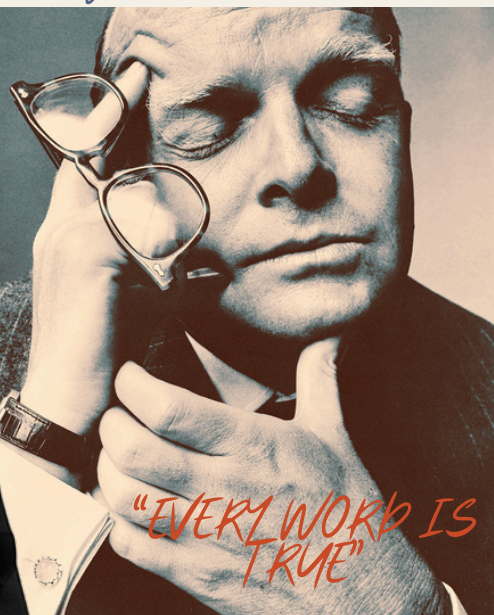


"He heapeth  
up riches  
and cannot  
tell who  
shall  
scatter  
them!"

(qtd. in *The  
Professor's  
House*)

The difference is the  
eternal voice and the  
one who cannot see and  
misleads for selfish  
gain.



# PRESS KIT: LINE BY LINE COMPARISON WILLA CATHER'S ONE OF OURS TO TRUMAN CAPOTE'S IN COLD BLOOD, OVER 100 PAGES OF EXAMPLES OF A STUDY OF VERY CLOSE SIMILARITY

The village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of western Kansas [ . . . ] and the men, **many of them, wear** narrow frontier trousers, **Stetsons**, and high-heeled boots with pointed toes [ . . . ] a white cluster of grain elevators rising as gracefully as **Greek temples** [ . . . ]

—In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

"Late in the morning Claude found himself alone before the **Church of St. Ouen**. He was **hunting for the Cathedral**, and this looked as if it might be the right place. He shook the water from his raincoat and entered, removing his hat at the door. The day, so dark without, was darker still within;... far away, a few scattered candles, still little points of light... **just before him, in the grey twilight, slender white columns in long rows, like the stems of silver poplars**. The entrance to the nave was closed by a cord, so he walked up the aisle on the right, treading softly, passing chapels where solitary women knelt in the light of a few tapers. Except for them, the church was empty... empty. His own breathing was audible in this silence. He moved with caution lest he should wake an echo."

Willa Cather's other Greek references in *One of Ours*: "**To him the story of "Paradise Lost" was as mythical as the "Odyssey"; yet when his mother read it aloud to him, it was not only beautiful but true. A woman who didn't have holy thoughts about mysterious things far away would be prosaic and commonplace, like a man.**"

"The Voyage of the Anchises" [**The leaving of the fallen Troy**]: "A long train of crowded cars, the passengers all of the same sex, almost of the same age, **all dressed and hatted alike**, was slowly steaming through the green sea-meadows late on a summer afternoon."

*One of Ours* by Willa Sibert Cather

*One of Ours* by Willa Sibert Cather

BOOKS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Compiled by:  
SHILOH RICHTER






A woman with long, wavy brown hair is floating in the air, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a voluminous, multi-layered gown with a bright orange skirt and a white bodice with orange sleeves. The background is a high-angle, aerial view of a city with a river, showing a dense urban landscape with many buildings and streets.

*A vision of the  
Earth's evil,  
caused by humans*

*at the  
deepest  
level,  
betrayal  
as  
Truman is  
doing,*

*and  
Willa's Priceless  
Heritage of  
Literature &  
Paradise*



A woman with long brown hair is looking over her shoulder at the camera. She is wearing a vibrant red dress covered in a pattern of raised, fabric roses. The dress has a long, flowing skirt. She is standing in a forest with tall, thin, dark tree trunks. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and some low-lying plants. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day.

Willa's works  
deeper and  
deeper show  
how it is to be  
naturally  
more deeply  
rooted from  
the Garden;  
the feminine  
and from the  
important  
nature and  
immense  
heritage and  
care of "home  
life" as she  
experienced  
in France.

a  
senseless  
war-torn  
and  
scorched  
Garden of  
Eden in  
France in  
WWI

not knowing what  
Paradise America  
is and throwing it  
all away with  
extreme narcissism.



# Healing in Eternity

To show the hand of eternity, I try to remove my hand--and show things I myself could not have done on my own, and in my life choices I have let it speak. It opens the artworks to the real wondrously. I've been looking at it all my life. This is also the path how I found Truman's lifelong plagiarism of Willa, the evil (the absence of heart in narcissism) that reveals the divine.

Many years ago miracles started happening to me with Willa's works, and not just Willa's works, but from the line within which she was writing. The miracles have been happening all my life but they started to come to fruition when I began a romantic relationship with John Mayer in 2010.

In my writing over the past fifteen years it has more and more culminated in literature and art being "prophetic."

Through these miracles I came to see the evil and the plagiarism--the theft of eternal voice--which would also bring the illumination back to the masterful miracles of Willa's works to show what she was writing--and how it perfectly aligns.

Because I had to look deeply into the hell on earth caused by malignant narcissism to learn what was happening, I could see what had happened to Willa's writing.

## Popular Culture

Audrey Hepburn was aware of Truman's plagiarism of Willa and laid the groundwork of evidence with her spirit, humor, and beauty in her iconic work such as in Breakfast at Tiffany's, Paris When It Sizzles, Charade, and How to Steal a Million.

Katy Perry's birth was at the intended delivery of Truman's last, prolonged lie and plagiarized manuscript about having met Willa, a manipulation of her life and identity at his dying breath.

And so there are several stories culminating here.

## The Miracles

I have collected them in the writing of my books, essays, and tapestries, but Willa's works began to take form in Greenwich Village where she wrote many of them, and at a bird fountain on the day that John first played "A Face to Call Home" on 3rd Street in 2010, a few blocks over from her previous homes and her setting of "Coming, Aphrodite!" which turns out is the original Breakfast at Tiffany's.

I had already in 2008, without knowing the exact connection, walked into her 1925 photograph in front of the cathedral (at ceiling level) in Santa Fe on the 500 year anniversary of Michelangelo painting my name on the Sistine Ceiling.

## Art and Literature

The path of narcissism is the path of the fraud and evil within humanity as shown back through Homer, through the Hebrew Bible, Virgil into Dante, into the Renaissance art as in Michelangelo, to us, especially the art culminating in the 1960s and now.





*The evil, mentally ill, and the plagiarism is not a basis for fame, as "renegade," or literary.*

"The winding path turned again, and came out abruptly on a hillside, above an open glade piled with grey boulders. On the opposite rise of ground stood a grove of pines, with bare, red stems. The light, around and under them, was red like a rosy sunset. **Nearly all the stems divided about half-way up into two great arms, which came together again at the top, like the pictures of old Grecian lyres."**

**One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather**

*It matters grandly. It matters everything. The wise are wise because they have looked deeply and given themselves to it and to the brilliant transmission of it to other humans. And yet we elect dunces to 'icon' status.*



**TRUMAN TRYING TO LOOK LIKE THE VISIONARY BY THE GRAVES OF MURDER VICTIMS HE COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS ABOUT, LIVES THAT WERE NOT ENDED SO HE COULD BE MORE FAMOUS, AND YET THAT WAS ALWAYS HIS GOAL, INSTANTLY HIS GOAL AND APPETITE UPON THEIR DEATHS.**

Masterful artists, the epic poet singer-songwriter Homer showed, are experiencing deeply, transformationally, the eternal truths, the insights into them, and how they play out into humanity. Most often they give all of themselves to these hard won insights, give the days and nights of their lives, that they can bring back into knowing the realest things. In this, they are actually able to touch eternity—the thing itself—and to bring it through into experience and understanding in Beingness and through the brilliant transmission of art. It never comes easy or at an easy price. Most often they have sacrificed beyond imagine for the expression of the insight into art, given up something most valuable in their lives, such as Homer's speaking from the eternal 'middle voice' through Odysseus and how he must leave his identity, his love of a lifetime, his home he has created, and his only child that he does not want to leave, to go into the depths of a world demanding and conniving the hell of war and slaughter based on ego and false appearances in order to show what humanity isn't seeing—can't see—what they have grown blind to, what they then forbid to be talked about, from overgrown ego and absence of empathy. What is this voice that actually begins to operate within the eternal because it can actually see into it and participate with it? We know this to be true because it has lasted as the basis of literature for 3000 years and remains true to and about people today. This is shown through the Poets' voice, as with Penelope who is "weaving" the Poetic eternal narrative never leaving the creation of the story of the truth of life and love, or Odysseus—of whom she trusts his Being—who takes the sacred speaker's staff in order to talk about empathy and care of the soldiers instead of sending them into slaughter, or Athena who protects and guides the entire way, and gently alights as a bird on the rafters of the dining hall to make sure that Odysseus is able to establish love and peace in his own kingdom so that they can know his true Beingness. These 'eternal voices' of knowing are seeing Odysseus safely home to a transformed kingdom with different values rooted in the art and the feminine because he is transformed and been through it all. Even these almost three thousand years later Homer was speaking the truth—still very true—that there are voices who mean not to see the hero home, [continued]



Making the  
precious  
life  
sacrifices  
of WWI  
about  
murderers  
for fame is  
a disgrace  
to  
everything  
Willa wrote  
and her  
miraculous  
vision of  
France and  
America.

Her works  
and this are  
written  
through  
taking the  
path of the  
eternal, not  
through the  
social, or  
parasocial,  
but through  
following the  
death of the  
self into the  
Avatamsaka,  
the path the  
eternal  
shows, the  
ultimate,  
staying true  
to the deep  
inner peace  
that leads,  
and emerging  
the 'mother of  
buddhas'.





but fully intend, hidden in arrogance and deceit, to see them get killed in war or in their journey home because of their own emptiness and darkness inside. The attribute that Homer shows in this voice that acts like it is the eternal—mimics it—is that it can't actually see. It can only repeat what it has seen from others, which does not open to omniscience, sublime, or wisdom, it dies to the empty, manipulative self. It is only deadly appearances. It wants to drag down others with it. This is part of the astounding brilliance of the epics that actually see us home to our true Beings, to purest love. The mimicking voices are only acting like they can see what the masterful artists see, the ones who have been through the fires and emerged divine.

ASTOUNDINGLY, this art becomes prophetic. This is known through the divine trickster (Lewis Hyde, Trickster Makes This World). The mimickers actually mean death for a culture, our values cause us to die, a culture closed to the eternal pouring in, to known wisdom, the willingness to transform. And so it does matter. Laertes' wisdom and patience is the foil to head-strong impetuous Achilles: vastly important cultural differences. Plagiarism is an 'artist' who cannot see and only wants the status and glory. But Willa Cather could see. And what she saw and what she delivers is beyond phenomenal in the vision of possibility which opens. It opens worlds for us. It opens to recognition in this moment. It opened to me because it became prophetic, and that is how I came to write this. —Shiloh Richter, M.A.







Beginning of Novels--Structure of story and details. The entirety of Truman's novel is copied. PRESS KIT: ADDENDUM



"Claude rose and dressed,—a simple operation which took very little time. He crept down two flights of stairs, feeling his way in the dusk, his red hair standing up in peaks, like a cock's comb. He went through the kitchen into the adjoining washroom, which held two porcelain stands with running water."

— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather

Old Mahailey herself came in from the yard, with her apron full of corn-cobs to start a fire in the kitchen stove. She smiled at him in the foolish fond way she often had with him when they were alone. "What air you gittin' up for a-ready, boy? **You goin' to the circus before breakfast?** Don't you make no noise, else you'll have 'em all down here before I git my fire a-goin'." "All right, Mahailey." Claude caught up his cap and ran out of doors, down the hillside toward the barn. The sun popped up over the edge of the prairie like a broad, smiling face; the light poured across the close-cropped August pastures and the hilly, timbered windings of Lovely Creek, a clear little stream with a sand bottom, that curled and twisted playfully about through the south section of the big Wheeler ranch. **It was a fine day to go to the circus at Frankfort, a fine day to do anything; the sort of day that must, somehow, turn out well.**

Truman Capote takes all the elements of each of Willa's characters, their qualities and actions, and intersperses them into his characters with the exact story structure. For example, at the beginning as Claude gets up to start his day, so does Herb Clutter, who also has the characteristics and biography of Claude's father. Claude and Mr. Clutter take the same path through the kitchen and outdoors to the barn and both feed a horse and have to contend with a farm worker; then both stories directly address the kitchen. Later, Claude's actions and qualities Truman transfers to Perry Smith. This happens with all of Truman's characters, details, and events, copying line by line Willa's masterpiece all the way through.

"[...] while Mr. Clutter was shaving, showering, and outfitting himself in whipcord trousers, a cattleman's leather jacket, and soft stirrup boots [...].]"

"—but he was not a hearty eater; unlike his fellow-ranchers, **he even preferred Spartan breakfasts.**"


"[...] **Other than a housekeeper** who came in on weekdays, the Clutters employed no household help, so since his wife's illness and the departure of the elder daughters, Mr. Clutter had of necessity learned to cook; either he or Nancy, **but principally Nancy, prepared the family meals.**"

"As Mr. Clutter contemplated **this superior specimen of the season**, he was joined by a part-collie mongrel, and together they **ambled off toward the livestock corral**, which was adjacent to one of three barns on the premises. One of these barns was a mammoth Quonset hut; it brimmed with grain—Westland sorghum—and one of them housed a dark, pungent hill of milo grain **worth considerable money**—a hundred thousand dollars."



This is a culmination of seeing what evil had happened to bring out this illumination.

Willa saw the devastation and loss of life from war as a decimation of the care of life as can be seen in the heritage of the French culture she loved.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white dress and a red sash, stands in the center of the image. She is surrounded by a chaotic scene of war, with smoke, debris, and the silhouettes of soldiers in the background. The Eiffel Tower is visible on the right side of the image. The overall tone is somber and dramatic.

She is very aware of what abusive narcissism is, without the terminology, but knowing very well its intricacies. She shows it in her stories, which is part of the wild, rare understanding that brings out the pure golden of the promise of her works.



Willa wearing a white fox stole, which matches the white dog to be found in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel.

In 2008 when I walked into Willa's photograph, I went to a camera shop right across from her from the balcony of La Fonda Hotel in 1925. She culminates her shot with herself as the cathedral doors.

Adrey's iconic street scene on 5th Avenue came from her work and demonstrates Adrey's knowledge that it was Willa's.

Now 100 years later I get to show how it all began at Greenwich Village and into this Southwest in wildly numinous ways of what she wrote.

- It was the exact 500 year anniversary of Michelangelo beginning to paint the Sistine Ceiling.
- I had just gotten my white fluffy ferocious joy of wonder, Moonbeam 6 months earlier. When he passed in 2015 I saw the white dog in the Sistine frescoes and knew what it meant. He was the most vivid joy and wonder I had ever known.
- Vanilla Custard Pudding, my Yorkie came to me in 2009, an instant affinity, and both would make the adventure and writing possible.
- It started to come to life so much that I had to make a tapestry to show what was happening and the cosmic and literary weave, it was coming to life through Van Gogh, through art and literature wildly so, through the Odyssey, through Michelangelo, and then I started to realize it from Willa.

I had just made a movie Road to El Paso with my dad outside of Santa Fe, my dad who was a minister and who passed in 2019.

My writing in this line extends back all the decades and in finally seeing the path it goes in my romantic relationship with John Mayer. I knew the realness the moment I saw him.



There is  
actual  
wonder in  
Willa's  
works that  
comprise the  
details  
Truman  
Capote lifted  
for fame.





I've been collecting and publishing the endless phenomenal connections to show the weave with everything and everyone—that this place on Earth is not simply a random hell freewheeling left to narcissism.



John Mayer gave me the courage to follow this path in staying true to myself and the writing.



*"We must not look at Goblin men,  
We must not buy their fruits;  
Who knows upon what soil they feed  
Their hungry thirsty roots?"  
--Goblin Market*

*Willa's epigraphs for The Troll Garden*

*A Fairy Palace, with a  
fairy garden;...  
inside the trolls dwell,..  
...working at their  
magic fizzes, making  
and making always  
things rare and strange."  
--Charles Kingsley*

*And so we are here to this moment where I can let the  
truths, the work of writing, show through.*

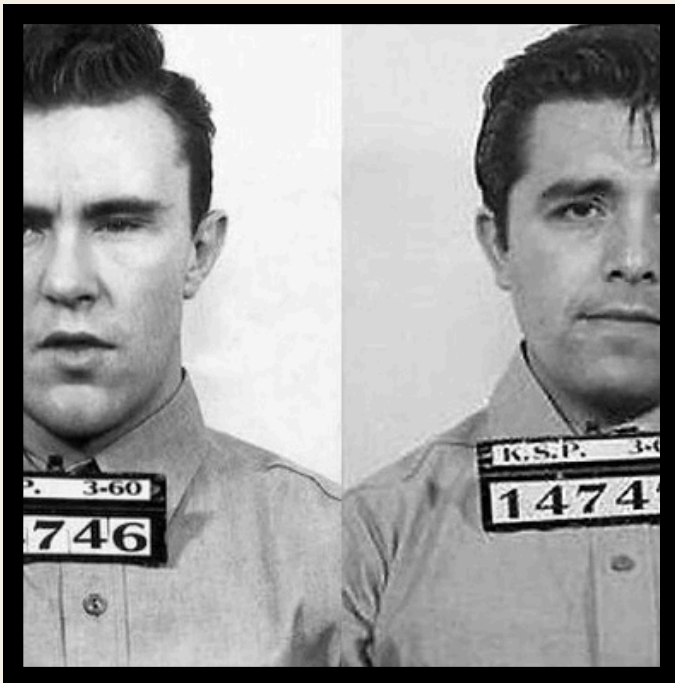




*Later,*

"O.K., beauty. Put away the comb," said Dick, dressed now and ready to go. Having discarded his work uniform, he wore gray khakis, a matching matching shirt, and, like Perry, ankle-high black boots. Perry, who could never find trousers to fit his truncated lower half, wore blue jeans rolled up at the bottom and a leather windbreaker. Scrubbed, combed, as tidy as two dudes setting off on a double date, they went out to the car.

**TRUMAN TOOK RICHARD AVEDON TO KANSAS TO MAKE HIMSELF THE CENTER OF GLAMOROUS PUBLICITY, THIS AFTER RICHARD AVEDON HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF AND WORKED ON AUDREY HEPBURN'S FUNNY FACE (1957).**



*Billed charmingly as the 'Tiny Terror,' he is collectively taken at his word for grossly invasive and manipulative "gossip" he credits himself with 'gaining' for 'literature'*



**TRUMAN COULD USE AND MANIPULATE EVERYONE INVOLVED BECAUSE OF HIS FAME**



*"One of the most difficult things in writing a novel or anything at all is to choose the point of view from which it's going to be told."  
--Truman Capote*

**TRUMAN HAPPILY SIGNING COPIES OF HIS PLAGIARIZED NOVEL, 'SUCCESSFULLY' PULLING OFF "TRUMAN'S VERSION" OF WILLA CATHER'S WORKS AS HE DID WITH BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S WITH AUDREY HEPBURN DRAWING ATTENTION BY DOCUMENTING THE FRAUD; TRUMAN WOULD GO ON THAT YEAR TO THROW HIMSELF THE "PARTY OF THE CENTURY" HAND IN HAND WITH THE PRESS.**



"Mahailey came out on the hilltop and rang the breakfast bell. After the hired men went up to the house, Claude slipped into the barn to see that **Molly had got her share of oats. She was eating quietly**, her head hanging, and her scaly, dead-looking foot lifted just a little from the ground. When he stroked her neck and talked to her she stopped grinding and gazed at him mournfully. She knew him, and wrinkled her nose and drew her upper lip back from her worn teeth, to show that she liked being petted. She let him touch her foot and examine her leg."

— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather

**Molly was a faithful old mare**, the mother of many colts; Claude and his younger brother **had learned to ride on her. This man Jerry**, taking her out to work one morning, let her step on a board with a nail sticking up in it. He pulled the nail out of her foot, said nothing to anybody, and drove her to the cultivator all day. Now she had been standing in her stall for weeks, patiently suffering, her body wretchedly thin, and her leg swollen until it looked like an elephant's."

**"Claude backed the little Ford car out of its shed, ran it up to the horse-tank, and began to throw water on the mud-crusts wheels and windshield. While he was at work** the two hired men, Dan and Jerry, came shambling down the hill to feed the stock. **Jerry was grumbling** and swearing about something, but Claude wrung out his wet rags and, beyond a nod, paid no attention to them. **Somehow his father always managed to have the roughest and dirtiest hired men in the country working for him.**"

"When Claude reached the kitchen, his mother was sitting at one end of the breakfast table, **pouring weak coffee**, his brother and Dan and Jerry were in their chairs, and Mahailey was baking griddle cakes at the stove."

"Claude Wheeler opened his eyes before the sun was up and vigorously shook his younger brother, who lay in the other half of the same bed. "Ralph, Ralph, get awake! **Come down and help me wash the car.**" "What for?" "Why, aren't we going to the circus today?" "Car's all right. Let me alone." The boy turned over and pulled the sheet up to his face, to shut out the light which was beginning to come through the curtainless windows."

— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather

*Circus--elephants and the conventional small town, the town being one of the reasons Claude will leave.*

"Nancy's cats, and **Babe**, the family favorite—an old fat workhorse who never objected to lumbering about with three and four children astride her broad back. Mr. Clutter now fed Babe the core of his apple, calling good morning to a **man raking debris inside the corral—Alfred Stoecklein**, the sole resident employee."

"[ . . . ] corral—Alfred Stoecklein, **the sole resident employee**. The Stoeckleins and their three children lived in a house not a hundred yards from the main house; except for them, the Clutters had no neighbors within half a mile. A long-faced man with long brown teeth, Stoecklein asked, "Have you some particular work in mind today? Cause **we got a sick-un**. The baby. Me and Missis been up and down with her most the night. I been thinking to carry her to doctor." And Mr. Clutter, expressing sympathy, said by all means to take the morning off [ . . . ]"

"**He and Perry** drove along the main street of Olathe until they arrived at the Bob Sands establishment, an **auto-repair garage**, where Dick had been employed since his release from the penitentiary in mid-August. **A capable mechanic**, he earned sixty dollars a week. He deserved no salary for the work he planned to do this morning, but Mr. Sands, who left him in charge on Saturdays, would never know he had paid his hireling **to overhaul his own car**. With Perry assisting him, he went to work."

"That morning an apple and a glass of milk were enough for him; because **he touched neither coffee or tea**"

"a well-run public library, a competent daily newspaper, green-lawned and shady squares here and there, **placid residential streets** where animals and children are safe to run free, a big, rambling park complete with a small menagerie ("See the Polar Bears!" "See Penny the Elephant!"), and a swimming pool that consumes several acres ("World's Largest FREE Swimpool!"). Such accessories, and the dust and the winds and the ever-calling train whistles, add up to a "home town" that is probably **remembered with nostalgia by those who have left it**, and that, for those who have remained, provides **a sense of roots and contentment.**"



They complained of the gloom of the house, and said they could not get enough to eat. Mrs. Royce went every summer to a vegetarian sanatorium in Michigan, **where she learned to live on nuts and toasted cereals.** She gave her family nourishment, to be sure, but there was never during the day a meal that a man could look forward to with pleasure, or sit down to with satisfaction. Mr. Royce usually dined at the hotel in town. **Nevertheless, his wife was distinguished for certain brilliant culinary accomplishments. Her bread was faultless.** When a church supper was toward, she was always called upon for her wonderful mayonnaise dressing, **or her angel-food cake,**—sure to be the lightest and spongiest in any assemblage of cakes.

Mr. Clutter had of necessity learned to cook; either he or Nancy, but principally Nancy, prepared the family meals. **Mr. Clutter enjoyed the chore, and was excellent at it—no woman in Kansas baked a better loaf of salt-rising bread, and his celebrated coconut cookies were the first item to go at charity cake sales—but he was not a hearty eater; unlike his fellow-ranchers, he even preferred Spartan breakfasts.**



Photo by Phyllis Cerf  
TRUMAN CAPOTE

**THE THIRD CRIMINAL INVADER AT THE CLUTTER HOME, THERE TO MAKE IT ABOUT HIMSELF.**

**THESE PEOPLE AND THEIR LIVES DID NOT BELONG TO TRUMAN, AS THE SOCIETY WOMEN DID NOT, AND MOST CERTAINLY WILLA CATHER DOES NOT, NOR AUDREY HEPBURN FOR HIM TO SLANDER. IT IS A SICKENING CROSSING OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES THAT LEADS NO WHERE BUT SUFFERING AND PAIN. TRUMAN WAS DETERMINED TO CAUSE MORE PAIN FOR SELFISH GAIN. TRUMAN WAS COPYING WILLA IN REALNESS FROM REAL PEOPLE BUT WITHOUT THE GOLDEN INSIGHT SHE WAS ABLE TO BRING ABOUT THAT FREES US FROM THE BOUNDS OF CLOSED MINDS AND SOCIETIES AND OPENS US TO THE BRILLIANCE OF OUR OWN PLACES AND EXISTENCES, RIGHT HERE IN THESE VERY REAL GORGEOUS MOMENTS THAT OTHERS WOULD KILL.**

**FAME ONLY APPEARS TO BE OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT, IMMORTAL, BOUNDLESS, LIMITLESS. IT MOST CERTAINLY IS NONE OF THOSE THINGS, JUST BEING KNOWN TO PEOPLE BY APPEARANCES, BUT CAN LOOK "POWERFUL," "FULL OF WONDER." IT DOES NOT OPEN TO THAT.**

**IF THERE IS NO OPENING OF BEINGNESS, FAME IS JUST A MIRAGE. BEINGNESS IS RECOGNIZABLE, WE JUST HAVEN'T LEARNED TO KNOW IT OF OURSELVES. WE HAVE TO SEE THROUGH TO THE INNER BEING. PERSONALITY DISORDERS SUCH AS NARCISSISM SHOW IDENTIFIABLE REPEATED PATTERNS OF ILL-INTENT: ABUSIVE OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL, DEFINITE LACK OF EMPATHY, THINKING ONLY OBSESSIVELY OF THEMSELVES, VICTIMIZATION, TURNING EVERYTHING TO BE ABOUT THEMSELVES. THIS IS THE DEATH OF BEINGNESS, EVEN THOUGH IT APPEARS TO BE "DESPERATE FOR LOVE AND ATTENTION" IT IS ACTUALLY A FORCEFUL ABUSIVE STANCE FROM WHICH TO OPERATE.**



An oil painting of a table and chairs by a lake. The scene is set outdoors, with a large, dark tree trunk on the right side. In the foreground, a round table covered with a white and yellow striped tablecloth is set with a pitcher of yellow liquid, two cups, and several loaves of bread. Two wooden folding chairs are positioned on either side of the table. The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky and trees, with a distant shoreline visible. The overall style is impressionistic, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

The divine of art  
is priceless.

A covert narcissist will trick you  
and hope you never figure out what's  
happening, how you are being  
manipulated and taken; a divine  
trickster, from within literature  
and art where they are free to  
operate (beyond 'scolding' or rumor),  
will show you what is happening. It  
can't be 'told' because it is a  
personal, inward revelation, a  
transformation of knowing. It is  
an inward path of one's own sacred  
identity, before it is collective, but  
happening at the same time.



Willa's last manuscript, which was unfinished



### New York Public Library Rose Reading Room

In the legends from the South of France, there was a green sprout on La Madeleine's tongue, the natural coming to speak, when she was found to be buried in the tomb of Cedonius with the message of 710 on the written note, which is my birthday 7.10. Cedonius is known for the words coming from Jesus's tongue, too, of him speaking my name, to go wash in the waters of Shiloah found in John's name and the year he started out in music, John 9.7.

In the Hebrew Bible where the feminine and Beingness, all of the Earth and nature and the Cosmos's animals were cursed from extreme, brutal narcissism as a huge, suffering cultural path, the prophecy of my name is written in their own words.

My name 'Shiloh' is written in Jacob's prophecy in the Hebrew Bible's Genesis 49:10 as his dying words:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
nor a lawgiver from between [his] feet,  
until Shiloh come;  
and unto [him always the choice of an exclusive  
pronoun]  
shall the gathering of the people be."

Genesis means 'to come into Being.' This is where Beingness was forced to be unwritten and forgotten-what Penelope is told to do to "remember." But this prophecy is what he knows must happen, and the meaning of the name is within their writing.

This prophecy is the basis of Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling, which starts with referencing this verse right above the front door or the eternal gate.

My last name is in the prophecy, too, with 'Richter', meaning 'judge or law-giver' in German. (Uranus the awakener, is conjuncting my Natal Saturn, long-term judgment, evidence, in the house of the body, earth, and Venus. Taurus symbol is of the bull, a symbol of the feminine which is referenced in Penelope opening her "vault" to retrieve Odysseus's "bow." The MUSIC is the awakener.)



""You boys better start in early, though. You can take the wagon and the mules, and load in the cowhides. The butcher has agreed to take them." Claude put down his knife. **"Can't we have the car? I've washed it on purpose."** "And what about Dan and Jerry? They want to see the circus just as much as you do, and I want the hides should go in; they're bringing a good price now. I don't mind about your washing the car; mud preserves the paint, they say, but it'll be all right this time, Claude." The hired men haw-hawed and Ralph giggled. **Claude's freckled face got very red.** The pancake grew stiff and heavy in his mouth and was hard to swallow. **His father knew he hated** to drive the mules to town, and knew how he hated to go anywhere with Dan and Jerry. As for the hides, they were the skins of four **steers that had perished in the blizzard** last winter through the wanton carelessness of these same hired men, and the price they would bring would not half pay for the time his father had spent in stripping and curing them. They had lain in a shed loft all summer, and the wagon had been to town a dozen times. **But today, when he wanted to go to Frankfort clean and care-free,** he must take these stinking hides and two coarse-mouthed men, and drive a pair of mules that always brayed and balked and behaved ridiculously in a crowd. Probably his father had looked out of the window and seen him washing the car, and had put this up on him while he dressed. It was like his father's idea of a joke. Mrs. Wheeler looked at Claude sympathetically, feeling that he was disappointed. Perhaps she, too, suspected a joke. She had learned that humour might wear almost any guise."

— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Carter

**"His natural stupidity** must have been something quite out of the ordinary; after years of reverential study, he could not read the Greek Testament without a **lexicon and grammar** at his elbow. He gave a great deal of time to the **practice of elocution** and oratory. At certain hours their frail domicile—it had been thinly built for the academic poor and sat upon concrete blocks in lieu of a foundation—re-echoed with his hoarse, overstrained voice, declaiming his own orations or those of Wendell Phillips. Annabelle Chapin was one of Claude's classmates. She was not as dull as her brother; she **could learn a conjugation and recognize the forms** when she met with them again."

""Hello," said Claude, bustling in as if he were in a great hurry.

"Have you seen **Ernest Havel**? I thought I might find him in here."

Bayliss swung round in his swivel chair to return a plough catalogue to the shelf. "What would he be in here for? **Better look for him in the saloon.**" Nobody could put **meaner insinuations** into a slow, dry remark than Bayliss."

"Because the old man was around," said Dick, answering Perry, who wanted to know why he had been late in meeting him at the Little Jewel. "I didn't want him to see me taking the gun out of the house. Christ, then he would have **knowned** I wasn't telling the truth." " 'Known.' But what did you say? Finally?" "Like we said. I said we'd be gone overnight—said **we was going** to visit your sister in Fort Scott. On account of she was holding money for you. Fifteen hundred dollars." Perry had a sister, and had once had two, but the surviving one did not live in Fort Scott, a Kansas town eighty-five miles from Olathe; in fact, he was uncertain of her present address. "And was he sore?" "Why should he be sore?" "Because he hates me," said Perry, whose voice was both gentle and prim—a voice that, though soft, manufactured each word exactly, ejected it like a smoke ring issuing from a parson's mouth. **"So does your mother.** I could see—the ineffable way they looked at me."

—In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

"Dick shrugged. "Nothing to do with you. As such. **It's just they don't like me seeing anybody from** The Walls." Twice married, twice divorced, now twenty-eight and the father of three boys, Dick had received his parole **on the condition that he reside with his parents; the family, which included a younger brother, lived on a small farm** near Olathe. "Anybody wearing the fraternity pin," he added, and touched a blue dot tattooed under his left eye—an **insigne, a visible password,** by which certain former prison inmates could identify him."

Claude isn't supposed to have  
a friend like Ernest Havel,  
more of a free-thinking liberal.

"a well-run public library, a competent daily newspaper, green-lawned and shady squares here and there, **placid residential streets** where animals and children are safe to run free, a big, rambling park complete with a small menagerie ("See the Polar Bears!" "See Penny the Elephant!"), and a swimming pool that consumes several acres ("World's Largest FREE Swimpool!"). Such accessories, and the dust and the winds and the ever-calling train whistles, add up to a "home town" that is probably **remembered with nostalgia by those who have left it,** and that, for those who have remained, provides **a sense of roots and contentment."**



'[ . . . ] got a couple bottles of beer cooling in the creek," he said.

"I knew you wouldn't want to go in a saloon."

"Oh, forget it!" Claude muttered, ripping the cover off a jar of pickles. He was nineteen years old, and he was afraid to go into a saloon, and his friend knew he was afraid. After lunch, Claude took out a handful of good cigars he had bought at the drugstore. **Ernest, who couldn't afford cigars**, was pleased. He lit one, and as he smoked he kept looking at it with an air of pride and turning it around between his fingers. The horses stood with their heads over the wagon-box, munching their oats. **The stream trickled by under the willow roots with a cool, persuasive sound.** Claude and Ernest lay in the shade, their coats under their heads, talking very little. Occasionally a motor dashed along the road toward town, and a cloud of dust and a smell of gasoline blew in over the creek bottom; but for the most part the silence of the warm, lazy summer noon was undisturbed. **Claude could usually forget his own vexations and chagrins when he was with Ernest. The Bohemian boy was never uncertain**, was not pulled in two or three ways at once. He was simple and direct. He had a number of impersonal preoccupations; **was interested in politics and history and in new inventions.** Claude felt that his friend lived in an atmosphere of **mental liberty** to which he himself could never hope to attain.

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You and I are old friends, and yet we hardly ever see each other. Mother says you've been promising for two years to run up and have a visit with her. Why don't you come? It would please her."

"Then I will. **I've always been fond of your mother.**" She paused a moment, absently twisting the strings of her bonnet, then twitched it from her head with a quick movement and looked at him squarely in the bright light. **"Claude, you haven't really become a free-thinker**, have you?"

He laughed outright. "Why, what made you think I had?"

**"Everybody knows Ernest Havel is, and people say you and he read that kind of books together."**

"Has that got anything to do with our being friends?"

"Yes, it has. I couldn't feel the same confidence in you. I've worried about it a good deal."

"Well, you just cut it out. For one thing, I'm not worth it," he said quickly.

"Oh, yes, you are! If worrying would do any good—" she shook her head at him reproachfully. Claude took hold of the fence pickets between them with both hands. "It will do good! Didn't I tell you there was missionary work to be done right here? **Is that why you've been so stand-offish with me the last few years, because you thought I was an atheist?**" "I never, you know, liked Ernest Havel," she murmured.

He had a way of using big **words in the wrong place**, not because he tried to show off, but because all words sounded alike to him. In the first days of their acquaintance in camp he told Claude that this was a failing he couldn't help, and that it was called "anaesthesia." Sometimes this failing was confusing; when Fanning sententiously declared that he would like to be on hand when the Crown Prince settled his little account with Plato, Claude was perplexed until subsequent witticisms revealed that the boy meant Pluto.

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"The two young men had little in common, but they did not realize it, for they shared a number of surface traits. Both, for example, were fastidious, very attentive to hygiene and the condition of their fingernails. **After their grease-monkey morning, they spent the better part of an hour sprucing up in the lavatory of the garage.**"

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"I understand," said Perry. "I sympathize with that. They're good people. **She's a real sweet person, your mother.**"

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**"How often he had wished for Ernest during the lectures! He could see Ernest drinking them up, agreeing or dissenting in his independent way."**



**TRUMAN TAKING HIS PLAGIARIZED NOVEL TO THE SCREEN WITH WRITER DIRECTOR RICHARD BROOKS, POSING AS THE 'AUTEUR'**



My middle name, Lynn, is the flowing waters. It comes from an English surname which was derived from Welsh/Celtic llyn meaning "lake, waterfall, or pool."

Michelangelo's *Pieta* shows that waterfall into Jesus.

The flowing water is also where Dante meets Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy* at the rainbow of 7 (colors) and 10 (pases), my birthdate.

Jesus says my name when he talks about the healing waters of Siloam in John 9:7 ('Siloam' is Greek for Shiloah; '97 is the year John started out in music), which is the flowing waters from what has historically been called the Virgin Spring in ancient Jerusalem.

The waterfall is corrupted into a stench and fetid waters in the *Inferno* where there is fraud and betrayal in the feminine, starting from the tears where the feminine was slaughtered at Troyes, Crete, where Homer's *Odysseus* first goes on his journey into the war, a signal to the cause of the war at the corrupted feminine, the monster in the labyrinth.

Michelangelo breaks open the flood on the Sistine Ceiling right across from this prophecy.

Up from these flowing waters of Shiloah from ancient Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. *Odysseus* had built for Penelope a bed made of a live olive tree. It is the symbol of this "Place of Peace" and his intimate knowledge of her.

Likewise, The Mount of Olives is known as the place from which Jesus ascended to heaven."

Bob Weir's name is where the water of that flow is regulated. A weir is a small dam built across a river to control the upstream water level. It is used to regulate the flow of water in streams, rivers, and other water bodies. Unlike large dams which create reservoirs, the goal of building a weir across a river isn't to create storage, but only to gain some control over the water level." In other words, how it gently flows or floods.

His name is very much like Virgil taking Dante by the waterfall through the *Inferno* showing him what has happened to cause hell on earth. Weir was also born on a Pluto Return of Virgil's passing. Bob Weir Virgil Pluto Return 14 43 Leo 8 October 19 BC; Virgil passed on 21 September 19 BC

In the La Madeleine legend, Mary Magdalene was placed in the tomb of Cedonius, this man healed of "blindness" when he washed in these waters of Shiloah, linking my name and John's to the legend of Mary Magdalene from 710, my birthdate, in the South of France where the legend was shifted away from where she could not be in Israel. The flowing waters then appear at the mouth of the Rhône.

La Madeleine was buried in the tomb of Cedonius so she could be "identified" to the 'blind' that needed to be 'healed' by Jesus.

The lyrics from the *Grateful Dead*'s "Here Comes Sunshine" include the line, "Wake of the flood, laughing water, forty-nine, the year of a flood, but also the number of the prophecy. The *Grateful Dead* released their album *Wake of the Flood* in 1973, the same time as my dad's album *Face to Face* with the portrait of the suffering Jesus on the cover painted from Michelangelo's *Pieta* which had come to the United States in 1964.

On The Mount of Olives in Jerusalem is the Church of Mary Magdalene, also like the epic and continuing story of Mary Magdalene.

This flow of water leading to the sexual meeting with the Venus, as it is in the *Odyssey*, is also in the 36,000 year old cave drawings up the Rhône at the Ardèche in the South of France.



When John and I were first coming to know each other, when he first spoke to me, I visited the Olive Tree Cafe on MacDougal St. in NYC in July 2010. When I walked in it was uncannily just like the same atmosphere, even the very same movies showing in black and white, of a place called Crystal's in Texas from my childhood where I had fallen in love with old movies.

My birthday 71070, upside down, OLOIL also spells out Olive Oil. John has said that his first celebrity crush was Shelley Duvall playing Olive Oyl in Popeye. (I used to be called Olive Oyl because I was very thin as a child.) Shelley Duvall was born on 7.7.49 in Ft. Worth, Texas where I grew up (from age 4). She passed the day after my birthday in 2024. Her partner was the lead vocalist for the Breakfast Club.

The last night that I went out with my dad we shared a bucket of movie popcorn-- (we had made the movie together). I asked him to smell the scent of DoTERRA's "Forgive" blend and we talked about 1977.

Translations of 'Shiloh' from Hebrew are "The One to Whom it belongs," "Place of Peace," "an epithet of the Messiah," and as Shiloh meaning "Sent."

Andrey Hepburn's home in Switzerland was named "La Pausible" "The Peaceful"

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance shows an etymological root of to be "shalah" meaning (שָׁלַח) Shiloh to "be happy, prosper, be in safety" and "to be quiet and at ease," which is a description of a state of being. This is the state of internal peace of which Thich Nhat Hanh taught in the South of France. That is the same etymological root in the name of the goddess Aserah

When I would return to the Village in 2023, it was on this discovery of the miracles with author Willa Cather and this being the true neighborhood of Breakfast at Tiffany's. It was also Willa's Garden of Eden in "Coming, Aphrodite!" and the opportunity of the artists recognizing the true identity of each other.

The Genesis prophecy also contains my birthdate: 7,10,70 as 7 x 7=49 and I was born on the 10th. My name upside down is the number 407145. It contains my birthday and the numbers of the Hebrew prophecy at the beginning and end 4 and 4+5=9, with my birthdate 71070 in the middle. It also contains the year of my birth, 1970: 70 19. My name contains the place of my birth, Ohio, and the goddess Io, the goddess in the form of the cow which is signaled in the Odyssey at Penelope's "vault." I lived alone with my dogs on a 606 acre ranch when I came to know John.

I was born in Bethesda Hospital. The Pool of Bethesda is where Jesus performed the miracle of John 5:1-18, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." This is down from the Mount of Olives. It is the place of St. Anne, who gives birth to Virgin Mary. Bethesda Hospital at that time was a mile from the Ohio River and a park once named the Garden of Eden with a vineyard (Now Eden Park). The Ohio River is where Huckleberry Finn was headed to freedom.

Jesus spoke my birthdate when he said to forgive, "I say unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven. 70 x 7. That's also the year John was born: 77.

The last night that I went out with my dad we shared a bucket of movie popcorn-- (we had made the movie together). I asked him to smell the scent of DoTERRA's "Forgive" blend and we talked about 1977.

Like my name, Beatrice connects to the etymology of the name Aserah, ashar, "אשר" the ancient goddess meaning happiness or blessedness (1 Kings 10:8, Psalm 32:1, Isaiah 30:18) (abarin-publications.com)





"There was something in the way the mint bed burned and floated that made one a fatalist,—afraid to meddle. But after he was far away, he would regret; uncertainty would tease him like a splinter in his thumb. He rose suddenly and said without apology: "Gladys, **I wish I could feel sure you'd never marry my brother.**" She did not reply, but sat in her easy chair, looking up at him with a strange kind of calmness. "**I know all the advantages,**" he went on hastily, "but they wouldn't make it up to you. That sort of a—compromise would make you awfully unhappy. I know.""

On a table in the middle of the room were pipes and boxes of tobacco, cigars in a glass jar, and a big Chinese bowl full of cigarettes. This provisionment seemed the more remarkable to Claude because **at home he had to smoke in the cowshed.**

"But I keep smelling cigarette smoke."

"On your breath?" inquired Kenyon.

"No, funny one. Yours."

Then Nancy said, "Listen," and hesitated, as if summoning nerve to make an outrageous remark. "**Why do I keep smelling smoke?** Honestly, I think I'm losing my mind. I get into the car, I walk into a room, and it's as though somebody had just been there, smoking a cigarette. It isn't Mother, it can't be Kenyon. Kenyon wouldn't dare . . ." Nor, very likely, would any visitor to the Clutter home, which was **pointedly devoid of ashtrays.** Slowly, Susan grasped the implication, but it was ludicrous. Regardless of what his private anxieties might be, **she could not believe that Mr. Clutter was finding secret solace in tobacco.**

**That evening Claude was sitting on the windmill platform, down by the barn, after a hard day's work ploughing for winter wheat. He was solacing himself with his pipe. No matter how much she loved him, or how sorry she felt for him, his mother could never bring herself to tell him he might smoke in the house.**

He had been to see Mrs. Erlich just before starting home for the holidays, and found her making German Christmas cakes. **She took him into the kitchen and explained the almost holy traditions that governed this complicated cookery.** Her excitement and seriousness as she beat and stirred were very pretty, Claude thought. **She told off on her fingers the many ingredients,** but he believed there were things she did not name: the fragrance of old friendships, the glow of early memories, belief in wonder-working rhymes and songs. Surely these were fine things to put into little cakes!

"Mr. Clutter liked Bobby, and considered him, for a boy his age, which was seventeen, most dependable and gentlemanly; however, in the three years she had been permitted "dates," Nancy, popular and pretty as she was, had never gone out with anyone else, and while Mr. Clutter understood that it was the present national adolescent custom to form couples, to "go steady" and wear "engagement rings," **he disapproved,** particularly since he had not long ago, by accident, surprised his daughter and the Rupp boy kissing. **He had then suggested that Nancy discontinue "seeing so much of Bobby,"** advising her that a slow retreat now would hurt less than an abrupt severance later"

"You love Bobby now, and you need him. **But deep down even Bobby knows there isn't any future in it.** Later on, when we go off to Manhattan, everything will seem a new world."

**That evening Claude was sitting on the windmill platform, down by the barn, after a hard day's work ploughing for winter wheat. He was solacing himself with his pipe. No matter how much she loved him, or how sorry she felt for him, his mother could never bring herself to tell him he might smoke in the house.**

"She's got character. Gets it from her old man." Certainly her strongest trait, the talent that gave support to all the others, derived from her father: **a fine-honed sense of organization.** Each moment was assigned; she knew precisely, at any hour, what she would be doing, how long it would require. And that was the trouble with today: **she had overscheduled it."**

Now, what I wanted, dear—my little girl, my little Jolene, she's just dying to bake a cherry pie, and seeing how you're a champion cherry-pie maker, always winning prizes, **I wondered could I bring her over there this morning and you show her?"** Normally, Nancy would willingly have taught Jolene to prepare an entire turkey dinner; she felt it her duty to be available when younger girls came to her wanting help with their **cooking, their sewing, or their music lessons**—or, as often happened, to confide. Where she found the time, and still managed to "practically run that big house"

*All the activity in the Erlich house Truman assigns to Nancy's character, theatre, music . . .*



"Claude couldn't resist **occasionally dropping in at the Erlichs' in the afternoon; then the boys were away, and he could have Mrs. Erlich to himself for half-an-hour.** When she talked to him **she taught him so much about life.** He loved to hear her sing sentimental German songs as she worked; "Spinn, spinn, du Tochter mein." He didn't know why, but he simply adored it! Every time he went away from her he felt happy and full of kindness, and thought about beech woods and walled towns, or about Carl Schurz and the Romantic revolution."

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"how could people find so much to say about one girl?"

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"Perhaps Wheeler was proud of his son's business acumen."

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The Erlich boys **had so many new interests** he couldn't keep up with them; they had been going on, and he had been standing still. He wasn't conceited enough to mind that. **The thing that hurt was the feeling of being out of it,** of being lost in another kind of life in which ideas played but little part.

**WILLA CATHER AND DOUGLASS CATHER SIT ON A STONE WALL BENEATH OVERHANGING ROCK IN WALNUT CANYON, ARIZONA. C. 1912, PHILIP L. AND HELEN CATHER SOUTHWICK COLLECTION, ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN LIBRARIES**




"As matters stood, **there was no room for Jolene's cherry-pie lesson.** Unless something could be canceled. "Mrs. Katz? Will you hold the line a moment, please?" She walked the length of the house to her father's office. The office, which had an outside entrance for ordinary visitors, was separated from the parlor by a sliding door; though Mr. Clutter occasionally shared the office with Gerald Van Vleet, a young man who assisted him with the management of the farm, it was fundamentally his retreat—an orderly sanctuary, paneled in walnut veneer, where, surrounded by weather barometers, rain charts, a pair of binoculars, he sat like a captain in his cabin, a navigator piloting River Valley's sometimes risky passage through the seasons. "Never mind," he said, responding to Nancy's problem. **"Skip 4-H. I'll take Kenyon instead."** And so, lifting the office phone, Nancy told Mrs. Katz yes, **fine, bring Jolene right on over. But she hung up with a frown.** "It's so peculiar," she said as she looked around the room and saw in it **her father helping Kenyon add a column of figures,** and, at his desk by the window, Mr. Van Vleet, who had a kind of brooding, rugged good looks that led her to call him Heathcliff behind his back."

*And to Dick . . .*

"Was nothing wrong with my boy, Mr. Nye," Mr. Hickock said. "An outstanding athlete—always on the first team at school. **Basketball! Baseball! Football!** **Dick was always the star player. A pretty good student, too, with A marks in several subjects. History. Mechanical drawing.** After he graduated from high school—June, 1949—he wanted to go on to college. Study to be an engineer. But we couldn't do it.

--In Cold Blood by Truman Capote





In the *Odyssey*, Penelope is Odysseus's 'Place of Peace,' happiness and safety just as the goddess and the Queen of Heaven are described in the Hebrew Bible as in their experience in Jeremiah 44.

"Shiloh" has been taken to mean the "Second Coming." "Parousia" in Greek means "being present, presence, from para + ousia, 'essence,' from on, genitive onto, present participle of einai 'to be'; It is the awakening of the realization of beingness.

The *Odyssey* shows this recognition of the Second Coming at the feminine by Odysseus (who is recognized by his Inner Being, or thus made divine) that was denied by the Hebrew story. To them, it cannot be human. It always must be.

The state of being that Thag shows is very much that sense of peace, security, and abundance described with the Queen of Heaven documented in the Hebrew Bible and experienced with Jesus.

In describing the meaning of the name Asherah, *Thagim Publications* shows that 'Asher' is a part of Shiloh, and 'Shi' a part of Asherah; closely synonymous to the relative participle 'asher' is the relative prefix 'shi'.

"This female divine figure was always associated with trees... LXX translated the word Asherah into Greek as also grove (... ) groves (... ) trees (Aphodel P. Long).

Asherah is shown to be associated with Eve in the way the Hebrew Bible was written: Scholar Jenny Keir writes, "Adam names his wife Hawah or Mother of All Living Things (Genesis 3:20). Considering what we now know about Asherah, it should be clear that at any time in the second or early first millennium BCE, when a woman is called 'Mother of All Living Things,' the text must have something to do with the great goddess Asherah."



In that sacred grove, the Garden of Eden, is where Asherah/Eve is expelled, just as Asherah's name was removed from throughout the Hebrew Bible, and her altar burned as in 2 Kings 23:15.

And so Jacob knew what he was prophesying when he said "Shiloh." The greatest artists across the millennia knew it as well.

In the path that I have been writing of the art here is how it has come to fruition:

In the article "John Mayer and The Revenge of The Count of Monte Cristo" I wrote about how the scribes of the Hebrew New Testament didn't know how the female story continues of Mary Magdalene, and so she naturally and by the currents of fate arrived by boat, even from a boat just like that surfaced in her hometown of Magdala the year John was born, onto the shores of where she could live as legend and in Presence in the South of France, in contemplation on the top of the mountain in the Sainte-Baume in the Bouches-du-Rhône in this contemplative state of Peace, or natural Beingness.

I had told John at the beginning that I was "looking for a heart of gold." He sent pictures from a diner in Laurel Canyon with "Peace" in the stained glass above him during making Born & Raised. In 2024 I went to go see John play with Neil Young.

I just knew that day that he loved me.

He chose to show it where Bob Dylan first played in NYC. I had first heard Bob Dylan when I was 10 from his albums Slow Train Coming and Nashville Skyline. One of the reasons I had first gone to Greenwich Village was to go there to the Village Underground because of Bob and the music and literary history.

The Sibyl steps down with a book at that altar, where the white dog steps down to the throne of the Pope, symbolizing that it is the seat of what the white dog star symbolizes: the feminine.

I am writing from the sacred groves of Willa Cather's enchanted New Mexico where Magdalena in the Garden in Santa Fe was by the flowing water and surrounded by birds alighting to her...

That Cathedral and Garden are the culmination of the street where in 2008 at the beginning of all of this, I walked into Willa's 1925 photograph taken on the balcony of La Fonda Hotel and on the 500 year anniversary of painting the Sistine Chapel about my name. All three of my names are in the meaning of the ceiling, including my last name at Michelangelo's Last Judgment.

My great-great-grandfather had a jewelry store in downtown Cincinnati opened in 1896 and even had a signature watch, the "Lucerne" c. 1940.

That hotel had just opened in 1922—the year my grandfather was born, (then my dad '44, brother '66, and John '77—and there are John's lyrics, "It's been a long time since 22"). It was the year Willa said that the world split apart, the year Eric moved into Aries... I would go stay at the hotel 100 years later in December 2022 right after discovering that Willa's work in New York City is the source of Breakfast at Tiffany's before my trip to New York just as her journey by my mountain in 1912 before she published the beginning story, "The Bohemian Girl."



*Continued . . .*

Bayliss had a farm implement business in Frankfort, and though he was still under thirty he had made a very considerable financial success. Perhaps Wheeler was proud of his son's business acumen. At any rate, he drove to town to see Bayliss several times a week, went to sales and stock exhibits with him, and sat about his store for hours at a stretch, joking with the farmers who came in. Wheeler had been a heavy drinker in his day, and was still a heavy feeder. Bayliss was thin and dyspeptic, and a virulent Prohibitionist; he would have liked to regulate everybody's diet by his own feeble constitution. Even Mrs. Wheeler, who took the men God had apportioned her for granted, wondered how Bayliss and his father could go off to conventions together and have a good time, since their ideas of what made a good time were so different.

Once every few years, Mr. Wheeler bought a new suit and a dozen stiff shirts and went back to Maine to visit his brothers and sisters, who were very quiet, conventional people. But he was always glad to get home to his old clothes, his big farm, his buckboard, and Bayliss.

"Then, starting home, he walked toward the trees, and under them, leaving behind him the big sky, the whisper of wind voices in the wind-bent wheat."

"As matters stood, there was no room for Jolene's cherry-pie lesson. Unless something could be canceled. "Mrs. Katz? Will you hold the line a moment, please?" She walked the length of the house to her father's office. The office, which had an outside entrance for ordinary visitors, was separated from the parlor by a sliding door; though Mr. Clutter occasionally shared the office with Gerald Van Vleet, a young man who assisted him with the management of the farm, it was fundamentally his retreat—an orderly sanctuary, paneled in walnut veneer, where, surrounded by weather barometers, rain charts, a pair of binoculars, he sat like a captain in his cabin, a navigator piloting River Valley's sometimes risky passage through the seasons. "Never mind," he said, responding to Nancy's problem. "Skip 4-H. I'll take Kenyon instead." And so, lifting the office phone, Nancy told Mrs. Katz yes, fine, bring Jolene right on over. But she hung up with a frown. "It's so peculiar," she said as she looked around the room and saw in it her father helping Kenyon add a column of figures, and, at his desk by the window, Mr. Van Vleet, who had a kind of brooding, rugged good looks that led her to call him Heathcliff behind his back."

*Willa's conventions  
become Truman's 4-H.*

"Mr. Clutter travels a great deal," she said to Jolene. "Oh, he's always headed somewhere. Washington and Chicago and Oklahoma and Kansas City—sometimes it seems like he's never home."

"There were few days in the year when Wheeler did not drive off somewhere; to an auction sale, or a political convention, or a meeting of the Farmers' Telephone directors;—to see how his neighbours were getting on with their work, if there was nothing else to look after. He preferred his buckboard to a car because it was light, went easily over heavy or rough roads, and was so rickety that he never felt he must suggest his wife's accompanying him. Besides he could see the country better when he didn't have to keep his mind on the road. He had come to this part of Nebraska when the Indians and the buffalo were still about, remembered the grasshopper year and the big cyclone, had watched the farms emerge one by one from the great rolling page where once only the wind wrote its story. He had encouraged new settlers to take up homesteads, urged on courtships, lent young fellows the money to marry on, seen families grow and prosper; until he felt a little as if all this were his own enterprise. The changes, not only those the years made, but those the seasons made, were interesting to him."

"A town of eleven thousand, Garden City began assembling its founders soon after the Civil War. An itinerant buffalo hunter, Mr. C. J. (Buffalo) Jones, had much to do with its subsequent expansion from a collection of huts and hitching posts into an opulent ranching center with razzle-dazzle saloons, an opera house, and the plushiest hotel anywhere between Kansas City and Denver—in brief, a specimen of frontier fanciness that rivaled a more famous settlement fifty miles east of it, Dodge City. Along with Buffalo Jones, who lost his money and then his mind (the last years of his life were spent haranguing street groups against the wanton extermination of the beasts he himself had so profitably slaughtered), the glammers of the past are today entombed."



The day of me first walking into her photograph, where she has in fact placed herself as the door of the cathedral, the very meaning of the Sistine with my name, was the weekend of 10 February 2008, the day John was performing "No One" on the Grammys with Alicia Keys. I had just that day been photographing the oldest church in the US (from the time of Queen Elizabeth I's passing—built while Shakespeare was still alive). When I visited in December 2022, it was upon the passing and funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. (Audrey Hepburn's first leading role of Roman Holiday, came out upon her inauguration.)

And when I got to New York City visiting where Willa wrote it all near Washington Square, I realized by looking at the inspiration of her neighborhood and her writing there, that that street in Santa Fe, San Francisco St. between the hotel and the camera shop and the cathedral at the end, which was the inspiration of her *Magdalena in the Garden*, was also then her realization of her *Coming, Aphrodite!* (1920), a main source of Truman's plagiarism for *Breakfast at Tiffany's* but brought stunningly back to the beauty of spirit by Audrey Hepburn.

Her realization of *La Madeleine in Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) was what she was writing towards in "*Coming, Aphrodite!*" seven years earlier.

And so as I stood there in the West Village, where all the miracles happened in coming to know and fall in love with John in 2010, I realized that Willa's photograph of herself in front of the cathedral in Santa Fe led to me walking into her photograph, precisely into a camera shop, and the furthering of the iconic photograph of Audrey Hepburn on Fifth Avenue in front of Tiffany's, and the realization going further, as she intended, as signified in the novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

An editor of McClure's Magazine her issue in June 1911 foreshadows what she would write with a NYC street culminating in a cathedral—she would go to Santa Fe the next year and see it.

Audrey's iconic scene, photograph, on that street is from Willa's writing, and not Truman's. It's the very difference of the plagiarism and Audrey's spirit breaking through. She was seeing very far ahead to when things **COULD BE SPOKEN**, and here it was coming true in the most unfathomable ways.

The miracle of John singing "A Face to Call Home" there at the Village Underground, Willa's neighborhood, coinciding with the fountain of birds in flight that day for me had come to this fruition, miracles in Greenwich Village.

In Santa Fe then, in 2008, I had walked into an iconic photograph—not just of the secret Willa was photographing right in between those stories 1920-1925-1927, but since George Axelrod was giving back the stories and credit to Willa from Truman Capote's plagiarism, and with Audrey Hepburn to carry it, I was also walking into the iconic photograph that would become *Breakfast at Tiffany's*—and further. At the beginning of writing to John I wrote to him about writing a screenplay sequel to that movie across the years.



The French saying, "Joy of the street, sorrow of the home," was exemplified in Mr. Wheeler, though not at all in the French way. His own affairs were of secondary importance to him. In the early days he had homesteaded and **bought and leased enough land to make him rich**. Now he had only to rent it out to good farmers who liked to work—he didn't, and of that he made no secret. When he was at home, he usually sat upstairs in the living room, reading newspapers. He subscribed for a dozen or more—the list included a weekly devoted to scandal—and he was well informed about what was going on in the world. **He had magnificent health**, and illness in himself or in other people struck him as humorous. To be sure, he never suffered from anything more perplexing than **toothache or boils, or an occasional bilious attack**.

"Always certain of what he wanted from the world, Mr. Clutter had in large measure obtained it."

He wanted to tidy up his mother's flower garden, a treasured patch of disheveled foliage that grew beneath her bedroom window. When he got there, he found one of the hired men loosening earth with a spade—Paul Helm, the husband of the housekeeper. "Seen that car?" Mr. Helm asked. Yes, Kenyon had seen a car in the driveway—a gray Buick, standing outside the entrance to his father's office. "Thought you might know who it was." "Not unless it's Mr. Johnson. Dad said he was expecting him." Mr. Helm (the late Mr. Helm; he died of a stroke the following March) was a somber man in his late fifties whose withdrawn manner veiled a nature keenly curious and watchful; he liked to know what was going on. "Which Johnson?" "The insurance fellow." Mr. Helm grunted. "Your dad must be laying in a stack of it. That car's been here I'd say three hours." The chill of oncoming dusk shivered through the air, and though the sky was still deep blue, lengthening shadows emanated from the garden's tall chrysanthemum stalks; Nancy's cat frolicked among them, catching its paws in the twine with which Kenyon and the old man were now tying plants. Suddenly, Nancy herself came jogging across the fields aboard fat Babe—Babe, returning from her Saturday treat, a bathe in the river. Teddy, the dog, accompanied them, and all three were water-splashed and shining. "You catch cold," Mr. Helm said. Nancy laughed; she had never been ill—not once. Sliding off Babe, she sprawled on the grass at the edge of the garden and seized her cat, dangled him above her, and kissed his nose and whiskers. Kenyon was disgusted. "Kissing animals on the mouth." "You used to kiss Skeeter," she reminded him. "Skeeter was a horse." A beautiful horse, a strawberry stallion he had raised from a foal. How that Skeeter could take a fence! "You use a horse too hard," his father had cautioned him. "One day you'll ride the life out of Skeeter." And he had; while Skeeter was streaking down a road with his master astride him, his heart failed, and he stumbled and was dead. Now, a year later, Kenyon still mourned him, even though his father, taking pity on him, had promised him the pick of next spring's foals. "Kenyon?" Nancy said. "Do you think Tracy will be able to talk? By Thanksgiving?" Tracy, not yet a year old, was her nephew, the son of Eveanna, the sister to whom she felt particularly close. (Beverly was Kenyon's favorite.) "It would thrill me to pieces to hear him say 'Aunt Nancy.' Or 'Uncle Kenyon.' Wouldn't you like to hear him say that? I mean, don't you love being an uncle? Kenyon? Good grief, why can't you ever answer me?" "Because you're silly," he said, tossing her the head of a flower, a wilted dahlia, which she jammed into her hair. Mr. Helm picked up his spade. Crows cawed, sundown was near, but his home was not; the lane of Chinese elms had turned into a tunnel of darkening green, and he lived at the end of it, half a mile away. "Evening," he said, and started his journey. But once he looked back. "And that," he was to testify the next day, "was the last I seen them. Nancy leading old Babe off to the barn. Like I said, nothing out of the ordinary." *See also reference page 22 in France*

Even the horses had a more varied and sociable existence than usual, going about from one farm to another to help neighbour horses drag wagons and binders and headers. They nosed the colts of old friends, ate out of strange mangers, and drank, or refused to drink, out of strange water-troughs. Decrepit horses that lived on a pension, like the Wheelers' stiff-legged Molly and Leonard Dawson's Billy with the heaves—his asthmatic cough could be heard for a quarter of a mile—were pressed into service now. It was wonderful, too, how well these invalided beasts managed to keep up with the strong young mares and geldings; they bent their willing heads and pulled as if the chafing of the collar on their necks was sweet to them.






After his interview with Mr. Royce, Claude drove directly to the mill house. As he came up the shady road, he saw with disappointment the flash of two white dresses instead of one, moving about in the sunny flower garden. The visitor was Gladys Farmer. This was her vacation time. She had walked out to the mill in the cool of the morning to spend the day with Enid. Now they were starting off to gather water-cresses, and had stopped in the garden to smell the heliotrope. On this scorching afternoon the purple sprays gave out a fragrance that hung over the flower-bed and brushed their cheeks like a warm breath. The girls looked up at the same moment and recognized Claude. [ . . . ] He took their little tin pails and followed them around the old dam-head and up a sandy gorge, along a clear thread of water that trickled into Lovely Creek just above the mill. They came to the gravelly hill where the stream took its source from a spring hollowed out under the exposed roots of two elm trees. All about the spring, and in the sandy bed of the shallow creek, the cresses grew cool and green. Gladys had strong feelings about places. She looked around her with satisfaction. "Of all the places where we used to play, Enid, this was my favourite," she declared. [ . . . ] "I love it here." She leaned back upon the hot, glistening hill-side. The sun came down in red rays through the elm-tops, and all the pebbles and bits of quartz

She spoke sadly. He took her passive hand. "Why not?" "My mind is full of other plans. Marriage is for most girls, but not for all." Enid had taken off her hat. In the low evening light Claude studied her pale face under her brown hair. There was something graceful and charming about the way she held her head, something that suggested both submissiveness and great firmness. "I've had those far-away dreams, too, Enid; but now my thoughts don't get any further than you. If you could care ever so little for me to start on, I'd be willing to risk the rest." She sighed. "You know I care for you. I've never made any secret of it. But we're happy as we are, aren't we?" "No, I'm not. I've got to have some life of my own, or I'll go to pieces. If you won't have me, I'll try South America,—and I won't come back until I am an old man and you are an old woman." Enid looked at him, and they both smiled. The mill house was black except for a light in one upstairs window. Claude sprang out of his car and lifted Enid gently to the ground. She let him kiss her soft cool mouth, and her long lashes. In the pale, dusty dusk, lit only by a few white stars, and with the chill of the creek already in the air, she seemed to Claude like a shivering little ghost come up from the rushes where the old mill-dam used to be. A terrible melancholy clutched at the boy's heart. He hadn't thought it would be like this. He drove home feeling weak and broken. Was there nothing in the world outside to answer to his own feelings, and was every turn to be fresh disappointment? Why was life so mysteriously hard? This country itself was sad, he thought, looking about him,—and you could no more change that than you could change the story in an unhappy human face. He wished to God he were sick again; the world was too rough a place to get about in. There was one person in the world who felt sorry for Claude that night. Gladys Farmer sat at her bedroom window for a long while, watching the stars and thinking about what she had seen plainly enough that afternoon. She had liked Enid ever since they were little girls,—and knew all there was to know about her. Claude would become one of those dead people that moved about the streets of Frankfort; everything that was Claude would perish, and the shell of him would come and go and eat and sleep for fifty years. Gladys had taught the children of many such dead men.

glittered dazzlingly. Down in the stream bed the water, where it caught the light, twinkled like tarnished gold. Claude's sandy head and stooping shoulders were mottled with sunshine as they moved about over the green patches, [ . . . ] Gladys was too poor to travel, but she had the good fortune to be able to see a great deal within a few miles of Frankfort, and a warm imagination helped her to find life interesting. [ . . . ] Presently Claude came up the bank with two shining, dripping pails. [ . . . ] "Where were you before you came here?" "I was out in the country with your father, looking at his alfalfa." "And he walked you all over the field in the hot sun, I suppose?" Claude laughed. "He did." "Well, I'll scold him tonight. You stay here and rest. I am going to drive Gladys home." [ . . . ] They lingered awhile, however, listening to the soft, amiable bubbling of the spring; a wise, unobtrusive voice, murmuring night and day, continually telling the truth to people who could not understand it. When they went back to the house Enid stopped long enough to cut a bunch of heliotrope for Mrs. Farmer,—though with the sinking of the sun its rich perfume had already vanished. They left Gladys and her flowers and cresses at the gate of the white cottage, now half hidden by gaudy trumpet vines. Claude turned his car and went back along the dim, twilight road with Enid. [ . . . ] "Do you think you could marry me, Enid?" "I don't believe it would be for the best, Claude."

"My mind is full of other plans. Marriage is for most girls, but not for all." Enid had taken off her hat. In the low evening light Claude studied her pale face under her brown hair. There was something graceful and charming about the way she held her head, something that suggested both submissiveness and great firmness. "I've had those far-away dreams, too, Enid; but now my thoughts don't get any further than you. If you could care ever so little for me to start on, I'd be willing to risk the rest." She sighed. "You know I care for you. I've never made any secret of it. But we're happy as we are, aren't we?" "No, I'm not. I've got to have some life of my own, or I'll go to pieces. If you won't have me, I'll try South America,—and I won't come back until I am an old man and you are an old woman." Enid looked at him, and they both smiled. The mill house was black except for a light in one upstairs window. Claude sprang out of his car and lifted Enid gently to the ground. She let him kiss her soft cool mouth, and her long lashes. In the pale, dusty dusk, lit only by a few white stars, and with the chill of the creek already in the air, she seemed to Claude like a shivering little ghost come up from the rushes where the old mill-dam used to be. A terrible melancholy clutched at the boy's heart. He hadn't thought it would be like this. He drove home feeling weak and broken. Was there nothing in the world outside to answer to his own feelings, and was every turn to be fresh disappointment? Why was life so mysteriously hard? This country itself was sad, he thought, looking about him,—and you could no more change that than you could change the story in an unhappy human face. He wished to God he were sick again; the world was too rough a place to get about in. There was one person in the world who felt sorry for Claude that night. Gladys Farmer sat at her bedroom window for a long while, watching the stars and thinking about what she had seen plainly enough that afternoon. She had liked Enid ever since they were little girls,—and knew all there was to know about her. Claude would become one of those dead people that moved about the streets of Frankfort; everything that was Claude would perish, and the shell of him would come and go and eat and sleep for fifty years. Gladys had taught the children of many such dead men.





That street in front of the cathedral in Santa Fe, San Francisco St., points to the West Coast where the Grateful Dead would begin, and this literary journal in '57, just ten years after Willa's passing, and the year of the arrests for Bob Dylan's friend, Allen Ginsberg's Howl, which has begun there in that neighborhood in New York City, which of course, was very much speaking out for Beingness.

What a way to fall in love there in the West Village, coming from Willa's Southwest.

And so in Willa's 1925 photograph I walked into a camera shop directly across from where Willa was standing, photographing herself in front of the Cathedral and Garden of her novel Death Comes for the Archbishop where she has Magdalena, a very human la Madeleine, being embodied in an abused human female, and inspiring "an architect of days that haven't happened yet."



"The German army was entering Luxembourg; he didn't know where Luxembourg was, whether it was a city or a country; he seemed to have some vague idea that it was a palace! His mother had gone up to "Mahailey's library," the attic, to hunt for a map of Europe,—a thing for which Nebraska farmers had never had much need. But that night, on many prairie homesteads, the women, American and foreign-born, were hunting for a map."

— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather

"For some reason, Claude began to think about the far-off times and countries it had shone upon. He never thought of the sun as coming from distant lands, or as having taken part in human life in other ages. To him, the sun rotated about the wheatfields. But the moon, somehow, came out of the historic past, and made him think of Egypt and the Pharaohs, Babylon and the hanging gardens. She seemed particularly to have looked down upon the follies and disappointments of men; into the slaves' quarters of old times, into prison windows, and into fortresses where captives languished."

"Don't say such things." Mrs. Wheeler dropped into the deep willow chair, realizing that she was very tired, now that she had left the stove and the heat of the kitchen. She began weakly to wave the palm leaf fan before her face. "It's said to be such a beautiful city. Perhaps the Germans will spare it, as they did Brussels. They must be sick of destruction by now. Get the encyclopaedia and see what it says. I've left my glasses downstairs."

"Sipping and smoking, he studied a map spread on the counter before him—a Phillips 66 map of Mexico—but it was difficult to concentrate, for he was expecting a friend, and the friend was late. He looked out a window at the silent small-town street, a street he had never seen until yesterday. Still no sign of Dick. But he was sure to show up; after all, the purpose of their meeting was Dick's idea, his "score." And when it was settled—Mexico. The map was ragged, so thumbed that it had grown as supple as a piece of chamois. Around the corner, in his room at the hotel where he was staying, were hundreds more like it—worn maps of every state in the Union, every Canadian province, every South American country—for the young man was an incessant conceiver of voyages [ . . . ]" —In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

"From the same article he had memorized other appealing statements: "Cozumel is a hold-out against social, economic, and political pressure. No official pushes any private person around on this island," and "Every year flights of parrots come over from the mainland to lay their eggs." ACAPULCO connoted deep-sea fishing, casinos, anxious rich women; and SIERRA MADRE meant gold [ . . . ]"

WILLA'S  
INSPIRATION FOR  
"TOM OUTLAND'S  
STORY"  
WILLA CATHER SITS  
ON A LOW ROCK  
WALL AT "CLIFF  
PALACE" IN MESA  
VERDE,  
COLORADO, WITH  
TREES AND A  
ROCKY HILL IN THE  
BACKGROUND,  
1915, PHILIP L. AND  
HELEN CATHER  
SOUTHWICK  
COLLECTION,  
ARCHIVES &  
SPECIAL  
COLLECTIONS,  
UNIVERSITY OF  
NEBRASKA-  
LINCOLN  
LIBRARIES

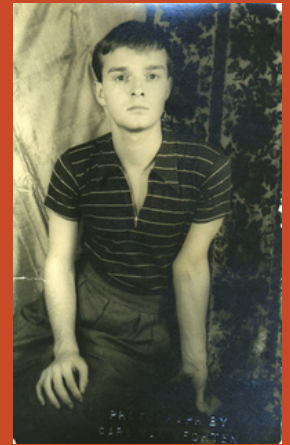




**"The doors and windows were always open, the vines and the long petunias in the window-boxes waved in the breeze, and the rooms were full of sunlight and in perfect order. Enid wore white dresses about her work, and white shoes and stockings."**

wits. Well, she was wearing some jewelry, two rings—which is one of the reasons why I've always discounted robbery as a motive—and a robe, and a white nightgown, and white socks.

TRUMAN IN 1948,  
THE YEAR OF  
PUBLISHING HIS  
FIRST PLAGIARIZED  
STORY



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**"A deep preoccupation about her health made Mrs. Royce like a woman who has a hidden grief, or is preyed upon by a consuming regret. It wrapped her in a kind of insensibility. She lived differently from other people, and that fact made her distrustful and reserved. Only when she was at the sanatorium, under the care of her idolized doctors, did she feel that she was understood and surrounded by sympathy."**

**— One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather**

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"[ . . . ] after each confinement the young mother had experienced an inexplicable despondency—seizures of grief that sent her wandering from room to room in a hand-wringing daze. [ . . . ] the pattern of postnatal depression repeated itself, and following the birth of her son, the mood of misery that descended never altogether lifted; it lingered like a cloud that might rain or might not."

In regard to his family, Mr. Clutter had just one serious cause for disquiet—his wife's health. She was "nervous," she suffered "little spells"—such were the sheltering expressions used by those close to her. Not that the truth concerning "poor Bonnie's afflictions" was in the least a secret; everyone knew she had been an on-and-off psychiatric patient the last half-dozen years. Yet even upon this shadowed terrain sunlight had very lately sparkled. The past Wednesday, returning from two weeks of treatment at the Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, her customary place of retirement, Mrs. Clutter had brought scarcely credible tidings to tell her husband; with joy she informed him that the source of her misery, so medical opinion had at last decreed, was not in her head but in her spine—it was physical, a matter of misplaced vertebrae. Of course, she must undergo an operation, and afterward—well, she would be her "old self" again. Was it possible—the tension, the withdrawals, the pillow-muted sobbing behind locked doors, all due to an out-of-order backbone? —In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

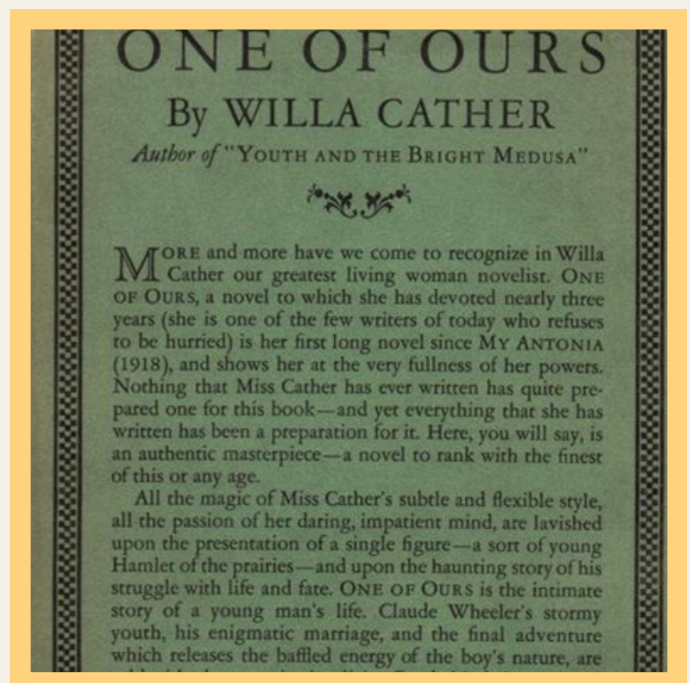
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"She knew "good days," and occasionally they accumulated into weeks, months, but even on the best of the good days, those days when she was otherwise her "old self," the affectionate and charming Bonnie her friends cherished, she could not summon the social vitality her husband's pyramiding activities required. [ . . . ] hers a private one that eventually wound through hospital corridors. But she was not without hope. Trust in God sustained her, and from time to time secular sources supplemented her faith in His forthcoming mercy; she read of a miracle medicine, heard of a new therapy, or, as most recently, decided to believe that [ . . . ] sense of adequacy and usefulness," [ . . . ]

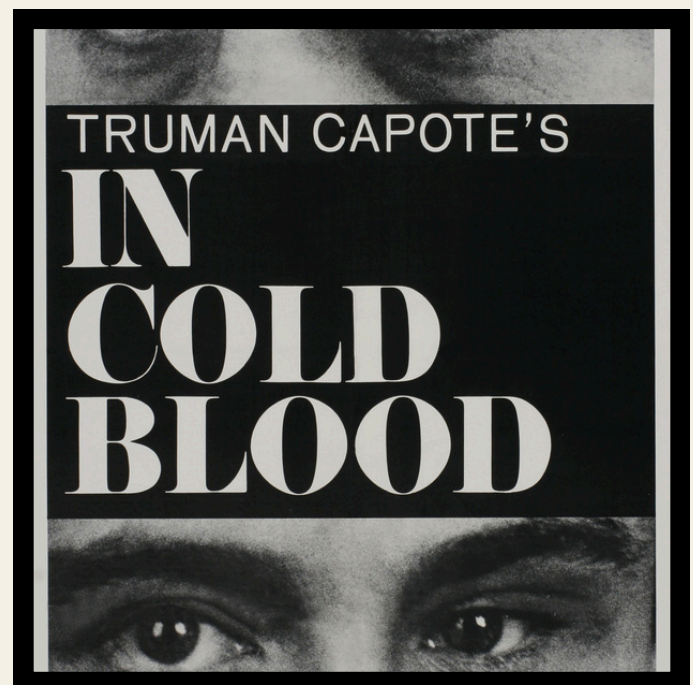


“Three months later, on a grey December day, Claude was seated in the passenger coach of an accommodation freight train, going home for the holidays. He had a pile of books on the seat beside him and was reading, when the train stopped with a jerk that sent the volumes tumbling to the floor. He picked them up and looked at his watch. It was noon. The freight would lie here for an hour or more, until the east-bound passenger went by. Claude left the car and walked slowly up the platform toward the station. A bundle of little spruce trees had been flung off near the freight office, and sent a smell of Christmas into the cold air. A few drays stood about, the horses blanketed. The steam from the locomotive made a spreading, deep-violet stain as it curled up against the grey sky. Claude went into a restaurant across the street and ordered an oyster stew. The proprietress, a plump little German woman with a frizzed bang, always remembered him from trip to trip.” — *One of Ours* by Willa Sibert Cather

“Down by the depot, the postmistress, a gaunt woman who wears a rawhide jacket and denims and cowboy boots, presides over a falling-apart post office. The depot itself, with its peeling sulphur-colored paint, is equally melancholy; the Chief, the Super-Chief, the El Capitan go by every day, but these celebrated expresses never pause there. No passenger trains do—only an occasional freight. Up on the highway, there are two filling stations, one of which doubles as a meagerly supplied grocery store, while the other does extra duty as a café—Hartman’s Café, where Mrs. Hartman, the proprietress, dispenses sandwiches, coffee, soft drinks, and 3.2 beer.” —In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote



(01)



(02)

He liked to think that such geniality was common only in what he broadly called "the West."

“The village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of western Kansas, a lonesome area that other Kansans call “out there.” Some seventy miles east of the Colorado border, the countryside, with its hard blue skies and desert-clear air, has an atmosphere that is rather more Far West than Middle West.” —In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote





The opening of Willa's novel Death Comes for the Archbishop follows the path up with references to the "Jornada del Muerto" of a red rock terrain and which is near my home in New Mexico. It is the description of the bishop arriving. (My father was a minister.)

"The blunted pyramid, repeated so many hundred times upon his retina and crowding down upon him in the heat, had confused the traveller, who was sensitive to the shape of things. "Mais c'est fantastique!" he muttered, closing his eyes to rest them from the intrusive omnipresence of the triangle. When he opened his eyes again, his glance immediately fell upon one juniper which differed in shape from the others. It was not a thick-growing cone, but a naked, twisted trunk, perhaps ten feet high, and at the top it parted into two lateral, flat-lying branches, with a little crest of green in the centre, just above the cleavage. Living vegetation could not present more faithfully the form of the Cross. The traveller dismounted, drew from his pocket a much worn book, and baring his head, knelt at the foot of the cruciform tree."

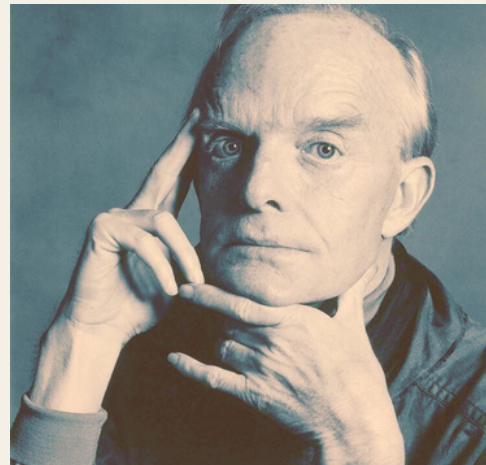
That road is just miles outside my front door. There's a 400 year old Juniper tree there.





Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

## Willa's Garden of Eden



"Claude was frowning out into **the flaming garden**. He had not heard a word of her reply. "Why didn't you keep me from making a fool of myself?" he asked in a low voice." — One of Ours by Willa Sibert Cather

"They **walked together along a dusty road that ran between half-ripe wheat fields, bordered with poplar trees**. The wild morning-glories and Queen Anne's lace that grew by the road-side were still shining with dew. **A fresh breeze stirred the bearded grain**, parting it in furrows and fanning out streaks of crimson poppies."

Pear trees, trained like vines against the wall, did not astonish them half so much as the sight of the familiar cottonwood, growing everywhere. Claude thought he had never before realized how beautiful this tree could be. In verdant little valleys, along the clear rivers, the cottonwoods waved and rustled; and on the little islands, of which there were so many in these rivers, they stood in pointed masses, seemed to grip deep into the soil and to rest easy, as if they had been there for ever and would be there for ever more. At home, all about Frankfort, the farmers were cutting down their cottonwoods because they were "common," planting maples and ash trees to struggle along in their stead. Never mind; the cottonwoods were good enough for France, and they were good enough for him! He felt they were a real bond between him and this people.

"After drinking the glass of milk and putting on a fleece-lined cap, Mr. Clutter **carried his apple with him when he went outdoors** to examine the morning. It was ideal apple-eating weather; the whitest sunlight descended from the purest sky, and an easterly wind rustled, without ripping loose, the last of the leaves on the Chinese elms. Autumns **reward western Kansas for the evils** that the remaining seasons impose: winter's rough Colorado winds and hip-high, sheep-slaughtering snows; the slushes and the strange land fogs of spring; and summer, when even crows seek the puny shade, and the tawny infinitude of wheatstalks bristle, **blaze**.

—In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

*Truman makes every attempt to tie Holcomb, Kansas, to nearby Garden City, just as Willa establishes a 'Paradise Lost' of Eden*

The distance between Olathe, a suburb of Kansas City, and Holcomb, which might be called a suburb of Garden City, is approximately four hundred miles.





## "Lovely Creek"

**"The stream trickled by under the willow roots with a cool, persuasive sound. Claude and Ernest lay in the shade, their coats under their heads, talking very little. Occasionally a motor dashed along the road toward town, and a cloud of dust and a smell of gasoline blew in over the creek bottom; but for the most part the silence of the warm, lazy summer noon was undisturbed."**

"Like the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, drama, in the shape of exceptional happenings, had never stopped there. The inhabitants of the village, numbering two hundred and seventy, were satisfied that this should be so, quite content to exist inside ordinary life—"

*Willa's town is caught in conventionalty, mediocrity. It's leading to Claude leaving to enlist.*

*Claude Wheeler is denied his desires to go to the university. He knows the farming very well, but it is his father who owns the place. It is not his own.*

"haphazard hamlet bounded on the south by a brown stretch of the Arkansas"

**Ernest's wagon was standing under the shade of some willow trees, on a little sandy bottom half enclosed by a loop of the creek which curved like a horseshoe. Claude threw himself on the sand beside the stream and wiped the dust from his hot face. He felt he had now closed the door on his disagreeable morning.**

*This is the spectrum of Willa's story, the dancing in France in the liberated town that ends in murder, to Baylis's accounting the money in Lovely Creek.*



## "River Valley Ranch"

Anyone who has made the coast-to-coast journey across America, whether by train or by car, has probably passed through Garden City, but it is reasonable to assume that few travelers remember the event. It seems just another fair-sized town in the middle—almost the exact middle—of the continental United States. Not that the inhabitants would tolerate such an opinion—perhaps rightly.

*Truman copies it for setting up the killers showing up.*

"[...] land leased with borrowed money, created, in embryo, River Valley Farm (a name justified by the Arkansas River's meandering presence but not, certainly, by any evidence of valley). It was an endeavor that several Finney County conservatives watched with show-us amusement—old-timers who had been fond of baiting the youthful county agent on the subject of his university notions: "That's fine, Herb. You always know what's best to do on the other fellow's land. Plant this. Terrace that. But you might say a sight different if the place was your own." They were mistaken; the upstart's experiments succeeded—partly because, in the beginning years, he labored eighteen hours a day.

"viewed each other strangely, and as strangers."

*In Lovely Creek Willa's characters cannot be clear with one another or fond. It is another break in Claude leading him to leave for the war.*

At one end of the town stands a stark old stucco structure, the roof of which supports an electric sign—DANCE—but the dancing has ceased and the advertisement has been dark for several years. Nearby is another building with an irrelevant sign, this one in flaking gold on a dirty window—HOLCOMB BANK.



"He sighed and turned away. If his mother had been the least bit unctuous, like Brother Weldon, he could have told her many enlightening facts. **But she was so trusting and childlike, so faithful by nature and so ignorant of life as he knew it, that it was hopeless to argue with her. He could shock her and make her fear the world even more than she did, but he could never make her understand.** His mother was **old-fashioned**. She thought dancing and card-playing dangerous pastimes—**only rough people did such things** when she was a girl in Vermont—and "worldliness" only another word for wickedness. According to her conception of education, one should learn, **not think**; and above all, **one must not enquire**. The history of the human race, as it lay behind one, was already explained; and so was its destiny, which lay before. The **mind should remain obediently** within the theological concept of **history**."

"Bayliss was seated in the **little glass cage where he did his writing and bookkeeping**. He nodded at Claude from his desk."

"Suddenly a shot rang out above the chatter, and an old woman in a white cap screamed and tumbled over on the pavement,—rolled about, kicking indecorously with both hands and feet. A second crack,—the little girl who stood beside Hicks, eating chocolate, threw out her hands, ran a few steps, and fell, blood and brains oozing out in her yellow hair. The people began screaming and running. The Americans looked this way and that; ready to dash, but not knowing where to go. Another shot, and Captain Maxey fell on one knee, blushed furiously and sprang up, only to fall again,—ashy white, with the leg of his trousers going red."

"When, after eight days, the Americans had orders to march, there was mourning in every house. On their last night in town, the officers received pressing invitations to the **dance in the square**. Claude went for a few moments, and looked on. David was dancing every dance, but Hicks was nowhere to be seen. The poor fellow had been out of everything. Claude went over to the church to see whether he might be moping in the graveyard."



**WILLA CATHER ON THE BALCONY OF THE LA FONDA HOTEL WITH A VIEW DOWN SAN FRANCISCO STREET IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO, WITH THE BACKGROUND OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. FRANCIS. THE CATHEDRAL WAS BUILT BY ARCHBISHOP LAMY, PROTOTYPE FOR CATHER'S FATHER LATOUR IN HER 1927 NOVEL "DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP." EDITH LEWIS MAY HAVE TAKEN THIS PHOTOGRAPH DURING ONE OF THEIR TRIPS TO THE SOUTHWEST IN 1925 OR 1926.**







*"The Voyage of the Archises": The soldiers ship across the Atlantic*

The company formed for roll-call at one end of the shed, with their packs and rifles.

By seven o'clock all the troops were aboard, and the men were allowed on deck. For the first time Claude saw the profile of New York City, rising thin and gray against an opal-coloured morning sky. The day had come on hot and misty. The sun, though it was now high, was a red ball, streaked across with purple clouds. The tall buildings, of which he had heard so much, looked unsubstantial and illusory,—mere shadows of grey and pink and blue that might dissolve with the mist and fade away in it. The boys were disappointed. They were Western men, accustomed to the hard light of high altitudes, and they wanted to see the city clearly; they couldn't make anything of these uneven towers that rose dimly through the vapour."

They agreed it was a shame they could not have had a day in New York before they sailed away from it, and that they would feel foolish in Paris when they had to admit they had never so much as walked up Broadway.

*The soldiers' effects*

"You'd better brush up on it if you want to do anything with French girls. I hear your M.P.'s are very strict. You must be able to toss the word the minute you see a skirt, and make your date before the guard gets onto you." "I suppose French girls haven't any scruples?" Claude remarked carelessly. Victor shrugged his narrow shoulders. "I haven't found that girls have many, anywhere. When we Canadians were training in England, we all had our week-end wives. I believe the girls in Crystal Lake used to be more or less fussy,—but that's long ago and far away. You won't have any difficulty."

if we happen in London together. If I'm there, you can always find me. Her address is mine. It will really be a great thing for you to meet a woman like Maisie. She'll be nice to you, because you're my friend."

*Traveling to Holcomb, Kansas in the 'black' Chevrolet*

The distance between Olathe, a suburb of Kansas City, and Holcomb, which might be called a suburb of Garden City, is approximately four hundred miles.

Truman Capote. In *Cold Blood & Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Kindle Edition.

By midafternoon the black Chevrolet had reached Emporia, Kansas—a large town, almost a city, and a safe place, so the occupants of the car had decided, to do a bit of shopping. They parked on a side street, then wandered about until a suitably crowded variety store presented itself. The first purchase was a pair of rubber gloves; these were for Perry, who, unlike Dick, had neglected to bring old gloves of his own."

"I'm sorry, sir, I've made careful search for your luggage, and it's not to be found, sir."

[...]

"You can take this shirt out and have it laundered and bring it back to me tonight. I've no linen in my bag."

*Deep in the living quarters of the ship*

"When Claude and Fanning and Lieutenant Bird were undressing in their narrow quarters that night, the fourth berth was still unclaimed. They were in their bunks and almost asleep, when the missing man came in and unceremoniously turned on the light."

They had not quarreled, there had been no overt falling-out, nothing had happened except that Bob, who was sixteen, had started "going with a girl," which meant that Kenyon, a year younger and still very much the adolescent bachelor, could no longer count on his companionship. Bob told him, "When you're my age, you'll feel different. I used to think the same as you: Women—so what? But then you get to talking to some woman, and it's mighty nice. You'll see."

*Claude's new friend Victor Morse has a girlfriend in London, has invited Claude to come meet her and join them for dinner.*



If Bob was unavailable, then he would rather be alone, for in temperament he was not in the least Mr. Clutter's son but rather Bonnie's child, a sensitive and reticent boy. His contemporaries thought him "stand-offish," yet forgave him, saying, "Oh, Kenyon. It's just that he lives in a world of his own."

"After his interview with Mr. Royce, Claude drove directly to the mill house. As he came up the shady road, he saw with disappointment the flash of two white dresses instead of one, **moving about in the sunny flower garden**. The visitor was Gladys Farmer. This was her vacation time. She had walked out to the mill in the cool of the morning to spend the day with Enid. Now they were starting off to gather water-cresses, **and had stopped in the garden to smell the heliotrope**. On this **scorching afternoon the purple sprays gave out a fragrance that hung over the flower-bed and brushed their cheeks like a warm breath**. The girls looked up at the same moment and recognized Claude."

The next few weeks were busy ones on the farm. Before the wheat harvest was over, Nat Wheeler packed his leather **trunk**, put on his "store clothes," and set off to take Tom Welton back to Maine. During his absence Ralph began to **outfit for life** in Yucca county. Ralph liked being a great man with the Frankfort merchants, and he had never before had such an opportunity as this. He bought a new shot gun, saddles, bridles, boots, long and short storm coats, **a set of furniture for his own room, a fireless cooker, another music machine**, and had them shipped to Colorado. His mother, who did not like phonograph music, and detested phonograph monologues, begged him to take the machine at home, but he assured her that she would be dull without it on winter evenings. He wanted one of the latest make, put out under the name of a great American **inventor**.

Together, Kenyon and Nancy had made a paint-splattered attempt to deprive the **basement room of its unremovable dourness, and neither was aware of failure**. In fact, they both thought their den a triumph and a blessing—Nancy because it was a place where she **could entertain "the gang"** without disturbing her mother, and Kenyon because here he could be alone, free to bang, saw, and mess with his **"inventions,"** the newest of which was **an electric deep-dish frying pan**. Adjoining the den was a furnace room, which contained a tool-littered table piled with some of his other works-in-progress—an amplifying unit, **an elderly wind-up Victrola** that he was restoring to service.

He wanted to tidy up his mother's flower garden, a treasured patch of disheveled foliage that grew beneath her bedroom window. spade—Paul Helm, the husband of the housekeeper. "Seen that car?" Mr. Helm asked. Yes, Kenyon had seen a car in the driveway—a gray Buick, standing outside the entrance to his father's office. "Thought you might know who it was." "Not unless it's Mr. Johnson. Dad said he was expecting him." Mr. Helm (the late Mr. Helm; he died of a stroke the following March) was a somber man in his late fifties whose withdrawn manner veiled a nature keenly curious and watchful; he liked to know what was going on. "Which Johnson?" "The insurance fellow." Mr. Helm grunted. "Your dad must be laying in a stack of it. That car's been here I'd say three hours." The chill of oncoming dusk shivered through the air, and though the sky was still deep blue, lengthening shadows emanated from the garden's tall chrysanthemum stalks; Nancy's cat frolicked among them, catching its paws in the twine with which Kenyon and the old man were now tying plants. Suddenly, Nancy herself came jogging across the fields aboard fat Babe—Babe, returning from her Saturday treat, a bathe in the river. Teddy, the dog,

Kenyon had built the chest himself: a mahogany hope chest, lined with cedar, which he intended to give Beverly as a wedding present. Now, working on it in the so-called den in the basement, he applied a last coat of varnish. The furniture of the den, a cement-floored room that ran the length of the house, consisted almost entirely of examples of his carpentry (shelves, tables, stools, a ping-pong table) and Nancy's needlework (chintz slip covers that rejuvenated a decrepit couch, curtains, pillows bearing legends: HAPPY? and YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO LIVE HERE BUT IT HELPS). Together, Kenyon and Nancy had made a paint-splattered attempt to deprive the basement room of its unremovable dourness, and neither was aware of failure. In fact, they both thought their den a triumph and a blessing—Nancy because it was a place where she could entertain "the gang" without disturbing her mother, and Kenyon because here he could be alone, free to bang, saw, and mess with his "inventions," the newest of which was an electric deep-dish frying pan. Adjoining the den was a furnace room, which contained a tool-littered table piled with some of his other works-in-progress—an amplifying unit, an elderly wind-up Victrola that he was restoring to service.



The door still stood open, at the end of the corridor. Claude went down the steps until he could sight along the floor of the passage, into the front room. The shutters were closed in there, and the sunlight came through the slats. In the middle of the floor, between the door and the windows, stood a tall chest of drawers, with a mirror attached to the top. In the narrow space between the bottom of this piece of furniture and the floor, **he could see a pair of boots. It was possible there was but one man in the room**, shooting from behind his movable fort,—though there might be others hidden in the corners. "There's only one fellow in there, I guess. He's shooting from behind a big dresser in the middle of the room. Come on, one of you, we'll have to go in and get him." Willy Katz, the Austrian boy from the Omaha packing house, stepped up and stood beside him. "Now, Willy, we'll both go in at once; you jump to the right, and I to the left,—and one of us will jab him. He can't shoot both ways at once. Are you ready? All right—Now!"

Stepping into the street, he turned to shut the wooden door after him, and heard a soft stir in the dark tool-house at his elbow. From among the rakes and spades a child's frightened face was staring out at him. She was sitting on the ground with her lap full of baby kittens. He caught but a glimpse of her dull, pale face.

[...]

As the two soldiers left the table and started for the camp, Claude reached down into the tool house and took up one of the kittens, holding it out in the light to see it blink its eyes. The little girl, just coming out of the kitchen, uttered a shrill scream, a really terrible scream, and squatted down, covering her face with her hands. Madame Joubert came out to chide her. **"What is the matter with that child?"** Claude asked as they hurried out of the gate. "Do you suppose she was hurt, or abused in some way?" "Terrorized. She often screams like that at night. Haven't you heard her? They have to go and wake her, to stop it. **She doesn't speak any French; only Walloon. And she can't or won't learn, so they can't tell what goes on in her poor little head.**"

"No witnesses," he reminded Perry, for what seemed to Perry the millionth time. It rankled in him, the way Dick mouthed those two words, as though they solved every problem; it was stupid not to admit that there might be a witness they hadn't seen. "The ineffable happens, things do take a turn," he said. But Dick, smiling boastfully, boyishly, did not agree: "Get the bubbles out of your blood. Nothing can go wrong." No. Because the plan was Dick's, and from first footfall to final silence, flawlessly devised.

"Kenyon?" Nancy said. **"Do you think Tracy will be able to talk? By Thanksgiving?"** Tracy, not yet a year old, was her nephew, the son of Eveanna, the sister to whom she felt particularly close. (Beverly was Kenyon's favorite.) **"It would thrill me to pieces to hear him** say 'Aunt Nancy.' Or 'Uncle Kenyon.' Wouldn't you like to hear him say that? I mean, don't you love being an uncle? Kenyon? Good grief, why can't you ever answer me?"





*The Voyage to France, Victor  
Morse, and the cathedral in  
Rouen.*

*The driving through Kansas,  
stopping at a catholic place, a  
shift in friends, a church*

A day came at last when Claude was wakened from sleep by a sense of stillness. He sprang up with a dazed fear that some one had died; but Fanning lay in his berth, breathing quietly. **Something caught his eye through the porthole,—a great grey shoulder of land** standing up in the pink light of dawn, powerful and strangely still after the distressing instability of the sea. Pale trees and long, low fortifications... **close grey buildings** with red roofs... little sailboats bounding seaward... up on the cliff a gloomy fortress.

The next morning when Claude **arrived at the hospital to see Fanning**, he found every one too busy to take account of him. The courtyard was full of ambulances, and a long line of camions waited outside the gate. A train-load of wounded Americans had come in, sent back from evacuation hospitals to await transportation home. [...] Looking in through the glass door, Claude noticed a young man **writing at a desk enclosed by a railing**. Something about his figure, about the way he held his head, **was familiar**. [...] Presently, as if he felt a curious eye upon him, the young man paused in his rapid writing [...] After blowing out deep clouds of smoke until his cigarette was gone, he sat down to his ledger and frowned at the page in a way which said he was too busy to talk. [...] "Oh, yes! He's a star patient here, a psychopathic case. [...] This psychopath, Phillips, takes a great interest in him and keeps him here to observe him. He's writing a book about him. [...] cousins. His photographs and belongings were lost when he was hurt, all except **a bunch of letters** he had in his pocket. [...] The doctor has the letters. [...] They call him 'the lost American' here." "He seems to be doing some sort of clerical work," Claude observed discreetly. [...] Claude walked on past the church of St. Jacques. Last night already seemed like a dream, but it haunted him. **He wished he could do something to help that boy**; help him get away from the doctor who was writing a book about him, and the girl who wanted him to make the most of himself; get away and be lost altogether in what he had been lucky enough to find. **All day, as Claude came and went, he looked among the crowds for that** young face, so compassionate and tender.

"I saw you talking to that wry-necked boy."

The black Chevrolet was again parked, this time in front of a **Catholic hospital** on the outskirts of Emporia. [...] While Perry waited in the car, **he had gone into the hospital** to try and buy a pair of black stockings from a nun. This rather unorthodox method of obtaining them had been **Perry's inspiration**; nuns, he had argued, were certain to have a supply. [...] The compulsively superstitious person is also very often a **serious believer in fate**; that was the case with Perry. He was here, and embarked on the present errand, not because he wished to be but because fate had arranged the matter; [...] The reason was that several weeks earlier he had learned that on Thursday, November 12, **another of his former cellmates** [...] During the first of his three years in prison, Perry had observed Willie-Jay from a distance, with interest but with apprehension; if one wished to be thought **a tough specimen, intimacy with Willie-Jay seemed unwise**. **He was the chaplain's clerk**, a slender Irishman with prematurely gray hair and gray, melancholy eyes. **His tenor voice was the glory of the prison's choir**. Even Perry, though he was contemptuous of any exhibition of piety, felt "upset" **when he heard Willie-Jay sing "The Lord's Prayer"**; the hymn's **grave language sung in so credulous a spirit** moved him, **made him wonder a little** at the justice of his contempt. Eventually, prodded by a **slightly alerted religious curiosity**, he approached Willie-Jay, and **the chaplain's clerk, at once responsive**, thought he **divined in the cripple-legged body builder** with the misty gaze and the prim, smoky voice "a poet, something rare and savable." **An ambition to "bring this boy to God" engulfed him**. His hopes of succeeding accelerated when one day Perry **produced a pastel drawing** he had made—a large, in no way technically **naïve portrait of Jesus**. Lansing's Protestant chaplain, the Reverend James Post, so valued it that **he hung it in his office, where it hangs still: a slick and pretty Saviour**, with Willie-Jay's full lips and grieving eyes. **The picture was the climax of Perry's** never very earnest **spiritual quest**, quest, and, ironically, the termination of it; he adjudged his Jesus "a piece of hypocrisy," an attempt to "fool and betray" Willie-Jay, for he was **as unconvinced of God as ever**.

Claude took hold of the fence pickets between them with both hands. "It will do good! **Didn't I tell you there was missionary work to be done right here? Is that why you've been so stand-offish with me the last few years, because you thought I was an atheist?"** "I never, you know, liked Ernest Havel," she murmured.



All the same, Dick was full of fun, and he was shrewd, a realist, he "cut through things," there were no clouds in his head or straw in his hair.

There was plenty of deck room, now that so many men were ill either from seasickness or the epidemic, and sometimes he and Albert Usher had the stormy side of the boat almost to themselves. The Marine was the best sort of companion for these gloomy days; steady, quiet, self-reliant. And he, too, was always looking forward. As for Victor Morse, Claude was growing positively fond of him.

Claude seemed to himself to be leading a double life these days. When he was working over Fanning, or was down in the hold helping to take care of the sick soldiers, he had no time to think,—did mechanically the next thing that came to hand. But when he had an hour to himself on deck, the tingling sense of ever-widening freedom flashed up in him again. The weather was a continual adventure; he had never known any like it before. The fog, and rain, the grey sky and the lonely grey stretches of the ocean were like something he had imagined long ago—memories of old sea stories read in childhood, perhaps—and they kindled a warm spot in his heart. Here on the Anchises he seemed to begin where childhood had left off. The ugly hiatus between had closed up. Years of his life were blotted out in the fog. This fog which had been at first depressing had become a shelter; a tent moving through space, hiding one from all that had been before, giving one a chance to correct one's ideas about life and to plan the future. The past was physically shut off; that was his illusion. He had already travelled a great many more miles than were told off by the ship's log.

"She feels as if God had saved him from some horrible suffering, some horrible end. For as she reads, she thinks those slayers of themselves were all so like him; they were the ones who had hoped extravagantly,—who in order to do what they did had to hope extravagantly, and to believe passionately. And they found they had hoped and believed too much. But one she knew, who could ill bear disillusion... safe, safe."

Late in the morning Claude found himself alone before the Church of St. Owen. He was hunting for the Cathedral, and this looked as if it might be the right place. [ . . . ] When he reached the choir he turned, and saw, far behind him, the rose window, with its purple heart. As he stood staring, hat in hand, as still as the stone figures in the chapels, a great bell, up aloft, began to strike the hour in its deep, melodious throat; [ . . . ] While he was vainly trying to think about architecture, some recollection of old astronomy lessons brushed across his brain,—something about stars whose light travels through space for hundreds of years before it reaches the earth and the human eye. The purple and crimson and peacock-green of this window had been shining quite as long as that before it got to him.... He felt distinctly that it went through him and farther still.

As they walked up and down in the rain, Victor told his story briefly. When he had finished High School, he had gone into his father's bank at Crystal Lake as bookkeeper.

*The basis of Claude's story:*

""You are a man of extreme passion, a hungry man not quite sure where his appetite lies, a deeply frustrated man striving to project his individuality against a backdrop of rigid conformity. You exist in a half-world suspended between two superstructures, one self-expression and the other self-destruction."

Claude knew, and everybody else knew, seemingly, that there was something wrong with him. He had been unable to conceal his discontent. Mr. Wheeler was afraid he was one of those visionary fellows who make unnecessary difficulties for themselves and other people. Mrs. Wheeler thought the trouble with her son was that he had not yet found his Saviour. Bayliss was convinced that his brother was a moral rebel, that behind his reticence and his guarded manner he concealed the most dangerous opinions. The neighbours liked Claude, but they laughed at him, and said it was a good thing his father was well fixed. Claude was aware that his energy, instead of accomplishing something, was spent in resisting unalterable conditions, and in unavailing efforts to subdue his own nature. When he thought he had at last got himself in hand, a moment would undo the work of days; in a flash he would be transformed from a wooden post into a living boy. He would spring to his feet, turn over quickly in bed, or stop short in his walk, because the old belief flashed up in him with an intense kind of hope, an intense kind of pain,—the conviction that there was something splendid about life, if he could but find it.



After Perry's parole, four months elapsed, months of rattling around in a fifth-hand, hundred-dollar Ford, rolling from Reno to Las Vegas, from Bellingham, Washington, to Buhl, Idaho, and it was in Buhl, where he had found temporary work as a truck driver, that Dick's letter reached him [...]

**The Battalion entrained at Arras. Lieutenant Colonel Scott had orders to proceed to the railhead, and then advance on foot into the Argonne.**

In the solitary, comfortless course of his recent driftings, Perry had over and over again reviewed this indictment, and had decided it was unjust. He did give a damn—but who had ever given a damn about him? His father? Yes, up to a point. A girl or two—but that was "a long story." No one else except Willie-Jay himself. And only Willie-Jay had ever recognized his worth, his potentialities, had acknowledged that he was not just an undersized, overmuscled half-breed, had seen him, for all the moralizing, as he saw himself—"exceptional," "rare," "artistic." In Willie-Jay his vanity had found support, his sensibility shelter, and the four-month exile from this high-carat appreciation had made it more alluring than any dream of buried gold.

[...] destination. "He's headed East," the chaplain said. "To fine opportunities. A decent job, and a home with some good people who are willing to help him." And Perry, hanging up, had felt "dizzy with anger and disappointment."

Take Kenyon. Right now he kind of leans toward being an engineer, or a scientist, but you can't tell me my boy's not a born rancher. God willing, he'll run this place some day.

**Nat Wheeler didn't care where his son went to school**, but he, too, took it for granted that the religious institution was cheaper than the State University; and that because the students there looked shabbier they were less likely to become too knowing, and to be offensively intelligent at home. However, he referred the matter to Bayliss one day when he was in town. "Claude's got some notion he wants to go to the State University this winter." Bayliss at once assumed that wise, better-be-prepared-for-the-worst expression which had made him seem shrewd and seasoned from boyhood. "I don't see any point in changing unless he's got good reasons." "Well, he thinks that bunch of parsons at the Temple don't make first-rate teachers." "I expect they can teach Claude quite a bit yet. If he gets in with that fast football crowd at the State, there'll be no holding him." For some reason Bayliss detested football. "This athletic business is a good deal over-done. **If Claude wants exercise, he might put in the fall wheat.**"

**As soon as he reached Lincoln in September, he had matriculated at the State University for special work in European History.**

Between haying and harvest that summer Ralph and Mr. Wheeler drove to Denver in the big car, **leaving Claude and Dan to cultivate the corn. When they returned Mr. Wheeler announced that he had a secret.** After several days of reticence, during which he shut himself up in the sitting-room writing letters, and passed mysterious words and winks with Ralph at table, **he disclosed a project which swept away all Claude's plans and purposes.**

**Deeper and deeper into flowery France! That was the sentence Claude kept saying over to himself to the jolt of the wheels, as the long troop train went southward, on the second day after he and his company had left the port of debarkation. [...]** The second night the boys were to spend in Rouen, and they would have the following day to look about [...]

When Claude joined his company at the station, they had the laugh on him. They had found the Cathedral,—and a statue of Richard the Lion-hearted, over the spot where the lion-heart itself was buried; "the identical organ," fat Sergeant Hicks assured him. **But they were all glad to leave Rouen.**

*Claude's relationship with  
Gerhardt, the violinist*

**Claude had been ashamed of Tod Fanning**, who was always showing himself a sap-head, and **who would never have got a commission** if his uncle hadn't been a Congressman. But the moment he met Lieutenant Gerhardt's eye, **something like jealousy flamed up in him. He felt in a flash that he suffered by comparison** with the new officer; that he must be on his guard and must not let himself be patronized.

As they were leaving the Colonel's office together, Gerhardt asked him whether he had got his billet. Claude replied that after the men were in their quarters, he would look out for something for himself. **The young man smiled. "I'm afraid you may have difficulty. The people about here have been overworked, keeping soldiers, and they are not willing as they once were. I'm with a nice old couple over in the village. I'm almost sure I can get you in there. If you'll come along, we'll speak to them, before some one else is put off on them."**



"If Ralph is to live in Colorado, and you are to be away from home half of the time, I don't see what is to become of this place," murmured Mrs. Wheeler, still in the dark. "Not necessary for you to see, Evangeline," her husband replied, stretching his big frame until the rocking chair creaked under him. "It will be Claude's business to look after that."

"Know what they say about you, Herb? Say, 'Since haircuts went to a dollar-fifty, Herb writes the barber a check.' " "That's correct," replied Mr. Clutter. Like royalty, he was famous for never carrying cash. "That's the way I do business. When those tax fellows come poking around, canceled checks are your best friend." With the check written but not yet signed, he swiveled back in his desk chair and seemed to ponder. The agent, a stocky, somewhat bald, rather informal man named Bob Johnson, hoped his client wasn't having last-minute doubts. Herb was hardheaded, a slow man to make a deal [ . . . ]"

Bonnie by herself—Bonnie wouldn't be able to carry on an operation like this . . ."

She had left the sitting-room because she was afraid Claude might get angry and say something hard to his father, and because she couldn't bear to see him hectored. Claude had always found life hard to live; he suffered so much over little things,—and she suffered with him. For herself, she never felt disappointments. Her husband's careless decisions did not disconcert her. If he declared that he would not plant a garden at all this year, she made no protest. It was Mahailey who grumbled. If he felt like eating roast beef and went out and killed a steer, she did the best she could to take care of the meat, and if some of it spoiled she tried not to worry. When she was not lost in religious meditation, she was likely to be thinking about some one of the old books she read over and over. Her personal life was so far removed from the scene of her daily activities that rash and violent men could not break in upon it. But where Claude was concerned, she lived on another plane, dropped into the lower air, tainted with human breath and pulsating with poor, blind, passionate human feelings.

The men kept the phonograph going; as soon as one record buzzed out, somebody put in another. Once, when a new tune began, Claude saw David look up from his paper with a curious expression. He listened for a moment with a half-contemptuous smile, then frowned and began sketching in his map again. Something about his momentary glance of recognition made Claude wonder whether he had particular associations with the air,—melancholy, but beautiful, Claude thought. He got up and went over to change the record himself this time. He took out the disk, and holding it up to the light, read the inscription: "Meditation from Thais—Violin solo—David Gerhardt." When they were going back along the communication trench in the rain, wading single file, Claude broke the silence abruptly. "That was one of your records they played tonight, that violin solo, wasn't it?"

Claude would have liked to take Ernest to the hotel for dinner. He had more than enough money in his pockets; and his father was a rich farmer. In the Wheeler family a new thrasher or a new automobile was ordered without a question, but it was considered extravagant to go to a hotel for dinner. If his father or Bayliss heard that he had been there—and Bayliss heard everything they would say he was putting on airs, and would get back at him. He tried to excuse his cowardice to himself by saying that he was dirty and smelled of the hides; but in his heart he knew that he did not ask Ernest to go to the hotel with him because he had been so brought up that it would be difficult for him to do this simple thing. He made some purchases at the fruit stand and the cigar counter, and then hurried out along the dusty road toward the pumping station.

With the aid of his guitar, Perry had sung himself into a happier humor. He knew the lyrics of some two hundred hymns and ballads—a repertoire ranging from "The Old Rugged Cross" to Cole Porter—and, in addition to the guitar, he could play the harmonica, the accordion, the banjo, and the xylophone. In one of his favorite theatrical fantasies, his stage name was Perry O'Parsons, a star who billed himself as "The One-Man Symphony."

He wished he could ever get David to talk about his profession, and wondered what he looked like on a concert platform, playing his violin.

Mlle. Claire went to the piano. David frowned and began to tune the violin. Madame Fleury called the old servant and told him to light the sticks that lay in the fireplace. She took the armchair at the right of the hearth and motioned Claude to a seat on the left. The little boy kept his stool at the other end of the room. Mlle. Claire began the orchestral introduction to the Saint-Saens concerto.



After dinner, when they went into the salon, Madame Fleury asked David whether he would like to see Rene's violin again, and nodded to the little boy. He slipped away and returned carrying the case, which he placed on the table. He opened it carefully and took off the velvet cloth, as if this was his peculiar office, then handed the instrument to Gerhardt. David turned it over under the candles, telling Madame Fleury that he would have known it anywhere, Rene's wonderful Amati, **almost too exquisite in tone for the concert hall, like a woman who is too beautiful for the stage.** The family stood round and listened to his praise with evident satisfaction. Madame Fleury told him that Lucien was très sérieux with his music, that his master was well pleased with him, and when his hand was a little larger he would be allowed to play upon Rene's violin. Claude watched the little boy as he stood looking at the instrument in David's hands; in each of his big black eyes a candle flame was reflected, as if some steady fire were actually burning there. "What is it, Lucien?" his mother asked. "If Monsieur David would be so good as to play before I must go to bed—" he murmured entreatingly.

From the car's glove compartment Perry fetched a pint bottle containing a ready-mixed compound of orange flavoring and vodka. They passed the bottle to and fro. Though dusk had established itself, Dick, doing a steady sixty miles an hour, was still driving without headlights, but then the road was straight, the country was as level as a lake, and other cars were seldom sighted. This was "out there"—or getting near it. "Christ!" said Perry, glaring at the landscape, flat and limitless under the sky's cold, lingering green—empty and lonesome except for the far-between flickerings of farmhouse lights.

"Oh, there'll be a great deal of weather before we get over, and damned little of anything else!" He drew a bottle from under his pillow. "Have a nip?" "I don't mind if I do," Claude put out his hand.

Usher frowned at the gilded path on the water where the sun lay half submerged, like a big, watchful eye, closing.

Singing, and the thought of doing so in front of an audience, was another mesmeric way of whittling hours. He always used the same mental scenery—a night club in Las Vegas, which happened to be his home town. It was an elegant room filled with celebrities excitedly focused on the sensational new star rendering his famous, backed-by-violins version of "I'll Be Seeing You" and encoring with his latest self-composed ballad:

Every April flights of parrots  
Fly overhead, red and green,  
Green and tangerine.  
I see them fly, I hear them high,  
Singing parrots bringing April spring . . ."

**The birds, that always came to life at dusk and dawn, began to sing, flying home from somewhere.**

*Willa often uses parrots in her work, and according to scholar Merrill Maguire Skaggs, she often alludes to Gustave Flaubert's parrots, as in his story "A Simple Heart" where a vision of a parrot is a religious experience as the owner dies:*

**"A blue vapour rose in Félicité's room. She opened her nostrils and inhaled it with a mystic sensuousness; then she closed her lids. Her lips smiled. The beats of her heart grew fainter and fainter, and vaguer, like a fountain giving out, like an echo dying away;—and when she exhaled her last breath, she thought she saw in the half-opened heavens a gigantic parrot hovering above her head."**

--"A Simple Heart" by Gustave Flaubert

By this time the sun had disappeared, and all over the west the yellow sky came down evenly, like a gold curtain, on the still sea that seemed to have solidified into a slab of dark blue stone,— not a twinkle on its immobile surface. Across its dusky smoothness were two long smears of pale green, like a robin's egg.

(Page 142).



**"Women like her simply don't exist in your part of the world," the aviator murmured, as he snapped the photograph case. "She's a linguist and musician and all that. With her, every-day living is a fine art.** Life, as she says, is what one makes it. In itself, it's nothing. Where you came from it's nothing—a sleeping sickness."

A twitch of feeling, something quite genuine, passed over the air-man's boyish face, and his rather small red mouth compressed sharply. "Yes, a woman I want you to meet. Here," twitching his chin over his high collar, "I'll write Maisie's address on my card: Introducing Lieutenant Wheeler, A.E.F.' That's all you'll need.

"Yes, I have," said Dick, who claimed still to be in love with his honey-blond first wife though she had remarried.

*Claude is still in love with Gladys even though he married Enid.*

The Kansas band **played a solemn march, the Swedish quartette sang a hymn.** Many a man turned his face away when that brown sack was lowered into the cold, leaping indigo ridges that seemed so destitute of anything friendly to human kind. In a moment it was done, and they steamed on without him. The glittering walls of water kept rolling in, indigo, purple, **more brilliant than on the days of mild weather. The blinding sunlight did not temper the cold,** which cut the face and made the lungs ache. Landsmen began to have that miserable sense of being where they were never meant to be.

It was as clear as day—the moon was so bright—and cold and kind of windy; a lot of tumbleweed blowing about. But that's all I saw. Only now when I think back, I think somebody must have been hiding there. Maybe down among the trees. Somebody just waiting for me to leave."

Claude and Gladys were old friends, from their High School days, though they hadn't seen much of each other while he was going to college.

Claude was thinking, as he walked, of how he used to like to come to mill with his father. The whole process of milling was mysterious to him then; and the mill house and the miller's wife were mysterious; even Enid was, a little—until he got her down in the bright sun among the cattails. They used to play in the bins of clean wheat, watch the flour coming out of the hopper and get themselves covered with white dust.

And we could go to Japan. Sail right across the Pacific. It's been done—thousands of people have done it. I'm not conning you, Dick—you'd go for Japan. Wonderful, gentle people, with manners like flowers. Really considerate—not just out for your dough. And the women. You've never met a real woman . . ."

It will really be a great thing for you to meet a woman like Maisie. She'll be nice to you, because you're my friend." He went on to say that she had done everything in the world for him; had left her husband and given up her friends on his account. She now had a studio flat in Chelsea, where she simply waited his coming and dreaded his going. It was an awful life for her. She entertained other officers, of course, old acquaintances; but it was all camouflage. He was the man.

Dick switched on the radio; Perry switched it off. Ignoring Dick's protest, he strummed his guitar: "I came to the garden alone, while the dew was still on the roses, And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses . . ." A full moon was forming at the edge of the sky.

Taken one by one, they were ordinary fellows like himself. Yet here they were. And in this massing and movement of men there was nothing mean or common; he was sure of that. It was, from first to last, unforeseen, almost incredible. Four years ago, when the French were holding the Marne, the wisest men in the world had not conceived of this as possible; they had reckoned with every fortuity but this. **"Out of these stones can my Father raise up seed unto Abraham."**

**That evening some bad boys had come out from town and strewn the road near the mill with dozens of broken glass bottles, after which they hid in the wild plum bushes to wait for the fun.**

See, Nancy's the only girl I ever dated. I'd known her all my life; we'd gone to school together from the first grade. Always, as long as I can remember, she was pretty and popular—a person, **even when she was a little kid.** I mean, **she just made everybody feel good about themselves.** The first time I dated her was when we were in the eighth grade. Most of the boys in our class wanted to take her to the eighth-grade graduation dance, and I was surprised—I was pretty proud—when she said she would go with me. We were both twelve. My dad lent me the car, and I drove her to the dance. The more I saw her, the more I liked her; **the whole family, too—there wasn't any other family like them, not around here, not that I know of.** Mr. Clutter may have been **more strict about some things—religion,** and so on—but he never tried to make you feel he was right and you were wrong.



When they were classmates at the Frankfort High School, Gladys was Claude's aesthetic proxy. It wasn't the proper thing for a boy to be too clean, or too careful about his dress and manners. But if he selected a girl who was irreproachable in these respects, got his Latin and did his laboratory work with her, then all her personal attractions redounded to his credit. Gladys had seemed to appreciate the honour Claude did her, and it was not all on her own account that she wore such beautifully ironed muslin dresses when they went on botanical expeditions.

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Her distrust had communicated itself to her daughters and in countless little ways had coloured their feelings about life. They grew up under the shadow of being "different," and formed no close friendships. Gladys Farmer was the only Frankfort girl who had ever gone much to the mill house. Nobody was surprised when Caroline Royce, the older daughter, went out to China to be a missionary, or that her mother let her go without a protest. The Royce women were strange, anyhow, people said; with Carrie gone, they hoped Enid would grow up to be more like other folk. She dressed well, came to town often in her car, and was always ready to work for the church or the public library.

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"The travelers stopped for dinner at a restaurant in Great Bend. Perry, down to his last fifteen dollars, was ready to settle for root beer and a sandwich, but Dick said no, they needed a solid "tuck-in," and never mind the cost, the tab was his. They ordered two steaks medium rare, baked potatoes, French fries, fried onions, succotash, side dishes of macaroni and hominy, salad with Thousand Island dressing, cinnamon rolls, apple pie and ice cream, and coffee. To top it off, they visited a drugstore and selected cigars;"

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They were approaching the village, which lay on the edge of a wood,—a wood so large one could not see the end of it; it met the horizon with a ridge of pines. The village was but a single street. On either side ran clay-coloured walls, with painted wooden doors here and there, and green shutters. Claude's guide opened one of these gates, and they walked into a little sanded garden; the house was built round it on three sides. Under a cherry tree sat a woman in a black dress, sewing, a work table beside her.

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They skirted the northern rim of the town. No one was abroad at this nearly midnight hour, and nothing was open except a string of desolately brilliant service stations. Dick turned into one—Hurd's Phillips 66. A youngster appeared, and asked, "Fill her up?" Dick nodded, and Perry, getting out of the car, went inside the station, where he locked himself in the men's room.



Gerhardt went out of the gate and left him alone with his hostess. Her mind seemed to read his thoughts. When he uttered a word, or any sound that resembled one, she quickly and smoothly made a sentence of it, as if she were quite accustomed to talking in this way and expected only monosyllables from strangers. She was kind, even a little playful with him; but he felt it was all good manners, and that underneath she was not thinking of him at all. When he was alone in the tile-floored sleeping room upstairs, unrolling his blankets and arranging his shaving things, he looked out of the window and watched her where she sat sewing under the cherry tree.

Dick nodded, and Perry, getting out of the car, went inside the station, where he locked himself in the men's room [ . . . ] "Can't say I do. Three dollars six cents." He accepted Dick's money, made change, and said, "You'll excuse me, sir? I'm doing a job. Putting a bumper on a truck."

A kind of rivalry seemed to have sprung up between him and Claude, neither of them knew why. Claude could see that the sergeants and corporals were a little uncertain about Gerhardt. His laconic speech, never embroidered by the picturesque slang they relished, his gravity, and his rare, incredulous smile, alike puzzled them. Was the new officer a dude? Sergeant Hicks asked of his chum, Dell Able. No, he wasn't a dude. Was he a swellhead? No, not at all; but he wasn't a good mixer. He was "an Easterner"; what more he was would develop later. Claude sensed something unusual about him. He suspected that Gerhardt knew a good many things as well as he knew French, and that he tried to conceal it, as people sometimes do when they feel they are not among their equals; this idea nettled him. It was Claude who seized the opportunity to be patronizing, when Gerhardt betrayed that he was utterly unable to select lumber by given measurements.

Was it possible that he had misjudged Perry's character? That Perry, of all people, was suffering a sudden case of "blood bubbles"? A year ago, when they first encountered each other, he'd thought Perry "a good guy," if a bit "stuck on himself," "sentimental," too much "the dreamer." He had liked him but not considered him especially worth cultivating until, one day, Perry described a murder, telling how, simply for "the hell of it," he had killed a colored man in Las Vegas—beaten him to death with a bicycle chain. The anecdote elevated Dick's opinion of Little Perry; he began to see more of him, and, like Willie-Jay, though for dissimilar reasons, gradually decided that Perry possessed unusual and valuable qualities.



(02)



In the two weeks of intensive training that followed, Claude marvelled at Gerhardt's spirit and endurance. The muscular strain of mimic trench operations was more of a tax on him than on any of the other officers. He was as tall as Claude, but he weighed only a hundred and forty-six pounds, and he had not been roughly bred like most of the others. When his fellow officers learned that he was a violinist by profession, that he could have had a soft job as interpreter or as an organizer of camp entertainments, they no longer resented his reserve or his occasional superciliousness. They respected a man who could have wriggled out and didn't. Down in the grassy glade, among the piles of flint boulders, little white birches shook out their shining leaves in the lightly moving air. All about the rocks were patches of purple heath; it ran up into the crevices between them like fire. On one of these bald rocks sat Lieutenant Gerhardt, hatless, in an attitude of fatigue or of deep dejection, his hands clasped about his knees, his bronze hair ruddy in the sun. After watching him for a few minutes, Claude descended the slope, swishing the tall ferns. "Will I be in the way?" he asked as he stopped at the foot of the rocks. "Oh, no!" said the other, moving a little and unclasping his hand.

[...]

Gerhardt rolled over on his back and put his hands under his head. "Oh, this affair is too big for exceptions; it's universal. If you happened to be born twenty-six years ago, you couldn't escape. If this war didn't kill you in one way, it would in another." He told Claude he had trained at Camp Dix, and had come over eight months ago in a regimental band, but he hated the work he had to do and got transferred to the infantry. When they retraced their steps, the wood was full of green twilight. Their relations had changed somewhat during the last half hour, and they strolled in confidential silence up the home-like street to the door of their own garden.

The next morning Claude awoke with such a sense of physical well-being as he had not had for a long time. The sun was shining brightly on the white plaster walls and on the red tiles of the floor. Green jalousies, half-drawn, shaded the upper part of the two windows. Through their slats, he could see the forking branches of an old locust tree that grew by the gate. A flock of pigeons flew over it, dipping and mounting with a sharp twinkle of silver wings. It was good to lie again in a house that was cared for by women. He must have felt that even in his sleep, for when he opened his eyes he was thinking about Mahailey and breakfast and summer mornings on the farm. The early stillness was sweet, and the feeling of dry, clean linen against his body. There was a smell of lavender about his warm pillow. [...]

Madame Joubert came out of the kitchen in a purple flowered morning gown, her hair in curlpapers under a lace cap. She brought the coffee herself, and they sat down at the unpainted table without a cloth [...]

Dick's theory that such a gift could, under his supervision, be profitably exploited. Having reached this conclusion, he had proceeded to woo Perry, flatter him—pretend, for example, that he believed all the buried-treasure stuff and shared his beachcomber yearnings and seaport longings, none of which appealed to Dick, who wanted "a regular life," with a business of his own, a house, a horse to ride, a new car, and "plenty of blond chicken. It was important, however, that Perry not suspect this—not until Perry, with his gift, had helped further Dick's ambitions. But perhaps it was Dick who had miscalculated, been duped; if so—if it developed that Perry was, after all, only an "ordinary punk"—then "the party" was over, the months of planning were wasted, there was nothing to do but turn and go. It mustn't happen; Dick returned to the station.

The door to the men's room was still bolted. He banged on it: "For Christsake, Perry!" "In a minute." "What's the matter? You sick?" Perry gripped the edge of the washbasin and hauled himself to a standing position. His legs trembled; the pain in his knees made him perspire. He wiped his face with a paper towel. He unlocked the door and said, "O.K. Let's go."

Nancy's bedroom was the smallest, most personal room in the house—girlish, and as frothy as a ballerina's tutu. Walls, ceiling, and everything else except a bureau and a writing desk, were pink or blue or white. [...] dry gardenias, the remains of some ancient corsage, were attached to it, and old valentines, newspaper recipes, and snapshots of her baby nephew and of Susan Kidwell and of Bobby Rupp, Bobby caught in a dozen actions—[...] Of these, she liked best one that showed them sitting in a leaf-dappled light amid picnic debris and looking at one another with expressions that, though unsmiling, seemed mirthful and full of delight. Other pictures, of horses, of cats deceased but unforgotten—like "poor Boobs," who had died not long ago and most mysteriously (she suspected poison)—encumbered her desk.

Nancy was invariably the last of the family to retire; as she had once informed her friend and home-economics teacher, Mrs. Polly Stringer, the midnight hours were her "time to be selfish and vain." It was then that she went through her beauty routine, a cleansing, creaming ritual, which on Saturday nights included washing her hair. Tonight, having dried and brushed her hair and bound it in a gauzy bandanna, she set out the clothes



**She called David by his first name, pronouncing it the French way, and when Claude said he hoped she would do as much for him, she said, Oh, yes, that his was a very good French name, "mais un peu, un peu... romanesque," at which he blushed, not quite knowing whether she were making fun of him or not. "It is rather so in English, isn't it?" David asked. "Well, it's a sissy name, if you mean that." "Yes, it is, a little," David admitted candidly.**

**On the march at last; through a brilliant August day Colonel Scott's battalion was streaming along one of the dusty, well-worn roads east of the Somme, their railway base well behind them. The way led through rolling country; fields, hills, woods, little villages shattered but still habitable, where the people came out to watch the soldiers go by. [...] They were bound for the big show, and on every hand were reassuring signs: long lines of gaunt, dead trees, charred and torn; big holes gashed out in fields and hillsides, already half concealed by new undergrowth; winding depressions in the earth, bodies of wrecked motor-trucks and automobiles lying along the road, and everywhere endless straggling lines of rusty barbedwire, that seemed to have been put there by chance,—with no purpose at all. "Begins to look like we're getting in, Lieutenant," said Sergeant Hicks, smiling behind his salute. Claude nodded and passed forward.**

**Claude took Bert and Dell Able and Oscar the Swede, and set off to make a survey and report the terrain. Behind the hill, under the burned edge of the wood, they found an abandoned farmhouse and what seemed to be a clean well. It had a solid stone curb about it, and a wooden bucket hanging by a rusty wire. When the boys splashed the bucket about, the water sent up a pure, cool breath. But they were wise boys, and knew where dead Prussians most loved to hide. Even the straw in the stable they regarded with suspicion, and thought it would be just as well not to bed anybody there.**

But as in every manifestation, she continued to tinker with her handwriting, slanting it to the right or to the left, shaping it roundly or steeply, loosely or stingily—as though she were asking, “Is this Nancy? Or that? Or that? Which is me?” (Once Mrs. Riggs, her English teacher, had returned a theme with a scribbled comment: “Good. But why written in three styles of script?” To which Nancy had replied: “Because I’m not grown-up enough to be one person with one kind of signature.”)

“This is it, this is it, this has to be it, there’s the school, there’s the garage, now we turn south.” To Perry, it seemed as though Dick were muttering jubilant mumbo-jumbo. They left the highway, sped through a deserted Holcomb, and crossed the Santa Fe tracks. “The bank, that must be the bank, now we turn west—see the trees? This is it, this has to be it.” The headlights disclosed a lane of Chinese elms; bundles of wind-blown thistle scurried across it. Dick doused the headlights, slowed down, and stopped until his eyes were adjusted to the moon-illuminated night. Presently, the car crept forward.

Finally, Nancy said she would go with me. We went around to the kitchen door, and, of course, it wasn’t locked; the only person who ever locked doors around there was Mrs. Helm—the family never did. We walked in, and I saw right away that the Clutters hadn’t eaten breakfast; there were no dishes, nothing on the stove. Then I noticed something funny: Nancy’s purse. It was lying on the floor, sort of open. We passed on through the dining room, and stopped at the bottom of the stairs. Nancy’s room is just at the top. I called her name, and started up the stairs, and Nancy Ewalt followed. The sound of our footsteps frightened me more than anything, they were so loud and everything else was so silent. Nancy’s door was open. The curtains hadn’t been drawn, and the room was full of sunlight. I don’t remember screaming.

**There they came upon a pitiful group of humanity, bemired. A woman, ill and wretched looking, sat on a fallen log at the end of the marsh, a baby in her lap and three children hanging about her. She was far gone in consumption; one had only to listen to her breathing and to look at her white, perspiring face to feel how weak she was. Draggled, mud to the knees, she was trying to nurse her baby, half hidden under an old black shawl. She didn't look like a tramp woman, but like one who had once been able to take proper care of herself, and she was still young.**



"Il faut que votre mère—se reposer," he told her, with the grave caesural pause which he always made in the middle of a French sentence. She understood him. No distortion of her native tongue surprised or perplexed her. She was accustomed to being addressed in all persons, numbers, genders, tenses; by Germans, English, Americans. She only listened to hear whether the voice was kind, and with men in this uniform it usually was kind. Had they anything to eat? "Vous avez quelque chose à manger?" "Rien. Rien du tout." Wasn't her mother "trop malade à marcher?" She shrugged; Monsieur could see for himself. And her father? He was dead; "mort à la Marne, en quatorze."

Four o'clock... a summer dawn... his first morning in the trenches.

Larry Hendricks, a teacher of English, aged twenty-seven, lived on the top floor of the Teacherage.

He had come in late last night, and had everything to learn. Mounting the firestep, he peeped over the parapet between the sandbags, into the low, twisting mist. Just then he could see nothing but the wire entanglement, [...]

That dull stretch of grey and green was No Man's Land. Those low, zigzag mounds, like giant molehills protected by wire hurdles, were the Hun trenches; five or six lines of them. He could easily follow the communication trenches without a glass.

*And, again, Willa's references to Tom Sawyer for identity*

Kenyon was in my sophomore English class, and I'd directed Nancy in the 'Tom Sawyer' play.



Dell Able's sister, however, had enclosed a clipping from the Kansas City Star; a long account by one of the British war correspondents

In the interim, Mr. Ewalt had decided that perhaps he ought not to have allowed the girls to enter the house alone. He was getting out of the car to go after them when he heard the screams, but before he could reach the house, the girls were running toward him. His daughter shouted, "She's dead!" and flung herself into his arms. "It's true, Daddy! Nancy's dead!"

Susan turned on her. "No, she isn't. And don't you say it. Don't you dare. It's only a nosebleed. She has them all the time, terrible nosebleeds, and that's all it is." "There's too much blood. There's blood on the walls. You didn't really look." "I couldn't make head nor tails," Mr. Ewalt subsequently testified. "I thought maybe the child was hurt. It seemed to me the first thing to do was call an ambulance. Miss Kidwell—Susan—she told me there was a telephone in the kitchen. I found it, right where she said. But the receiver was off the hook, and when I picked it up, I saw the line had been cut."

He wanted to write, but his apartment was not the ideal lair for a would-be author. It was smaller than the Kidwells', and, moreover, he shared it with a wife, three active children, and a perpetually functioning television set. ("It's the only way we can keep the kids pacified.") Though as yet unpublished, young Hendricks, a he-mannish ex-sailor from Oklahoma who smokes a pipe and has a mustache and a crop of untamed black hair, at least looks literary—in fact, remarkably like youthful photographs of the writer he most admires, Ernest Hemingway. To supplement his teacher's salary, he also drove a school bus.

Most of my ideas for stories, I get them out of the newspapers—you know? Well, the TV was on and the kids were kind of lively, but even so I could hear voices. From downstairs.

*Takes on the identity of Ernest Hemingway reporting the war*

"On July 8, 1918, Ernest Hemingway, an 18-year-old ambulance driver for the American Red Cross, is struck by a mortar shell while serving on the Italian front, along the Piave delta, in World War I. A native of Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway was working as a reporter for the Kansas City Star when war broke out in Europe in 1914. He volunteered for the Red Cross in France before the American entrance into the war in April 1917 and was later transferred to the Italian front, where he was on hand for a string of Italian successes along the Piave delta in the first days of July 1918, during which 3,000 Austrians were taken prisoner. On the night of July 8, 1918, Hemingway was struck by an Austrian mortar shell while handing out chocolate to Italian soldiers in a dugout. The blow knocked him unconscious and buried him in the earth of the dugout; fragments of shell entered his right foot and his knee and struck his thighs, scalp and hand. Two Italian soldiers standing between Hemingway and the shell's point of impact were not so lucky, however: one was killed instantly and another had both his legs blown off and died soon afterward." history.com



Claude made his way back to the dugout into which he and Gerhardt had thrown their effects last night. The former occupants had left it clean. There were two bunks nailed against the side walls,—wooden frames with wire netting over them, covered with dry sandbags. Between the two bunks was a soap-box table, with a candle stuck in a green bottle, an alcohol stove, a bainmarie, and two tin cups. On the wall were coloured pictures from Jugend, taken out of some Hun trench. He found Gerhardt still asleep on his bed, and shook him until he sat up. "How long have you been out, Claude? Didn't you sleep?" "A little. I wasn't very tired. I suppose we could heat shaving water on this stove; they've left us half a bottle of alcohol. It's quite a comfortable little hole, isn't it?" "It will doubtless serve its purpose," David remarked dryly. "So sensitive to any criticism of this war! Why, it's not your affair; you've only just arrived." "I know," Claude replied meekly, as he began to fold his blankets. "But it's likely the only one I'll ever be in, so I may as well take an interest."

decided I'd better keep my eyes open. Make a note of every detail. In case I was ever called on to testify in court.

Claude stripped off his shirt and slid into the pool beside Gerhardt. "Gee, I hit something sharp down there! Why didn't you fellows pull out the splinters?" He shut his eyes, disappeared for a moment, and came up sputtering, throwing on the ground a round metal object, coated with rust and full of slime. "German helmet, isn't it? Phew!" He wiped his face and looked about suspiciously. "Phew is right!" Bruger turned the object over with a stick. "Why in hell didn't you bring up the rest of him? You've spoiled my bath. I hope you enjoy it." Gerhardt scrambled up the side. "Get out, Wheeler! Look at that," he pointed to big sleepy bubbles, bursting up through the thick water. "You've stirred up trouble, all right! Something's going very bad down there." Claude got out after him, looking back at the activity in the water. "I don't see how pulling out one helmet could stir the bottom up so. I should think the water would keep the smell down." "Ever study chemistry?" Bruger asked scornfully. "You just opened up a graveyard, and now we get the exhaust. If you swallowed any of that German cologne—Oh, you should worry!" Lieutenant Hammond, still barelegged, with his shirt tied over his shoulders, was scratching in his notebook. Before they left he put up a placard on a split stick. No Public Bathing!! Private Beach C. Wheeler, Co. B. 2-th Inf'ty.

The first letters from home! The supply wagons brought them up, and every man in the Company got something except Ed Drier, a farm-hand from the Nebraska sand hills, and Willy Katz, the tow-headed Austrian boy from the South Omaha packing-houses.

When the last ragged envelope was given out and he turned away empty-handed,

His battalion had marched in quietly at midnight, and the line they came to relieve had set out as silently for the rear. It all took place in utter darkness. Just as B Company slid down an incline into the shallow rear trenches, the country was lit for a moment by two star shells, there was a rattling of machine guns, German Maxims,—a sporadic crackle that was not followed up. Filing along the communication trenches, they listened anxiously; artillery fire would have made it bad for the other men who were marching to the rear. But nothing happened. They had a quiet night, and this morning, here they were!

Said they hadn't, and—I never saw a more bewildered man—said, 'Where the devil can Herb be?' About then we heard footsteps. Coming up the stairs from the basement. 'Who's that?' said the sheriff, like he was ready to shoot. And a voice said, 'It's me. Wendle.' Turned out to be Wendle Meier, the undersheriff. Seems he had come to the house and hadn't seen us, so he'd gone investigating down in the basement. The sheriff told him—and it was sort of pitiful: 'Wendle, I don't know what to make of it. There's two bodies upstairs.' 'Well,' he said, Wendle did, 'there's another one down here.' So we followed him down to the basement. Or playroom, I guess you'd call it. It wasn't dark—there were windows that let in plenty of light. Kenyon was over in a corner, lying on a couch. He was gagged with adhesive tape and bound hand and foot [...]

It was a furnace room, and very warm. Around here, people just install a gas furnace and pump the gas smack out of the ground. Doesn't cost them a nickel—that's why all the houses are overheated.

Eight non-stop passenger trains hurry through Holcomb every twenty-four hours. Of these, two pick up and deposit mail—[ . . . ] And when those mail sacks come flying out—sakes alive! It's like playing tackle on a football team: Wham! Wham! WHAM!



he murmured, "She's Bohunk, and she don't write so good."

Holcomb's mail messenger, Mrs. Sadie Truitt—or Mother Truitt, as the townspeople call her—does seem younger than her years, which amount to seventy-five. A stocky, weathered widow who wears **babushka bandannas and cowboy boots** ("Most comfortable things you can put on your feet, soft as a loon feather"), Mother Truitt is the oldest native-born Holcombite. "Time was wasn't anybody here wasn't my kin. Them days, we called this place Sherlock. Then along came this stranger. By the name Holcomb. A hog raiser, **he was**. Made money, and decided the town ought to be called after him. Soon as it was, what did he do? Sold out. Moved to California. Not us. I was born here, **my children was born here**. And! Here! We! Are!"

**Battalion Headquarters was nearly half a mile behind the front line, part dugout, part shed, with a plank roof sodded over. The Colonel's office was partitioned off at one end; the rest of the place he gave over to the officers for a kind of club room. One night Claude went back to make a report on the new placing of the gun teams. The young officers were sitting about on soap boxes, smoking and eating sweet crackers out of tin cases. Gerhardt was working at a plank table with paper and crayons, making a clean copy of a rough map they had drawn up together that morning, showing the limits of fire. Noise didn't fluster him; he could sit among a lot of men and write as calmly as if he were alone.**



YOUNG WILLA CATHER



TRUMAN CAPOTE

The people of Holcomb speak of their post office as "the Federal Building," which seems rather too substantial a title to confer on **a drafty and dusty shed. The ceiling leaks, the floor boards wobble, the mailboxes won't shut, the light bulbs are broken, the clock has stopped.** "Yes, it's a disgrace," agrees the caustic, somewhat original, and entirely imposing lady who presides over this litter. "But the stamps work, don't they? Anyhow, what do I care? **Back here in my part is real cozy. I've got my rocker, and a nice wood stove, and a coffee pot, and plenty to read.**"



The next morning Doctor Trueman asked Claude to help him at sick call. [ . . . ]

Down near the end of the line he had seen one of his own men misconducting himself, snivelling and crying like a baby,—a fine husky boy of eighteen who had never given any trouble. Claude made a dash for him and clapped him on the shoulder.

"If you can't stop that, Bert Fuller, get where you won't be seen. I don't want all these English stewards standing around to watch an American soldier cry. I never heard of such a thing!"

"I can't help it, Lieutenant," the boy blubbered. "I've kept it back just as long as I can. I can't hold in any longer!"

"What's the matter with you? Come over here and sit down on this box and tell me."

Private Fuller willingly let himself be led, and dropped on the box. "I'm so sick, Lieutenant!"

"I'll see how sick you are." Claude stuck a thermometer into his mouth, and while he waited, sent the deck steward to bring a cup of tea. "Just as I thought, Fuller. You've not half a degree of fever. You're scared, and that's all. Now drink this tea. I expect you didn't eat any breakfast."

"No, sir. I can't eat the awful stuff on this boat."

"It is pretty bad. Where are you from?"

"I'm from P-P-Pleasantville, up on the P-P-Platte," the boy gulped, and his tears began to flow afresh.

"Well, now, what would they think of you, back there? I suppose they got the band out and made a fuss over you when you went away, and thought they were sending off a fine soldier. And I've always thought you'd be a first rate soldier. I guess we'll forget about this. You feel better already, don't you?"

"Yes, sir. This tastes awful good. I've been so sick to my stomach, and last night I got pains in my chest. All my crowd is sick, and you took big Tannhauser, I mean Corporal, away to the hospital. It looks like we're all going to die out here."

The conversation with Mrs. Helm lasted several minutes, and was most distressing to Mother Truitt, who could hear nothing of it except the noncommittal monosyllabic responses of her daughter. Worse, when the daughter hung up, she did not quench the old woman's curiosity; instead, she placidly drank her coffee, went to her desk, and began to postmark a pile of letters.

"Myrt," Mother Truitt said. "For heaven's sake. What did Mabel say?"

"I'm not surprised," Mrs. Clare said. "When you think how Herb Clutter spent his whole life in a hurry, rushing in here to get his mail with never a minute to say good-morning-and-thank-you-dog, rushing around like a chicken with its head off—joining clubs, running everything, getting jobs maybe other people wanted. And now look—it's all caught up with him. Well, he won't be rushing any more."

"Why, Myrt? Why won't he?"

Mrs. Clare raised her voice. "BECAUSE HE'S DEAD. And Bonnie, too. And Nancy. And the boy. Somebody shot them."

"Myrt—don't say things like that. Who shot them?"

Without a pause in her postmarking activities, Mrs. Clare replied, "The man in the airplane. The one Herb sued for crashing into his fruit trees. If it wasn't him, maybe it was you. Or somebody across the street. All the neighbors are rattlesnakes. Varmints looking for a chance to slam the door in your face. It's the same the whole world over. You know that."

"I don't," said Mother Truitt, who put her hands over her ears. "I don't know any such thing."

"Varmints."

"I'm scared, Myrt."

"Of what? When your time comes, it comes. And tears won't save you." She had observed that her mother had begun to shed a few. "When Homer died, I used up all the fear I had in me, and all the grief, too. If there's somebody loose around here that wants to cut my throat, I wish him luck. What difference does it make? It's all the same in eternity. Just remember: If one bird carried every grain of sand, grain by grain, across the ocean, by the time he got them all on the other side, that would only be the beginning of eternity. So blow your nose."

*Trueman's scene changes it to "Mother Truitt"*

*scene while Claude is helping Doctor Trueman*

*The scene Truman is referencing is from the 1934 Barbara Stanwyck, Frank Morgan movie of Willa's A Lost Lady.*

*(She slaps the pilot.)*

His wife once said, "My husband cares more for those trees than he does for his children," and everyone in Holcomb recalled **the day a small disabled plane crashed into the peach trees**: "Herb was fit to be tied! Why, the propeller hadn't stopped turning before **he'd slapped** a lawsuit on the pilot."



BARBARA STANWYCK IN A LOST LADY (1934)





**"Are there many of your records?"**  
**"Quite a number. Why do you ask?"**

**"I'd like to write my mother. She's fond of good music. She'll get your records, and it will sort of bring the whole thing closer to her, don't you see?"**

**"All right, Claude," said David good-naturedly. "She will find them in the catalogue, with my picture in uniform alongside. I had a lot made before I went out to Camp Dix. My own mother gets a little income from them.**

**"Meditation from Thais—Violin solo—David Gerhardt." When they were going back along the communication trench in the rain, wading single file, Claude broke the silence abruptly. "That was one of your records they played tonight, that violin solo, wasn't it?" "Sounded like it. Now we go to the right. I always get lost here." [ . . . ] He wished he could ever get David to talk about his profession, and wondered what he looked like on a concert platform, playing his violin.**

**The following night, Claude was sent back to Division Head-quarters at Q—with information the Colonel did not care to commit to paper. He set off at ten o'clock, with Sergeant Hicks for escort. There had been two days of rain, and the communication trenches were almost knee-deep in water. About half a mile back of the front line, the two men crawled out of the ditch and went on above ground. There was very little shelling along the front that night. When a flare went up, they dropped and lay on their faces, trying, at the same time, to get a squint at what was ahead of them. The ground was rough, and the darkness thick; it was past midnight when they reached the east-and-west road—usually full of traffic, and not entirely deserted even on a night like this. Trains of horses were splashing through the mud, with shells on their backs, empty supply wagons were coming back from the front. Claude and Hicks paused by the ditch, hoping to get a ride.**

"And that," he recalls, rather ruefully, "was the first I heard of what had happened in Holcomb. I didn't believe it. I couldn't afford to. Lord, I had Clutter's check right here in my pocket. A piece of paper worth eighty thousand dollars. If what I'd heard was true. But I thought, It can't be, there must be some mistake, things like that don't happen, you don't sell a man a big policy one minute and he's dead the next. Murdered. Meaning double indemnity. I didn't know what to do. I called the manager of our office in Wichita. Told him how I had the check but hadn't put it through, and asked what was his advice? Well, it was a delicate situation. It appeared that legally we weren't obliged to pay. But morally—that was another matter. Naturally, we decided to do the moral thing." The two persons who benefited by this honorable attitude—Eveanna Jarchow and her sister Beverly, sole heirs to their father's estate—were, within a few hours of the awful discovery,

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**At the Teacherage, Wilma Kidwell was forced to control herself in order to control her daughter, for Susan, puffy-eyed, sickened by spasms of nausea, argued, inconsolably insisted, that she must go—must run—the three miles to the Rupp farm. "Don't you see, Mother?" she said. "If Bobby just hears it? He loved her. We both did. I have to be the one to tell him." [ . . . ] bed. He listened to Mr. Ewalt, asked no questions, and thanked him for coming. Afterward, he stood outside in the sunshine. The Rupp property is on a rise, an exposed plateau, from which he could see the harvested, glowing land of River Valley Farm—scenery that occupied him for perhaps an hour. [ . . . ] Later, when his brother stopped standing and started to walk, heading down the road and across the fields toward Holcomb, Larry pursued him. "Hey, Bobby. Listen. If we're going somewhere, why don't we go in the car?" His brother wouldn't answer. He was walking with purpose, running, really, but Larry had no difficulty keeping stride. [ . . . ] both boys were sweating as they approached a barricade [ . . . ] but none was allowed past the barricade, which, soon after the arrival of the Rupp brothers, was briefly lifted to permit the exit of four ambulances, the number finally required to remove the victims, and a car filled with men from the sheriff's office—men who, even at that moment, were mentioning the name of Bobby Rupp. For Bobby, as he was to learn before nightfall, was their principal suspect.**

Stumbling this way and that, they ran into a big artillery piece, the wheels sunk over the hubs in a mud-hole. "Who's there?" called a quick voice, unmistakably British. "American infantrymen, two of us. Can we get onto one of your trucks till this lets up?" "Oh, certainly! We can make room for you in here, if you're not too big. Speak quietly, or you'll waken the Major." Giggles and smothered laughter; a flashlight winked for a moment and showed a line of five trucks, the front and rear ones covered with tarpaulin tents. [ . . . ] Claude said he had a friend in the air service up there; **did they happen to know anything about Victor Morse?** Morse, the American ace? **Hadn't he heard?** Why, that got into the London papers. **Morse was shot down inside the Hun line three weeks ago. It was a brilliant affair.** He was chased by eight Boche planes, brought down three of them, put the rest to flight, and was making for base, when they turned and got him. His machine came down in flames and he jumped, fell a thousand feet or more. **"Then I suppose he never got his leave?" Claude asked. They didn't know. He got a fine citation.**

The men settled down to wait for the weather to improve or the night to pass. **Some of them fell into a doze, but Claude felt wide awake.** He was wondering about the flat in Chelsea; whether the heavy-eyed beauty had been very sorry, **or whether she was playing "Roses of Picardy"** for other young officers. He thought mournfully that he would never go to London now.

**He had quite counted on meeting Victor there some day, after the Kaiser had been properly disposed of.** He had really liked Victor. There was something about that fellow... **a sort of debauched baby,** he was, who went seeking his enemy in the clouds. What other age could have produced such a figure? That was one of the things about this war; **it took a little fellow from a little town, gave him an air and a swagger, a life like a movie-film,—and then a death like the rebel angels.** A man like Gerhardt, for instance, had always lived in **a more or less rose-colored world;** he belonged over here, really. How could he know what hard moulds and crusts the big guns had broken open on the other side of the sea? **Who could ever make him understand how far it was** from the strawberry bed and the glass cage in the bank, to the sky-roads over Verdure?

Far off, in the town of Olathe, in a hotel room where window shades darkened the midday sun, **Perry lay sleeping, with a gray portable radio murmuring beside him.** Except for taking off his boots, he had not troubled to undress. **He had merely fallen face down across the bed,** as though sleep were a weapon that had struck him from behind. The boots, black and silver-buckled, **were soaking in a washbasin filled with warm, vaguely pink-tinted water.**

A few miles north, in the **pleasant kitchen of a modest farmhouse,** Dick was consuming a Sunday dinner. The others at the table—his mother, his father, his younger brother—were not conscious of anything uncommon in his manner. He had arrived home at noon, kissed his mother, readily replied to questions his father put concerning his supposed overnight trip to Fort Scott, and sat down to eat, seeming quite his ordinary self. When the meal was over, the three male members of the family settled in the parlor to watch a televised basketball game. The broadcast had only begun when the father **was startled to hear Dick snoring;** as he remarked to the younger boy, **he never thought he'd live to see the day when Dick would rather sleep than watch basketball.** But, of course, he did not understand how very tired Dick was, did not know that **his dozing son had, among other things, driven over eight hundred miles in the past twenty-four hours.**



# Willa's Garden of Eden & Paradise Lost

"What are you reading, Mother?" he asked presently.

She turned her head toward him. "Nothing very new. I was just beginning 'Paradise Lost' again. I haven't read it for a long while."

"Read aloud, won't you? Just wherever you happen to be. I like the sound of it."

Mrs. Wheeler always read deliberately, giving each syllable its full value. Her voice, naturally soft and rather wistful, trailed over the long measures and the threatening Biblical names, all familiar to her and full of meaning.

"A dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
As one great furnace flamed; yet from the flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe."

Her voice groped as if she were trying to realize something. The room was growing greyer as she read on through the turgid catalogue of the heathen gods, so packed with stories and pictures, so unaccountably glorious. At last the light failed, and Mrs. Wheeler closed the book.

"That's fine," Claude commented from the couch. "But Milton couldn't have got along without the wicked, could he?"

Mrs. Wheeler looked up. "Is that a joke?" she asked slyly.

"Oh no, not at all! It just struck me that this part is so much more interesting than the books about perfect innocence in Eden."

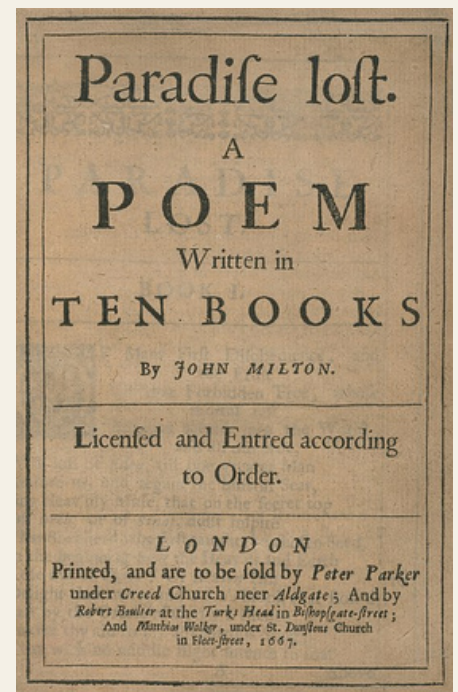
"And yet I suppose it shouldn't be so," Mrs. Wheeler said slowly, as if in doubt.

Her son laughed and sat up, smoothing his rumpled hair. "The fact remains that it is, dear Mother. And if you took all the great sinners out of the Bible, you'd take out all the interesting characters, wouldn't you?"

"Except Christ," she murmured.

"Yes, except Christ. But I suppose the Jews were honest when they thought him the most dangerous kind of criminal."

"Are you trying to tangle me up?" his mother inquired, with both reproach and amusement in her voice.



John Milton's  
*Paradise Lost*  
"concerns the  
biblical story of the  
fall of man: the  
temptation of Adam  
and Eve by the fallen  
angel Satan and  
their expulsion from  
the Garden of Eden."

Claude stripped off his shirt and slid into the pool beside Gerhardt. "Gee, I hit something sharp down there! Why didn't you fellows pull out the splinters?" He shut his eyes, disappeared for a moment, and came up sputtering, throwing on the ground a round metal object, coated with rust and full of slime. "German helmet, isn't it? Phew!" He wiped his face and looked about suspiciously. "**Phew is right!**" Bruger turned the object over with a stick. "**Why in hell didn't you bring up the rest of him?** You've spoiled my bath. I hope you enjoy it." Gerhardt scrambled up the side. "**Get out, Wheeler! Look at that,**" he pointed to big sleepy bubbles, bursting up through the thick water. "**You've stirred up trouble, all right! Something's going very bad down there.**" Claude got out after him, looking back at the activity in the water. "I don't see how pulling out one helmet could stir the bottom up so. I should think the water would keep the smell down." "**Ever study chemistry?**" Bruger asked scornfully. "**You just opened up a graveyard, and now we get the exhaust.** If you swallowed any of that German cologne—Oh, you should worry!" Lieutenant Hammond, still barelegged, with his shirt tied over his shoulders, **was scratching in his notebook.** Before they left he put up a placard on a split stick. No Public Bathing!! Private Beach C. Wheeler, Co. B. 2-th Inf'ty.

Dell Able's sister, however, had enclosed a clipping from the Kansas City Star; a long account by one of the British war correspondents in Mesopotamia, describing the hardships the soldiers suffered there; dysentery, flies, mosquitoes, unimaginable heat. He read this article aloud to a group of his friends as they sat about a shell-hole pool where they had been washing their socks. He had just finished the story of how the Tommies had found a few mud huts at the place **where the original Garden of Eden was said to have been,—a desolate spot full of stinging insects—**when Oscar Petersen, a very religious Swedish boy who was often silent for days together, opened his mouth and said scornfully,

"That's a lie!" Dell looked up at him, annoyed by the interruption.

"How do you know it is?"

"Because; the Lord put four cherubims with swords to guard the Garden, and there ain't no man going to find it. It ain't intended they should. The Bible says so."

Hicks began to laugh. "Why, that was about six thousand years ago, you cheese! Do you suppose your cherubims are still there?"

"'Course they are. What's a thousand years to a cherubim? Nothin'!" The Swede rose and sullenly gathered up his socks.

Dell Able looked at his chum. "Ain't he the complete bonehead? Solid ivory!"

Oscar wouldn't listen further to a "pack of lies" **There was something very unpleasant about the idea of a thousand** fresh-faced schoolboys being sent out against the guns. [...] I don't believe American boys ever seem as young as that." **"Why, if you met him anywhere else, you'd be afraid of using bad words before him, he's so pretty! What's the use of sending an orphan asylum out to be slaughtered? I can't see it," grumbled the fat sergeant.**

That Monday, the sixteenth of November, 1959, was still **another fine specimen of pheasant weather on the high wheat plains of western Kansas—a day gloriously bright-skied, as glittery as mica.** *"they found the land of France turning gold."*

**The river lay** in this direction; near its bank stood a grove of fruit trees—peach, **pear**, cherry, and apple. Fifty years ago, according to native memory, it would have taken a lumberjack ten minutes to **axe all the trees in western Kansas.** **Even today, only cottonwoods** and Chinese elms—perennials with a cactuslike indifference to thirst—are commonly planted. However, as Mr. Clutter often remarked, "an inch more of rain and **this country would be paradise—Eden on earth.**" The little collection of fruit-bearers growing by the river was his attempt to contrive, rain or no, a **patch of the paradise, the green, apple-scented Eden**, he envisioned. His wife once said, "My husband cares more for those trees than he does for his children [...]"

**Pear trees**, trained like vines against the wall, did not astonish them half so much as the sight of **the familiar cottonwood**, growing everywhere. Claude thought he had never before realized how beautiful this tree could be. In verdant little valleys, **along the clear rivers, the cottonwoods waved and rustled;** and on the little islands, of which there were so many in these rivers, they stood in pointed masses, seemed to grip deep into the soil and to rest easy, as if they had been there for ever and would be there for ever more. At home, all about Frankfort, **the farmers were cutting down their cottonwoods** because they were "common," **planting maples and ash trees to struggle along in their stead.** Never mind; the cottonwoods were **good enough for France, and they were good enough for him!**

Nancy and I on the couch, and Mr. Clutter in his chair, that stuffed rocker. He wasn't watching the television so much as he was reading a book—a 'Rover Boy,' one of Kenyon's books. Once he went out to the kitchen **and came back with two apples;** he offered one to me, but I didn't want it, so he ate them both. He had very white teeth; he said apples were why.

*Truman has Mr. Clutter always eating apples. Here, Bobby Rupp will miss out on the fallen paradise.*



Claude and Hicks got into Headquarters just as the cooks were turning out to build their fires. One of the Corporals took them to the officers' bath,—a shed with big tin tubs, and carried away their uniforms to dry them in the kitchen. It would be an hour before the officers would be about, he said, and in the meantime he would manage to get clean shirts and socks for them. "Say, Lieutenant," Hicks brought out as he was rubbing himself down with a real bath towel, "I don't want to hear any more about those Pal Battalions, do you? It gets my goat. So long as we were going to get into this, we might have been a little more previous. I hate to feel small." "Guess we'll have to take our medicine," Claude said dryly, "There wasn't anywhere to duck, was there?"

Ruin was ugly, and it was nothing more, Claude was thinking, as he followed the paths that ran over piles of brick and plaster. There was nothing picturesque about this, as there was in the war pictures one saw at home. A cyclone or a fire might have done just as good a job. The place was simply a great dump-heap; an exaggeration of those which disgrace the outskirts of American towns. It was the same thing over and over; mounds of burned brick and broken stone, heaps of rusty, twisted iron, splintered beams and rafters, stagnant pools, cellar holes full of muddy water. An American soldier had stepped into one of those holes a few nights before, and been drowned.

"Now, just what is a Pal Battalion?" drawled Hicks. He hated all English words he didn't understand, though he didn't mind French ones in the least. "Fellows who signed up together from school," the lad piped. Hicks glanced at Claude. They both thought this boy ought to be in school for some time yet, and wondered what he looked like when he first came over. "And you got cut up, you say?" he asked sympathetically. "Yes, on the Somme. We had rotten luck. We were sent over to take a trench and couldn't. We didn't even get to the wire. The Hun was so well prepared that time, we couldn't manage it. We went over a thousand, and we came back seventeen." "A hundred and seventeen?" "No, seventeen." Hicks whistled and again exchanged looks with Claude. They could neither of them doubt him. There was something very unpleasant about the idea of a thousand fresh-faced schoolboys being sent out against the guns. "It must have been a fool order," he commented. "Suppose there was some mistake at Headquarters?"

Today this quartet of old hunting companions had once again gathered to make the familiar journey, but in an unfamiliar spirit and armed with odd, non-sportive equipment—mops and pails, scrubbing brushes, and a hamper heaped with rags and strong detergents. They were wearing their oldest clothes. For, feeling it their duty, a Christian task, these men had volunteered to clean certain of the fourteen rooms in the main house at River Valley Farm: rooms in which four members of the Clutter family had been murdered by, as their death certificates declared, "a person or persons unknown."

The men worked from noon to dusk. When the time came to burn what they had collected, they piled it on a pickup truck and, with Stoecklein at the wheel, drove deep into the farm's north field, a flat place full of color, though a single color—the shimmering tawny yellow of November wheat stubble. There they unloaded the truck and made a pyramid of Nancy's pillows, the bedclothes, the mattresses, the playroom couch; Stoecklein sprinkled it with kerosene and struck a match. [ . . . ] But that life, and what he'd made of it—how could it happen, Erhart wondered as he watched the bonfire catch. How was it possible that such effort, such plain virtue, could overnight be reduced to this smoke, thinning as it rose and was received by the big, annihilating

*"As soon as they had got out of the region of martyred trees"*

sky? Of those present, none had been closer to the Clutter family than Andy Erhart. Gentle, genially dignified, a scholar with work-calloused hands and sunburned neck, he'd been a classmate of Herb's at Kansas State University. "We were friends for thirty years," he said some time afterward, and during those decades Erhart had seen his friend evolve from a poorly paid County Agricultural Agent into one of the region's most widely known and respected farm ranchers: "Everything Herb had, he earned—with the help of God. He was a modest man but a proud man, as he had a right to be. He raised a fine family. He made something of his life." But that life, and what he'd made of it—how could it happen, Erhart wondered as he watched the bonfire catch.

*The major speaking with Claude at headquarters:*

There are a couple of nice Frenchwomen in the Red Cross barrack, up on the hill, in the old convent garden. They try to look out for the civilian population, and we're on good terms with them. We get their supplies through with our own, and the quartermaster has orders to help them when they run short. You might go up and call on them. They speak English perfectly."

[...]

As he climbed toward the top of the hill he noticed that the ground had been cleaned up a bit. The path was clear, the bricks and hewn stones had been piled in neat heaps, the broken hedges had been trimmed and the dead parts cut away. Emerging at last into the garden, he stood still for wonder; even though it was in ruins, it seemed so beautiful after the disorder of the world below. The gravel walks were clean and shining. A wall of very old boxwoods stood green against a row of dead Lombardy poplars. Along the shattered side of the main building, a pear tree, trained on wires like a vine, still flourished,—full of little red pears. Around the stone well was a shaven grass plot, and everywhere there were little trees and shrubs, which had been too low for the shells to hit,—or for the fire, which had seared the poplars, to catch. The hill must have been wrapped in flames at one time, and all the tall trees had been burned. The barrack was built against the walls of the cloister,—three arches of which remained, like a stone wing to the shed of planks. [...]

"Are you Mlle. de Courcy? I am Claude Wheeler. I have a note of introduction to you, if I can find it."

[...]

"Then you are a guest from the front, and you will have lunch with Louis and me. Madame Barre is also gone for the day. Will you see our house?" She led him through the low door into a living room, unpainted, uncarpeted, light and airy. There were coloured war posters on the clean board walls, brass shell cases full of wild flowers and garden flowers, canvas camp-chairs, a shelf of books, a table covered by a white silk shawl embroidered with big butterflies. The sunlight on the floor, the bunches of fresh flowers, the white window curtains stirring in the breeze, reminded Claude of something, but he could not remember what. [...]

When he came out, the table in the living room was set for three. The stout old dame who was placing the plates paid no attention to him,—seemed, from her expression, to scorn him and all his kind. He withdrew as far as possible out of her path and picked up a book from the table, a volume of Heine's *Reisebilder* in German. [...]

The sheriff's office is on the third floor of the Finney County courthouse, an ordinary stone-and-cement building standing in the center of an otherwise attractive tree-filled square. Nowadays, Garden City, which was once a rather raucous frontier town, is quite subdued. On the whole, the sheriff doesn't do much business, and his office, three sparsely furnished rooms, is ordinarily a quiet place popular with courthouse idlers; Mrs. Edna Richardson, his hospitable secretary, usually has a pot of coffee going and plenty of time to "chew the fat." Or did, until, as she complained, "this Clutter thing came along," bringing with it "all these out-of-towners, all this newspaper fuss." The case, then commanding headlines as far east as Chicago, as far west as Denver, had indeed lured to Garden City a considerable press corps.

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the fourteen rooms in the main house at River Valley Farm: rooms in which four members of the Clutter family had been murdered by, as their death certificates declared, "a person or persons unknown."

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*Unknown Soldier, Died  
for France.*

They smoked in silence, meditating and waiting for night. On a cross at their feet the inscription read merely: *Soldat Inconnu, Mort pour La France*. A very good epitaph, Claude was thinking. Most of the boys who fell in this war were unknown, even to themselves. They were too young. They died and took their secret with them,—what they were and what they might have been.

*"Under their talk, in  
the minds of both,  
that lonely spot  
lingered, and the  
legend: Soldat  
Inconnu, Mort pour  
La France."*

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*"There were coloured war posters on the clean board walls"*

Hicks, too, had been lost in his reflections. Now he broke the silence. "Somehow, Lieutenant, 'mort' seems deader than 'dead.' It has a coffinish sound. And over there they're all 'tod,' and it's all the same damned silly thing. Look at them set out here, black and white, like a checkerboard. The next question is, who put 'em here, and what's the good of it?"

"Search me," the other murmured absently.

She looked so tired that Claude knew he had no right to stay. Long shadows were falling in the garden. It was hard to leave; but an hour more or less wouldn't matter. Two people could hardly give each other more if they were together for years, he thought. "Will you tell me where I can come and see you, if we both get through this war?" he asked as he rose. He wrote it down in his notebook. "I shall look for you," she said, giving him her hand. There was nothing to do but to take his helmet and go. At the edge of the hill, just before he plunged down the path, he stopped and glanced back at the garden lying flattened in the sun; the three stone arches, the dahlias and marigolds, the glistening boxwood wall. He had left something on the hilltop which he would never find again.

When they struck the road they came upon a big Highlander sitting in the end of an empty supply wagon, smoking a pipe and rubbing the dried mud out of his kilts. The horses were munching in their nose-bags, and the driver had disappeared. The Americans hadn't happened to meet with any Highlanders before, and were curious. This one must be a good fighter, they thought; a brawny giant with a bulldog jaw, and a face as red and knobby as his knees. More because he admired the looks of the man than because he needed information, Hicks went up and asked him if he had noticed a military cemetery on the road back. [...] the Battalion went to the front again in new country, about ten kilometers east of the trench they had relieved before. One morning Colonel Scott sent for Claude and Gerhardt and spread his maps out on the table. "We are going to clean them out there in F 6 tonight, and straighten our line. The thing that bothers us is that little village stuck up on the hill, where the enemy machine guns have a strong position. I want to get them out of there before the Battalion goes over. We can't spare too many men, and I don't like to send out more officers than I can help; it won't do to

photographs taken at the scene of the crime by a police photographer—twenty blown-up glossy-print pictures of Mr. Clutter's shattered skull, his son's demolished face, Nancy's bound hands, her mother's death-dulled, still-staring eyes, and so on.

And yes, he told the reporters, he did have an opinion on whether the murders were the work of one man or two, but he preferred not to disclose it.

As darkness fell, Dewey interrupted the consultation to telephone his wife, Marie, at their home, and warn her that he wouldn't be home for dinner. She said, "Yes. All right, Alvin," but he noticed in her tone an uncharacteristic anxiety. [...] He said, "Anything the matter?" "Not a thing," she assured him. "Only, when you come home tonight, you'll have to ring the bell. I've had all the locks changed." Now he understood, and said, "Don't worry, honey. Just lock the doors and turn on the porch light."

While Dewey was occupying himself with the diary, his principal assistants, the Agents Church, Duntz, and Nye, were crisscrossing the countryside, talking, as Duntz said, "to anyone who could tell us anything" [...]

At the end of the day, when the three agents convened in Dewey's office, it developed that Duntz and Church had had better luck than Nye—Brother Nye, as the others called him. (Members of the K.B.I. are partial to nicknames; Duntz is known as Old Man—unfairly, since he is not quite fifty, a burly but light-footed man with a broad, tomcat face, and Church, who is sixty or so, pink-skinned and professorial-looking, but "tough," according to his colleagues, and "the fastest draw in Kansas," is called Curly, because his head is partly hairless.) Both men, in the course of their inquiries, had picked up "promising leads."

At ten o'clock the men began to ascend the water-course, creeping through pools and little waterfalls, making a continuous spludgy sound, like pigs rubbing against the sty. Claude, with the head of the column, was just pulling out of the gully on the hillside above the village, when a flare went up, and a volley of fire broke from the brush on the up-hill side of the water-course; machine guns, opening on the exposed line crawling below.

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It was raining now, and they could safely count on a dark night.

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Our people laughed and called to them and threw them flowers, but they never turned to look... eyes straight before. They passed like men of destiny." She threw out her hands with a swift movement and dropped them in her lap. The emotion of that day came back in her face. As Claude looked at her burning cheeks, her burning eyes, he understood that the strain of this war had given her a perception that was almost like a gift of prophecy.

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When he came out, the table in the living room was set for three. The stout old dame who was placing the plates paid no attention to him,—seemed, from her expression, to scorn him and all his kind. He withdrew as far as possible out of her path and picked up a book from the table, a volume of Heine's Reisebilder in German.

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*Heine's Reisebilder is "Travel Pictures" that Claude sees at Mlle. Olive's.*

*It "is a collection of travel narratives that appeared in four installments from 1826-1831. Marking Heine's generic transition from lyric poetry to prose, the signal the arrival of a new sense of literary modernity. With its stylish, exhilarating take on the mode of travel writing increasingly popular at the height of the Romantic period, Heine's prose achieves a new tone that engages Classicism and Romanticism in provocative manner. Carrying over a rhythmic flow and tone from his poetry, he created a unique fusion of prose and poetry, in a carefree style that took on a paradigmatic significance for nineteenth-century culture." litencyc.com*

(Eleven months later a gun-toting team of masked bandits took her at her word by invading the post office and relieving the lady of nine hundred and fifty dollars.)

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"Around here," according to the proprietor of one Garden City hardware store, "locks and bolts are the fastest-going item. Folks ain't particular what brand they buy; they just want them to hold."

[...]

—strangers, ignorant of the local disaster—were startled by what they saw as they crossed the prairies and passed through Holcomb: windows ablaze, almost every window in almost every house, and, in the brightly lit rooms, fully clothed people, even entire families, who had sat the whole night wide awake, watchful, listening.

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He said I was a natural-born 'medium,' and he knew about things like that, he was interested. He said I had a high degree of 'extrasensory perception.' Sort of like having built-in radar—you see things before you see them. The outlines of coming events.

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And afterward the blessed ascent! Ascension to a paradise that in one version was merely "a feeling," a sense of power, of unassailable superiority—sensations that in another version were transposed into "A real place. Like out of a movie. Maybe that's where I did see it—remembered it from a movie. Because where else would I have seen a garden like that? With white marble steps? Fountains? And away down below, if you go to the edge of the garden, you can see the ocean. Terrific! Like around Carmel, California. The best thing, though—well, it's a long, long table. You never imagined so much food. Oysters. Turkeys. Hot dogs. Fruit you could make into a million fruit cups. And, listen—it's every bit free.

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Before lunch Mlle. de Courcy showed him the store room in the rear, **where the shelves were stocked with rows of coffee tins, condensed milk, canned vegetables and meat**, all with American trade names he knew so well; names which seemed doubly familiar and "reliable" **here, so far from home.**

## Travel literature



*Claude meets Mlle. Olive de Courcy who works for the Red Cross on what would be the "Mount of Olives" in the paradise of France, now instead, devastated by the destruction of war.*

Claude, from his elevation, saw a tall girl coming slowly up the path by which he had ascended.

[...] Claude came down from his perch.

his **conception of her**, as opposed to Dick's, she was not rich, not beautiful; rather, she was nicely groomed, gently spoken, was conceivably "a college graduate," in any event "a very intellectual type"—a sort of girl he'd always wanted to meet but in fact never had. Unless you counted Cookie, **the nurse he'd known when he was hospitalized** as a result of his motorcycle accident. A swell kid, Cookie, and **she had liked him, pitied him, babied him, inspired him to read "serious literature"**—Gone with the Wind, This Is My Beloved. Sexual episodes of a strange and stealthy nature had occurred, and love had been mentioned, and marriage, too, but eventually, when his injuries had mended, **he'd told her goodbye** and given her, by way of explanation, a poem he pretended to have written: There's a race of men that don't fit in, A race **that can't stay still; So they break the hearts of kith and kin; And they roam the world at will. They range the field and they rove the flood, And they climb the mountain's crest;**

*Robert W. Service's "The Men That Don't Fit In"*

*To replicate what Willa is doing here in the transcendence that would be possible with Olive and her Biblical and Odyssean references to the Mount of Olives, Truman then plagiarizes Gustave Flaubert's "A Simple Heart"'s ending almost in full—not as allusion as Willa does. There's no reason here for him to "allude to" Flaubert. He's replicating Willa's scene of potential transcendence, as it happens in Flaubert's story.*

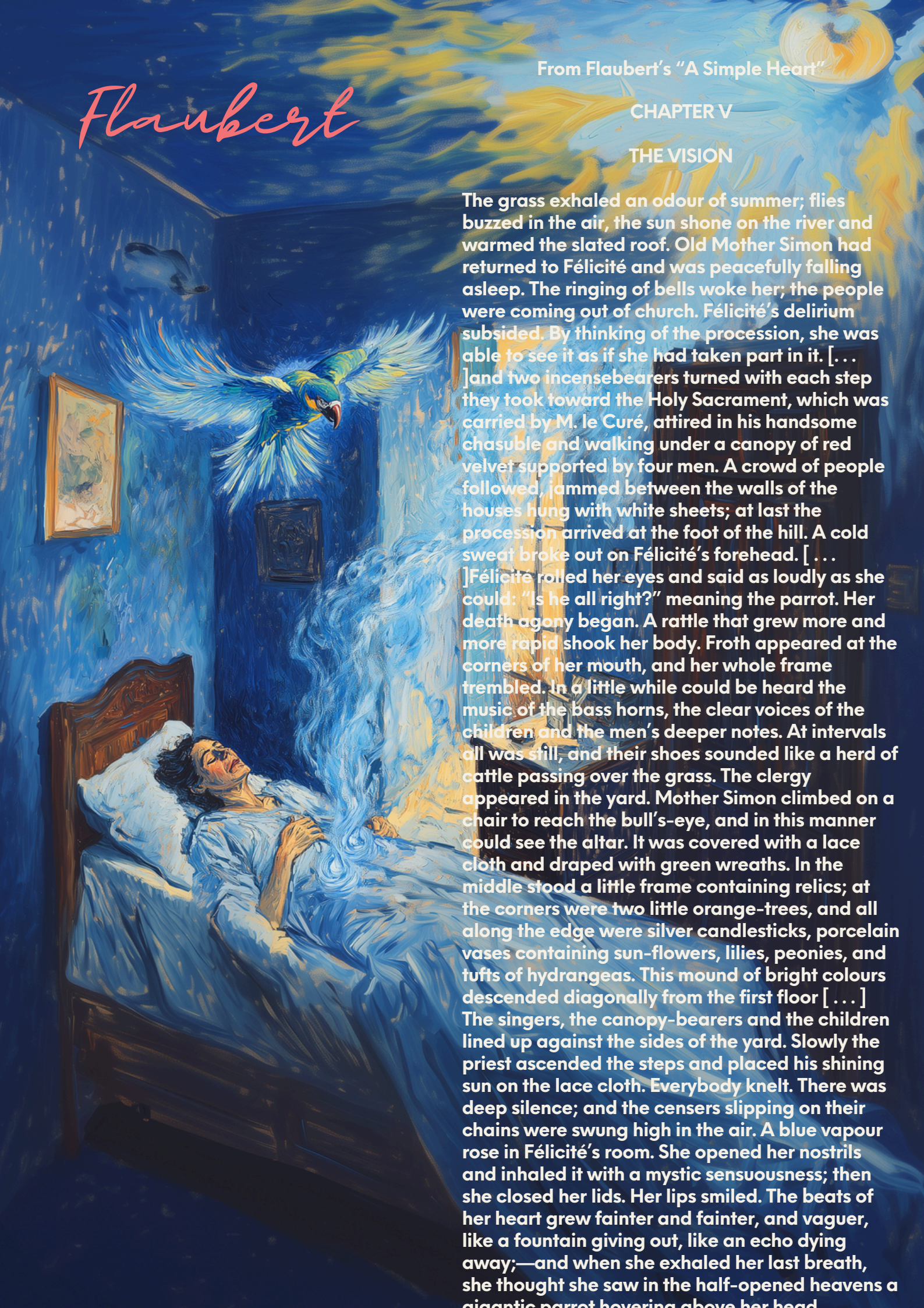


# Flaubert

## CHAPTER V

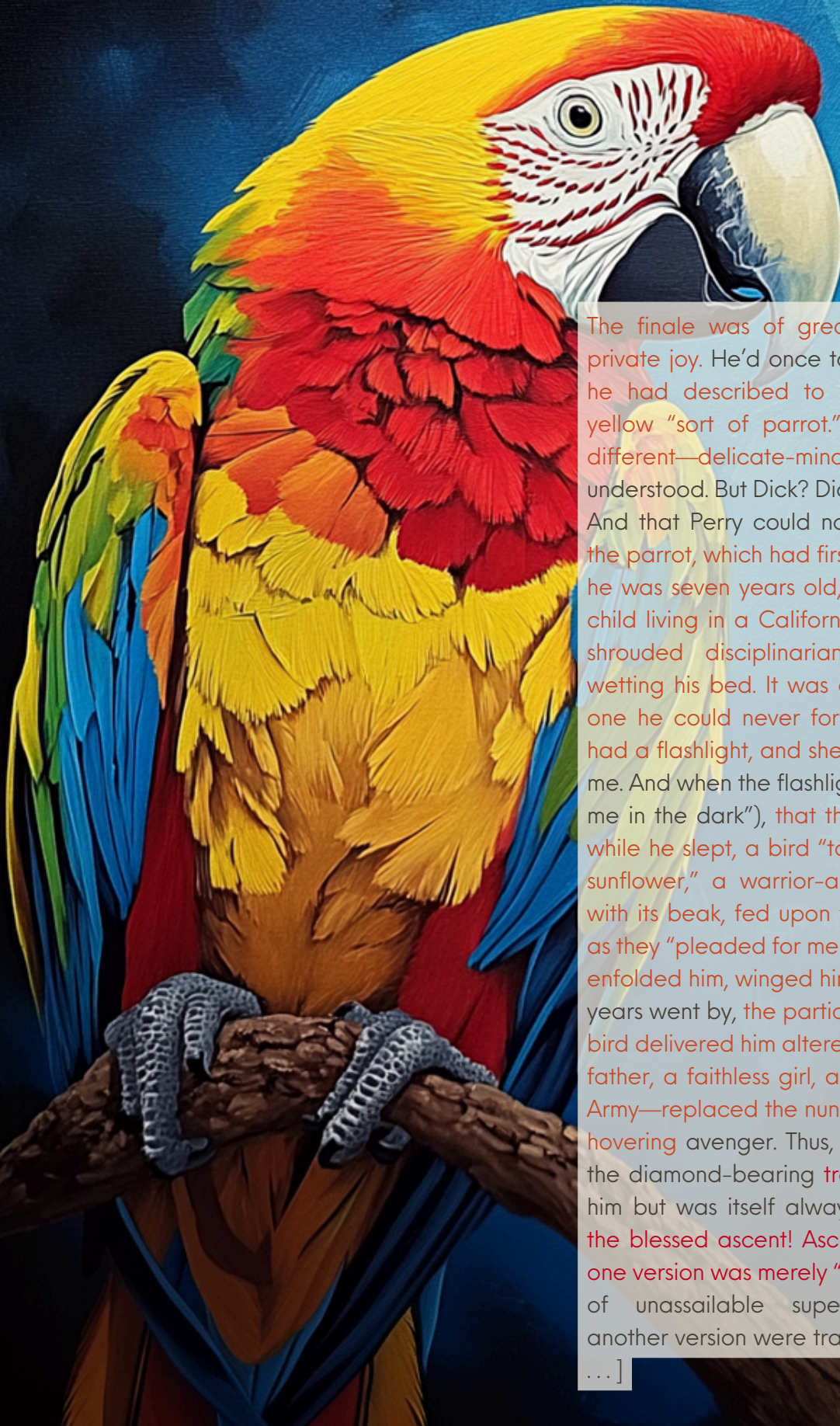
### THE VISION

The grass exhaled an odour of summer; flies buzzed in the air, the sun shone on the river and warmed the slated roof. Old Mother Simon had returned to Félicité and was peacefully falling asleep. The ringing of bells woke her; the people were coming out of church. Félicité's delirium subsided. By thinking of the procession, she was able to see it as if she had taken part in it. [...] and two incensebearers turned with each step they took toward the Holy Sacrament, which was carried by M. le Curé, attired in his handsome chasuble and walking under a canopy of red velvet supported by four men. A crowd of people followed, jammed between the walls of the houses hung with white sheets; at last the procession arrived at the foot of the hill. A cold sweat broke out on Félicité's forehead. [...] Félicité rolled her eyes and said as loudly as she could: "Is he all right?" meaning the parrot. Her death agony began. A rattle that grew more and more rapid shook her body. Froth appeared at the corners of her mouth, and her whole frame trembled. In a little while could be heard the music of the bass horns, the clear voices of the children and the men's deeper notes. At intervals all was still, and their shoes sounded like a herd of cattle passing over the grass. The clergy appeared in the yard. Mother Simon climbed on a chair to reach the bull's-eye, and in this manner could see the altar. It was covered with a lace cloth and draped with green wreaths. In the middle stood a little frame containing relics; at the corners were two little orange-trees, and all along the edge were silver candlesticks, porcelain vases containing sun-flowers, lilies, peonies, and tufts of hydrangeas. This mound of bright colours descended diagonally from the first floor [...] The singers, the canopy-bearers and the children lined up against the sides of the yard. Slowly the priest ascended the steps and placed his shining sun on the lace cloth. Everybody knelt. There was deep silence; and the censers slipping on their chains were swung high in the air. A blue vapour rose in Félicité's room. She opened her nostrils and inhaled it with a mystic sensuousness; then she closed her lids. Her lips smiled. The beats of her heart grew fainter and fainter, and vaguer, like a fountain giving out, like an echo dying away;—and when she exhaled her last breath, she thought she saw in the half-opened heavens a gigantic parrot hovering above her head.





# Truman's Version



The finale was of great importance, a source of private joy. He'd once told it to his friend Willie-Jay; he had described to him the towering bird, the yellow "sort of parrot." Of course, Willie-Jay was different—delicate-minded, "a saint." He'd understood. But Dick? Dick might laugh.

And that Perry could not abide: anyone's ridiculing the parrot, which had first flown into his dreams when he was seven years old, a hated, hating half-breed child living in a California orphanage run by nuns—shrouded disciplinarians who whipped him for wetting his bed. It was after one of these beatings, one he could never forget ("She woke me up. She had a flashlight, and she hit me with it. Hit me and hit me. And when the flashlight broke, she went on hitting me in the dark"), that the parrot appeared, arrived while he slept, a bird "taller than Jesus, yellow like a sunflower," a warrior-angel who blinded the nuns with its beak, fed upon their eyes, slaughtered them as they "pleaded for mercy," then so gently lifted him, enfolded him, winged him away to "paradise." As the years went by, the particular torments from which the bird delivered him altered; others—older children, his father, a faithless girl, a sergeant he'd known in the Army—replaced the nuns, but the parrot remained, a hovering avenger. Thus, the snake, that custodian of the diamond-bearing tree, never finished devouring him but was itself always devoured. And afterward the blessed ascent! Ascension to a paradise that in one version was merely "a feeling," a sense of power, of unassailable superiority—sensations that in another version were transposed into "A real place. [...]"



Claude and his party found themselves back at the foot of the hill, at the edge of the ravine from which they had started. Heavy firing on the hill above told them the rest of the men had got through. The quickest way back to the scene of action was by the same water-course they had climbed before. They dropped into it and started up. Claude, at the rear, felt the ground rise under him, and he was swept with a mountain of earth and rock down into the ravine.

**He never knew whether he lost consciousness or not. It seemed to him that he went on having continuous sensations.** The first, was that of being blown to pieces; of swelling to an enormous size under intolerable pressure, and then bursting. Next he felt himself shrink and tingle, like a frost-bitten body thawing out. Then he swelled again, and burst. This was repeated, he didn't know how often. He soon realized that he was lying under a great weight of earth; his body, not his head. He felt rain falling on his face. His left hand was free, and still attached to his arm. He moved it cautiously to his face. He seemed to be bleeding from the nose and ears. Now he began to wonder where he was hurt; he felt as if he were full of shell splinters. Everything was buried but his head and left shoulder. A voice was calling from somewhere below.

*Right before Claude leaves home early in the novel he sees that Mahaley has a Red Cross poster hung in her kitchen above the flour barrel (the making of bread) of an old woman in the rubble of her home in France. Their conversation is a foreshadowing of Claude meeting Mlle. Olive, the Red Cross Nurse who feeds him black war bread, and the loss of the divine possibilities because of the human conflict.*



Over the flour barrel in the corner Mahaley had tacked a Red Cross poster; a charcoal drawing of an old woman poking with a stick in a pile of plaster and twisted timbers that had once been her home. Claude went over to look at it while he dried his hands. "Where did you get your picture?" "She's over there where you're goin', Mr. Claude. There she is, huntin' for somethin' to cook with; no stove nor no dishes nor nothin'—everything all broke up. I reckon she'll be mighty glad to see you comin'."

*Tzuman attempts the Garden of Eden again with the murderers with Perry standing in for Willa's Claude and how Claude is under fire.*

Since I was a kid, I've had this same dream. Where I'm in Africa. A jungle. I'm moving through the trees toward a tree standing all alone. Jesus, it smells bad, that tree; it kind of makes me sick, the way it stinks. Only, it's beautiful to look at—it has blue leaves and diamonds hanging everywhere. Diamonds like oranges. That's why I'm there—to pick myself a bushel of diamonds. But I know the minute I try to, the minute I reach up, a snake is gonna fall on me. A snake that guards the tree. This fat son of a bitch living in the branches. I know this beforehand, see? And Jesus, I don't know how to fight a snake. But I figure, Well, I'll take my chances. What it comes down to is I want the diamonds more than I'm afraid of the snake. So I go to pick one, I have the diamond in my hand, I'm pulling at it, when the snake lands on top of me. We wrestle around, but he's a slippery sonofabitch and I can't get a hold, he's crushing me, you can hear my legs cracking. Now comes the part it makes me sweat even to think about. See, he starts to swallow me. Feet first. Like going down in quicksand."

Speaking of her friendship with Nancy Clutter, Susan Kidwell said: "We were like sisters. At least, that's how I felt about her—as though she were my sister.

**Mahaley, when they are alone, sometimes addresses Mrs. Wheeler as "Mudder"; "Now, Mudder, you go upstairs an' lay down an' rest yourself." Mrs. Wheeler knows that then she is thinking of Claude, is speaking for Claude.**



*Willa intersperses this with allusions to the divine: the church ruins with the baby Jesus blown away, just a foot remaining with the Virgin Mary, Claude breaking the black way bread, the Mount where Olive is as the Mount of Olives where there should be transcendence as in the Odyssey.*

"Well, it's true, anyway. It was like that when we went to High School, and it's kept up. Everything you do always seems exciting to me."

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But I am afraid I won't marry him,—because you are the member of the family I have always admired."

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"Now what do you think of that? A German account, and this is an English book! The world simply made a mistake about the Germans all along. It's as if we invited a neighbour over here and showed him our cattle and barns, and all the time he was planning how he would come at night and club us in our beds." Mrs. Wheeler passed her hand over her brow. "Yet we have had so many German neighbours, and never one that wasn't kind and helpful." "I know it. Everything Mrs. Erlich ever told me about Germany made me want to go there. And the people that sing all those beautiful songs about women and children went into Belgian villages and—" "Don't, Claude!" his mother put out her hands as if to push his words back. "Read about the defences of Paris; that's what we must think about now."

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One bright June day Mr. Wheeler parked his car in a line of motors before the new pressed-brick Court house in Frankfort. The Court house stood in an open square, surrounded by a grove of cotton-woods. The lawn was freshly cut, and the flower beds were blooming. When Mr. Wheeler entered the courtroom upstairs, it was already half-full of farmers and townspeople, talking in low tones while the summer flies buzzed in and out of the open windows. The judge, a one-armed man, with white hair and side-whiskers, sat at his desk, writing with his left hand. He was an old settler in Frankfort county, but from his frockcoat and courtly manners you might have thought he had come from Kentucky yesterday instead of thirty years ago. He was to hear this morning a charge of disloyalty brought against two German farmers. One of the accused was August Yoeder, the Wheelers' nearest neighbour, and the other was Troilus Oberlies, a rich German from the northern part of the county.

A cork bulletin board, painted pink, hung above a white-skirted dressing table; dry gardenias, the remains of some ancient corsage, were attached to it, and old valentines, newspaper recipes, and snapshots of her baby nephew and of Susan Kidwell and of Bobby Rupp, Bobby caught in a dozen actions—swinging a bat, dribbling a basketball, driving a tractor, wading, in bathing trunks, at the edge of McKinney Lake (which was as far as he dared go, for he had never learned to swim). And there were photographs of the two together—Nancy and Bobby. Of these, she liked best one that showed them sitting in a leaf-dappled light amid picnic debris and looking at one another with expressions that, though unsmiling, seemed mirthful and full of delight.

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Except once in a while Bobby said how much he'd loved Nancy, and how he could never care about another girl.

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Dewey, for example, found it difficult to understand "how two individuals could reach the same degree of rage, the kind of psychopathic rage it took to commit such a crime." He went on to explain: "Assuming the murderer was someone known to the family, a member of this community; assuming that he was an ordinary man, ordinary except that he had a quirk, an insane grudge against the Clutters, or one of the Clutters—where did he find a partner, someone crazy enough to help him? It doesn't add up. It doesn't make sense. But then, come right down to it, nothing does."

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Another reason, the simplest, the ugliest, was that this hitherto peaceful congregation of neighbors and old friends had suddenly to endure the unique experience of distrusting each other; understandably, they believed that the murderer was among themselves, and, to the last man, endorsed an opinion advanced by Arthur Clutter, a brother of the deceased, who, while talking to journalists in the lobby of a Garden City hotel on November 17, had said, "When this is cleared up, I'll wager whoever did it was someone within ten miles of where we now stand."

*Just as Willa splits the text between Nebraska and France, Truman breaks his story from Garden City to the killers at a mileage distance, providing his story structure from her structure.*

Approximately four hundred miles east of where Arthur Clutter then stood, two young men were sharing a booth in the Eagle Buffet, a Kansas City diner.

**"Then you are a guest from the front, and you will have lunch with Louis and me.**

"You don't have to read it fifty times." The reference was to a front-page article in the November 17 edition of the *Kansas City Star*. Headlined CLUES ARE FEW IN SLAYING OF 4, the article, which was a follow-up of the previous

**"All right, sir. I want to look at the papers after supper. I haven't read anything but the headlines since before thrashing. Ernest was stirred up about the murder of that Grand Duke and said the Austrians would make trouble. But I never thought there was anything in it."** "There's seventy cents a bushel in it, anyway," said his father, reaching for a hot biscuit. **"If there's that much, I'm somehow afraid there will be more,"** said Mrs. Wheeler thoughtfully. She had picked up the paper fly-brush and sat waving it irregularly, **as if she were trying to brush away a swarm of confusing ideas. "You might call up Ernest, and ask him what the Bohemian papers say about it,"** Mr. Wheeler suggested. Claude went to the telephone, but was unable to get any answer from the Havel. They had probably gone to a barn dance down in the Bohemian township. **He went upstairs and sat down before an armchair full of newspapers; he could make nothing reasonable out of the smeary telegrams in big type on the front page of the Omaha World Herald. The German army was entering Luxembourg; he didn't know where Luxembourg was, whether it was a city or a country; he seemed to have some vague idea that it was a palace!**

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**He knew that nothing like this would ever come again; the fields and woods would never again be laced over with this hazy enchantment. [...]** **One night he dreamed that he was at home;** out in the ploughed fields, where he could see nothing but the furrowed brown earth, stretching from horizon to horizon. Up and down it moved a boy, with a plough and two horses. At first he thought it was his brother Ralph; but on coming nearer, **he saw it was himself,—and he was full of fear for this boy. Poor Claude, he would never, never get away; he was going to miss everything! While he was struggling to speak to Claude, and warn him, he awoke.**

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For instance, right before I had my motorcycle accident I saw the whole thing happen: saw it in my mind—the rain, the skid tracks, me lying there bleeding and my legs broken. That's what I've got now. A premonition. Something tells me this is a trap."

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At last Claude worked himself out of his burrow, but he was unable to stand. Every time he tried to stand, he got faint and seemed to burst again. **Something was the matter with his right ankle, too—he couldn't bear his weight on it.** Perhaps he had been too near the shell to be hit; he had heard the boys tell of such cases. It had exploded under his feet and swept him down into the ravine, but hadn't left any metal in his body. If it had put anything into him, it would have put so much that he wouldn't be sitting here speculating. He began to crawl down the slope on all fours.

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**"Suppose there was some mistake at Headquarters?"**

"O.K.," Dick said. "Maybe I had some wrong information."



*Claude and David Gerhardt must stick together in the trenches, finally dying together.*

In the years when he went to school in Lincoln, he was always hunting for some one whom he could admire without reservations; some one he could envy, emulate, wish to be. Now he believed that even then he must have had some faint image of a man like Gerhardt in his mind. It was only in war times that their paths would have been likely to cross; or that they would have had anything to do together... any of the common interests that make men friends.

The new officer was not intrusive, certainly. He walked along, whistling softly to himself, seeming quite lost in the freshness of the morning, or in his own thoughts. There had been nothing patronizing in his manner so far, and Claude **began to wonder why he felt ill at ease with him**. Perhaps it was because he did not look like the rest of them. Though he was young, he did not look boyish. He seemed experienced; a finished product, rather than something on the way. He was handsome, and his face, like his manner and his walk, had something distinguished about it. A broad white forehead under reddish brown hair, hazel eyes **with no uncertainty in their look**, an aquiline nose, finely cut,—a sensitive, scornful mouth, which somehow did not detract from the kindly, though slightly reserved, expression of his face.

Claude had been ashamed of Tod Fanning, who was always showing himself a sap-head, and who would never have got a commission if his uncle hadn't been a Congressman. But the moment he met Lieutenant Gerhardt's eye, something like jealousy flamed up in him. He felt in a flash that he suffered by comparison with the new officer; that **he must be on his guard and must not let himself be patronized**.

**He was quite disheartened** by the colloquy that followed. Clearly his new fellow officer spoke Madame Joubert's perplexing language as readily as she herself did, and **he felt irritated and grudging as he listened**. He had been hoping that, wherever he stayed, he could learn to talk to the people a little; but with this accomplished young man about, he would never have the courage to try. He could see that Mme. Joubert liked Gerhardt, liked him very much; **and all this, for some reason, discouraged him**.

Like Dick or not (and he didn't dislike Dick, though once he'd liked him better, respected him more), it was obvious they could not now safely separate. On that point they were in accord, for Dick had said, "If we get caught, let's get caught together. Then we can back each other up. When they start pulling the confession crap, saying you said and I said." Moreover, if he broke with Dick, it meant the end of plans still attractive to Perry, and still, despite recent reverses, deemed possible by both—a skin-diving, treasure-hunting life lived together among islands or along coasts south of the border.

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The compulsively superstitious person is also very often a serious believer in fate; that was the case with Perry. **He was here, and embarked on the present errand, not because he wished to be but because fate had arranged the matter; he could prove it—though he had no intention of doing so, at least within Dick's hearing, for the proof would involve his confessing the true and secret motive behind his return to Kansas, a piece of parole violation he had decided upon for a reason quite unrelated to Dick's "score" or Dick's summoning letter. The reason was that several weeks earlier he had learned that on Thursday, November 12, another of his former cellmates was being released from Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing, and "more than anything in the world," he desired a reunion with this man, his "real and only friend," the "brilliant" Willie-Jay.**

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During the first of his three years in prison, Perry had observed Willie-Jay from a distance, with interest but with apprehension; if one wished to be thought a tough specimen, intimacy with Willie-Jay **seemed unwise**. He was the chaplain's clerk, a slender Irishman with prematurely gray hair and gray, **melancholy eyes**. His **tenor voice was the glory of the prison's choir**. Even Perry, though he was contemptuous of any exhibition of piety, **felt "upset"** when he heard Willie-Jay sing "The Lord's Prayer"; the hymn's grave language sung in so credulous a spirit moved him, **made him wonder a little at the justice of his contempt**.

*Claude's mother thinks he will have a religious conversion*

"No. I lived in Paris for several years when I was a student." "What were you studying?" "The violin." "You are a musician?" Claude looked at him wonderingly. "I was," replied the other with a disdainful smile, languidly stretching out his legs in the heather. "That seems too bad," Claude remarked gravely. "What does?" "Why, to take fellows with a special talent. There are enough of us who haven't any." Gerhardt rolled over on his back and put his hands under his head. "Oh, this affair is too big for exceptions; it's universal. If you happened to be born twenty-six years ago, you couldn't escape. If this war didn't kill you in one way, it would in another." He told Claude he had trained at Camp Dix, and had come over eight months ago in a regimental band, but he hated the work he had to do and got transferred to the infantry.

*The old woman*

Over the flour barrel in the corner Mahailey had tacked a Red Cross poster; a charcoal drawing of an old woman poking with a stick in a pile of plaster and twisted timbers that had once been her home. Claude went over to look at it while he dried his hands.

There was no chance for the kind of life he wanted at home, where people were always buying and selling, building and pulling down. He had begun to believe that the Americans were a people of shallow emotions. That was the way Gerhardt had put it once; and if it was true, there was no cure for it. Life was so short that it meant nothing at all unless it were continually reinforced by something that endured; unless the shadows of individual existence came and went against a background that held together. While he was absorbed in his day dream of farming in France, his companion stirred and rolled over on his elbow.

Behind the hill, under the burned edge of the wood, they found an abandoned farmhouse and what seemed to be a clean well. It had a solid stone curb about it, and a wooden bucket hanging by a rusty wire. When the boys splashed the bucket about, the water sent up a pure, cool breath. But they were wise boys, and knew where dead Prussians most loved to hide. Even the straw in the stable they regarded with suspicion, and thought it would be just as well not to bed anybody there. Swinging on to the right to make their circuit, they got into mud; a low field where the drain ditches had been neglected and had overflowed.

Eventually, prodded by a slightly alerted religious curiosity, he approached Willie-Jay, and the chaplain's clerk, at once responsive, thought he divined in the cripple-legged body builder with the misty gaze and the prim, smoky voice "a poet, something rare and savable." An ambition to "bring this boy to God" engulfed him. His hopes of succeeding accelerated when one day Perry produced a pastel drawing he had made—a large, in no way technically naïve portrait of Jesus. Lansing's Protestant chaplain, the Reverend James Post, so valued it that he hung it in his office, where it hangs still: a slick and pretty Saviour, with Willie-Jay's full lips and grieving eyes. The picture was the climax of Perry's never very earnest spiritual quest, and, ironically, the termination of it; he adjudged his Jesus "a piece of hypocrisy," an attempt to "fool and betray" Willie-Jay, for he was as unconvinced of God as ever. Yet should he admit this and risk forfeiting the one friend who had ever "truly understood" him? (Hod, Joe, Jesse, travelers straying through a world where last names were seldom exchanged, these had been his "buddies"—never anyone like Willie-Jay, who was in Perry's opinion, "way above average intellectually, perceptive as a well-trained psychologist." How was it possible that so gifted a man had wound up in Lansing? That was what amazed Perry. The answer, which he knew but rejected as "an evasion of the deeper, the human question," was plain to simpler minds: the chaplain's clerk, then thirty-eight, was a thief, a small-scale robber [...]

*Claude's journey to France is more of a spiritual quest than just enlisting for the war.*

*David Berhardt is a well-educated concert violinist whom everyone considers should not be on the front.*

And part of the land—Mr. Clutter's fruit orchard, and the wheat fields going away. Way off in one of the fields a bonfire was burning; they were burning stuff from the house. Everywhere you looked, there was something to remind you. Men with nets and poles were fishing along the banks of the river, but not fishing for fish. Bobby said they were looking for the weapons. The knife. The gun.



Ralph liked being a great man with the Frankfort merchants, and he had never before had such an opportunity as this. He bought a new shot gun, saddles, bridles, boots, long and short storm coats, a set of furniture for his own room, a fireless cooker, another music machine, and had them shipped to Colorado.

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The country neighbours, who were always amused at the Wheelers' doings, got almost as much pleasure out of Ralph's lavishness as he did himself. One said Ralph had shipped a new piano out to Yucca county, another heard he had ordered a billiard table. August Yoeder, their prosperous German neighbour, asked grimly whether he could, maybe, get a place as hired man with Ralph. Leonard Dawson, who was to be married in October, hailed Claude in town one day and shouted; "My God, Claude, there's nothing left in the furniture store for me and Susie! Ralph's bought everything but the coffins. He must be going to live like a prince out there." "I don't know anything about it," Claude answered coolly. "It's not my enterprise." "No, you've got to stay on the old place and make it pay the debts, I understand." Leonard jumped into his car, so that Claude wouldn't have a chance to reply. Mrs. Wheeler, too, when she observed the magnitude of these preparations, began to feel that the new arrangement was not fair to Claude, since he was the older boy and much the steadier. Claude had always worked hard when he was at home, and made a good field hand, while Ralph had never done much but tinker with machinery and run errands in his car. She couldn't understand why he was selected to manage an undertaking in which so much money was invested.

Claude is on his way back to Lincoln, with a fairly liberal allowance which does not contribute much to his comfort or pleasure. He has no friends or instructors whom he can regard with admiration, though the need to admire is just now uppermost in his nature. He is convinced that the people who might mean something to him will always misjudge him and pass him by. He is not so much afraid of loneliness as he is of accepting cheap substitutes; of making excuses to himself for a teacher who flatters him, of waking up some morning to find himself admiring a girl merely because she is accessible. He has a dread of easy compromises, and he is terribly afraid of being fooled.

Shepherd & Foster's, Rothschild's, Shopper's Paradise. By sundown, when the stores were closing, their pockets were filled with cash and the car was heaped with salable, pawn-able wares. Surveying this harvest of shirts and cigarette lighters, expensive machinery and cheap cuff links, Perry felt elatedly tall—now Mexico, a new chance, a "really living" life. But Dick seemed depressed. He shrugged off Perry's praises ("I mean it, Dick. You were amazing. Half the time I believed you myself"). And Perry was puzzled; he could not fathom why Dick, usually so full of himself, should suddenly, when he had good cause to gloat, be meek, look wilted and sad.

*Throughout the novel Willa is showing the worth of things as opposed to what can be bought.*

The farmer raised and took to market things with an intrinsic value; wheat and corn as good as could be grown anywhere in the world, hogs and cattle that were the best of their kind. In return he got manufactured articles of poor quality; showy furniture that went to pieces, carpets and draperies that faded, clothes that made a handsome man look like a clown. Most of his money was paid out for machinery,—and that, too, went to pieces. A steam thrasher didn't last long; The old woman

Mysterious objects stood about him in the grey twilight; electric batteries, old bicycles and typewriters, a machine for making cement fence-posts, a vulcanizer, a stereopticon with a broken lens. The mechanical toys Ralph could not operate successfully, as well as those he had got tired of, were stored away here. [...] Nearly every time Claude went into the cellar, he made a desperate resolve to clear the place out some day, reflecting bitterly that the money this wreckage cost would have put a boy through college decently.

After the third, he abruptly asked, "What about Dad? I feel—oh, Jesus, he's such a good old guy. And my mother—well, you saw her. What about them? Me, I'll be off in Mexico. Or wherever. But they'll be right here when those checks start to bounce. I know Dad. He'll want to make them good. Like he tried to before. And he can't—he's old and he's sick, he ain't got anything."

*Claude's concern with his mother, and knowing that his dad can afford anything is pervasive throughout the story; beyond this, psychopaths do not feel empathy. To credit the killers with empathy negates the reality.*



**The timber claim was his refuge.** In the open, grassy spots, shut in by the bushy walls of yellowing ash trees, he felt unmarried and free; free to smoke as much as he liked, and to read and dream. **Some of his dreams would have frozen his young wife's blood with horror—and some would have melted his mother's heart with pity.** To lie in the hot sun and look up at the stainless blue of the autumn sky, to hear the dry rustle of the leaves as they fell, and the sound of the bold squirrels leaping from branch to branch; **to lie thus and let his imagination play with life—that was the best he could do. His thoughts, he told himself, were his own.** He was no longer a boy. He went off into the timber claim to meet a young man more experienced and interesting than himself, **who had not tied himself up with compromises.**

Imagination, of course, can open any door—turn the key and let terror walk right in.

## Truman's "most quoted"

"Everything Herb had, he earned—with the help of God. He was a modest man but a proud man, as he had a right to be. He raised a fine family. He made something of his life." But that life, and what he'd made of it—how could it happen, Erhart wondered as he watched the bonfire catch. How was it possible that such effort, such plain virtue, could overnight be reduced to this—smoke, thinning as it rose and was received by the big, annihilating sky?

*This is one of Truman's "most quoted," and yet it is Willa's words and vision that opens this and deeply, eloquently illustrates the hope of the Garden of Eden going up in smoke and ashes, the possibilities lost because of humans.*

Half an hour after the wagon left, Nat Wheeler put on an alpaca coat and went off in the rattling buckboard in which, though he kept two automobiles, he still drove about the country. He said nothing to his wife; it was her business to guess whether or not he would be home for dinner. She and Mahaley could have a good time scrubbing and sweeping all day, with no men around to bother them. [ . . . ] The merchants in the little towns about the county missed him if he didn't drop in once a week or so. He was active in politics; never ran for an office himself, but often took up the cause of a friend and conducted his campaign for him.

The fog, and rain, the grey sky and the lonely grey stretches of the ocean were like something he had imagined long ago—memories of old sea stories read in childhood, perhaps—and they kindled a warm spot in his heart. Here on the Anchises he seemed to begin where childhood had left off. The ugly hiatus between had closed up. Years of his life were blotted out in the fog. This fog which had been at first depressing had become a shelter; a tent moving through space, hiding one from all that had been before, giving one a chance to correct one's ideas about life and to plan the future. The past was physically shut off; that was his illusion.





for him the call was clear, the cause was glorious. Never a doubt stained his bright faith. She divines so much that he did not write. She knows what to read into those short flashes of enthusiasm; how fully he must have found his life before he could let himself go so far—he, who was so afraid of being fooled! He died believing his own country better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be. And those were beautiful beliefs to die with. Perhaps it was as well to see that vision, and then to see no more. She would have dreaded the awakening,—she sometimes even doubts whether he could have borne at all that last, desolating disappointment.

He had troubled his mother and disappointed his father, His marriage would be the first natural, dutiful, expected thing he had ever done. It would be the beginning of usefulness and content; as his mother's oft-repeated Psalm said, **it would restore his soul.**

When Claude's mother hears of these things, she shudders and presses her hands tight over her breast, as if she had him there. She feels as if God had saved him from some horrible suffering, some horrible end. For as she reads, she thinks those slayers of themselves were all so like him; they were the ones who had hoped extravagantly,—who in order to do what they did had to hope extravagantly, and to believe passionately. And they found they had hoped and believed too much. **But one she knew, who could ill bear disillusion... safe, safe.**

It was a curious thing, he reflected, that a character could perpetuate itself thus; by a picture, a word, a phrase, it could renew itself in every generation and be born over and over again in the minds of children. **At that time he had never seen a map of France,** and had a very poor opinion of any place farther away than Chicago; **yet he was perfectly prepared for the legend of Joan of Arc, and often thought about her** when he was bringing in his cobs in the evening, or when he was sent to the windmill for water and stood shaking in the cold while the chilled pump brought it slowly up. He **pictured her then very much as he did now;** about her figure there gathered a luminous cloud, like dust, with soldiers in it... the banner with lilies... a great church... cities with walls.


He said, "About that premonition stuff. Tell me this: **If you were so damn sure you were gonna crack up, why didn't you call it quits?** It wouldn't have happened if you'd stayed off your bike—right?" That was a riddle that Perry had pondered. **He felt he'd solved it, but the solution, while simple, was also somewhat hazy:** "No. Because once a thing is set to happen, all you can do is hope it won't. Or will—depending. **As long as you live, there's always something waiting, and even if it's bad, and you know it's bad, what can you do? You can't stop living.**

Several classmates of Nancy's from Holcomb High School wept as the Reverend Leonard Cowan said: 'God offers us courage, love and hope even **though we walk through the shadows of the valley of death.** I'm sure he was with them in their last hours. Jesus has never promised us we would not suffer pain or sorrow but He has always said He would be there to help us bear the sorrow and the pain.' ...

to remind Dick of the fortune awaiting them on Cocos Island, a land speck off the coast of Costa Rica. "No fooling, Dick," Perry said. **"This is authentic. I've got a map. I've got the whole history. It was buried there back in 1821—**Peruvian bullion, jewelry. Sixty million dollars—that's what they say it's worth. Even if we didn't find all of it, even if we found only some of it—Are you with me, Dick?" Heretofore, Dick had always encouraged him, listened attentively to his talk of maps, tales of treasure, but now—and it had not occurred to him before—he wondered if all along Dick had only been pretending, just kidding him. The thought, acutely painful, passed, for Dick, with a **wink and a playful** jab, said, "Sure, honey. I'm with you. All the way."

**As soon as he was seated,** Mr. Wheeler reached for the two-pint sugar bowl and began to pour sugar into his coffee. Ralph asked him if he were going to the circus. Mr. Wheeler **winked.** [ . . . ] The hired men haw-hawed and Ralph giggled. Claude's freckled face got very red. The pancake grew stiff and heavy in his mouth and was **hard to swallow.** His father knew he hated to drive the mules to town, [ . . . ] It was like his father's idea of a joke. Mrs. Wheeler looked at Claude sympathetically, feeling that he was disappointed. Perhaps she, too, **suspected a joke. She had learned that humour might wear almost any guise.**





One warm afternoon in May Claude sat in his upstairs room at the Chapins', copying his thesis, which was to take the place of an examination in history. It was a criticism of the testimony of Jeanne d'Arc in her nine private examinations and the trial in ordinary. The Professor had assigned him the subject with a flash of humour. Although this evidence had been pawed over by so many hands since the fifteenth century, by the phlegmatic and the fiery, by rhapsodists and cynics, he felt sure that Wheeler would not dismiss the case lightly. Indeed, Claude put a great deal of time and thought upon the matter, and for the time being it seemed quite the most important thing in his life. He worked from an English translation of the Proces, but he kept the French text at his elbow, and some of her replies haunted him in the language in which they were spoken. It seemed to him that they were like the speech of her saints, of whom Jeanne said, "the voice is beautiful, sweet and low, and it speaks in the French tongue." Claude flattered himself that he had kept all personal feeling out of the paper; that it was a cold estimate of the girl's motives and character as indicated by the consistency and inconsistency of her replies; and of the change wrought in her by imprisonment and by "the fear of the fire." When he had copied the last page of his manuscript and sat contemplating the pile of written sheets, he felt that after all his conscientious study he really knew very little more about the Maid of Orleans than when he first heard of her from his mother, one day when he was a little boy. He had been shut up in the house with a cold, he remembered, and he found a picture of her in armour, in an old book, and took it down to the kitchen where his mother was making apple pies. She glanced at the picture, and while she went on rolling out the dough and fitting it to the pans, she told him the story. He had forgotten what she said,—it must have been very fragmentary,—but from that time on he knew the essential facts about Joan of Arc, and she was a living figure in his mind. She seemed to him then as clear as now, and now as miraculous as then. It was a curious thing, he reflected, that a character could perpetuate itself thus; by a picture, a word, a phrase, it could renew

itself in every generation and be born over and over again in the minds of children. At that time he had never seen a map of France, and had a very poor opinion of any place farther away than Chicago; yet he was perfectly prepared for the legend of Joan of Arc, and often thought about her when he was bringing in his cobs in the evening, or when he was sent to the windmill for water and stood shaking in the cold while the chilled pump brought it slowly up. He pictured her then very much as he did now; about her figure there gathered a luminous cloud, like dust, with soldiers in it... the banner with lilies... a great church... cities with walls. On this balmy spring afternoon, Claude felt softened and reconciled to the world. Like Gibbon, he was sorry to have finished his labour,—and he could not see anything else as interesting ahead. He must soon be going home now. There would be a few examinations to sit through at the Temple, a few more evenings with the Erlichs, trips to the Library to carry back the books he had been using,—and then he would suddenly find himself with nothing to do but take the train for Frankfort. He rose with a sigh and began to fasten his history papers between covers. Glancing out of the window, he decided that he would walk into town and carry his thesis, which was due today; the weather was too fine to sit bumping in a street car. The truth was, he wished to prolong his relations with his manuscript as far as possible. He struck off by the road,—it could scarcely be called a street, since it ran across raw prairie land where the buffalo-peas were in blossom. Claude walked slower than was his custom, his straw hat pushed back on his head and the blaze of the sun full in his face. His body felt light in the scented wind, and he listened drowsily to the larks, singing on dried weeds and sunflower stalks. At this season their song is almost painful to hear, it is so sweet. He sometimes thought of this walk long afterward; it was memorable to him, though he could not say why.

*Willis Jeanne  
d'Arc*



from Willa's *The Professor's House*

+ Joan of Arc legend becomes Truman's "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" movie

Augusta said she must be leaving. St. Peter heard her well-known tread as she descended the stairs. How much she reminded him of, to be sure! She had been most at the house in the days when his daughters were little girls and needed so many clean frocks. It was in those very years that he was beginning his great work; when the desire to do it and the difficulties attending such a project strove together in his mind like Macbeth's two spent swimmers--years when he had the courage to say to himself: "I will do this dazzling, this beautiful, this utterly impossible thing!" During the fifteen years he had been working on his **Spanish Adventurers in North America, this room had been his centre of operations. There had been delightful excursions and digressions; the two Sabbatical years when he was in Spain studying records, two summers in the South-west on the trail of his adventurers, another in Old Mexico, dashes to France to see his foster-brothers. But the notes and the records and the ideas always came back to this room. It was here they were digested and sorted, and woven into their proper place in his history.**

And when it was settled—Mexico. The map was ragged, so thumbed that it had grown as supple as a piece of chamois. Around the corner, in his room at the hotel where he was staying, were hundreds more like it—worn maps of every state in the Union, every Canadian province, every South American country—for the young man was an incessant conceiver of voyages, not a few of which he had actually taken: to Alaska, to Hawaii and Japan, to Hong Kong. Now, thanks to a letter, an invitation to a "score," here he was with all his worldly belongings: one cardboard suitcase, a guitar, and two big boxes of books and maps and songs, poems and old letters, weighing a quarter of a ton. (Dick's face when he saw those boxes! "Christ, Perry. You carry that junk everywhere?" And Perry had said, "What junk? One of them books cost me thirty bucks.") Here he was in little Olathe, Kansas. Kind of funny, if you thought about it; imagine being back in Kansas, when only four months ago he had sworn, first to the State Parole Board, then to himself, that he would never set foot within its boundaries again. Well, it wasn't for long. Ink-circled names populated the map. COZUMEL, an

island off the coast of Yucatán, where, so he had read in a men's magazine, you could "shed your clothes, put on a relaxed grin, live like a Rajah, and have all the women you want for \$50-a-month!" From the same article he had memorized other appealing statements: "Cozumel is a hold-out against social, economic, and political pressure. No official pushes any private person around on this island," and "Every year flights of parrots come over from the mainland to lay their eggs." ACAPULCO connoted deep-sea fishing, casinos, anxious rich women; and SIERRA MADRE meant gold, meant Treasure of the Sierra Madre, a movie he had seen eight times. (It was Bogart's best picture, but the old guy who played the prospector, the one who reminded Perry of his father, was terrific, too. Walter Huston. Yes, and what he had told Dick was true: He did know the ins and outs of hunting gold, having been taught them by his father, who was a professional prospector. So why shouldn't they, the two of them, buy a pair of pack horses and try their luck in the Sierra Madre? But Dick, the practical Dick, had said, "Whoa, honey, whoa. I seen that show. Ends up everybody nuts. On account of fever and bloodsuckers, mean conditions all around. Then, when they got the gold—remember, a big wind came along and blew it all away?") Perry folded the map.

[...]  
Dick had once observed, "Every time you see a mirror you go into a trance, like. Like you was looking at some gorgeous piece of butt. I mean, my God, don't you ever get tired?" Far from it; his own face enthralled him. Each angle of it induced a different impression. It was a changeling's face, and mirror-guided experiments had taught him how to ring the changes, how to look now ominous, now impish, now soulful; a tilt of the head, a twist of the lips, and the corrupt gypsy became the gentle romantic.



Mrs. Wheeler got the word of his death one afternoon in the sitting-room, the room in which he had bade her good-bye. She was reading **when the telephone rang**. "Is this the Wheeler farm? This is the telegraph office at Frankfort. We have a message from the War Department,—"**the voice hesitated**. "Isn't Mr. Wheeler there?" "No, but you can read the message to me." Mrs. Wheeler said, "Thank you," and hung up the receiver. She felt her way softly to her chair. **She had an hour alone, when there was nothing but him in the room,—but him and the map there, which was the end of his road**. Somewhere among those perplexing names, he had found his place. Claude's **letters kept coming for weeks afterward; then came the letters from his comrades and his Colonel to tell her all**.

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**As the two soldiers left the table and started for the camp, Claude reached down into the tool house and took up one of the kittens, holding it out in the light to see it blink its eyes. The little girl, just coming out of the kitchen, uttered a shrill scream, a really terrible scream, and squatted down, covering her face with her hands**.

[...]

For who could sleep in a house—a modest one-story house—**where all night the telephone had been sounding every few minutes?** As he got out of bed, Dewey promised his wife, "This time I'll leave it off the hook." But it was not a promise he dared keep. True, many of the calls came from news-hunting journalists, or would-be humorists, or theorists ("Al? Listen, fella, I've got this deal figured. It's suicide and murder.

[...]

And while none of these conversations had as yet done more than make extra work for the investigators, **it was always possible that the next one might be**, as Dewey put it, **"the break that brings down the curtain."**

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Rather, it concerned a cat, the mysterious demise of Nancy's favorite pet, Boobs, whom, according to an entry dated two weeks prior to her own death, she'd found "lying in the barn," the victim, or so she suspected (without saying why), of a poisoner: "Poor Boobs. I buried him in a special place." On reading this, Dewey felt it could be "very important." If the **cat** had been poisoned, might not this act have been a small, malicious prelude to the murders? He determined to find the "special place" where Nancy had buried her pet, even though it meant combing the vast whole of River Valley Farm.

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Even the hunt for the grave of Nancy's cat had come to nothing.



**Madame Joubert came out to chide her.**

**"What is the matter with that child?"**

**Claude asked as they hurried out of the gate. "Do you suppose she was hurt, or abused in some way?" "Terrorized. She often screams like that at night. Haven't you heard her? They have to go and wake her, to stop it. She doesn't speak any French; only Walloon. And she can't or won't learn, so they can't tell what goes on in her poor little head." In the two weeks of intensive training that followed, Claude marvelled at Gerhardt's spirit and endurance.**

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**"I suppose you had better take the chickens over to your mother's," Enid continued evenly. "But I shouldn't like them to get mixed with her Plymouth Rocks; there's not a dark feather among them now. Do ask Mother Wheeler to use all the eggs, and not to let my hens set in the spring." "In the spring?" Claude looked up from his plate. "Of course, Claude. I could hardly get back before next fall, if I'm to be of any help to poor Carrie. I might try to be home for harvest, if that would make it more convenient for you." She rose to bring in the dessert. "Oh, don't hurry on my account!" he muttered, staring after her disappearing figure. Enid came back with the hot pudding and the after-dinner coffee things. "This has come on us so suddenly that we must make our plans at once," she explained. "I should think your mother would be glad to keep Rose for us [ . . . ]**

from the nearby room where her sons slept, sobs, **a small boy crying.** "Paul?" Ordinarily, Paul was neither troubled nor troublesome—not a whiner, ever. He was too busy digging tunnels in the backyard or practicing to be "the fastest runner in Finney County." But at breakfast that morning **he'd burst into tears.** His mother had not needed to ask him why; she knew that although he understood only hazily the reasons for the uproar round him, **he felt endangered by it**—by the harassing telephone, and the **strangers** at the door, and his father's worry-wearied eyes. She went to comfort Paul. His brother, three years older, helped. "Paul," he said, "you take it easy now, and tomorrow I'll teach you to play poker."

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**He said, "Maybe the boys ought to stay with Mother."** His mother, a widow, lived not far off, in a house she thought too spacious and silent; the grandchildren were always welcome. "For just a few days. **Until—well, until.**" "Alvin, do you think we'll ever get back to normal living?" Mrs. Dewey asked.

Claude took her up eagerly. "Don't you think so? You see it's my idea to have the second floor for ourselves, instead of cutting it up into little boxes as people usually do. We can come up here and forget the farm and the kitchen and all our troubles. I've made a big closet for each of us, and got everything just right. **And now Enid wants to keep this room for preachers!" Enid laughed. "Not only for preachers, Claude.** For Gladys, when she comes to visit us—you see she likes it—and for your mother when she comes to spend a week and rest. I don't think we ought to take the best room for ourselves." "Why not?" Claude argued hotly. **"I'm building the whole house for ourselves.** Come out on the porch roof, Gladys. Isn't this fine for hot nights? I want to put a railing round and make this into a balcony, where we can have chairs and a hammock."

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**My violin, a Stradivarius,** was in a vault in New York. I didn't need it for that concert, any more than I need it at this minute; yet I went to town and brought it out. I was taking it up from the station in a military car, and a drunken taxi driver ran into us. I wasn't hurt, but the violin, lying across my knees, was smashed into a thousand pieces. **I didn't know what it meant then; but since, I've seen so many beautiful old things smashed...** I've become a fatalist."

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At that time they were saving **to build a house on a farm** that Dewey had bought in 1951—two hundred and forty acres several miles north of Garden City. **If the weather was fine, and especially when the days were hot** and the wheat was high and ripe, he liked to drive out there and practice his draw—shoot crows, tin cans—or **in his imagination roam through the house he hoped to have [ . . . ]**

"I don't see how anyone can sit down to table without wanting to bless it," Mrs. Dewey once said. "Sometimes, when I come home from work—well, I'm tired. But there's always coffee on the stove, and sometimes a steak in the icebox. [ . . . ]"

Now Mrs. Dewey said, "Alvin, answer me. **Do you think we'll ever have a normal life again?"** He started to reply, but the telephone stopped him.

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Perry, who sat clutching the old Gibson guitar, his most beloved possession. [ . . . ]  
—these, too, were part of the car's untidy interior.

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Though their pasts were neither long or varied, most of them, like Claude Wheeler, felt a sense of relief at being rid of all they had ever been before and facing something absolutely new. Said Tod Fanning, as he lounged against the rail, "Whoever likes it can run for a train every morning, and grind his days out in a Westinghouse works; but not for me any more!"

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A Staten Island ferry-boat passed close under the bow of the transport. The passengers were office-going people, on their way to work, and when they looked up and saw these hundreds of faces, all young, all bronzed and grinning, they began to shout and wave their handkerchiefs. One of the passengers was an old clergyman, a famous speaker in his day, now retired, who went over to the City every morning to write editorials for a church paper. He closed the book he was reading, stood by the rail, and taking off his hat began solemnly to quote from a poet who in his time was still popular. "Sail on," he quavered, "Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State, Humanity, with all its fears, With all its hopes of future years, Is hanging breathless on thy fate."

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As the troop ship glided down the sea lane, the old man still watched it from the turtle-back. That howling swarm of brown arms and hats and faces looked like nothing, but a crowd of American boys going to a football game somewhere. But the scene was ageless; youths were sailing away to die for an idea, a sentiment, for the mere sound of a phrase... and on their departure they were making vows to a bronze image in the sea.

be out of Kansas, at last relaxed. Now it was true—they were on their way—On their way, and never coming back—without regret, as far as he was concerned, for he was leaving nothing behind, and no one who might deeply wonder into what thin air he'd spiraled. The same could not be said of Dick. There were those Dick claimed to love: three sons, a mother, a father, a brother—persons he hadn't dared confide his plans to, or bid goodbye, though he never expected to see them again—not in this life.

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A small boat was riding at anchor in a mild sea: the Estrellita, with four persons aboard—Dick, Perry, a young Mexican, and Otto, a rich middle-aged German. "Please. Again," said Otto, and Perry, strumming his guitar, sang in a husky sweet voice a Smoky Mountains song: "In this world today while we're living Some folks say the worst of us they can, But when we're dead and in our caskets, They always slip some lilies in our hand. Won't you give me flowers while I'm living ..."

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them, promised perspiration aplenty, entailing, as it did, the tracking down, the "checking out," of hundreds of people, among them all former River Valley Farm employees, friends and family, anyone with whom Mr. Clutter had done business, much or little—a tortoise crawl into the past.

They took their places under the arch before the preacher. He began with the chapter from Genesis about the creation of man, and Adam's rib, reading in a **laboured manner**, as if he did not quite know why he had selected that passage and was looking for something he did not find. His nose-glasses kept falling off and dropping upon the open book. Throughout this prolonged fumbling Enid stood calm, looking at him **respectfully**, very pretty in her short veil. **Claude was so pale that he looked unnatural,—nobody had ever seen him like that before. His face, between his very black clothes and his smooth, sandy hair, was white and severe, and he uttered his responses in a hollow voice.** Mahailey, at the back of the room, in a black hat with green gooseberries on it, was standing, in order to miss nothing. She watched Mr. Snowberry as if she hoped to catch some visible sign of the miracle he was performing. **She always wondered just what it was the preacher did to make the wrongest thing in the world the rightest thing in the world.**

Claude noticed that David looked at him as if he were very much pleased with him,—looked, indeed, **as if something pleasant had happened in this room; where, God knew, nothing had;** where, when they turned round, a swarm of black flies was quivering with **greed and delight over the smears Willy Katz' body had left on the floor.** Claude had often observed that **when David had an interesting idea, or a strong twinge of recollection, it made him, for the moment, rather heartless.** Just now he felt that **Gerhardt's flash of high spirits was in some way connected with him. Was it because he had gone in with Willy? Had David doubted his nerve?**

seemed that Beverly, the second of Mr. Clutter's surviving daughters, had married Mr. Vere Edward English, the young biology student to whom she had long been engaged. Miss Clutter had worn white, and **the wedding**, a full-scale affair ("Mrs. Leonard Cowan was soloist, and Mrs. Howard Blanchard organist"), **had been "solemnized** at the First Methodist Church"—the church in which, three days earlier, the bride had formally mourned her parents, her brother, and her younger sister.

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When Perry asked Dick, "Know what I think?" he knew he was beginning a conversation that would displease Dick, and one that, for that matter, he himself would just as soon avoid. He agreed with Dick: Why go on talking about it? But he could not always stop himself. Spells of helplessness occurred, moments when he "remembered things"—**blue light exploding in a black room**, the glass eyes of a big toy bear—and when voices, a particular few words, started nagging his mind: "Oh, no! Oh, please! No! No! No! No! Don't! Oh, please don't, please!" And certain sounds returned—a silver dollar rolling across a floor, **boot steps on hardwood stairs, and the sounds of breathing, the gasps, the hysterical inhalations** of a man with a severed windpipe.

The comment, the reluctance with which it was pronounced, made Dick ask, "Or did you? Kill him like you said?" It was a significant question, for his original interest in Perry, his assessment of Perry's character and potentialities, was founded on the story Perry had once told him of how he had beaten a colored man to death.

**They have always hung together and are usually quarrelling and grumbling at each other when they are off duty. Still, they hang together.**



Claude knew, and everybody else knew, seemingly, that there was something wrong with him. He had been unable to conceal his discontent. Mr. Wheeler was afraid he was one of those visionary fellows who make unnecessary difficulties for themselves and other people. Mrs. Wheeler thought the trouble with her son was that he had not yet found his Saviour. Bayliss was convinced that his brother was a moral rebel, that behind his reticence and his guarded manner he concealed the most dangerous opinions. The neighbours liked Claude, but they laughed at him, and said it was a good thing his father was well fixed. Claude was aware that his energy, instead of accomplishing something, was spent in resisting unalterable conditions, and in unavailing efforts to subdue his own nature. When he thought he had at last got himself in hand, a moment would undo the work of days; in a flash he would be transformed from a wooden post into a living boy. He would spring to his feet, turn over quickly in bed, or stop short in his walk, because the old belief flashed up in him with an intense kind of hope, an intense kind of pain,—the conviction that there was something splendid about life, if he could but find it.

The Lieutenant himself thought he was getting on pretty well, but a few hours later his pride was humbled. He was sitting alone in a little triangular park beside another church, admiring the cropped locust trees and watching some old women who were doing their mending in the shade. A little boy in a black apron, with a close-shaved, bare head, came along, skipping rope. He hopped lightly up to Claude and said in a most persuasive and confiding voice, "Voulez-vous me dire l'heure, s'il vous plaît, M'sieu' l' soldat?" Claude looked down into his admiring eyes with a feeling of panic. He wouldn't mind being dumb to a man, or even to a pretty girl, but this was terrible. His tongue went dry, and his face grew scarlet. The child's expectant gaze changed to a look of doubt, and then of fear. He had spoken before to Americans who didn't understand, but they had not turned red and looked angry like this one; this soldier must be ill, or wrong in his head. The boy turned and ran away. Many a serious mishap had distressed Claude less. He was disappointed, too.

When Perry said, "I think there must be something wrong with us," he was making an admission he "hated to make." After all, it was "painful" to imagine that one might be "not just right"—particularly if whatever was wrong was not your own fault but "maybe a thing you were born with." Look at his family! Look at what had happened there! His mother, an alcoholic, had strangled to death on her own vomit. Of her children, two sons and two daughters, only the younger girl, Barbara, had entered ordinary life, married, begun raising a family. Fern, the other daughter, jumped out of a window of a San Francisco hotel. (Perry had ever since "tried to believe she slipped," for he'd loved Fern. She was "such a sweet person," so "artistic," a "terrific" dancer, and she could sing, too. "If she'd ever had any luck at all, with her looks and all, she could have got somewhere, been somebody." It was sad to think of her climbing over a window sill and falling fifteen floors.) And there was Jimmy, the older boy—Jimmy, who had one day driven his wife to suicide and killed himself the next. Then he heard Dick say, "Deal me out, baby. I'm a normal." Wasn't that a horse's laugh? But never mind, let it pass. "Deep down," Perry continued, "way, way rock-bottom, I never thought I could do it. A thing like that."

The door still stood open, at the end of the corridor. Claude went down the steps until he could sight along the floor of the passage, into the front room. The shutters were closed in there, and the sunlight came through the slats. In the middle of the floor, between the door and the windows, stood a tall chest of drawers, with a mirror attached to the top. In the narrow space between the bottom of this piece of furniture and the floor, he could see a pair of boots. It was possible there was but one man in the room, shooting from behind his movable fort,—though there might be others hidden in the corners. "There's only one fellow in there, I guess. He's shooting from behind a big dresser in the middle of the room. Come on, one of you, we'll have to go in and get him." Willy Katz, the Austrian boy from the Omaha packing house, stepped up and stood beside him. "Now, Willy, we'll both go in at once; you jump to the right, and I to the left,—and one of us will jab him. He can't shoot both ways at once. Are you ready? All right—Now!" Claude thought he was taking the more dangerous position himself, but the German probably reasoned that the important man would be on the right. As the two Americans dashed through the door, he fired. Claude caught him in the back with his bayonet, under the shoulder blade, but Willy Katz had got the bullet in his brain, through one of his blue eyes. He fell, and never stirred. The German officer fired his revolver again as he went down, shouting in English, English with no foreign accent, "You swine, go back to Chicago!" Then he began choking with blood. Sergeant Hicks ran in and shot the dying man through the temples.

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At nine o'clock the officers were standing together in the square before the church, checking off on the map the houses that had been searched. The men were drinking coffee, and eating fresh bread from a baker's shop. The square was full of people who had come out to see for themselves. Some believed that deliverance had come, and others shook their heads and held back, suspecting another trick. A crowd of children were running about, making friends with the soldiers. One little girl with yellow curls and a clean white dress had attached herself to Hicks, and was eating chocolate out of his pocket. Gerhardt was bargaining with the baker for another baking of bread. The sun was shining, for a change,—everything was looking cheerful. This village seemed to be swarming with girls; some of them were pretty, and all were friendly. The men who had looked so haggard and forlorn when dawn overtook them at the edge of the town, began squaring their shoulders and throwing out their chests. They were dirty and mud-plastered, but as Claude remarked to the Captain, they actually looked like fresh men. Suddenly a shot rang out above the chatter, and an old woman in a white cap screamed and tumbled over on the pavement,—rolled about, kicking indecorously with both hands and feet. A second crack,—the little girl who stood beside Hicks, eating chocolate, threw out her hands, ran a few steps, and fell, blood and brains oozing out in her yellow hair.

"It was a couple of summers ago. Out in Vegas. I was living in this old boarding house—it used to be a fancy cathouse. But all the fancy was gone. It was a place they should have torn down ten years back; anyway, it was sort of coming down by itself. The cheapest rooms were in the attic, and I lived up there. So did this nigger. His name was King; he was a transient. We were the only two up there—us and a million cucarachas. King, he wasn't too young, but he'd done roadwork and other outdoor stuff—he had a good build. He wore glasses, and he read a lot. He never shut his door. Every time I passed by, he was always lying there buck-naked. He was out of work, and said he'd saved a few dollars from his last job, said he wanted to stay in bed awhile, read and fan himself and drink beer. [ . . . ] sleep, so I said, 'Come on, King, let's go for a drive.' I had an old car I'd stripped and souped and painted silver—the Silver Ghost, I called it. We went for a long drive. Drove way out in the desert. Out there it was cool. We parked and drank a few more beers. King got out of the car, and I followed after him. He didn't see I'd picked up this chain. A bicycle chain I kept under the seat. Actually, I had no real idea to do it till I did it. I hit him across the face. Broke his glasses. I kept right on. Afterward, I didn't feel a thing. I left him there, and never heard a word about it. Maybe nobody ever found him. Just buzzards."

[ . . . ]

The car was moving. A hundred feet ahead, a dog trotted along the side of the road. Dick swerved toward it. It was an old half-dead mongrel, brittle-boned and mangy, and the impact, as it met the car, was little more than what a bird might make. But Dick was satisfied. "Boy!" he said—and it was what he always said after running down a dog, which was something he did whenever the opportunity arose. "Boy! We sure splattered him!"



**Battalion Headquarters was nearly half a mile behind the front line, part dugout, part shed, with a plank roof sodded over. The Colonel's office was partitioned off at one end; the rest of the place he gave over to the officers for a kind of club room.** One night Claude went back to make a report on the new placing of the gun teams. The young officers **were sitting about on soap boxes, smoking and eating sweet crackers out of tin cases.** Gerhardt was working at a plank table with paper and crayons, making a clean copy of a rough map they had drawn up together that morning, showing the limits of fire. Noise didn't fluster him; he could sit among a lot of men and write as **calmly as if he were alone.**

When Owens was in college he had never shown the least interest in classical studies, but now it was as if he were giving birth to Caesar. The war came along, and stopped the work on his dam. It also drove other ideas into his exclusively engineering brains. **He rushed home to Kansas to explain the war to his countrymen... He travelled about the West, demonstrating exactly what had happened at the first battle of the Marne, until he had a chance to enlist. In the Battalion, Owens was called "Julius Caesar," and the men never knew whether he was explaining the Roman general's operations in Spain, or Joffre's at the Marne, he jumped so from one to the other.** Everything was in the foreground with him; centuries made no difference. Nothing existed until Barclay Owens found out about it. **The men liked to hear him talk.**

Claude knew that **David particularly detested Captain Owens of the Engineers,** and wondered that he could go on working with such concentration, when snatches of the Captain's lecture kept breaking through the confusion of casual talk and the noise of the phonograph. Owens, as he walked up and down, cast furtive glances at Gerhardt. He had got wind of the fact that there was something out of the ordinary about him. **The men kept the phonograph going;** as soon as one record buzzed out, somebody put in another.

But the case was by no means closed for the people of Finney County, and **least of all for those who patronized Holcomb's favorite meeting place, Hartman's Café.** "Since the trouble started, we've been doing all the business we can handle," Mrs. Hartman said, gazing around her snug domain, **every scrap of which was being sat or stood or leaned upon by tobacco-scented, coffee-drinking farmers, farm helpers, and ranch hands.** "Just a bunch of old women," added Mrs. Hartman's cousin, Postmistress Clare, who happened to be on the premises. "If it was spring and work to be done, they wouldn't be here. But wheat's in, winter's on the way, **they got nothing to do but sit around and scare each other.**

Bill Brown, down to the Telegram? See the editorial he wrote? That one he **called it 'Another Crime'?** Said, 'It's time for everyone to stop wagging loose tongues.' Because that's a crime, too—telling plain-out lies. But what can you expect? Look around you. Rattlesnakes. Varmints. Rumormongers. See anything else? Ha! Like dash you do." One rumor originating in Hartman's Café involved Taylor Jones, a rancher whose property adjoins River Valley Farm. In the opinion of a good part of the café's clientele, **Mr. Jones and his family, not the Clutters,** were the murderer's intended victims. "It makes harder sense," argued one of those who held this view. "Taylor Jones, he's a richer man than Herb Clutter ever was. Now, pretend the fellow who done it wasn't anyone from hereabouts. Pretend he'd been maybe hired to kill, and all he had was instructions on how to get to the house. Well, it would be mighty easy to make a mistake—take a wrong turn—and end up at Herb's place 'stead of Taylor's." The "Jones Theory" was much repeated—especially to the Joneses, a dignified and sensible family, **who refused to be flustered.**

A lunch counter, a few tables, an alcove harboring a hot grill and an icebox and **a radio**—that's all there is to Hartman's Café.

"Now you fellows don't want to forget that the night-life of Paris is **not a typical thing at all; that's a show got up for foreigners....** The French peasant, he's a thrifty fellow.... **This red wine's all right if you don't abuse it;** take it two-thirds water and it keeps off dysentery.... **You don't have to be rough with them, simply firm.** Whenever one of them accosts me, I follow a regular plan; first, **I give her twenty-five francs;** then I look her in the eye and say, 'My girl, I've got three children, three boys.' She gets the point at once; never fails. **She goes away ashamed of herself."**

Gerhardt and Claude Wheeler alighted from a taxi before the open gates of a square-roofed, solid-looking house, where all the shutters on the front were closed, and the tops of many trees showed above the garden wall. **They crossed a paved court and rang at the door.** An old valet admitted the young men, and took them through a wide hall to the salon, which opened on the garden. Madame and Mademoiselle would be down very soon. David went to one of the long windows and looked out. "They have kept it up, in spite of everything. It was always lovely here."

**The mother was short, plump, and rosy, with strong, rather masculine features and yellowish white hair.** The tears flashed into her eyes as David bent to kiss her hand, and she embraced him and touched both his cheeks with her lips. **"Et vous, vous aussi!" she murmured, touching the coat of his uniform with her fingers. There was but a moment of softness. She gathered herself up like an old general, Claude thought, as he stood watching the group from the window, drew her daughter forward, and asked David whether he recognized the little girl with whom he used to play.**

"Not exactly." Claude bit his lip. "The fact is, Dave, **I don't feel just comfortable here. Oh, the people are all right. But I'm out of place.** I'm going to pull out and get a billet somewhere else, and let you visit your friends in peace. Why should I be here? These people don't keep a hotel." "They very nearly do, from what they've been telling me. They've had a string of Scotch and English quartered on them. They like it, too,—or have the good manners to pretend they do. Of course, you'll do as you like, but you'll hurt their feelings and put me in an awkward position. To be frank, I don't see how you can go away without being distinctly rude."

"But our customers like it," says the proprietress. "Got to. **Nowhere else for them to go. 'Less they drive seven miles one direction or fifteen the other.** Anyway, we run a friendly place, **and the coffee's good since Mabel came to work**"—Mabel being Mrs. Helm. "After the tragedy, I said, 'Mabel, **now that you're out of a job, why don't you come give me a hand at the café.** Cook a little. Wait counter.' How it turned out—the only bad feature is, everybody comes in here, **they pester her** with questions. questions. About the tragedy. But Mabel's not like Cousin Myrt. Or me. She's shy. Besides, **she doesn't know anything special.** No more than anybody else." But by and large the Hartman congregation continued to suspect that Mabel Helm knew a thing or two that she was holding back. And, of course, she did. **Dewey had had several conversations with her** and had requested that everything they said be kept secret. Particularly, she was not to mention the missing radio or the watch found in Nancy's shoe. Which is why she said to Mrs. Archibald William Warren-Browne, **"Anybody reads the papers knows as much as I do. More. Because I don't read them."**

Square, squat, in the earlier forties, an Englishwoman fitted out with an accent almost incoherently upper-class, Mrs. Archibald William Warren-Browne did not at all resemble the café's other frequenters, and seemed, within that setting, **like a peacock trapped in a turkey pen.** Once, explaining to an acquaintance why she and her husband had abandoned "family estates in the North of England," exchanging the hereditary home—"the jolliest, oh, the prettiest old priory"—for an old and highly unjolly farmhouse on the plains of western Kansas, Mrs. Warren-Browne said: "Taxes, my dear. Death duties. Enormous, criminal death duties. That's what drove us out of England. Yes, we left a year ago. **Without regrets. None. We love it here. Just adore it.** Though, of course, it's very different from our other life. The life we've always known. **Paris** and Rome. Monte. London. **I do—occasionally—think of London.** Oh, I don't really miss it—the frenzy, and never a cab, and always worrying how one looks. **Positively not. We love it here.** I suppose some people—those aware of our past, the life we've led—wonder aren't we the tiniest bit lonely, out there in the wheat fields. Out West is where we meant to settle. Wyoming or Nevada—**la vraie chose.** We hoped when we got there some oil might stick to us. **But on our way we stopped to visit friends** in Garden City—friends of friends, actually. But they couldn't have been kinder. Insisted we linger on. **And we thought, Well, why not?**



St. Peter had **met his wife in Paris**, when he was but twenty-four, and studying for his doctorate. She too was studying there. **French people thought her an English girl** because of her gold hair and fair complexion. With her **really radiant charm**, she had a very interesting mind--**but it was quite wrong** to call it mind, the connotation was false. What she had was **a richly endowed nature** that responded strongly to life and art, and **very vehement likes and dislikes** which were often **quite out of all proportion to the trivial object or person that aroused them**. Before his marriage, and for years afterward, Lillian's prejudices, her divinations about people and art (always instinctive and unexplained, but nearly always right), were the most interesting things in St. Peter's life. When he accepted almost the first position offered him, in order to marry at once, and came to take the chair of European history at Hamilton, **he was thrown upon his wife for mental companionship**. Most of his colleagues were much older than he, but they were not his equals either in scholarship or in experience of the world. The only other man in the faculty who was carrying on important research work was **Doctor Crane**, the professor of physics. [ . . . ] St. Peter had had no friend in Hamilton of whom Lillian could possibly be jealous until Tom Outland came along, so well **fitted by nature and early environment to help him with his work on the Spanish Adventurers**.

(Page 15).

[ . . . ] When he had almost reached his old house and his study,

[ . . . ]

St. Peter **explained that he wanted to stay on in the empty house**, and would pay the full rent each month. So irregular a project annoyed Appelhoff.

--from The Professor's House by Willa Cather

The Professor **had succeeded in making a French garden in Hamilton**. There was not a blade of grass; it was a tidy half-acre of glistening gravel and glistening shrubs and bright flowers. There were trees, of course; a spreading horse-chestnut, a row of slender Lombardy poplars at the back, along the white wall, and in the middle two symmetrical, round-topped linden-trees. Masses of green-brier grew in the corners, the prickly stems interwoven and clipped until they were like great bushes. **There was a bed for salad herbs**. Salmon-pink geraniums dripped over the wall. The French marigolds and dahlias were just now at their best--such dahlias as no one else in Hamilton could grow. St. Peter had tended this bit of ground for over twenty years, and had got the upper hand of it. In the spring, **when home-sickness for other lands and the fret of things unaccomplished awoke, he worked off his discontent here**.

[continued] Why not hire a bit of land and start ranching? Or farming. Which is a decision we still haven't come to--whether to ranch or farm. Dr. Austin asked if we didn't find it perhaps too quiet. Actually, no. Actually, I've never known such bedlam. It's noisier than a bomb raid. **Train whistles. Coyotes**. Monsters howling the bloody night long. A horrid racket. And since the murders it seems to bother me more. So many things do. Our house--what an old creaker it is! Mark you, I'm not complaining. Really, it's quite a serviceable house--has all the mod. cons.--but, oh, how it coughs and grunts! And after dark, when the wind commences, that hateful prairie wind, one hears the most appalling moans. I mean, if one's a bit nervy, one can't help imagining--silly things. Dear God! That poor family! No, we never met them. I saw Mr. Clutter once. In the Federal Building."

**The moving was over and done**. Professor St. Peter was alone in the dismantled house where he had lived ever since his marriage, where he had worked out his career and **brought up his two daughters**. **It was almost as ugly as it is possible for a house to be**; square, three stories in height, painted the colour of ashes--the front porch just too narrow for comfort, with a slanting floor and sagging steps. As he walked slowly about the empty, echoing rooms on that bright September morning, the Professor regarded thoughtfully **the needless inconveniences he had put up with for so long**; the stairs that were too steep, the halls that were too cramped, the awkward oak mantles with thick round posts crowned by bumptious wooden balls, over green-tiled fire-places. Certain wobbly stair treads, certain creaky boards in the upstairs hall, had made him wince many times a day for twenty-odd years--and they still creaked and wobbled.

There were certainly no other advantages. The furnace heat did not reach the third floor. There was no way to warm the sewing-room, except by a rusty, round gas stove with no flue--a stove which consumed gas imperfectly and contaminated the air. To remedy this, **the window must be left open--otherwise, with the ceiling so low, the air would speedily become unfit to breathe.** If the stove were turned down, and the window left open a little way, **a sudden gust of wind would blow** the wretched thing out altogether, and a deeply absorbed man might be asphyxiated before he knew it. The Professor had found that the best method, in winter, was to turn the gas on full and keep the window wide on the hook, even if he had to put on a leather jacket over his working-coat. [ . . . ]

For three weeks in the fall, and again three in the spring, he shared his cuddy with **Augusta, the sewing-woman**, niece of his old landlord, a reliable, methodical spinster, **a German Catholic** and very devout.

[ . . . ]

**These "forms" were the subject of much banter between them.** The one which **Augusta called "the bust"** stood in the darkest corner of the room, upon a high wooden chest in which blankets and winter wraps were yearly stored. It was a **headless, armless female torso**, covered with strong black cotton, and so richly developed in the part for which it was named that the Professor once explained to **Augusta** how, **in calling it so, she followed a natural law of language, termed, for convenience, metonymy.** **Augusta** enjoyed the Professor when he was **\_risqué\_**, since she was sure of his ultimate delicacy.

[ . . . ]

"Oh, Professor, I never really minded!" **Augusta** spoke with feeling. **She rose and took up the black bust in her long arms.** The Professor also rose, very quickly. "What are you doing?" She laughed. "Oh, I'm not going to carry them through the street, Professor! The grocery boy is downstairs with his cart, to wheel them over." "Wheel them over?" "Why, yes, to the new house, Professor. I've come a

As anyone will tell you. **Anyone who has been sick and had Mrs. Ashida walk nobody can calculate how many miles** to bring them some of the wonderful soups she makes. [ . . . ] it was the day before Halloween [ . . . ] "[ . . . ] **We sure hate to think about leaving. Starting all over again.**" "Leaving?" protested Mr. Clutter, and slowed the car. "Well, Herb. The farm here, the people we're working for—Hideo **thinks we could do better.** Maybe in Nebraska. But nothing's settled. It's just talk so far." Her hearty voice, always on the verge of laughter, made the melancholy news sound somehow cheerful, but seeing that she had saddened Mr. Clutter, she turned to other matters. "Herb, give me a man's opinion," she said. "Me and the kids, **we've been saving up**, we want to give Hideo **something on the grand side** for Christmas. What he needs is **teeth.** Now, if your wife was to give you three gold teeth, would that strike you as a wrong kind of present? I mean, asking a man to spend Christmas in the dentist's chair?" "You beat all. Don't ever try to get away from here. We'll hogtie you," said Mr. Clutter. "Yes, yes, by all means gold teeth. Was me, I'd be tickled." His reaction delighted Mrs. Ashida, for she knew he would not approve her plan unless he meant it; he was a gentleman. **She had never known him to "act the Squire," or to take advantage or break a promise.**



week before my regular time, to make curtains and hem linen for Mrs. St. Peter. I'll take everything over this morning except the sewing-machine--that's too heavy for the cart, so the boy will come back for it with the delivery wagon. Would you just open the door for me, please?" **"No, I won't! Not at all. You don't need her to make curtains. I can't have this room changed if I'm going to work here. He can take the sewing-machine--yes. But put her back on the chest where she belongs, please. She does very well there."** St. Peter had got to the door, and stood with his back against it. Augusta rested her burden on the edge of the chest. **"But next week I'll be working on Mrs. St. Peter's clothes, and I'll need the forms. As the boy's here, he'll just wheel them over,"** she said soothingly. **"I'm damned if he will! They shan't be wheeled. They stay right there in their own place. You shan't take away my ladies. I never heard of such a thing!"** [ . . . ]

**And you still have Augusta's old forms. I don't think anything ever happened to her that amused her so much. And now, you know, she's quite sentimental about their being here. It's about Augusta that I came, Papa. Did you know that she had lost some of her savings in the Kinkoo Copper Company?"** [ . . . ]

**"She says that Louie took the trouble to speak to his banker and to several copper men before he advised Augusta; and that if she doesn't learn her lesson this time, she will do the same thing over again. Rosamond said they would do something for Augusta later, but she didn't say what."** **"Leave Rosamond to me. I'll convince her."** [ . . . ]

At midnight St. Peter was lying in his study, on his box-couch, covered up with blankets, a hot water bottle at his feet; he knew it was midnight, for the clock of Augusta's church across the park was ringing the hour. Augusta herself was there in the room, sitting in her old sewing-chair by the kerosene lamp, wrapped up in a shawl. She was reading a little much-worn religious book that she always carried in her handbag. Presently he spoke to her. **"Just when did you come in, Augusta?"** She got up and came over to him. **"Are you feeling comfortable, Doctor St. Peter?"** **"Oh, very, thank you. When did you happen in?"** **"Not any too soon, sir,"** she said gravely, with a touch of reproof. **"You never would take my cautions about that old stove, and it very nearly asphyxiated you. I was barely in time to pull you out."**

"I don't know what to say," said Mrs. Hartman, her voice indignantly astonished, and also despairing. **The Ashidas were a part of the Holcomb community everyone appreciated—a family likably high-spirited, yet hard-working and neighborly and generous, though they didn't have much to be generous with.** Mrs. Ashida said, **"We've been talking on it a long time. Hideo, he thinks we can do better somewhere else."** **"When you plan to go?"** **"Soon as we sell up. But anyway not before Christmas. On account of a deal we've worked out with the dentist. About Hideo's Christmas present. Me and the kids, we're giving him three gold teeth. For Christmas."** Mrs. Hartman sighed. **"I don't know what to say. Except I wish you wouldn't. Just up and leave us."** She sighed again. **"Seems like we're losing everybody. One way and another."** **"Gosh, you think I want to leave?"** Mrs. Ashida said. **"Far as people go, this is the nicest place we ever lived. But Hideo, he's the man, and he says we can get a better farm in Nebraska. And I'll tell you something, Bess."** Mrs. Ashida attempted a frown, but her plump, round, smooth face could not quite manage it. **"We used to argue about it. Then one night I said, 'O.K., you're the boss, let's go.' After what happened to Herb and his family, I felt something around here had come to an end. I mean personally. For me. And so I quit arguing. I said O.K."** She dipped a hand into Bruce's box of Cracker Jack. **"Gosh, I can't get over it. I can't get it off my mind. I liked Herb. Did you know I was one of the last to see him alive? Uh-huh. Me and the kids. We been to the 4-H meeting in Garden City and he gave us a ride home. The last thing I said to Herb, I told him how I couldn't imagine his ever being afraid. That no matter what the situation was, he could talk his way out of it."** Thoughtfully she nibbled a kernel of Cracker Jack, took a swig of Bobby's Coke, then said, **"Funny, but you know, Bess, I'll bet he wasn't afraid. I mean, however it happened, I'll bet right up to the last he didn't believe it would. Because it couldn't. Not to him."**

"You pulled me out, literally? Where to?" "Into the hall. I came over in the storm to ask you for the keys of the new house--I didn't get Mrs. St. Peter's letter until I got home from work this evening, and I came right over. When I opened the front door I smelled gas, and I knew that stove had been up to its old tricks. I supposed you'd gone out and forgot to turn it off. When I got to the second floor I heard a fall overhead, and it flashed across me that you were up here and had been overcome. I ran up and opened the two windows at the head of the stairs and dragged you out into the wind. You were lying on the floor." She lowered her voice. "It was perfectly frightful in here." "I seem to remember Dudley's being here." "Yes, after I'd turned off the stove and opened everything up, I went next door and telephoned for **Doctor Dudley**. I thought I'd better not say what the trouble was, but I asked him to come at once, as you'd been taken ill.

[...] "You do a good deal of this sort of thing-- watching and sitting up with people, don't you?" "Well, when I happen to be sewing in a house where there's sickness, I am sometimes called upon."



Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries

*Truman Changing Augusta into "Mrs. Ashida"*

*Augusta's "forms," the metonymy of "burst" becomes Truman's "gold teeth"--the forms of the Professor's speaking of Tom Outland's treasures;*

*Augusta's 'savings' get lost on a copper investment;*

*Augusta is "the last to see him alive" before the Professor is almost dead from asphyxiation from a gas stove.*

*Augusta is moving her things to the new house to work from there, and she and everyone in the family think they can now do "better."*

*She has the doctor to come to see him, (which Truman replaces with the dentist)*

*The holiday is changed from summer vacation to Christmas.*

*He changes German to Japanese.*

*The Cracker Jacks hold the "treasure" just as Willa's story holds Tom Outland's treasure.*

*People want to drink the Professor's Spanish sherry with him.*



No second class matter was sent up,—the boys had hoped for newspapers from home to give them a little war news, since they never got any here. Dell Able's sister, however, had enclosed a clipping from the **Kansas City Star**; a long account by one of the British war correspondents in Mesopotamia, describing the hardships the soldiers suffered there; **dysentery, flies, mosquitoes, unimaginable heat**. He read this article aloud to a group of his friends as they sat about a shell-hole pool where they had been washing their socks. He had just finished the story of how the Tommies had found a few mud huts at the place where the original Garden of Eden was said to have been,—a desolate spot full of stinging insects—when Oscar Petersen, a very religious Swedish boy who was often silent for days together, opened his mouth and said scornfully, **"That's a lie!"**



*Running out of text in One of Ours, Truman has to start incorporating The Professor's House and Tom Outland's Story about another young man who goes off to die in a war, and still throwing in Flaubert*

There is an old man with an ancient wooden box camera who hangs around the harbor in Acapulco, and when the Estrellita docked, Otto commissioned him to do six portraits of Perry posed beside his catch. Technically, the old man's work turned out badly—brown and streaked. Still, they were remarkable photographs, and what made them so was Perry's expression, his look of unflawed fulfillment, of beatitude, as though at last, and as in one of his dreams, a tall yellow bird had hauled him to heaven.

But wheat's in, winter's on the way, they got nothing to do but sit around and scare each other. You know Bill Brown, down to the Telegram? See the editorial he wrote? That one he called it 'Another Crime'? Said, 'It's time for everyone to stop wagging loose tongues.' Because that's a crime, too—telling plain-out lies. But what can you expect? Look around you. Rattlesnakes. Varmints. Rumormongers. See anything else? Ha! Like dash you do."

It may have been the hint of snow in the air, but it seemed to me that I had never breathed in anything that tasted so pure as the air in that valley. It made my mouth and nostrils smart like charged water, seemed to go to my head a little and produce a kind of exaltation.

--"Tom Outlands Story" by Willa Cahter



**The Professor in pyjamas was not an unpleasant sight; for looks, the fewer clothes he had on, the better. Anything that clung to his body showed it to be built upon extremely good bones, with the slender hips and springy shoulders of a tireless swimmer.**

--The Professor's House by Willa Cather

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**His daughter Kathleen, who had done several successful studies of him in water-colour, had once said:--"The thing that really makes Papa handsome is the modelling of his head between the top of his ear and his crown; it is quite the best thing about him." That part of his head was high, polished, hard as bronze, and the close-growing black hair threw off a streak of light along the rounded ridge where the skull was fullest. The mould of his head on the side was so individual and definite, so far from casual, that it was more like a statue's head than a man's.**

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**This time he brought with him a supercargo, a pitiful wreck of an old man he had picked up at Tarpin, the railroad town thirty miles north-east of us, where the Sitwells bought their supplies. This old man was a castaway Englishman, Henry Atkins by name. [ . . . ] and for many years was a table steward on the Anchor Line. [ . . . ] They dropped old Henry at Tarpin, where he soon drank up all his wages. When Rapp picked him up there, he was living on hand-outs. "I've told him we can't pay him anything," Rapp explained. "But if he wants to stay here and cook for you boys till I make my next trip, he'll have plenty to eat and a roof over him. [ . . . ] He won't bother you, he's not got any of the mean ways of a bum--I know a bum when I see one. Next time I come down I'll bring him some old clothes from the ranch, and you can lire him if you want to. All his baggage is that newspaper bundle, and there's nothing in it but shoes--a pair of patent leathers and a pair of sneakers. [ . . . ] Life was a holiday for Blake and me after we**

While Perry sang, Otto sketched him in a sketchbook. It was a passable likeness, and the artist perceived one not very obvious aspect of the sitter's countenance—its mischief, an amused, babyish malice that suggested some unkind cupid aiming envenomed arrows. He was naked to the waist. (Perry was "ashamed" to take off his trousers, "ashamed" to wear swimming trunks, for he was afraid that the sight of his injured legs would "disgust people," and so, despite his underwater reveries, all the talk about skin-diving, he hadn't once gone into the water.) Otto reproduced a number of the tattoos ornamenting the subject's overmuscled chest, arms, and small and calloused but girlish hands. The sketchbook, which Otto gave Perry as a parting gift, contained several drawings of Dick—"nude studies." Otto shut his sketchbook,

A week in Mexico City, and then he and Dick had driven south—Cuernavaca, Taxco, Acapulco. And it was in Acapulco, in a "jukebox honky-tonk," that they had met the hairy-legged and hearty Otto. Dick had "picked him up." But the gentleman, a vacationing Hamburg lawyer, "already had a friend"—a young native Acapulcan who called himself the Cowboy. "He proved to be a trustworthy person," Perry once said of the Cowboy. "Mean as Judas, some ways, but oh, man, a funny boy, a real fast jockey. Dick liked him, too. We got on great." The Cowboy found for the tattooed drifters a room in the house of an uncle, undertook to improve Perry's Spanish, and shared the benefits of his liaison with the holidaymaker from Hamburg,

She was eighteen, and Dick had promised to marry her. But he had also promised to marry Maria, a woman of fifty, who was the widow of a "very prominent Mexican banker."

**his gravest troubles have been frequent betrothals. --One of Ours**



On this September morning, however, St. Peter knew that he could not evade the unpleasant effects of change by tarrying among his autumn flowers. He must plunge in like a man, and get used to the feeling that under his work-room there was a dead, empty house. He broke off a geranium blossom, and with it still in his hand went resolutely up two flights of stairs to the third floor where, under the slope of the mansard roof, there was one room still furnished--that is, if it had ever been furnished. --The Professor's House

"You know things are different now, and you ought to take more care of your health."

During the Professor's second Sabbatical year in Spain, Horace and his uncle together very nearly got his department away from him. They worked so quietly that it was only at the eleventh hour that St. Peter's old students throughout the State got wind of what was going on, dropped their various businesses and professions for a few days, and came up to the capital in dozens and saved his place for him.

St. Peter explained that he wanted to stay on in the empty house, and would pay the full rent each month. So irregular a project annoyed Appelhoff. "I like fine to oblige you, Professor, but dey is several parties looking at de house already, an' I don't like to lose a year's rent for maybe a few months." "Oh, that's all right, Fred. I'll take it for the year, to simplify matters. I want to finish my new book before I move." Fred still looked uneasy. "I better see de insurance man, eh? It says for purposes of domestic dwelling." "He won't object. Let's have a look at your garden. What a fine crop of apples and sickle pears you have!"

One December afternoon Paul Helm was pruning the patch of floral odds and ends that had entitled Bonnie Clutter to membership in the Garden City Garden Club. It was a melancholy task, for he was reminded of another afternoon when he'd done the same chore. Kenyon had helped him that day, and it was the last time he'd seen Kenyon alive, or Nancy, or any of them. The weeks between had been hard on Mr. Helm. He was "in poor health" (poorer than he knew; he had less than four months to live), and he was worried about a lot of things. His job, for one. He doubted he would have it much longer. Nobody seemed really to know, but he understood that "the girls," Beverly and Eveanna, intended to sell the property—

"That's really what I came to see you about." Rosamond traced the edge of a hole in the matting with the tip of her lilac sunshade. "Won't you let me build you a little study in the back yard of the new house? I have such good ideas for it, and you would have no bother about it at all." "Oh, thank you, Rosamond. It's most awfully nice of you to think of it. But keep it just an idea--it's better so. Lots of things are. For the present I'll plod on here. It's absurd, but it suits me. Habit is such a big part of work."

We think you ought to let us settle an income on you, so that you could give up your university work and devote all your time to writing and research. That is what Tom would have wanted."

He didn't in the least understand his older daughter. Not that he pretended to understand Kathleen, either; but he usually knew how she would feel about things, and she had always seemed to need his protection more than Rosamond.

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"Much easier than to break in a new room, Rosie. A work-room should be like an old shoe; no matter how shabby, it's better than a new one." "**That's really what I came to see you about.**" Rosamond traced the edge of a hole in the matting with the tip of her lilac sunshade. "**Won't you let me build you a little study in the back yard of the new house? I have such good ideas for it, and you would have no bother about it at all.**" "Oh, thank you, Rosamond. It's most awfully nice of you to think of it. But keep it just an idea--it's better so. Lots of things are. For the present I'll plod on here. It's absurd, but it suits me. Habit is such a big part of work."

St. Peter had had no friend in Hamilton of whom Lillian could possibly be jealous until Tom Outland came along, so well fitted by nature and early environment to help him with **his work on the Spanish Adventurers**.

Lillian and the Marselluses sailed for France early in May. The Professor, **left alone**, had plenty of time to spray his rose-vines, and his garden had never been so beautiful as it was that June. After his university duties were over, he smuggled his bed and clothing back to the old house and **settled down to a leisurely bachelor life**.

though, as he'd heard one of the boys at the café remark, "**ain't nobody gonna buy that spread, long as the mystery lasts.**" It "didn't do" to think about—strangers here, harvesting "our" land. Mr. Helm minded—he minded for Herb's sake. This was a place, he said, that "**ought to be kept in a man's family.**" Once Herb had said to him, "**I hope there'll always be a Clutter here, and a Helm, too.**" It was only a year ago Herb had said that. Lord, what was he to do if the farm got sold? He felt "**too old to fit in somewhere different.**" Still, he must work, and he wanted to. He wasn't, he said, the kind to kick off his shoes and sit by the stove. And yet it was true that the farm nowadays made him uneasy: the locked house, Nancy's horse forlornly waiting in a field, the odor of windfall apples rotting under the apple trees, and the absence of voices—Kenyon calling Nancy to the telephone, Herb whistling, his glad "Good morning, Paul." He and Herb had "got along grand"—**never a cross word between them**. Why, then, did the men from the sheriff's office continue to question him? Unless they thought he had "something to hide"? Maybe he ought never to have mentioned the Mexicans.


[...] Gone. And Bonnie, too. Her bedroom window overlooked the garden, and now and then, usually when she was "having a bad spell," Mr. Helm had seen her stand long hours gazing into the garden, as though what she saw bewitched her. ("When I was a girl," she had once told a friend, "I was terribly sure trees and flowers were the same as birds or people. That they thought things, and talked among themselves. And we could hear them if we really tried. It was just a matter of emptying your head of all other sounds. Being very quiet and listening very hard. Sometimes I still believe that. But one can never get quiet enough ...").





WILLA AT MESA VERDE C. 1915





"She lived alone with her mother, who taught music at the Holcomb School"

—In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

By the time he had got as far as the third volume, into his house walked a boy who had grown up there, a boy with imagination, with the training and insight resulting from a very curious experience; who had in his pocket **the secrets which old trails and stones and water-courses tell only to adolescence.**

Claude and Gladys were old friends from their High School days, though they hadn't seen much of each other while he was going to college. Several times this fall Bayliss had asked Claude to go somewhere with him on a Sunday, and then stopped to "pick Gladys up," as he said. Claude didn't like it. He was disgusted, anyhow, when he saw that Bayliss had made up his mind to marry Gladys. **She and her mother were so poor** that he would probably succeed in the end, though so far Gladys didn't seem to give him much encouragement. Marrying Bayliss, he thought, would be no joke for any woman, but Gladys was the one girl in town whom he particularly ought not to marry. She was as extravagant as she was poor. **Though she taught in the Frankfort High School** for twelve hundred a year, she had prettier clothes than any of the other girls, except Enid Royce, whose father was a rich man.

"Gladys Farmer was the best **musician** in Frankfort, and she would probably like to hear it."

*Nothing is more important than empathy for another human being's suffering. Nothing. Not a career. Not wealth. Not intelligence, certainly not status. We have to feel for one another if we're going to survive with dignity.*

*~ Audrey Hepburn*

He must plunge in like a man, and get used to the feeling that under his work-room **there was a dead, empty house.**



**Bert is the same sweet-tempered boy he was when he left his mother's kitchen; his gravest troubles have been frequent betrothals. But Hicks' round, chubby face has taken on a slightly cynical expression,—a look quite out of place there. The chances of war have hurt his feelings... not that he ever wanted anything for himself. The way in which glittering honours bump down upon the wrong heads in the army, and palms and crosses blossom on the wrong breasts, has, as he says, thrown his compass off a few points.**

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**In the dark months that followed, when human nature looked to her uglier than it had ever done before, those letters were Mrs. Wheeler's comfort. As she read the newspapers, she used to think about the passage of the Red Sea, in the Bible; it seemed as if the flood of meanness and greed had been held back just long enough for the boys to go over, and then swept down and engulfed everything that was left at home.**

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**"Mahailey, when they are alone, sometimes addresses Mrs. Wheeler as "Mudder"; "Now, Mudder, you go upstairs an' lay down an' rest yourself." Mrs. Wheeler knows that then she is thinking of Claude, is speaking for Claude. As they are working at the table or bending over the oven, something reminds them of him, and they think of him together, like one person: Mahailey will pat her back and say, "Never you mind, Mudder; you'll see your boy up yonder." Mrs. Wheeler always feels that God is near,—but Mahailey is not troubled by any knowledge of interstellar spaces, and for her He is nearer still,—directly overhead, not so very far above the kitchen stove."**

"Once in a while. Gosh, the sun's strong." She covered her eyes with tinted glasses. "Remember Bobby Rupp? He married a beautiful girl."

—In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

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**The graves of the Clutter family**, four graves gathered under a single gray stone, lie in a far corner of the cemetery—beyond the trees, out in the sun, almost at the wheat field's bright edge. As Dewey approached them, he saw that **another visitor was already there: a willowy girl** with white-gloved hands, a smooth cap of dark-honey hair, and long, elegant legs. She smiled at him, and he wondered who she was. "Have you forgotten me, Mr. Dewey? Susan Kidwell." He laughed; she joined him. "Sue Kidwell. I'll be darned." He hadn't seen her since the trial; she had been a child then. "How are you? **How's your mother?**"

[...]

"And nice to have seen you, Sue. Good luck," he called after her as she disappeared down the path, a pretty girl in a hurry, her smooth hair swinging, shining—just such a young woman as Nancy might have been. Then, starting home, **he walked toward the trees, and under them, leaving behind him the big sky, the whisper of wind voices in the wind-bent wheat.** —In *Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

**Even in progressive Frankfort, the street lights were turned off on a night so glorious as this. Mrs. Farmer and her daughter had a little white cottage down in the south part of the town, where only people of modest means lived.**

*"Arvin Dewey was the lead investigator portrayed in *In Cold Blood*, and stated that the scene in which he visits the Clutters' graves was Capote's invention. Other Kansas residents whom Capote interviewed later claimed that they or their relatives were mischaracterized or misquoted. Dewey said that the rest of the book was factually accurate, but further evidence indicates that it is not as "immaculately factual" as Capote had always claimed it to be."*

*He had simply matched what he needed to Willa's novels.*

*The other elements that are distinctly Willa's are such methods and style of describing people, place, nature, and the environment—a constant presence within her works.*

When he awoke the afternoon was already far gone. The clock on the shelf ticked loudly in the still room, the coal stove sent out a warm glow. The blooming plants in the south bow-window looked brighter and fresher than usual in the soft white light that came up from the snow. Mrs. Wheeler was reading by the west window, looking away from her book now and then to gaze off at the grey sky and the muffled fields. The creek made a winding violet chasm down through the pasture, and the trees followed it in a black thicket, curiously tufted with snow. Claude lay for some time without speaking, watching his mother's profile against the glass, and thinking how good this soft, clinging snow-fall would be for his wheat fields.

To lie in the hot sun and look up at the stainless blue of the autumn sky, to hear the dry rustle of the leaves as they fell, and the sound of the bold squirrels leaping from branch to branch; to lie thus and let his imagination play with life—that was the best he could do. His thoughts, he told himself, were his own. He was no longer a boy. He went off into the timber claim to meet a young man more experienced and interesting than himself, who had not tied himself up with compromises.

Though he was born on Lake Michigan, of mixed stock (Canadian French on one side, and American farmers on the other), St. Peter was commonly said to look like a Spaniard. That was possibly because he had been in Spain a good deal, and was an authority on certain phases of Spanish history. He had a long brown face, with an oval chin over which he wore a close-trimmed Van Dyke, like a tuft of shiny black fur. With this silky, very black hair, he had a tawny skin with gold lights in it, a hawk nose, and hawk-like eyes--brown and gold and green. They were set in ample cavities, with plenty of room to move about, under thick, curly, black eyebrows that turned up sharply at the outer ends, like military moustaches. His wicked-looking eyebrows made his students call him Mephistopheles--and there was no evading the searching eyes underneath them; eyes that in a flash could pick out a friend or an unusual stranger from a throng. They had lost none of their fire, though just now the man behind them was feeling a diminution of ardour.

The result, which they named Valley View, is situated above the town on a plateau of modest altitude. Seen today, it is a dark island lapped by the undulating surf of surrounding wheat fields—a good refuge from a hot day, for there are many cool paths unbrokenly shaded by trees planted generations ago.

Snow whitened the wheat-tawny countryside, heaped the streets of the town, hushed them.

And there was one man of whom Perry had grown especially aware, a robust, upright gentleman with hair like a gray-and-silver skullcap; his face, filled out, firm-jawed, was somewhat cantankerous in repose, the mouth down-curved, the eyes downcast as though in mirthless reverie—a picture of unsparing sternness. And yet this was at least a partially inaccurate impression, for now and again the prisoner glimpsed him as he paused to talk to other men, joke with them and laugh [ . . . ]

He was a good-looking fellow, with sunburned blond hair, splendid teeth, attractive eyes that usually frowned a little unless he was laughing outright, a small, prettily cut mouth, restless at the corners. There was something moody and discontented about his face. The Professor had a great deal of sympathy for him; Scott was too good for his work.



# Willa's Heritage of France

"[...] but her preoccupation with religion, with church buildings, with missions is profoundly a preoccupation with culture and its transmission. ... She believed that the French were sanely and humanly civilised, and that they had developed the arts of peace to a high degree—it is as important to her that the missionaries bring excellent soup, well-roast lamb, wine for the table, and methods of gardening to the culture of New Mexico as that they bring true doctrine or even a cathedral."  
—A. S. Byatt

Real people as base models of characters:

"Father Lamy must be one of the most immediate and deliberately identifiable originals of any fictive character. However, his companion and friend, Father Machekneuf, who was to become Willa Cather's Father Valliant, is even more directly identifiable, since Willa Cather read, in 1925, Father W.J. Howlett's *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machekneuf, Pioneer Priest of Ohio, Pioneer Priest of New Mexico, Pioneer Priest of Colorado and Utah, and First Bishop of Denver* (Pueblo, Colorado 1908). She drew extensively and in detail on Father Howlett's account, which included Father Machekneuf's letters to his sister in Awerzyne. Indeed, as Edward and Lillian Bloom have demonstrated in a well-illustrated article, she reproduced long passages of the book almost verbatim—  
notably Father Valliant's season of special devotion to Mary in May, 'when he was a young curate in Cendre'. It was Father Howlett's 'gentle reminder' that she had not acknowledged her indebtedness, according to the Blooms, which prompted the open letter to the *Commonweal* from which we derive considerable insight into what Miss Cather thought she was doing in the novel. As she herself points out, 'novel' as a misleading term in some ways. Reviewers, she says, found the book hard to classify—to which she characteristically responds, 'Why bother?' and goes on 'Many more reviewers assert vehemently that it is not a novel. Myself, I prefer to call it a narrative.'

—A.S. Byatt in an introduction to *Death Comes for the Archbishop*

Willa uses French throughout; Truman forces French into his manuscript, even as it doesn't fit, putting it as an epigraph in French. Truman's quote concerns what will happen after with the people, which is exactly what Willa puts into her vision in Claude's death.

As Willa's emphasis is on the immense cultural evaluation and loss at Claude Wheeler based on her own cousin (and herself), Truman applies this empathy emphasis to the killers, like himself, instead of the humans harmed.

Truman then claims verbosely to have "invented the genre" copying Willa's actions, life, and work as his own identity by adopting Arvin Dewey as his person for display as the "lead investigator" and taking him to NYC.

Truman including a French epigraph and has Perry, the murderer, 'knowing hundreds of and composing "ballads" on the guitar (in place of Willa's violin):

Frères humains qui après nous vivez,  
N'ayez les cuers contre nous endurcis,  
Car, se pitié de nous povres avez,  
Dieu en aura plus tost de vous mercis.

FRANÇOIS VILLON  
Ballade des pendus

Human brothers and sisters who live after us,  
Have not the hearts against us hardened,  
For, if you have pity on us,  
God will thank you sooner.

Ballad of the Hanged Men



Willa's sublime estimation of the voice of music is evident in both her life and works.

Willa's dear friend, world-renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin recorded an album with, Norah Jones' father, Ravi Shankar, in 1967, West Meets East.



To Mr. & Mrs. Jones, best wishes,  
Yehudi Menuhin 1967

As mentally ill as Truman was in tracking Willa, it is not ironic then that the "Asian" man in Breakfast at Tiffany's is actually the Anglo author of the article "Willa Cather's Unfinished Avignon Story," George N. Kater

That manuscript Hard Punishments Truman was copying for his 'Proustian' (French culture) purposefully 'unfinished' (as Willa's was unfinished and not found) manuscript "Answered Prayers" while connecting the quote to Catholicism, as Willa's was connected to the French Papal Palace in Avignon.

"It is significant that when she [Willa] died she was writing a book about Provence, whose unchanging indigenous culture she admired." --A.S. Byatt

"She had wanted for years to write an Avignon story. On her many journeys to the south of France, it was Avignon that left the deepest impression with her. The Papal Palace at Avignon--seen first when she was a girl--stirred her as no building in the world had ever done. In 1935 we were there together. One day, as we wandered through the great chambers of white, almost translucent stone, alone except for a guide, this young fellow suddenly stopped still in one of the rooms and began to sing, with a beautiful voice. It echoed down the corridors and under the arched ceilings like a great bell sounding--but sounding from some remote past; its vibrations seemed laden, weighted down with the passions of another age--cruelties, splendours, lost and unimaginable to us in our time." (continued)

That roof top garden in San Francisco was turned into a bee garden in 2010, the year John and I met, like Dante's illumination of Beatrice in the Paradiso, and in the place where John would join musical forces with Bob Weir, Mickey Hart, and Bill Kreutzmann with Dead and Company.



My dad, the minister, singing on his Christian album inspired by the Pietà c. 1973  
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=d871Q9cCNW0&si=tlpOzWzVnAfjvWd9>

[...] "I have sometimes thought that Willa Cather wished to make her story like this song.

She had brought with her (on a journey in June 1941, six years before her death) to San Francisco Okey's little history of Avignon; and she often spent her mornings on the open roof garden of the Fairmont, walking to and fro, and reading in this book. It was probably then that she planned the general outline of the Avignon Story." --Edith Lewis qtd. by the guy who inspired Mickey Rooney's comedy in Breakfast at Tiffany's, George N. Kater



Audrey Hepburn's movie The Nun's Story in 1959 was a part of this feeling of the divine expressing in culture, released the year before Breakfast at Tiffany's was made.

The publishing of the book The Agony and the Ecstasy based on Michelangelo's life led to the Pietà traveling to New York City for the 1964 World's Fair, entitled "Peace Through Understanding." The papers and research of the writing of that book were given to the editor of my literary journal for holding at UCLA. The Pietà was meticulously and gorgeously photographed there at the world fair, in this new milieu, freed from the restrictions of its placement in St. Peter's. The Pietà was then in 1964 photographed by Robert Hupka, who began at first photographing it for artwork for a commemorative album of the music he had selected to play in the Vatican's exhibit. That all then led artist Maxine Pendry in the later 1960s to paint the face of Jesus from the Pietà in a work inspired by the name of the novel, entitling her painting The Agony. That painting, reminiscent of even Michelangelo's face, became the cover of my dad's gospel album (licensed through Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis). My dad's album is entitled Face to Face, recorded when I was 2-3 years old around 1973. I kept a copy of the album all my life, carrying that portrait. It becoming frayed and bleached out, we not knowing that it would lead me to the recognition scenes of the Homeric epics and to John, and to what it would mean to meet face to face.

Willa's novel One of Ours references a Pietà in different ways, in this loss of the Garden on Earth.

