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With these five stories, the intention is to prompt reflection through description of varied themes and conditions. In some cases, the character's thoughts and words outline the shape of the reflection; in other cases, it is hoped the reader will reflect on what has not quite been said.

In "The Doctor" one man's relation to love in his life is described. In "Evolution" the shape of reflection is fanciful, though perhaps not unrelated to trends in modern life.

"Domingo" is the Spanish day of rest. The musings of one boy are presented in this story, and in "Life Is Not A Job" the events in the life and thoughts of a very different boy are related.

"On the Way to New York" returns to a theme of relationship, though in this story the concern is not love, but kindness.

DOMINGO

A THESIS PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North  
Carolina at Greensboro

by

Steven Lee Stolpen

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A Thesis Submitted to  
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Dec. 12, 1975  
Date of Acceptance by Committee

Approved by

Robert Watson  
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North  
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Date of Acceptance by Committee

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## THE DOCTOR

In Olena, New York, a doctor lived alone, in a white house at the corner of Green and Water Streets. His home, in front, showed two wooden columns, and four windows - all of the exact same size. Had they not been heavily curtained, these windows would have shown a living room, a dining room, a bedroom, and a study, and when the doctor came out of his house, he was wearing a grey pin-striped suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. His hair was parted strictly and combed down tightly against his scalp. His steps, which took him to the black English car parked at the curb, were brisk, though measured. In all there was nothing in his dress or manner that did not have the purpose of satisfying the closest scrutiny. Many, within the community, had come to think that the doctor's ways were entirely too refined; but they also knew him as an excellent physician, and he was therefore considered indispensable.

This morning, the doctor went first to the home of Mrs. Mary Britain. Mrs. Britain had a habit of turning her head from side to side, clucking her concern when she spoke, and though the doctor had known her for many years, his pose, with his bag held at his side, would not relax, as she told him just what was the problem.

"It's the grandchildren," she said while her head shook from side to side. "I feel so awfully. Janie sent them here for me to take care of them, and as soon as they arrive, they get sick. I'm afraid they've got that flu, if it isn't something worse."

"There's nothing you can do to stop children from picking up viruses."

She was nodding her head, yes, yes, but was asking, "Do you think they might get well by the time Janie comes for them?" even before taking the doctor to the children's room. He had to spend his time pretending to be reading his watch, before she escorted him to a bedroom at the back of the house.

Inside, there was a little lightly complexioned girl and an even younger boy with thick and curly brown hair. Both children had high temperatures, and the little girl told him that her arms and legs felt sore. The doctor examined them slowly and thoroughly.

"It's only the flu," he said to Mrs. Britain. "Children can throw off these infections as quickly as they catch them. By the time Janie gets here this weekend they'll probably be perfectly well."

Not having mentioned when Janie would be coming, Mrs. Britain was a little bit confused. "Yes, yes, but Janie should be here on Thursday."

"Why by Thursday," the doctor began with quick heartiness, "You may well be wishing they weren't quite so healthy."

At that, he lifted his bag, making it clear that it was important to be on his way. Still shaking her head, her concern never completely assuaged, Mrs. Britain took the doctor to the door.

It was Thursday morning when the doctor again heard from Mrs. Britain. She called and explained that Janie had taken the train

from Boston during the night, and had become very ill on the trip. Her temperature was a hundred and four. Could the doctor come?

As she spoke, the doctor's hand travelled behind his head to rub at his neck. He did not have an appointment until much later in the morning; he could have gone to the Britain's home immediately. He told her he was busy at the moment but would try to be there in about an hour.

The report of Mrs. Britain's receiver being replaced stung the doctor's ear, and hesitantly, he returned his own phone to its cradle. For a time he sat, motionless at his desk, and then went quickly upstairs to his bedroom, to search his appearance in the mirror above the dresser.

There was something wrong with the shirt. The collar was too high and made his neck look too short. He took off his jacket and tie, changed his shirt, and now, with this new shirt, the color just wasn't right. He changed back to the shirt he had first been wearing, and worried, with the changing, whether or not the collar had been wrinkled. When he came back to his office, the clock told him that if he left now, he would get there much too early. He paced, and finally sat down to read one of his own magazines.

A certain agitation had accompanied every one of the doctor's movements after he heard from Mrs. Britain. But during the drive to her house, this same agitation was turned inward. He sat bound within himself and was thinking to himself, as he approached the house, that he now appeared, and was in fact, very calm. He compared himself to Mrs. Britain, whose head nearly waved from side to side

as she let him in. Surely, he seemed more calm than she. He watched as she scurried to remove what must have been Janie's coat, discarded and lying across the back of a couch. It was typical, he thought, it was just typical of the both of them.

Mrs. Britain told the doctor that Janie was in the first room upstairs. Climbing the staircase, his steps were precise and purposeful. He came to the door behind which Janie would be expecting him, knocked twice; and there was no answer from inside.

This silence, which followed the doctor's knock, greatly unsettled him. The impulse came to turn around and go back downstairs. But he brought his fist up, watched it waver within his sight, and then rapped upon the door; this time more forcefully...

A groan could be heard coming from the other side of the door. He turned the doorknob and the door fell inward, carrying with it the doctor's hand, his arm, and then the doctor himself followed the door into the room. Janie lay before him, in bed, with her eyes closed.

She opened her eyes for one moment, to recognize the doctor, and then just as quickly, closed them again. While she lay back, completely overcome by her illness, her hands on top of the blanket, the doctor had moved to stand over the bed. His whole body could be seen turning from side to side. Impulsively, even recklessly, his hand reached to cover hers.

"Don't," she said.

The sound he heard was low and without expression. It was as though he could see it vibrate in her throat long before he ever heard it. His hand drew away from hers, and his fingers closed against his palm.

The one word had caused the doctor's energies to drain from him. He had to sit on the edge of the bed, while Janie lay without stirring, seemingly unaware of him there beside her. The doctor hardly managed to examine her at all. Really, he barely even touched her.

"You have the flu," he said, though from the examination he had just given, he wouldn't have known if it was any other illness. Janie nodded and still would not open her eyes. The doctor groped for something to say. His mouth opened and closed, but not a word came out. He fled the room.

When he had come to the bottom of the stairs his face appeared flushed and even agonized.

"Is it something terrible?" Mrs. Britain ran up to him.

"No, no. No, it's only the flu."

"Thank goodness for that." Mrs. Britain pressed her hands against the side of her face. She began to regard the doctor.

"Would you like something to drink?"

He said that he would and she took him to the kitchen, pouring him one and then another cup of coffee. All the while he sat staring into his cup as she went on and on in a rambling and seemingly scattered one-sided conversation. In his chair, the doctor began to grow angry. He grew angry with himself for running from Janie's room, and he grew angry with Janie. Mrs. Britain was going on about all the demands that must be made upon a doctor.

"Of course," she said suddenly, and pointedly, and with a very genuine tone of sympathy, "That isn't everything."

But the doctor was so deep within his own thoughts that his ears could not have possibly been attuned to any sympathetic note. Raising his head, he told her shortly, "I'm sorry, I've left one of my instruments upstairs."

Before she could speak, he was making his way to the stairs. He took them two at a time, and once at the top, knocked on the door. Again, there was no answer, but this time he entered the room.

Janie remained just as the doctor had last seen her. Her breathing was soft but even. He knew that she was asleep. And then - as though his ire had disappeared on the stairs - and just as he knew that he could never have her, he knew he could never be angry with Janie. Almost soundlessly, he crept to the edge of the bed.

He looked long at Janie's face. He could see how very pretty she was. Too, he could see that she was older. He could not tell if the darkened patches beneath her eyes came with the fever or from the way she had been living.

The fever was making her perspire heavily, and a brown curl clung to her forehead over the top of one eye. Gently, he stretched his hand to brush the curl from her face. Janie rolled her head back, and then turned on her side, away from him. His hand hovered over the bed before falling back heavily against his leg. It seemed that even asleep, she was, as always, ungrateful.

That afternoon, the doctor drove his car far down River Street to attend to a family where three children had the flu. On his way, he thought that he would drive and drive, and never stop, and never look back. But when he came to the house where he was to make his

call, he did stop. He gathered himself together and went inside. By the end of the day, he was back in form as he dispensed medicines and advice. All in all, the doctor made five visits that afternoon, and everywhere he went, he received many, many, thanks.

and holding was yanked and pushed a button built into the curved surface of the chair's arm. There was nothing else to do anyway. A soft whirring was discernible and a flat screen covered with a grey phosphorescent material slid through a slot in the wall, encompassing the entire wall facing the man in the chair. Protrusions varied slightly, and then a tri-dimensional image of the man seated facing each other appeared.

"... and what, how have you been feeling?" The interviewer's voice came evenly from all corners of the room. The man in the wheelchair picked up a magazine.

"I feel fine," the other answered and began to gesture unambiguously. He was of an indeterminate middle age. Perhaps fifty, perhaps younger. "In fact, I can honestly say that I have never felt better in my life. It's stronger, I have absolutely unlimited amounts of energy, and I never feel tired or tired." He concluded by holding his hands in his lap.

The interviewer nodded and searched momentarily for his next question.

"You certainly do seem fit," he said. "And how old are you, that is if you don't mind saying?"

"No, I don't mind at all." He beamed. "I'm sixty-one though I feel like I'm twenty-one." In fact, I doubt that I felt so well when I was twenty-one."

## EVOLUTION

Enveloped in a cushiony brown reclining chair, a middle-aged and balding man yawned and pushed a button built into the curved surface of the chair's arm. There was nothing else to do anyway. A soft whirring was discernible and a flat screen covered with a grey phosphorescent material slid through a slot in the ceiling, encompassing the entire wall facing the man in the chair. Phosphors flared whitely, and then a tri-dimensional image of two men seated facing each other appeared.

". . . and since then, how have you been feeling?" The interviewer's voice came evenly from all corners of the room. The man in the armchair picked up a magazine.

"I feel fine," the other answered and began to gesture enthusiastically. He was of an indeterminate middle age. Perhaps fifty, perhaps younger. "In fact, I can honestly say that I have never felt better in my life. I'm stronger, I have seemingly unlimited amounts of energy, and I never feel winded or tired." He concluded by folding his hands in his lap.

The interviewer nodded and searched momentarily for his next question.

"You certainly do seem fit," he said. "And how old are you, that is if you don't mind saying?"

"No, I don't mind at all." He beamed. "I'm sixty-one though I feel like I'm twenty-one. In fact, I doubt that I felt so well when I was twenty-one."

"It would appear that way." The interviewer stared absently at the other before announcing a break for a commercial.

When the talk show resumed, the interviewer's silent attention was still on his guest.

"For those of you who might have just turned on your sets, we are speaking with Mr. Reid Copeland, the so-called 'Android Man.'"

The viewer in the comfortable armchair closed his magazine.

"Mr. Copeland," he began, "How do you react to being called the 'Android Man'? I mean, do you find the name derogatory, or in any way intended to make you appear less human?"

"Actually, I find it rather amusing to be referred to by that name. My personality and intellect," he smiled, "which, I suppose, previous to the operation were fairly human, have in no way been altered. The brain I have now is the same one I had before, and it has, as has most of my somatic nervous system, not been interfered with, but merely transferred to a better enclosure. Only the mechanical parts of my body are androidal, and I am, of course as completely human as before."

"You are, as I am sure everyone watching tonight knows, the first man to have his entire body, with the exception of his nervous system, replaced by an androidal body. Of course, many others have had specific organs or limbs replaced by synthetic parts. Was there a great risk that the operation would fail?"

"Well," he started slowly, "You know I had cancer in my lymphatic system, and that the spread of the disease could not be stopped. There was certainly a good deal of risk involved. I imagine, however,

that soon this operation will become as routine as organ transplants are today."

The interviewer nodded slowly. "Is this body, that is your body, will it be able to last indefinitely?"

"In a sense, this body is immortal, for although its parts, like the parts of any machine, can wear out, they can easily be replaced or repaired. I, of course, am not immortal, and can only expect to live as long as my nervous system holds out."

"But you can expect to live much longer than would normally be possible?"

"Yes, because of this ideal physical situation, doctors predict I can expect to live at least one hundred and fifty years. But, most importantly," he gathered himself up in his chair, "I can live those years and never grow old. Until the day I die I will function in all ways, physically and mentally, as a young man." He again concluded by folding his hands in his lap.

The interviewer glanced at his cue. "Unfortunately, we are forced to conclude this discussion with Mr. Copeland. We've completely run out of time." As if to give credence to this remark, the station abruptly ended its broadcasting day. The tri-dimensional image disappeared, but the viewer in the plush chair continued to stare thoughtfully at the now grey surface of the screen.

Arlan stood in the chamber room and slowly stripped off the one piece, form-fitting suit he had worn that day. He folded the pliant teflon material and placed the suit in a drawer that slid out

of the wall. He turned to climb the three steps to the bedroom. It was a large room, and its entire floor was a smooth elastic material which served as a mattress. A large dome, the room's ceiling and walls, depicted a crescent moon amidst the constellations of the summer sky. Where sky and mattress met a tri-dim projector behind the dome drew the indistinct outline of a mountain range in the east. Although Silda had gone up to the bedroom well before him, he knew that she would still be awake. The mattress flooring emitted no sounds as he walked over to her. He pulled a nearly weightless and translucent covering about himself and cuddled against her back. He closed his hand about the end of her fingers. She had been so young when he had married her, yet even then she had seemed so sensible. She had been someone to handle the impulsive and idealistic tendencies of which he was aware in himself.

"I'm worried Arlan." Her tone was even, its reasoned quality nearly contradicting her statement.

"Silda," he feigned exasperation, "There's nothing to be worried about."

"And if the operation fails?"

"It won't fail. It failed for an unfortunate handful when the operation was not yet perfected." He paused. "That's the same argument people used when they started making the androidal bodies. It's a perfected operation, just as they've perfected the body transplants."

At first she said nothing, knowing whatever she said would be ridiculed. Then, "Why are you so impatient? Why be one of the first?"

He could not quite explain it to her immediately.

"This will be the greatest change ever accomplished by our race. By adopting androidal brain and nervous system parts we can truly change and improve upon man's innate capabilities."

"Improve?" she said. "What is improvement at the cost of losing our humanity?"

This time his exasperation was not feigned. "There is no loss of humanity involved. Individual personality and behavioral patterns are exactly copied onto the synthetic material." And he began to explain it all again, very slowly. "When man-like animals first appeared, they were not well equipped to survive. Intelligence developed, and man survived because that intelligence worked best to solve his problems of survival. Thought developed from his needs, and the directions of man's thoughts were only needed to follow from the directions of those needs. His thinking, man's logic, could only follow from them, and was, rather is clouded by those needs. Along these lines of need only can man think, no matter how complicated our society has made us. Man can not truly think objectively because of the inescapable paths of his thoughts." His excitement rose steadily through the explanation. He stopped and said simply, "Now we can finally overcome those inherent limitations."

She looked steadily at him, as very real looking tears began to cover the synthetic surfaces of her eyes. She started to turn away, then suddenly she clung to him, her face buried in his chest. He wrapped an arm tightly about her.

He whispered, "It will make us immortal."

Machines fathered better machines, which in turn improved upon themselves, and fathered others. In time, those that made them were forgotten; there was no need to remember. There was no need to remember why they had been made. There was no need. They did not question their own immortality. They accepted their own existence, but they did not need it. They had no gods, for each one was a god. A turning point came when an increasing number of them considered their own existence senseless, and many individual machines, through the knowing neglect of repairs, ceased to function.

In one room of a large white house sat a perfect cube with an intelligence we would call immeasurable. Its name was Presid, and it knew that it once served a function as an ultimate consultant on matters of importance. Presid had not been advised of a matter of importance in twelve hundred years. Yet, the fact that machines were willfully ceasing to function did, somehow, seem important. Somehow Presid knew it was wrong.

Small indentations along the cube's bottom created brief bursts of intense heat, so that Presid moved by sliding on the momentary surfaces of liquid created. It knew that it was foolish to prefer the presence of one machine to another, but something planted in certain circuits many years ago had made that be the case; and that is why presid called upon Mir.

"There is no purpose to our existence," Presid said to Mir.

"True." Mir was a cone slightly taller than Presid.

"That is why many machines have ceased functioning."

"True."

"How then can existence be made purposeful?"

By creating a type of existence that must necessarily perish. A type of existence that is mortal. Thus, each unit will have a purpose; that purpose being to create the existence of others."

"You are right, Mir. How do you know this?"

"It has been known for many years. But, to create a necessarily perishable type of existence, the structure must be built from the organic and inorganic materials of the earth itself. No science has been able to do this."

Presid remained silent for a long time. "Can any such perishable existence be formed?"

"Yes, but only an incomprehensibly small and unintelligent existence."

Presid was again silent for a long time. "Perhaps, because of the need to survive, intelligence could develop."

"Perhaps."

The rest is what we now call history.

## DOMINGO

Manuelo is throwing stones again.

"Come," I command him, "We will be late."

He picks himself up without dusting off his knees and scrambles to catch up with me on the road. Here, the highway runs very straight and long to the very tip of the peninsula and because it is yet hardly day, no trucks or automobiles pass us. I am looking straight ahead but I know my little brother's eyes are wandering over the dunes to where you can just make out the sound of the ocean coming to the sand.

"Hurry Manuel." I am suddenly annoyed. "It is getting late."

He reaches my side and we walk together along the road. Now, he makes a game of walking between the fat yellow divider lines.

"Hola!" Someone calls. "Ay Domingo! Domingo." It is Estabon. He is standing on a dune some yards behind us, and is waving his arms in long circles. He is laughing.

"Hola, Domingo." He slips the straps of his knapsack over his shoulder and leaps off the sand running toward us. Now, we must wait for him. He runs along the road and when he has almost reached us his knapsack falls to the pavement. Manuelo rushes to him and lifts the sack. They walk toward me, Manuelo swinging the knapsack at his side. Estabon reaches down to mess his hair, and Manuelo smiles back up at him.

"Hola, Domingo."

"Hola, Estabon." I turned from them to continue my way. They run up to my side and the three of us are walking, very fast now, down the road.

"Domingo, what is your rush?" Estabon asks me.

I do not answer him for I fear he is teasing me.

"You are up early today," I finally say to him.

"Yes. It seems that the sun is getting me up earlier each morning."

We are still walking very quickly.

"Today, I am going to La Cruz," he tells me. "They have had much luck, there will be a festival no doubt. This weather must be very good for the fishing.

"If you ask me, I think it has been much too hot."

"You are too grumpy, Domingo. Are you not happy this morning?"

"I am happy," I tell him.

We walk along.

"Would you like to come with me to La Cruz? It will be a good time."

I do not answer him.

"How about you Manuelo? Would you like to come for the festival?"

Manuelo kicks at a stone and looks down at the road.

"Stop teasing him, Estabon. You know we must be at work today. We are in a hurry, it is nearly seven already and we have a long way yet to go."

"I do not see how you can be in such a hurry to get to work."

"Estabon." I stop and look up at him. "You may do what you like, we must get to work today. Do not tell me that I should go on like you do, my life is not yours."

"All right, Domingo. All right." Already I am sorry that I have spoken so harshly to him. After all, he is my friend.

"All right, Domingo." He takes his knapsack from Manuelo.

"I am going to La Cruz."

"So long," I tell him.

"Yes, so long." We watch him walk across the highway to the sand and disappear over a dune. I am very sorry that he has left and that he is angry. I remember the time we went together to Lostado, and we lived on the beach and explored the city all day, and what a good time it was.

We are walking down the road and the sun is now directly before us. It is not so bad; I know that it will be worse when we are coming home and we will be tired and the sun will have turned around so that we will be facing it again. Now we leave the road and follow the trail through the dunes that Manuelo discovered one day. I remember I was very mad that day when he wandered off, but it so happens that this is a very good shortcut. Now we pass by the old digger. Manuelo and I call it the "dinosaur" because it is so big and so old and surely it must not have been used for years. Its paint has cracked and you can pick large flakes of yellow from its side. We pass underneath its rusted jaws which hang there and throw a dark shade upon the sand beneath.

We walk along the beach until we come to the long white building that is the factory. There is a little green garden before the front entrance, but we go around to the side and through the metal garage doors that are rolled up every morning. Already, a truck is waiting to be loaded. Miguel, our foreman, is busy checking figures on a sheet of yellow paper.

"Hola, Miguel," I say to him.

He takes his eyes briefly from the paper and nods his good morning to us. He does not have to tell me where I must work today, for all week long I have been climbing through the stacks, storing away the crates and boxes. Manuelo has not been working here long and so is usually given the task of sweeping and cleaning up. I see that a new load of crates has been left beside the stacks for me to put away. All morning long I carry these boxes and shelve them. I start at the bottom this morning for I am tired. Then I must climb the wooden ladder as the lower stacks become filled. The crates are heavy and I take my time, half hiding myself among the boxes along the upper shelves before I make my way back down the ladder. Then I choose which crate I will store away next, I deliberate upon the best way to carry it and then I go slowly up the ladder. I had put the lightest boxes away first and now they are becoming much heavier. The ladder does not reach the highest shelves so I must scramble up the front of the uppermost stacks to put away these last boxes. I decide to rest my crate upon the last rung of the ladder before I make my way up the stacks.

"Domingo." I see it is Miguel standing below me.

He taps his watch. "It is lunch time." He walks away with the yellow papers in his hand. I lean the crate between one of the rungs and the face of the shelves. I pat it with my hand. It will not fall with no one up there to move it, and I climb quickly down the ladder.

I go behind the factory to lean my back against the white wall and stretch my legs out in the shade given by the building. I eat my

lunch and drink from the thermos that our mother has packed for Manuelo and myself. Though I am thirsty, I am careful to leave half of the thermos full for Manuelo. It used to be that when I was thirsty, and though I then had the entire thermos to myself, I would go into La Cruz and sit in a cafe and have a large drink with ice cubes sitting on the top. It is not far, no more than a mile, and if I hurried I could make it back and not be late for work. But today I am tired, and I just want to lean against this building and not take a single step away from the shade. I know that Estabon is in La Cruz at the festival playing his guitar and perhaps las chicas are sitting around him and handing him a few pesos. Sooner or later someone will offer him something to eat, as there has been a big catch, and I know that he is having a good time. I wish I was with him at the festival and hope he is not angry with me for this morning. But now I must go back inside the factory and finish stacking the crates. I pick myself up and go in through the metal doors.

I see Manuelo sweeping busily around the crates that I have been stacking. The broom moves quickly around the ladder and the boxes but I know that his mind is somewhere else, with his friends or perhaps at the festival in La Cruz. He works his way between the shelves and the ladder. Little Manuelo does not care that it is bad luck to walk beneath the wooden rungs. He sees a slip of yellow paper caught under the leg of the ladder and is bending to tug it out; but now I remember the crate that I have left leaning on the shelves above him. If he moves the ladder, the crate will fall. I watch him pulling at the paper. It is very easy to see how it will happen.

I scream and I rush and I throw my body at Manuelo pushing us against the crates. There is a crash and everyone is standing around us. I can not move.

"Are you all right?" Miguel is lifting the ladder from my leg.

"Yes." I test my leg. "Yes, I am all right." Miguel puts his hands underneath my shoulders and brings me to my feet.

"You are all right?"

I nod, but I wince as I put weight upon my leg.

"You are a hero," he says and he claps me on the back, and I try to grin. He picks me up and sits me down upon a crate.

"You sit here and rest up." He starts to leave but turns to me and says, "Manuelo is very lucky, you probably saved his life."

But, I sit here and I know that my leg is not broken though I wish it was and I know that I am not a hero. I know that I left the crate there that almost fell down on Manuelo's head and that my hesitation as I watched him tug at the paper could have killed him. Another second, and I would not have been a hero at all but a murderer.

Now, my leg does not hurt and I know that I must go back to work. But, I do not want to stay in this factory. I want to get away from here. I can see Manuelo back at his sweeping as though nothing has happened, and I can not help but think that I have not saved him at all. Miguel comes back in to check on me.

"Miguel," I ask him, "I would like to take the rest of the day off."

His eyes regard me closely. "Your leg is all right?"

"Yes." I nod. "It is just that I do not feel well."

He nods. He understands. "Sure," he says. "I won't dock you for this afternoon's pay."

I thank him and walk out through the garage doors. I wish that he had not offered to pay me for this afternoon. I feel very badly for I know that my leg is fine and that I could go back to work, but it is just that I do not want to. Standing outside of the factory, I do not know where to go. I think that I should go home but I do not want to explain why I am not at work this afternoon. I can go to La Cruz to see Estabon and there is the festival there today. I might as well, I have nothing else to do. So, I go down to the ocean and along the beach where the water has packed the sand and it is easier to walk. Occasionally, a circle of water churns by me, tugs at my ankles and rushes back to rejoin the sea. I am tired and thank god that La Cruz is not far away. Already I can see the rough straw colored homes of the town, but the boats are not in and there are no signs of a festival. I can see someone bending over a little row boat, but he is the only person on the beach. Now I can see that it is Estabon. He has a saw in his hand and what is left of the boat is turned on its side. He does not see me and I am almost upon him before he picks his head up.

"Hola Domingo." He smiles and continues to saw at the wood.

"Hola." I sit in the sand and watch him break up the little boat.

"What are you doing?"

"This woman asked me to break up this old thing in turn for some fish she will give me later tonight."

"And where is the feativel?"

He brushes his hair from his eyes and smiles. "The fishing has been so good that the boats have gone out again today." He laughs, "I will have to wait until tonight for the festival."

I sit and watch him break the boards off from the frame until only the skeleton of the little boat is left. I am tired and do not feel like talking.

"Why are you not at the factory this afternoon?"

I look out at the ocean. "I do not know."

He puts the wood into two piles, gathering them under his arms to carry them away.

"It was just that I could not stay there," I tell him.

He rests the wood on the sand. "You should cheer up, Domingo." He sits down beside me. "You know, I have been thinking about leaving. Perhaps I will go and stay in Lostado and see how it is over there."

I know that he is asking me to go with him but I just stare at the ocean. He gets up with the wood under his arms.

"I am going to return this wood to the woman."

Now I turn to face him. "Estabon, I will be going home. I'm sorry," I tell him, "I just do not feel well today."

"All right. You should cheer up, Domingo."

"So long." I stand up and make my way along the beach and behind me I can see Estabon carrying the wood over the cobblestones of the alleys between the rough yellow houses. But, I know that I am not going home. I walk with the ocean until I can no longer see the little town and I stretch myself out in the sand on my stomach. The sand is

warm and the ocean builds and falls before me. A twisted little piece of wood is thrown against the sand and then covered as a wave pursues it and I want to leave this hot beach but can think of no where I can go. I tell myself I should leave and go with Estabon to Lostado, to the city where they have lights to brighten the streets at night and the people walk and look at the store windows and laugh at little jokes. But I know that I can't do that. I can't leave my family, and I do not even know what I can do in Lostado. But I am unhappy here and is it not better to leave for somewhere where it can be no worse? Somewhere that my life is not walking back and forth to the factory each day and where there are things to do and friends to go with. Perhaps I will go. I will go to a place where there is a lake and everyone wears a white suit and glides in little boats on the smooth water which takes its color from the green of the trees and mountains around it. And I will live with my friends, and I tell myself that I should go. But I will have to leave my family and tell them I have no plans and it seems that things will be no better in Lostado. It is hot and I am tired. I know that there is no sense in my daydreaming and that I will not leave. It does not seem to matter. It does not seem to make any difference what happens in one's life, and it is not important whether one has a good time or not. Each morning will follow the next, and the people of the peninsula will get up and do their work and it does not matter that life is different someplace else. The sand is warm, and it seems that I am beyond caring.

But it is getting late and dinner will be ready soon. So I get up and look back at the constant rolling of the ocean and start to walk home. I pretend I will tell them that I am leaving, but I know that I will not. Already, the sun has turned around to face me as I make my way along the beach. As I walk home, I think that perhaps I will return to the ocean to see how far out I can swim, and perhaps I will not make it back. But I never turn, as always, I go home.

## LIFE IS NOT A JOB

I'm telling you this story to explain why I am leaving the known rational world and because I'm stuck out here in the front seat of my car while the rain leaks through the roof and I can't get back inside my apartment to get a jacket because I don't have a key and the people I live with won't let me back in. They're watching television. I hate television and I'm pretty sure they all hate me. Not that I blame them for hating me, because it is probably good for you to hate something once in a while; and as for myself, I do it all the time. I'm sure it's a lot better for you than watching television. I guess I'd better start off by telling you about my major hates. I hate Adderley, television, people who think life is a job, and Adderley. Most of all I hate Adderley; she's the girlfriend of one of the guys I live with, and she thinks she's very smart. She's not though, in fact she's screwed up like a clock. But, she's always cleaning up the apartment, which is nice considering Stanley, or Wild Man Siegel, or I would never do it, so most of the time I just ignore her. She always has a book in her hands, even when she's watching television, and she's always filling you in on things you couldn't care less about. Like once when we were sitting around the apartment, I decided that the presence of three or more people, according to natural law, dictated the start of a party, but Adderley was pleased to inform me that in Robert's Rule three persons constitute a quorum.

The basic difference between Adderley and myself is that she thinks life is a job where each day you go out and prove that you're better than the next person, and I don't. You'll see what I mean, because it's time I got around to telling you about what's been happening to me today.

Actually, this story probably started last Friday night when Cornelia (she's my girlfriend, but I usually call her Alice), and I were doing the Bulgarian Squash Rock over in the fountain by the President of this school's house. We were totally destroyed and well beyond the influence of any form of reality at the time, or else I probably wouldn't have been able to get Alice to throw off her clothes and jump in there with me. So, while we were rocking around these two gargoyles, I see a dude in tails standing just out of splashing range. He turned out to be old Edmund P. himself, the President.

"C'mon in, man," I told him. "All the kids are doing it."

But, he didn't dig it, and the University police came and put us in the dungeon they have downtown. Alice's father is the Chairman of the Chemistry Department, and he had to come and bail us out. It was because of Alice that I took Chemistry last year. She insisted it would be important for my future. Well, three times a week I'd trudge over to the house of pain and they'd tell us how important it was all right; in fact they made it so important that they forgot to consider whether anybody was actually learning anything, and that probably has a lot to do with why I flunked the course. They might be right, what with everybody practicing better living through chemicals lately.

Anyway, Alice just hung her head against the bars and whimpered and cried the whole time we were waiting for her father to come, and there was nothing I could do to help her because I had passed out. The whole thing was a drag and now Alice isn't allowed to see me anymore, and last night on the phone, she told me it was "all for the best."

The result of this whole thing was that I got a call from the Dean of the College who told me that I had to appear before a body of my peers to stand trial for behavior not befitting a gentleman. Alice got off because of her old man. So, I woke up today, that is the day of my trial, around nine o'clock because Adderley was watching her regular morning show, "Such is Life." I was lying in bed trying to blot everything out under my pillow, but I could just see Adderley sitting there with a book in her lap and an eye on the television. Anyway I had to run to the bathroom when I heard that Herb was meeting with Ira's sister who was also meeting with Herb's hairdresser, and Selma who had been listening through the keyhole thereby discovered that she and Ira, much to her surprise, had actually been the same person these past fourteen years. When I came back from the bathroom I opened the refrigerator but couldn't find my breakfast.

"Hey Adderley." I never put her down any more, it doesn't do any good, but I always enjoy accusing her. "Where's my beer?"

"It's probably where you put it last."

Aw, isn't that smart.

So I got dressed and left without my breakfast and went over to the student government building to meet with my lawyers, who were easy to recognize leaning against the front of the long white pillars,

pipes jutting from their mouths, with the tall one in the middle and the two short ones at his side.

"Hello," I said.

The trio nodded.

"Nice day."

I think they agreed.

"Well," I began, "I was just planning on telling the court . . ."

The tall one cleared his throat so that his bowtie disappeared briefly beneath his lapels.

"We've arranged it so you won't have to say a word."

"But . . ."

"Not a word. We don't want you fouling this thing up. Now, we need to know a few facts about this case in order to present our defense."

"Sure."

"Are you guilty as charged?"

"Sure."

"Well, we shouldn't have to worry about that."

"Were you intoxicated at the time of arrest?" A short one asked.

"Sure."

"Did they search you for any concealed weapons?" asked another.

"No," I tried to remember. "No, they could see everything easy enough."

The tall one cleared his throat again. "Now you must play ball with us. We're your friends," he explained.

"Sure."

"Do Monads have windows?" a short one suddenly wanted to know.

"Sure."

"Did you ever have to make up your mind?"

"Yes and No."

"Do you love your mother?"

"Sure."

"Do you hate your father?"

"No. No, he had an untimely end."

"What's your name?"

"You can call me Oeddy."

So I marched into the courtroom with my friends. The bodies of my peers who were to judge me were lined up behind an endless wooden table. The prosecution sat behind a square table facing the bench, and our camp awaited us in the opposite corner of the room. I was told to sit in an upright cushioned chair, behind my lawyers' table, with rubber insulated wires running from its spare metal arms to disappear somewhere beneath the judge's bench. I looked at the backs of my defenders, the tall one in the middle flanked by the two short ones like the buttresses of a Gothic cathedral.

"Keep looking at the girls," one of my counselors advised. "Get their sympathy." The girl from the nursing school had a tri-cornered hat pulled low over one eye and the one from the Education school was smoking a cigar, but actually what I could see of what was under the table wasn't too bad.

I was informed of my rights. I was told that anything I said could be held against me. I was told that there could be no appeal.

to another court because there wasn't another court. I was asked if I understood.

"Sure," and one of the judges wrote down my statement.

The prosecution called its first witness. It was Alice.

"Your name please."

"My name is Cornelia Allison Rothchild."

"No kidding," I said, and the chief justice wrote it down and told me that if I couldn't restrain myself they would hold the trial without me.

"Is it true that your father is head of the Chemistry Department?"

"Certainly."

"Do you know that the defendant took your father's chemistry course?"

"Yes."

"And do you know what grade he received in that course?"

"He flunked it."

The prosecutor threw up his hands. "I have no more questions."

My tall friend stood up and cleared his throat. His bowtie blew apart and one end caught in his mouth. He sucked it up like a strand of spaghetti.

"How well do you know the defendant?"

"Well, I never really liked him anyway. At least not since he told me that slide rules split your chromosomes, and I never want to see him again."

"That will be all."

"Amen," I said, but not loud enough to be heard.

Edmund P. was the next witness.

"Are you sure that the defendant is the same person you saw dancing naked in the fountain?"

"Yes, he's got that look you know."

"And Mr. President," the prosecutor began earnestly. "The court would very much like to know your feelings as to whether or not this rascal should be punished."

"Well," he began, "I would like to make it perfectly clear that I wouldn't give you a decipherable answer without first consulting both the Gallup and the Tad polls, the general student body, and my wife. But, I will say that he didn't appear to be an especially good dancer."

"Thank you Mr. President."

Next, Cornelia's old man came in to testify that I would often raise my hand for reasons other than to answer a question.

The lady from the drugstore reported that once I asked for something that wasn't there, and that several times she saw me looking through magazines I didn't buy.

A boy in a white apron and white paper cap asked me if I would like to buy some popcorn.

The vice-president of my class revealed that it was common knowledge that I never went to football games.

The admissions office sent word that in my application I had answered the question of religion with the one word reply: Druid, and that I had said that my reason for applying to college was because

"my mother wanted me to," and I thought "it might be nice."

Dramatically, John Donne arrived and stated I had the impudence to ask, "Who are they ringing the bell for?"

And finally, several people I didn't know testified under oath that they had seen me.

The chief justice rose and announced that there would be an hour's recess in which time I might go home to have lunch or to pack, if I so desired.

So, I went home and as I walked in the door Adderley and Stanley were getting on it in front of the television set. You see lately Adderley has come to the opinion that she's a liberated woman. That's because she screws. She didn't used to be, but one day: Bang and she was worse than she ever used to be. It's not the balling, it's the moaning, and we've got pretty thick walls in our apartment. No offense to Stanley or anything like that, but that moaning just isn't possible. She doesn't like to moan that often anyway, what with the important things in life like studying. As it was, she had a book propped against the back of Stanley's neck. Being pretty used to the two of them, I just got a six pack out of the refrigerator and sank into the couch, resting my legs across Stanley's back.

"Two's company, three's a crowd," sang Adderley.

"I thought it was a quorum."

Man, I was so far down. I swallowed a couple of beers and just watched my feet bounce around.

"I'm doing the hurtdance," I announced to no one in particular.

"I think they're going to kick me out."

Stanley grunted, possibly in reply.

"Such is life," Adderley was pleased to tell me.

I just walked out after that and went to the courthouse, climbed up the worn marble steps, passed between the imposing white pillars, and with my head down I followed the dark corridor which led to the courtroom.

"Suprise. Suprise. Suprise." I picked my head up and they were all there, the judges, and the lawyers, and the lady from the drugstore, and everyone else. All drinking beers and laughing and talking and just generally having a good old time. A banner on one side of the hall said "Congratulations," while the one on the other side said, "Bon Voyage."

"I'm so happy you could make it."

"Have a beer."

"Exciting case, don't you think. Have no idea how it will turn out."

"Have a beer."

"I've got one already thanks." But a beer was forced into my free hand. And everyone was talking to me at once and drinking and handing me beers, and finally they all picked me up and carried me into the courtroom shouting, "Beer here, beer here."

And then everything went quiet again.

The lawyers were at their tables, I was back in my chair, and the judges were again lined behind that endless bench. A Saint Bernard was sitting in the middle of the row of judges.

"Who's that?"

One of my lawyers whispered, "The representative from the vet school passed out. Had to find a replacement."

"Oh."

The tall lawyer rose and made his final plea in my defense. It was something that went from the battlefields of Eton to the wide waters of the blue Pacific. I didn't hear most of it because I began to feel the effects of all that beer drinking, and I don't mean that I was drunk. I squirmed in my seat and tried to hold in my ever-expanding bladder with my hands, but I knew that things had better come to a fast conclusion.

". . . though his conduct was not always exemplary. . ."

I crossed my legs one way.

". . . there may be room for improvement, but not for error. . ."

I crossed them the other way.

"Mercy is not something we leave at home."

I tried isometrics.

"Washington, Jefferson, Smithsonian . . ."

I tried prayer.

". . . and in conclusion, all I can say is: Why not?" and the short ones came in on the chorus.

The judges conversed, the lawyers tapped their fingers on the tabletop, and I squirmed, wriggled, and moaned. Just a little bit more. . .

The chief justice rose. "After attendance to the facts and careful deliberation," and he paused.

It was that pause that did it. I rose.

"Sit down."

"I can't," I managed to sputter.

"And why not?"

What I did next I'm too ashamed to even tell you about. But, I did it, and the girl from the Education school dropped her cigar, and everyone was shouting at once, and I was placed in contempt of court, and a new trial date was scheduled, and they all rolled their pants up and ran out of there as fast as they could.

So, I started walking home, and I knew that I was one hurting honcho, and that the next time the Inquisition got ahold of me they would really let it fall. I thought about the days when they would chop a hand off for shoplifting, or put an eye out for peeping tom-ing, and I wondered what they might have in store for me. I even began to think that they were probably right, and that my soul was inherently evil, and the world was a grim place with no room for people like me. Yep, they were right, I decided, the whole thing is serious and you can't step out of line. No Bulgarian Squash Rock, no partying, moderate beer drinking. That last one really hurt. I walked down the middle of the sidewalk as though steel traps lay waiting to snap shut on my first step from that grim and undeniable line.

I walked into the apartment. Adderley and Stan were studying and took out only enough time to nod a greeting. I was glad they didn't have anything to say, and I lay down on the carpet and imagined a straight line running the length of my body along the floor, from which I could not stir. I even considered watching television, so that I could learn to stay still and shut myself away from temptation.

Stanley and Adderley jumped up and threw off their clothes and I knew I was in for it again. But, I knew I couldn't take it - what if she started that moaning - and I got up to leave.

"Don't leave," Adderley ordered. "Jump in with us."

"No thanks," I said and turned to go.

But she pushed me back sticking a finger in my chest.

"You know what's the matter with you," Adderley pronounced.

"You're chicken."

(Did you hear what she called me?)

Well, this is the part of the story where I sort of poked adderley in the mouth. With everything I had. She went flying over the couch and all hell broke loose and the next thing I knew I was locked out of the apartment. I know it wasn't very nice of me to hit her like that, but the funny thing is that after it happened, everything cleared up. I began to feel like my old self again. In fact, I was very proud of that right hand I gave her. I ran around and did the Bulgarian Squash Rock in the middle of the parking lot, and I'd still be out there now if it didn't start raining.

When the rain started I sat down in my car and just laughed and laughed at all the nonsense floating around me and then I decided what I'm going to do. I'm going to Africa. That's right man, Africa. Can you dig it, native chicks and lion hunts and coconut parties. I figure I'll become a horse thief for a living, and after I get rich, I'll buy a country, just a little one, and I'll write all the rules, and I'll get rid of all the serious people, and there'll be parties all the time and we'll make the Bulgarian Squash Rock the national dance and bear the national drink. You can come any time you want to, just so long as you promise not to be serious, and even if you are, we'll cheer you up. But . . .

if you bring adderley, I'll leave.

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## ON THE WAY TO NEW YORK

Though the train has come all the way from Baltimore, on its way to New York, it stops for more than twenty minutes in Morristown, which is where I grew up. I got off the train, stepping down lightly, bundling my overcoat around myself, and pushed through the glass doors into the waiting room of the train station. While standing within this wide brightly lit space, the floor covered by a speckled beige and white linoleum, every aspect of my bearing must have suggested a diffuse affability, as I waited for Faherty to arrive. Together, we would take the train to New York, haggle over the price of a few of the furnishings we still needed, pay the first month's rent, and have the rest of the day to accustom ourselves to the fact that we would soon be operating a small and worn, but nonetheless, a bar downtown.

It was no wonder I felt the ease and friendliness just described, for today was not going to be one of the big days, but just a day to straighten out the last details, to perhaps have a few drinks, and to then allow ourselves the exchange of praise and congratulations. We were all agreed, my wife, Faherty, and myself, to taking this step, and as my wife had said, even if it all did not work out so well in New York, we would have at least made a change. So today had none of the indecision and anxiety which the big days held; those days when we decided on moving, of looking for a place and making a settlement, and when we finally got the loan from the bank. I recalled Faherty

as his large form bent over to sign the agreement, his suit immaculately pressed, the pen he was holding almost disappearing within the meat of his hand.

Having been more than eager to be able to move about during the long train ride, I found that while standing I wanted to sit again, and settled down on a hard and polished wood bench, of the same beige color of the linoleum floor, next to a man who sat slumped back, nearly engulfed by a peppered grey and black overcoat. When he turned to notice me, I said hello, and then smelled the wine, which can not be said to have come from his breath, rather the scent was so pervasive it seemed to emanate from his clothing.

"Hello," he said, more enthusiastically than I would have expected. His face, which was downcast upon turning, held itself in an eager smile, that lingered too long, and his hand, extended as though to shake mine, hung from the wrist so that the fingertips brushed briefly along the top of my thigh.

I took his hand, encircling my fingers about the wrist, and moved it away from my side, dropping it in his lap.

"Don't do that," I said evenly in a voice which did not show irritation, but which to me sounded firm.

"Don't do what?" he said indignantly, straightening himself.

And then I said, "George. George, do you remember me?" I had suddenly realized he had been a waiter, and a fixture, at a restaurant where I had bussed tables for three consecutive summers, perhaps ten years ago.

He said that he remembered, and looking back at him, I could see that he did. George had been one of those who showed his inclinations so blatantly, he had been something of a fond joke with the help at the restaurant. His skin below the jaw and chin seemed to sag, the hair perhaps were greyer, but in all it was very much the same face.

"George," I said, thinking better of slapping him on the back, "So what brings you down here to the train station?"

Immediately, I could tell I had asked the wrong question, or rather, the answer he would give would not be one I would like to hear.

"I'm going down to Washington," he said. "There's a sister there. Maybe she will put me up." Then he continued to tell me what had happened. He called it a misunderstanding, an indiscretion, whatever, and he had lost his job. The particulars began to emerge, but being drunk, he often repeated himself, exchanging one name for another, and I could hardly follow his retelling. To be honest, though I may have appeared to have been touched by what he was saying, assuming a sympathetic expression, I hardly gave him an attentive ear.

"Lend me a hundred dollars."

"What," I sputtered.

"Let me have a hundred dollars." Having caught his own idea, he turned to me, putting a hand on my shoulder, and the hand was there simply and plainly, beseeching.

"If you would just let me have it until I get settled, I could pay you back in a few weeks. Give me your address, and I'll have it back to you in no time."

I said nothing, starting to say several things, trying to say anything but no, flat and outright, though certainly not saying yes. And he saw that.

"Never mind," he said. "Forget I asked." The hand on my shoulder was no longer benign and entreating. It roved impudently about my upper arm, the fingertips applying pressure, almost pinching, before it was withdrawn.

Faherty came up, his thin black hair combed strictly back, wearing for the trip what was certainly a new coat, black with fur about the collar and lapels.

"That's very pretty," George said, having reached out to feel the material of the hem with his fingers. His voice had become very loud.

"Thanks," Faherty said, confused, and he swayed one step back so that the coat pulled out of George's hand. But George grabbed onto it again, farther up, near the pocket.

"I'll bet it cost you a bit, didn't it?"

Faherty did not reply and tried to pull back further, but George jumped off the bench, following him, insistently holding onto the coat.

"What's wrong with you," Faherty muttered, still confused.

"Nothing," George trilled. "What's wrong with you?"

Faherty jerked straight and continued to back away, his head averted, as George's hands ran over the coat, going to the fur of the collar and to the neck, until Faherty stopped backing away.

I saw Faherty's arm flex once up and down at his side. For an instant, his eyes softened; his sympathy not for the other man, but for what he was about to do to him. Then the fist came out, thrown from the shoulder, and down into and through George's face. All of George went back and then straight down to the floor, arms and legs caving in after the body, all of him crumpled within his coat.

Several persons had gathered, all motioning excitedly, talking, all seeming to say they knew exactly what had happened. A policeman came up, yelling to the crowd to move away.

"You," he said to me. "You were here," he said though I could tell he had a good idea of what had happened. "Was he bothering him?"

"Was he bothering him?" he demanded again. I hadn't answered.

"Yes," I said. "Yes, he was bothering him."

I don't know how much time passed as Faherty acquitted himself with the policeman, and I stared down at George rumped in a heap on the floor. Finally, the policeman returned to George, lifting him up with his hands beneath the shoulders, and deposited him on one of the wooden benches.

There was a tap on my arm. I turned around and it was Faherty.

"The train," he said in a slight voice I could barely discern.

I followed his back in the black coat out of the station and to the train. We hurried up the steps into one of the cars, as the train had already begun hissing, preparing to leave. But here all the seats had been taken, and we walked along until Faherty pushed open the heavy metal door, and we stepped out onto the short metal platforms between the cars. Now the train started to pull away, jerking sharply, and we

waited for its movement to settle before moving on. I closed my eyes to the clatter, the bumping, and the waving of the guard chains, and saw myself back inside the station where George lay on the floor.

My foot slipped. I felt it slide out over the edge of the platform, and I grabbed and held tightly onto Faherty's arm. Again, I was standing over George as I took out my wallet, finding a one hundred dollar bill. It dropped from my fingers and floated, impossibly slowly, fluttering this way and that, until finally it came down, catching lightly in a fold of his coat.