

FORUM



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THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
FORUM

NIGHT WAIT

Awakening: unsavoured sleep left a dry and acidic taste in his mouth. The slowing whirl of his mind ached to a standstill as the engine of a car rudely stopped and left quivering in the night. He lay silent—then searched the darkness for the clock. A luminous smudge gave him perspective on the night. . . .

The dull heavy weight of his body pressed in on him. For weeks he had carried an anvil inside his

breast, and all sleep had been a collapsing into nether depths, not in peaceful folds, but in endless deep falls, ruptured by long electric awakenings to that level of semi-consciousness where the mind has access to all its wildest imaginings. Sixten lay half on his side: his thoughts in wild scansion. Again the questioning sifted through his sleep-riddled thought. It was always the same reduction: the physical weight and pull of the body slowly strangulating the philosopher's

dream. Death by gravity! There were no answers after all to be found in sleep—only anodyne to provide the right framing of the question: that pseudo question: dying a withering death in grey sunlight.

Suddenly his own weight dissipated with the feeling of one who in being lost in a wilderness momentarily sees himself lost in a world. His hand reached out . . . etched out slowly the wrinkled space beside him, the mound of bed clothes that ridged him in . . . and found that she was gone from her usual place by his side. Ordinarily she slept noiselessly . . . but always touching him from time to time, sometimes with her hand or foot or in kiss, the gentle way she would like a pilgrim reinforcing her faith in continual fondling of her beads. He sat up with his head full of blood and stripped the clothes back. He was dazed for a moment. "Madeleine!" he called, his voice gruff and wooden as though yet involved with sleep. He called again and listened to his own voice settle in the darkness. But she was gone, and he knew it then even as a father who knows instantly that he has lost what the whole business of fatherhood is all about—caring essentially but finding the realization at first unnecessary, then frightening, and finally humorous, perhaps the only order in accepting slow death.

He opened the bedroom door to find darkness everywhere. He stalked like one who enjoyed lightlessness and knew his way through it. Nothing was touched. This he sensed right away. Only her tall leather boots by the door were gone. He could see their absence in the glow of the light that poured under the apartment door. He opened this door, blinked at the ochre glow of the halls. He saw the door at the end of the hall was tight, saw without the gauze of night, luminous with snow, and knew that here she had sought her particular escape. The heavy mustiness of the hall rugging ached his sense.

He drew on the lights to dress . . . quick now in his blunt moves . . . dressing as though to stop a war or catch that last train . . . alone with thoughts that tumbled now in that part of us all where the will to detection lurks. Awake now . . . mind alert to the evaluation of all evidence . . . the ashtray on the couch with two cigarettes smoked to their roots . . . the absence of her purse . . . nothing more now to lend itself to the twist of his imagination. Time contrapuntal to his quickening movements: two clocks . . . each verified two times . . . the half-way mark of night. Seconds ruled his movements . . . stopped once to go back and close a drawer and almost un-

balanced the entire mood . . . snuffed out the lights on the thought that outside somewhere someone could detect his furtive actions . . . relit one for a last minute check, only to sense in its flash all the laborious habits he had clung to since youth. Then realizing: was it the indecision about him more than anything that brought her home to herself and to the terrifying need for freedom she possessed? Had she understood suddenly as he so well knew and as it gnawed at him in his work that in the end it was our aloneness that counts? Was it this realization that he had perhaps too cruelly seeded inside her and nurtured that she had at last reacted against? Had he implanted inside her the daemon that would now rule for life? Had he in his way of loving given her but the spirit and knowledge of death?

The door eased to a close . . . the sense of other even in our last moments . . . the sense of our relativity in each vast isolated vacuum. Hurrying down the hall . . . the sudden catching of himself in a plate of mirror . . . the instinctive judgment at the aging that he read therein . . . the flash of porcelain eyes yellowed with worry, cracked with fitful sleep. Night erupted before him. The creaking of the door behind him as he stood under the wide lintel disrupted the massed silence that pulled in the air. Quickly he scanned the street . . . nothing . . . only the fine skein of white . . . the blurred pointilist sky . . . aureoles of two street lamps . . . cars caked in snow . . . their windows opaque . . . the windows of darkened buildings opaque, like the stained grey glasses on cadavers. Everywhere nothing stirred, all was stilled to death except the slow titillation of the snow-form against the raw retinal membrane . . . a negative of death . . . nothing stirring except the innate movement, the slow shift in things on their road to extinction. Madeleine! . . . somewhere she was a part of this, but he could not see her.

The tightness of fear slackened within his body. Calculation involved him; contemplation withdrew. An inch of granulated snow covered the sidewalks. Even the streets were whipped with white, not yet liquescent with the friction of traffic. Warmth suffused the steps of the building and left a pulsing moist arc in the concrete. Just beyond, a pair of small prints began in the snow. They were but mere indentures in white . . . slight pressings in the smooth covering of snow. He thought of the Elizabethans and their rose-impressed cheeks and the strange sensibility that stopped the world to look at its reticles and tracery. He thought of those who despised that outlook and

who had grown the other way in life . . . the ingrown-outgrown few and their shiftless groping for the paradigm in life. He stopped dead in his thought for it was not alive to him anymore. Then he did a strange thing. He went back inside, went through the building, came out the back door and caught up with the footprints in the center of the road heading down toward the glaring main street of the city. He followed perhaps too carefully in the footsteps of the other, enlarging them considerably as he did so. Soon he reached the main street and the bursts of light that fell from street lamps and that issued from stores. The street was striped with the tracks of cars, and the way the snow fell on the moist stripes and disappeared as though it fell through the world made him remember all the beauty that once lay untouched and virginal for him in the world.

Strange dark figures were immediately in view down the lengths of illuminated street. A car drove heavily by. The sidewalks were nearly all moist and into their dampness faded the prints he had so carefully followed. He waited. The figures drew closer . . . tumbling in on each other like dark shadows without laughter . . . forms abstracted from the night. He hesitated in his direction. Snow brushed his cheek like dank cobweb. Lewd glaring lights from restaurants stained the night with primal color but none were open: this he knew. He stepped into a doorway and disengaged snow from his shoes. As he did so he noticed that not long before, another had stopped in this vestibule to do likewise. He eyed the length of lighted street and the darkness of a side road that broke off a block or so away. It was toward this he headed when his silence broke and the pause became too much for him. He approached the group of strangers, now even more umbrageous because of their antics and the swelling silence of the night. They saw him . . . reacted like the several separate limbs of a marionette . . . dislocated and without the liquefaction of live movement. They grunted and groaned like agonized, writhing animals, suddenly disturbed in a cage. Hands chopped the air crisply like cleavers, fingers clicked like small explosives from the palms, wrists curved, palms froze. Their grunting grew out of all proportion to the image they struck. He stood aghast or seemed to momentarily—for he actually kept moving toward them, trying not to stare. Together they equally composed a leer; a tall boy with three men and a woman. Their faces made putty shapes and kept these shapes as they and he approached. Then he knew: saw the

dumbness that kept their throats dry and their words unshaped—felt the deafness that could not curb their grunts. They spread apart as he came closer . . . nearer now . . . they moved like tendrils of oil through water . . . like the dissected sections of amoebae. Fear froze in him, paralyzed all power to run, as something drew him through the middle of this spectacle. The wheeling of arms stopped as they fanned apart. Then one of them with a dexterous half dozen whips and inflections of his right hand made the others break into heinous attempts at laughter. They had read Sixten's fear on his face and at the same time *heard* the other's right hand. Onward they fell in their strange ambulatory distortion laughing gruffly at some jest told by a right hand cutting amorphous language through the falling snow.

His fear eased as the blood left his ears. Now he could cross the street. All he could think of was Madeleine and what he conceived her need to be at that moment. In that instant he had found an objective correlative in his own life for the anguish and fear that she must have felt all those times . . . those black pitiless moments she had outlined to him in great neural bursts at three and four in the morning . . . moments that he had difficulty tolerating let alone understanding . . . moments he had dismissed with the inarticulate blunt gestures of one who fails in pity to simply understand.

The road slipped under his feet. He did not look back, only down the main stretch of buried snow street and ahead of him along the darkening street that led to the university through a small park. No foot prints before him but enough moisture on the road to have effaced them. Endless snow precipitated through the blackness without beginning, caught vividly by cones of light that fell from the occasional lamp. A thought struck him . . . aroused in him part fear, part excitement . . . gave him the same sense of pathological anticipation that keeps intelligence corps alive for days without sleep. The university began two blocks away: his office was there . . . all his papers . . . letters . . . the journal. The extra key in the brown mug on the bookcase . . . something overlooked. His pace quickened toward the small city of learning that lurked ahead in the disintegrating white night. He took a back route to his office . . . one he knew would be inconvenient for her to use . . . through the prickly antennae of naked bush . . . over a short block wall . . . across a small practice field full of spilled whiteness . . . through the railed archway of the refectory with its frozen cruci-

fix pinned to its ribs . . . through the untrammelled whiteness along paths unlit except for the grey illumination of shifting white on black . . . onward in his pulsating fear with his eyes raw in alertness. He passed the Institute of Mediaeval Studies with its frozen panes concealing the walls of preserved thought. He was about to turn the corner that would reveal both his office window and the door to his building—when he stopped. Something in him wanted to turn back. Suddenly the initial excitement had given way to a terrible sense of guilt . . . he did not now want to know . . . there was no need ever to know and that perhaps alone is our prerogative . . . for in the end there is no knowing but of ourselves and even that is less a knowing than a gradual curbing of our kind of questioning. He stood alone in a pool of snow. Once he had found letters in a small packet addressed to her in a man's writing. He came across them in a clump of university relics she had given him to destroy. He had fondled those letters, had scrutinized the dates and the exotic place of their departure . . . had known even in a moment who had sent them and had beheld his image in bursts of cerebral fire. There had been a terrible pause when he had wanted to read those letters . . . somehow though in an act akin as any to an act of faith he overruled that temptation and destroyed the entire pile . . . going to her knowingly then in his silent declaration. . . . It was a moment emotionally equivalent to the one that now found him hesitant and alone in a pool of zinc light . . . except he now felt that nothing he could do could repair all that had happened. There simply was no going back now; there was no step of the will to improve things, to repair . . . nothing at all to do . . . the worst finality of feelings.

He turned the corner of the building half expecting her to run down the steps, but nothing stirred except the snow in its languid fall. There were slight indentations under the fresh snow as of several paths cut earlier beneath the last hour's snow . . . but nothing really distinguishable . . . The windows of his office were heavily cloaked in curtain and even if his small desk lamp were lit no light would filter outside. The main door of the building was locked. It responded with heavy resistance to his pull until he inserted his office key in the lock and opened it. It was dark inside and the waves of heat that struck him were tepid. An exit light of intense red burned at the end of the hall. Within a moment he had adjusted his vision to the room, removed his shoes,

placed them to one side of the door. Why he had done this he was not sure . . . perhaps an attempt to cling to some past anonymity he still cherished. He walked toward the red light, looking not at it but obliquely, that he might see as some animals do out of the corner of his eye. Red reflected in the polished tile of the floor . . . red stained the porous brick walls . . . and toward this silent redness he walked in damp stockings. No further light was in the hall . . . no light slipped beneath his door . . . but he knew that the rugging would prevent that anyway. The anticipation that had carried him this far, heightened . . . his fear became audible in the tension of his breathing. He strained to listen against the door . . . nothing except the hum in his ears when he held his breath and the crashing through the darkness when he exhaled. The heat and excitement of his state mounted until it would break, it seemed, his body. Already in his mind she had achieved the limitations of guilt; his accusations mingled with the quality of the silence and the darkness. A discovery was about to be made . . . windows barred he knew . . . his body's heat rose . . . the blood rushed through his ears . . . it seemed his vision caught the red enamel stain on the tiles and blurred . . . light! . . . he needed light . . . with closed breath he ran in silence to the end of the corridor and turned on the switch. Then he was back at the door knocking . . . "Madeleine, Madeleine" . . . knocking his fear into control, knocking louder in the yellow talc light while his fingers inserted a key and opened louder and louder the echo down the tiled hall. Nothing . . . blackness only, as in the end it had to be he knew. The light inside revealed nothing either. . . .

Now he sat in the brown polished chair with his fingers kneading the leather. He had closed the door and before that he had gone down the hall and turned off the light. It was all back now. Nothing had changed. The slow dissociation of his powers . . . the slow cancer of envy and devouring emptiness . . . that dry feeling not confined to nausea of something about to be uprooted from the pit of his gravity-filled body . . . and the final listlessness but with the parts still in the memory of sway, still alive and creaking with the original shuddering . . . like some vehicle torn off the highway landed now on its back with its journey ruptured, wheels buzzing, its metal slowly losing the blow and the heat audibly . . .

A single light burned beneath a parchment hood on his desk . . . he knew this feeling before but he

was not yet an alien to its effects . . . experience had shown him the color of the thing, the taste of the nausea, but it had helped only in anticipating the final effacing sleep . . . it had made no less agonizing the hot coals on the road or the raw shells that cut into the cuts. He lay in his chair, waiting only for the slow ticking to pass . . . the need of physical action had burned itself out and left him only with the will to count the waiting—as in one who has searched breathlessly for some god at night in all the dark corners of the world.

A wall of books glared back at him. Their presence gave his emotion an added incentive. A drawer lay open before him. It held a journal and a stack of loose onion skin hieroglyphed in a fine black scrawl. The entire untouched contents of the room conspired to rob his suspicion of all substance. He was left in addition to his hollering uncertainty and jealousy a terrible sense of guilt . . . an abysmal feeling that he had manoeuvred the entire thing. Loneliness was a fearful thing in all its ultimate shades . . . its terrible anonymity, pitting him against the great blackness equipped only with the pride he had carefully salvaged from all the good that had been once offered him . . . He wanted to reverse the moment in the snow when he had chosen to condemn her . . . she of all God's creatures the most in need of trust. He wanted to will a rightness and order back into things but what grew in that instant for him was the enormity of his actions and the ultimate powerlessness of his situation. He sensed now for the first time it seemed what it meant for her all those times when her pain-valanced face had come to him, her body rubbing against his like a lost animal, the stigmatized tears washing her eyes continually—and the endness in life it must have represented to her, which she was able to bring on herself when he met her and which clung to her like a limb does to the remembrance of some deep wound or distant fracture. He shuffled through papers in his desk . . . half anticipating a clue to his despair. He read single lines, paragraphs . . . mere scrapings of intuition; reading the shorter ones seeking with the slight hope left him any objective thrust to rid him of his grave self at that moment. Four lines on a white sheet glared upward at him. They were her words discovered on the underside of a cigarette packet the week before.

the sudden awareness that in the man one loves to the exclusion of self all is not noble or true. The aching deepness of the solitude into which one is plunged by his rejection of part of himself *him self* for another.

He closed the drawer with the touch of one amply

surfeited. That was all . . . he was still alone and no scaffolding of escape had presented itself to him. There were the letters . . . dozens of them neatly tied in bundles . . . annotated even . . . live manuscripts that he had spent his youth over, it seemed, deciphering in them truths pertinent to his own existence and to the growth of something strange in him which was born and died under the nom de plume 'love.' But the letters . . . even within reach of the fingers that plied the brown leather, of the eyes that grew less and less alert to the yellow dust light of the room . . . the letters were not touched then? It was as though they had yielded their last inscape to his suspicious gaze. He did not reach out for them . . . as he had so often . . . though the thought with a million other thoughts of definite action crossed the circuits of his consciousness. He did nothing however and thought slid further and further from the grips of action . . . while the yellow light ached deeper and deeper into his sight, while remembrance after remembrance dimmed until there was nothing left to his power of distinguishing. At the furthest remove of his dream the blackness comprehended the yellow glare and his dreams paralysed in sleep.

Hours later he awoke in a state of fresh terror. Thick eyes registered the time. His neck was stiff. His eyes raw. Heavy and unsettled with the impotency of his sleep. Heavy with the weight of the night's reactions if yet without intensity. A wedge had inserted itself in his feelings about her and had finally allowed him to sleep. "To be left like this," he thought. That was what he now sensed he would bring against her. This was what seemed hardest to forgive: the deprivation of self-control . . . the senses hurled helplessly askew . . . past and present spilled and left ungathered.

The office was warm and dry . . . full with the stale clogged smell of books. Cracks of grey light edged through the curtains where they met the wall. The light still burned but shed less of an ochre hue. He got up stiffly . . . his neck a spike of pain . . . a pulsing pain rode his spine. He withdrew the curtains, flinching with the explosion of grey light. Stale air circulated through his lungs . . . his stomach slowly turned over . . . retched. He gathered his coat . . . six-thirty by the small dial on a book shelf . . . anticipation swelled with his coming fully awake . . . something had to be solved . . . he became more and more conscious of the problem in those terms . . . *something must be settled at once.*

The door closed behind him without his double checking it . . . he located his shoes at the end of the corridor near the main door . . . they sat like moist turf in a pool of water. Outside . . . the burst of the grey javel morning in his face. The snow had stopped falling. Even the silence had changed. Everything was gauzed in white . . . his prints only dents blown in the white dust. His nausea quelled for an instant. The strong dank smell ate at him like a poison. He walked quickly into the timbrous shell of silence. Nothing of the night's fear remained. He was moving toward something prehensile now. The nightscape so vividly etched in the acid of his tossing mind and body held no sway over him now. What the yellow light had done to finally destroy his vision, the ammonia dawn did to his sensibility. No indications of a rested soul were to be found in his body. No real worry crossed his mind for Madeleine . . . she had severed a cord between them and turned him loose upon himself. It was himself that he now plunged on in search of over these white paths of the night's madness . . . beneath the breaking shell of dawn . . . beneath palindromic sky the color of cement . . .

He reached the main artery of the city . . . crossed its ridges of slush . . . headed down the street toward their apartment. The greyness intensified. Stark figures groped into the day. He saw only their black outline against the white. The path to his building was wet . . . already brushed clean of snow. He did not notice the absence of footprints—nothing bore relation to his isolation now in the cold scrutiny of greyness. He entered the building . . . passed through the glass portico . . . avoided the elevator . . . began climbing the several flights. He paused outside the opaque exit door. Grey light poured through . . . but no shadows formed on the other side. His breathing quickened into a terrible bounding anticipation. He tried to collect his thoughts. But his anticipation of what lay ahead clouded intention. He opened the glass door and crossed the hall. He inserted his key. Forced his breath to a standstill. The door closed. He saw her from the moment he opened the door. Her eyes had drawn him on. She sat stiffly in a chair . . . still in her raincoat . . . buttoned . . . her look clouded, sore . . . her raw thoracic eyes slightly distended as in Greek statues of young boys. He walked toward her. A disc of mutilated cigarette butts sat in her lap.

"Are you all right?" It was an artificial thing to say. He was palled by her appearance . . . a flayed

animal. It was as though he had forgotten what she looked like; what first struck him was the wounded cringe in her face. "Fine," she said, a forced treble, biting her lip.

"I thought you were dead." He spoke without feeling of an emotion lost somewhere in the pathology of the night before.

She said nothing. Only looked at him. Her cheeks showed streaks of tears . . . watermarks . . . that caught the light like snail tracings . . .

"I went looking for you," he said. "I was terribly worried."

She bit her lip. Imperceptibly almost, "I thought you were dead." The dry streaks came alive with fresh moisture.

"What happened?" He felt he always knew when something had happened. "Why did you go out? Tell me what happened." He had asked these questions before. This time there was less anxiety in his utterance. Something in him was less involved than ever before.

"I couldn't sleep. I needed some air. I thought I'd go out to that small Greek restaurant and get some cigarettes."

"What time did you go out?"

"I don't know. I think about four."

"It couldn't have been four. I woke at three and you were gone."

"I didn't notice the clock. I didn't . . . I came right back."

"Did something happen?"

"No-o. It was snowing."

He was angry now . . . sure that something commensurate with his own trauma the night before had happened to her.

"Did you ever think I might wake up and find you gone?"

"I wasn't long. You were sound asleep. And I just couldn't go to sleep." Her eyes were swollen with moisture. Nervously, she lit into a cigarette.

He took off his coat and shoes and put some coffee on the stove. He was thinking that he would let her cry and then he would go to her. A heaving guilt rolled around inside his sleep-obsessed body. But he could feel no forgiveness. The equivocation that always shrouded Madeleine's actions paralysed him. Beneath her vast personal charade, all her gestures were like half-defined semaphores to some hidden lover . . . He wanted to hurl ten simple questions at her, but her simplicity defied him. Already he sensed the harmlessness of her action in her own

eyes. This angered him. Then there was the possibility, as there always was with Madeleine, that something *had* happened. Opening a drawer to remove a cloth, he uncovered a package of cigarettes. Its discovery had the effect of an unnecessary piece of evidence produced too late not to prove totally disruptive. His eyes stopped his hand from reaching for it. He did not really know what to do. Then he thought he saw it clear: he would resort to total honesty. It was the one thing that she could not equivocate against. He could not play her game because it did not come naturally to him. But it demanded on his part this time a certain humiliation. He still stung with the impact of that night. On these thoughts he closed the drawer . . . finished the coffee . . . and went into the bedroom after her.

She lay on her side with the coat over her. A long twisted ash clung precipitously to the end of her cigarette. Her stockings were splashed with grey miniscule spades. Her young body made him nervous in the way it lay there. Some deep instinct wanted to destroy her in the peculiar way she couched her silence. He flicked her ash with his finger—as carefully as you would remove a lash from an eye. She started. She sat up . . . bleary eyed . . . and pushed the cigarette into an ashtray.

“I dreamt you were dead,” she said.

“No. I’m not dead.” He sat down and gently began to unbutton her raincoat.

“Come on to bed,” he said. “You’re tired.” She lay back and reached for his hand.

“I was so afraid you were killed.” Her eyes closed in sleep.

Her beauty grew more and more abstract . . . alienated now from the woman he felt had defiled him. She lay like a wounded animal . . . sacrificed to sleep. He did not touch her and perhaps this alone saved him. He rose up and slowly prepared for his work. He shifted about as though in darkness . . . aware only that the day was upon him and that somehow he had lived through another night.

. . . Months later a letter would give full false witness to the betrayal Sixten’s imagination had permanently salvaged from that night’s events. (How their relationship would have reached the level of survival it needed had such letters been sent to each other!) Long before, Sixten had delivered to my ears his version of the story with all the terrible and irreparable emphasis he had given it. I reproduce but a fragment of Madeleine’s letter, the part that reviewed for me the incidents that he had taken such

pains to relate:

. . . but even that matters not now; what does is the way I feel, somewhat the way I did one morning when I once encountered him all white as though from the dead. It had been a terribly uneasy night and I could not find any solace in fitful sleep. I awoke at some god-awful hour absolutely soaked. I had had the most frightful dream and awoke thinking! (believing!) I was pregnant with some bastard’s animal inside me. It was impossible of course but dreams get awful strong holds on me at times. Sixten was asleep like a lamb. I couldn’t lie there in such a state so I got up. It had just started to snow and looked marvellous outside. I wanted so much to get some air because I was still shaking with that awful dream. I still thought I was pregnant! I just couldn’t shake the awful premonition that had got hold of me in my dream. What would Sixten say? I was so terrified I couldn’t breathe, so I went out for a walk. A terrible thing happened that night. I was walking over by the campus through the new snow when some pervert started to follow me. I ran until I came to the main street and suddenly he was right behind me and when I turned I saw his eyes shone red. I ran down the street and he followed me and shouted obscene things in my ear. Fortunately a policeman came out of nowhere and apprehended him. He called after me but I continued to run. The man stood shouting at him the last I saw. I came home trembling and very afraid I would wake up Sixten. I sat very quietly in the dark smoking. I sat there most of the night smoking, thinking of the awful dream and that man’s red eyes. I must have fallen asleep because when I wakened I was still in my coat and it had just gotten bright outside. I got up to look in at Sixten and was horrified to see he was gone. I did not know what had happened. It seemed part of the dream and the things that man shouted after me in the snow. I lost all control of myself because I was so afraid something had happened to Sixten! Just then he came in. He looked like death. I thought he had been hurt or something and then I saw that he was terribly angry. I didn’t know what to do or what to say. I was terrified to tell him about the child or about the man in case he’d hate me. I told him some lie about cigarettes but then I remembered there was an extra package in a drawer and just as I told the lie I knew his eyes seized the package. It was a terrible feeling. I felt just like when I was small and had been found out lying. But I still couldn’t say anything . . . What could I tell him that would not make him hate me more? I pretended to sleep then and he groped around for a long time in the bathroom and then went to school to his class. There was always so much unsaid in our life together and the more he turned within himself and said nothing, the more terrified I became. Now I am really alone and very afraid and I wish I knew where he was and I would fly to him. I have tried so many places in hopes of locating him but no one knows anything. I have changed and I suppose it is that which I most want to tell him. I am sure I have changed. I am afraid though if I do not find him soon and if he does not take me back something terrible will happen to me. I am afraid it has started to happen even now. If somehow this reaches you please write or cable me if you know where he is. Anyway please take care of yourself and please be well and happy.

Love,
Madeleine

P.S. My dearest Simone—HOW do people ever touch one another in this life?

● *The work of Matthew Corrigan, of the Department of English of the State University of New York at Buffalo, has appeared in Dalhousie Review, Canadian Forum, Edge, and other periodicals. He is co-editor of Dimension: a Journal of Cultural Criticism.*
