

November Twenty-Eighth, 2002

The telephone hadn't rung for me, loud and concise, clearly beckoning, startling the friendly Thanksgiving dinner murmur of family members and I just thought that because it's a time of reconciliation that maybe you'd call—you used to call. I don't blame you for not calling. Weren't we good though? I have trouble holding on. I am unequivocally, an opportunist, trampling and uprooting flowers in order to reach greener pastures. I think of the time I have spent fussing with games and abstractions until you had to run because it became degrading to be in love with even a wisp of my hair. Just by remembering, it seemed to me that I could feel just how it felt for you to kiss my face knowing he had been there too, rapt in a passion—you must have been aware of every smell, every move, every curve and HE I watched for so long and kept forgiving like it wasn't me involved and getting hurt and I is that why I kept going on like that, promiscuous and all because you couldn't conjure up any courage and HE is that what I am now that I finally said No... never again... courageous? and I well, independent and HE you act in irrespective of conditions and conditioning, so in love—things fall apart; you don't think you'll need courage if you are bound to someone with a commitment and I you don't believe I ever held us sacred and HE I think you did very definitely because you fell in love with me but you still held him sacred too and had too many loyalties and I I really fell in love with you, I really am and HE you wanted to break from some sort of his ultimate tyranny and in me you discovered something softer and understanding, maybe even malleable and I it was in you that I always felt welcome and rewarded, just me and never challenged and HE did you need his extreme power over you to feel alive, though and I I thought that we—you and I—didn't have as much thunder or intellect sometimes as we should, but we were always good and even, like a balanced seesaw and I wish everyone else could have gone away and HE and now

you are sorry I know but it is that you have had to be sorry so many times and it sounds bogus and I know you never lied about being sorry but it's all too complicated in your eyes, with the shadows of other men, you weren't ever thinking of consequences but you captured yourself in the pulse of too many isolated moments and immersed yourself in flesh and I capriciously and HE and maybe someday this won't hurt like it does now and will it all seem worth it then? I'll wait for then and you will too but what will it be once the pain is gone, just an experience, just a series of events that happened to two people but maybe it can be something more if this can be pulled from like learning, for instance maybe this pain can change things, can change you, so you understand the frivolity of just a heated moment and me, to be aware of love and you, because I will love again... I just cannot risk my pride ever, this is particularly important and I capriciously and HE it is hard to believe all of the sweetness that is the fruit and the beginning of love can allow itself to follow the designs that strangle and deceive and estrange and rot so willynilly like there never was control over it, we never had it in our hands together like a flower, you just had it in your hand like pudgy but in spite of all this I still believe you... we were worth this despair and I I can never do this again to anyone and to myself, you and HE I think you'd just better go back to Vermont without me or anyone and see how time moves without someone always there to love you and forgive and I I suppose I know what you think I will realize up there and HE you'll remember in the back of your head when you are lonely in a cold kitchen that this is some sort of penance even for me because I can't trust you till you know how it feels and then maybe; strange, you are the last person I ever thought would disappoint me and I capriciously, it will be better for me for you and me and HE you act irrespective of conditions and conditioning and will at any time will disregard what I am saying and I capriciously and HE the saddest thing of all is that I think you finally know how much I mean to you, now that I am leaving you (for good).

I left my parents' house. I drove for two hours by daylight followed by a sunset and then the rest in darkness. I turned on my headlights. Route 89 gets black as a hole sometimes. I put a tape in the stereo. The music was raucous and invasive so that I couldn't help but notice it and not think otherwise—not about you anyway. I lit a cigarette. The smoke encircled my head and I watched it, I think. Then I rolled down the window just enough to push the half-finished cigarette out onto the fast road. I then remembered that I forgot to get my sister's new address so I'd have to call the house and they'd ask me if I was all right. Before I left there I thought I'd wait a little longer because maybe you'd call in the late afternoon but I knew I'd have to go eventually, probably without the call and I didn't want my family to think that I was really spun in circles over you like I am. I had also forgotten the clean bed linens folded in a neat stack by the front door, but my roommate surely had extras so I wouldn't have to turn the car around.