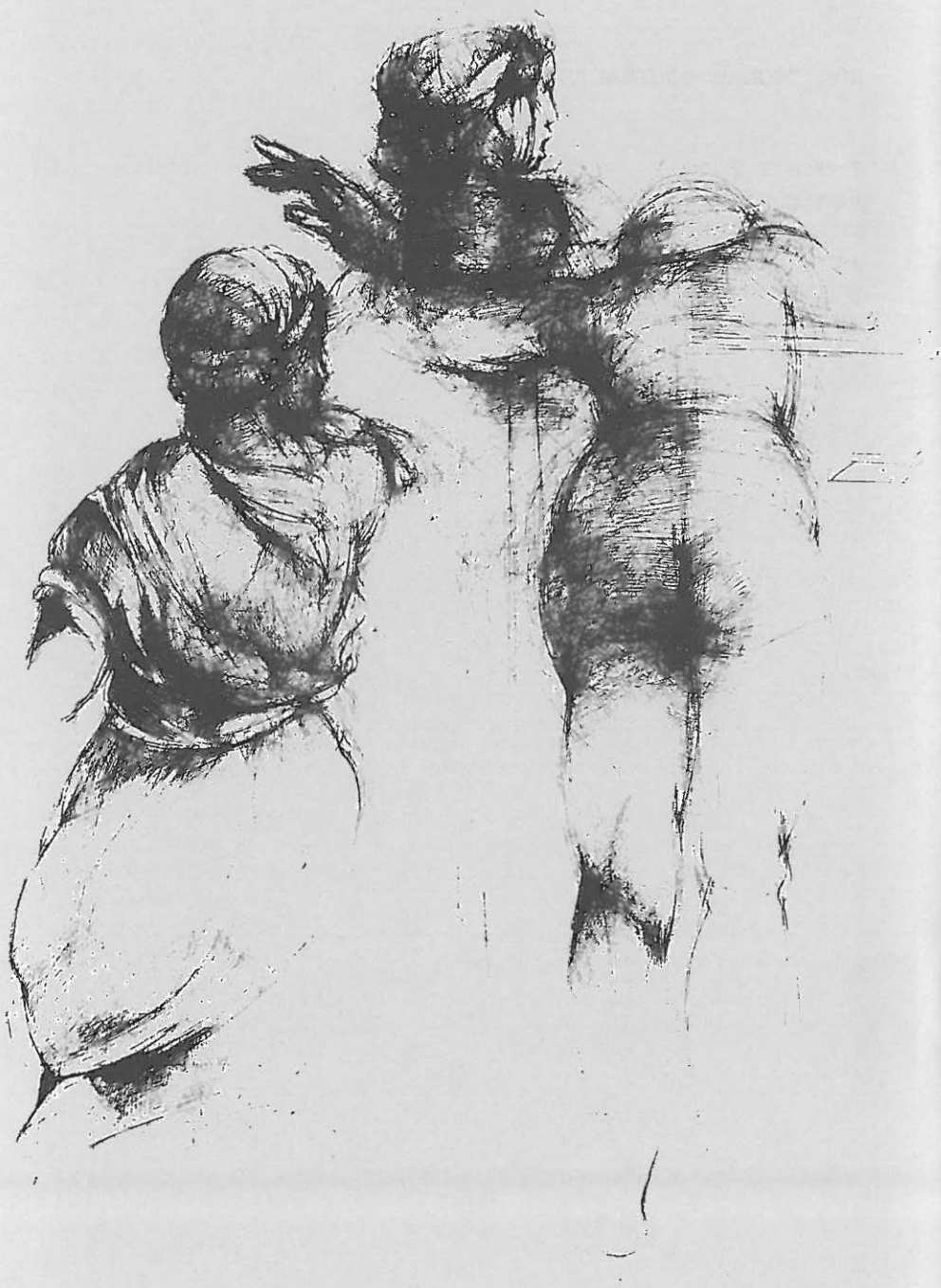
SALT WATER ON SAND

no one must see us
seeing is knowing
no-ing our meaning
our meaning is touching
your touch makes me burn
burning is rising
from nest of dry cinders
we rise and we fall
like breathing like heartbeats
like seasons like planets
like waves on a shore
pounding toward silence
our borders of rocks
dissolve into sand

Peter M. Johnson

FUNCTIONAL NOMINALISM

I don't know
names of trees,
only how they look
in a rainstorm:
greedy and
anonymous.



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