Hyde Park, 1968

Hanging out in Hyde Park with my sister was salvation from The Parents: from Dad's martyred sighs, from Mother's all-night raving. Mother's Irish tongue loosened with alcohol, and her list of grievances was long. She ranted relentlessly about the peculiar fact that Dad's mother had entered the convent when she was widowed, ceding the family fortune to the Notre Dame nuns. Mother, harping on their loss of estate, dredged up one symbolic fact over and over: Nunny (Mother's mother was Nanny) had taken her vacuum cleaner with her to the convent, during the war, *when vacuum cleaners were impossible to get*! We heard diatribes against the sanctimonious Jesuits (my father had taught at Loyola); we heard Mother screech that Waukegan was a hell-hole. Well, it was, she was right about that. Dad had tried to divorce Mother a few years before, and had failed. It was just too hard for a Catholic and a gentleman to chuck the mother of his six offspring. Maybe he still saw her as the green-eyed beauty of his youth. But if you saw Mother, naked on the porch banging pots together on the Fourth of July, or being whisked off to Elgin State Hospital dead drunk under a red blanket, in the hearse-like grey ambulance that made 11 trips to our house that year, you'd be hard-pressed to reconcile that image with the elegant satin-clad bride at the White Marsh Country Club, the neighbor of Grace Kelly, the Chestnut Hill debutante. Dad must have wondered how it all fell apart. Mother must have wondered what happened to the privileged life she was meant to have. I wondered how I had the bad luck to be the last one at home, now that my brother was in college. Things change.

On Friday afternoons, I took the train to Hyde Park from wretched Waukegan, ostensibly to baby-sit. But I rarely baby-sat. Instead, I went everywhere with my sister,

Bridget, her husband Sam, and my two-year-old niece, Ramona. With a change of clothes in a brown paper bag tucked under my arm, I raced from the Chicago and Northwestern station to the Illinois Central underground on State Street. It took less than eight minutes, dashing and weaving on the downtown streets, hair flying, running against the lights.

To make money for my Hyde Park weekends, I worked on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Preparing to serve elegant hors d'oeuvres at Exmoor Country Club, I threaded my waist-length hair into a braid, donned my black uniform, and adjusted my white lace apron. Hans, the German chef, tried to pinch all the waitresses (we called him Hands). We were sent to the stately dining room with silver trays adorned with his bacon-wrapped water chestnuts and cheese puffs. I circulated through the crowd of well-dressed WASPs, navigating a sea of navy jackets and club ties, cocktail dresses and vacation-tanned flesh decked out with gold, pearls, and diamonds. Every hair was in place, and most of the hair was fair. "Well, you know we are the only *non-Jewish* club in Highland Park," a whey-faced matron whispered to her friend. The suburban businessmen ogled me. The wives narrowed their eyes and tightened their painted lips, sending me a clear message. I knew they wanted to rip my teenaged throat out.

In Hyde Park, Bridget and I moved briskly toward the all-night Laundromat at Harper Square. Dirty slush clumped on the curbs, glistening in the streetlights. We pushed the high-wheeled buggy, piled high with dirty laundry and the red plastic bucket of diapers soaking in diluted bleach. I pulled my pea coat tighter against the cold wind whipping off Lake Michigan.

On the white Formica table of the too-bright Laundromat, I folded Sam's multi-colored pocket T-shirts, smoothing their warm surface with my palm. Mingling with the hot iron smell of the tumbling dryers was the sweet fragrance of marijuana. It was too cold for the dashiki-clad men to sit in the square to smoke their joints and drink their quarts of Schlitz. Harper Square was its own little village, nearly always free of the presence of "the man", the red-faced, uncomfortable looking, and mostly Irish cops. Through the smudged plate glass window I watched University of Chicago students walking home from Jimmy's pub, and teenagers with giant Afros laughing and playing bongos under the streetlight, oblivious to the cold. Couples wandered into the Akasa gift shop across the square. Their breath steamed the air.

When we walked home, piles of clean folded laundry stacked inside the old-fashioned buggy, gleeful to have the chore done, we sometimes stopped on the bitterest cold nights for matzo ball soup at the Unique Deli. Being with Bridget made me feel safe.

Sometimes we were taken for twins. We both had flowing white blonde hair (Colorsilk Snow Blonde), strong shapely legs, tiny waists, and in her case, large breasts. People often asked if we were Swedish, especially when we fixed our hair in coils, like braided earmuffs. Sometimes we wore matching bias cut mini-skirts with a clingy tank top, or velour mini-dresses- hers purple, mine burgundy, with matching tights. I was almost seventeen; Bridget was twenty-five.

While Sam and his friends smoked dope and drank wine and argued about the writings of Heidegger and Kant, Bridget and I bustled in the kitchen. She'd raced home from teaching in a ghetto school, stopping at the Co-op to throw a white wrapped package of stew meat and jug wine into her bike basket, picking up snow-suited Ramona

at the babysitter's and plopping her into the bike seat. I sprinted from the IC station on Friday afternoons, ready to chop onions, read to Ramona, make brownies, and be the object of not-so-covert desire for Sam's friends. Bridget and Sam and Ramona felt like my real family. There was nothing in Waukegan that I wanted to claim.

I was learning Hyde Park in all its seasons. In the fall we'd meet Sam for lunch at the Commons, sitting amid the bustle of students heading for the heavy wood tables with their trays. The students didn't look young: they wore hand-knit sweaters, baggy corduroys and rimless or horn-rimmed glasses. Their pale faces were set off with beards and scraggly hair. They carried green canvas book bags sagging with heavy books. The women wore tiny mini-skirts and tights and pushed back their frizzy mops of hair with tortoiseshell barrettes. Some wore braids and dungarees and clacked across campus in red Dr. Scholl's sandals, adding monkey socks for warmth when the weather got cold- those brown and white rag socks that you could shape into small stuffed monkeys. Draft dodgers, rabble-rousers, poets, philosophers, politicians, philanthropists and editors of the future, they lived to debate. The Vietnam War was raging half a world away, but the conversation rang with as much fervor whether they were discussing the Tet Offensive, or the sublimity of Plato. The stone walls of the Commons echoed with their voices. Some men- and fewer women- looked so doleful and haggard that it gave credence to Sam's claim that the University was afflicted with at least one or two suicides a year. The subject came up in the summer, when I was walking with Sam and we came upon a human foot wedged in the quarried rock path at the promontory off 57th Street, where we swam. The foot was so rotted it was not at first recognizable. I gasped. He was pushing it out of the crevasse with a heavy stick, chuckling, saying we'd have to tell the cops. Sam

always acted amused about dreadful things. I admired that. I looked to him to tell the truth about life; he had no interest in telling the polite social lies that I saw exposed as sham on a daily basis.

"But what makes them kill themselves?" I'd asked Sam. "I mean…they are so smart and everything…"

"That's the problem. They were probably the smartest people wherever they came from. But there is always someone smarter here. It requires…an adjustment." Sam twisted the top arch of his eyebrows, which gave his round face a diabolical look.

Being smart enough to read and discuss philosophers, as Sam and his friends did, didn't seem to make them happy. They flirted and cheated on one another and got too drunk to stand; they wept into the night about girlfriends they pined for, or being dumped. Then they seemed just as sad and obtuse as the rest of the world.

Even so, I was intimidated. Sam was studying philosophy with a sweet white-haired man who resembled Albert Einstein, and another man, who had a severe demeanor, considered the most brilliant philosopher in the world. I'd met both of them and knew they were campus gods, loved and feared. Sam and his friends were ten years older than me- they were all adults- and I often fell mute in their presence. I was slightly afraid of them.

Kurt Swanson was one of Sam's closest friends, and he shared his coach house apartment with another graduate student, Bob Vale. Swanson had come to the University of Chicago as a brilliant 16 year old, born to older parents, and like most of the U of C students, he was, in Bridget's opinion, socially retarded. A tall bulky Swede, he reminded

me of a big shaggy dog. Vale was a scrawny 23 year-old, medium tall, kinky reddish brown hair in a thick wedge of comb over. His horned rimmed glasses gave him a tentative look of maturity. He was obsequious to Bridget, but she didn't like him. "There's something sly and slinking about him. He reminds me of… a weasel," she said.

He wore expensive loafers but wore them without rubbers, ruining the soft maroon leather with snow and street salts. After he had shrunk his cashmere sweaters by throwing them in the washing machine, he sent his laundry out to a service. Although his mother was a doctor, he seemed to have no practical sense. "Maybe he has enough money to regard everything as replaceable," Bridget sniffed.

Swanson, not rich, devised a practical way of getting things done by keeping a domestically gifted girlfriend around. Bob didn't seem to have a girlfriend.

The coach house that Swanson and Bob rented sat at the edge of Woodlawn, a block from Muhammed Ali's mansion and two blocks from Elijah Muhammed's. Surveillance cameras and bright lights were set up in the trees of those mansions; small cadres of suited men with rifles patrolled the street. It was the neighborhood where Bridget had been attacked by a gang of teenage girls. They'd thrown coke bottles at her, pushing her off her bike and screaming *honky* and *blue-eyed devil.* They'd yanked her hair and shouted that they were going to kill her. An older black gentleman, a gas station attendant, saw the attack and shamed the delinquent girls into retreat. One of them had been her sixth-grade student two years before.

Swanson usually showed up for dinner. He and Sam would work on their motorcycles and talk philosophy. Bridget would throw together hearty casseroles to feed the hapless gang of Sam's graduate student friends, most living on loans and perpetually hungry.

Sometimes they brought girlfriends, but I got the feeling that all the men were in love with Bridget, who looked like Julie Christie in Dr. Zhivago. I was simply her satellite: the little sister.

Swanson sometimes invited us to the coach house. His latest girlfriend was a Czech beauty named Irina who wore low-cut puff-sleeved blouses and dirndl skirts. We smoked dope and swiped chunks of chewy bread into goulash as the early dark of late winter descended. There was always a pudding or sacher torte later, timed just right for the blind munchies. The conversations slowed and meandered then; we all smiled and felt beneficent toward each other. Janis screeched or Jimmy Hendrix powered up his electric guitar; we heard Abbey Road a thousand times. Swanson didn't know music the way Sam did, and played the albums that Vale had collected. One weekend I brought tubes of acrylic paint and painted a mural, swirling paisleys, on the shiny green surface of the staircase wall. Vale lurked around, not quite included but never excluded. He wasn't a philosopher- he was studying literature. He wanted to be a writer.

I didn't pay much attention to Vale, but started to feel self-conscious around him because I'd catch him staring at me. All of Sam's friends did, but Vale unnerved me. He didn't joke or make obnoxious comments I could dismiss. And Vale was really out of Sam's protective circle, not directly connected to the philosophy group. Unlike the other grad students, he had money. Swanson tolerated him, but they didn't seem close.

In the early March of the long grey winter of 1968, Bridget and Sam threw one of their many impromptu parties on a Saturday night. The crowd of a dozen or so spilled into the tiny living room of the Chicago Housing Authority row house that Sam and Bridget had scored. Their neighbors were four black families, and one Puerto Rican

family. As that rare commodity- a young white married *family*, living on Bridget's teaching salary and paying for Sam's endless quest for his doctorate, they rounded out the demographic.

The townhouse apartments were small, but they had both a second floor and a basement. The concrete block basement walls took on a kind of elegance, painted off-white and hung with Sam's paintings and prints. He built rice-paper cabinets to house his stereo system. We all lounged on a wine-colored down sofa and green and coral cushions thrown on the floor. Joints were passed. Food was served.

Sam got fixated on certain records- for a while it was Hank Williams, wailing "why don't you love me like you used to do"; then it was Leadbelly, mournful and gravel-voiced. He went through a long phase of Doc Watson, Flat and Scruggs, bluegrass. When Sam was stoned, or drunk, the Oklahoma drawl he'd so carefully erased his first year at Georgetown comically reappeared.

I stared at the album cover of *Bringing it All Back Home*. A thin-faced brunette in a red pantsuit lounged on a chair, cigarette held nonchalantly. Bob Dylan's face loomed in the foreground. Vale claimed that the woman in the photo was really Bob Dylan himself, in drag. He came over to sit next to me, saying, "Look! See how it's the same face!" But I didn't see it. Maybe he was joking. *Maggie's Farm* played, raucous, echoing the party going on around us. The mood shifted with the next song, *Love Minus Zero/No Limit*. *She knows there's no success like failure, and that failure's no success at all.*

Jim emptied the last bottle of Alamaden Mountain Red with a theatrical flourish. "More wine!" he bellowed. Jim was the third part of the Sam-Jim-Swanson trinity, a non-academic who worked in the physics department setting up experiments. He had grown

up in Chicago, had worked as an electrician, and loved to flaunt his working class roots. Sometimes he sang pornographic versions of Catholic hymns in an exaggerated brogue. His favorite expletive was “pig fucker”, which always made me laugh.

Vale jumped up from the sofa. “I’ll go,” he said. He turned to me. “Want to come?”

I did, even though Vale made me feel uneasy. I saw the sharp look that Bridget threw to Sam, a look that said, “Do something!” But Sam only smirked.

“Okay,” I said, grabbing the navy pea coat that never entirely kept me warm.

Vale was silent as we walked to his car, a low-slung green MG. It was so pretty that it looked like a toy. Inside the car he smiled at me. He reached for his pack of Lucky Strikes and shook one forward, offering it to me. I shook my head no- I only smoked pot. But I liked the way he’d smiled at me. When the lighter popped out, he lit his cigarette and flicked the flecks of tobacco off his lips with his tongue. His lips were full and slightly chapped. His profile was clean and sharp, like Dad’s. He put the car in gear and pulled away.

We didn’t go to the store; Vale drove down to the Point. Alive with crowds in the summer, a landscape of bikinis and Speedos and blankets spread on the stubbly grass, now it was bleak and cold. Rats scurried through the nearby tunnels at night. Late-night walkers had been mugged near here, but inside the car I felt warm and intact. “I think it’s beautiful here in the winter,” said Vale. It was. We could see the Museum of Science and Industry, lit to reveal its majestic lines, and looking west, the twinkling of fishing boat lights out on the dark lake. Vale fiddled with the radio and found a jazz station. “Do you know how to drive?” he asked. I said no. “Want to learn?”

I laughed; something in the way he asked, his voice breaking like the voice of a fourteen-year old boy. But he was a man. He reached over to take my hand, placing it on the round wooden knob of the gearshift. He covered my small hand with his larger one. His hand was warm, almost sweaty.

"Like this," he said. "The shift pattern is right here…you gently release the clutch as you press on the gas pedal…"

The lesson was brief. Bob leaned over to kiss me, his mouth warm and wet. His fingers snaked under my sweater and thrillingly caressed my breasts.

"We'd better go," I said stupidly. "The wine…"

He kissed me again and pulled his face back to look at me, caressing my hair. I didn't like the scrutiny; I did like the scrutiny. His eyes looked into mine. Did he notice my dark roots? The tiny bumps on my forehead?

"Your eyes are so blue," he said, twisting back into his seat to start the car.

We pulled up to the familiar coach house. We wouldn't be buying wine, or returning to the party. Bridget would worry. Bob opened my door and when I got out of the car, kissed me again. The cold metal of the car door pressed against the thin wool of my bell-bottoms, Bob's tongue pushing warm and wet against my own tongue. I knew I should pull away. But I didn't want to. I liked the way he was pressing against me. I liked that he was interested- he was an older man. I felt flattered, even though I didn't really know how to talk to him. It wasn't decision to walk into the coach house with him, just the natural unfolding of events.

We walked up the narrow stairs, past the garish mural I'd painted. I hoped that Swanson, whose room was on the other side of the house, would not see us or hear us

when he got home. Bob's room had an unmade bed, a desk full of papers, and orderly stacks of magazines- *Ramparts, Esquire, New Yorker*. He had a huge collection of record albums. The bookshelves spilled over, crammed. I recognized books I'd read in school and books that Sam had passed on to me. Dostoevski, Thomas Hardy, Saul Bellow.

"I read this," I said, pointing to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Vale, so chatty and urbane with Swanson and Sam, quietly led me to the bed.

Strangely, I don't remember the sex. I felt exposed when he pulled the sheets back and stared at me; I pulled them back up. He told me I was beautiful. I asked him to turn out the light; he hesitated, not wanting to, but he did. For such a "bad girl" I felt silent and awkward, not knowing how to move with him, or really, what to do. I'd lost my virginity a few months before to a blonde Italian boy named Sandy in a Highwood motel. I had known in a horrible way, despite the once-cute Sandy seeming uglier by the minute, his red face looming above me like a gargoyle, that I'd been expected to "put out." I'd felt that he would have been enraged if I had tried to stop. Sandy was on the fringes of the glamorous Lake Forest crowd, the moneyed playboys who bedded rich girls and poor girls alike. They were boys who kept count. When Sandy saw the bloody sheets that night, after I'd ignored the pain just to get it over with, he'd yelled at me.

"Why didn't you tell me you were on the rag?"

Dizzy and still drunk, I had pulled my clothes on and walked out of the motel room. The cold wind hit my face like a punch. The snow was piled stiff and high around the parking lot. A streetlight illuminated one corner but the rest was in shadow. I vomited purple-red sloe gin in heaves, watching it stain the snow. I felt like crawling into a snow

bank to die, more humiliated by Sandy's refusal to believe that I'd been a virgin than the actuality of changing that status, which had only begun to feel merely inevitable.

Vale was not drunk. He wove his fingers into my long hair and pulled his skinny body on top of me. His skin was very white and I noticed a small reddish mole on his back.

"You excite me…" he whispered, breathing hard into my ear.

It seemed that I did because within a few minutes, he rolled off me and flung his arm across his eyes. This is the moment that comes back, as though it were yesterday- the crumpled white sheets, the wine-colored blanket, the light from the bathroom shining on his pale arm, the wetness pooling out between my legs, the faint male armpit smell in the room, the fear that Swanson could hear us, and then, two thoughts, slicing like a knife to cut away all other thoughts. *It is the 9th of March. I am pregnant.*

Vale dropped me off at the house the next morning. Bridget had been worried; she'd called Swanson to confirm that I was in the coach house. A wave of anger and sympathy flashed across her face, almost at the same time.

"Are you okay?" she asked.

"Uh-huh" I nodded.

I knew I'd entered a territory that I couldn't share with her. Pudgy Ramona came up and hugged my legs. I called her my love leech.

"Read to me, TT," she commanded.

I settled on the sofa with her to read *Frances' Baby Sister*, eleven times. It did not occur to me that I could say "no" to a not-quite three year-old.

The long Chicago winter broke in late April, crocuses poking through the cold earth, the air soft again with spring. Martin Luther King was shot in a Memphis motel. Sam had taken a photo of him at a rally, prominently displayed in the hallway. Bridget draped a black silk ribbon around the photo. High school continued as the usual mixture of classes that I disliked (science, math) and classes that sparked me (English, art). There were, occasionally, hours when my secret state did not intrude into my life. I broke the class record for running broad jump. I received a magna cum laude in the national Latin exams. I cut classes. My best friends were Sue and Libby, horsey girls from Libertyville but smart misfits. Sue, who worked with me at Exmoor, had corn silk hair and a face that looked as if it had been slightly pushed in; Libby came from a huge creative family and lived in a yellow house big enough to accommodate her eight brothers and sisters. As the weather warmed, we stretched out in the protected courtyard between the girls' side and the boys' side of the school, skirts hiked up and midriff bared to catch the weak rays of the spring sun. A priest came out one day to admonish us. "That's not proper conduct for young ladies," he said. A group of boys pressed their faces to the window, watching.

I tried to will my period to come but I knew it wouldn't. On Memorial Day, Bridget made a chocolate cake for my 17th birthday. We celebrated with the first swim of the season at the Point. I hoped that the cold water, or the 20-mile bike rides from Waukegan to Lake Bluff, would cause a miscarriage. I had no idea what to do. Time was running out.

I was afraid to tell my friends, because I was sure that they couldn't help me. I vaguely had heard that women went to Puerto Rico, or Sweden. But how could I arrange that, even if I had the money? In a few weeks school would be out for the summer. Then

I would start my senior year. I wanted to go to college, refusing to let Dad cripple me into caretaking my mother. She was my mother, but his wife. The Parents would be, absolutely, the last people I would ever turn to. Dad would ask the nuns for advice. Mother would retreat to the bottle. The hide-bound dull Waukeganites would get their cheap thrill of righteousness and finger-pointing. The very thought of the *tsk tsk* public shame turned my heart to steel. No. If I had to, I would hitch hike to California, get a job, have the baby. I'd somehow manage. But I prayed I wouldn't have to. I had not seen Vale since we had all happened to meet, accidentally, at a screening of *Bonnie and Clyde* at the Hyde Park Theater. We had barely spoken.

In early June, Bobby Kennedy was shot in a Los Angeles hotel. At Assumption High School for Girls, hushed voices talked about another Kennedy, martyred. The nightly news showed young men being stuffed into helicopters, bleeding and moaning. The draft began to affect boys my age, but not the ones in college. There were student riots in Paris and in Prague. As each day passed, a silenced voice of panic grew louder and more insistent. I had to do something. But what could I do? Had anyone noticed my fuller breasts? Didn't they say that you had to do something before twelve weeks? It seemed that everywhere I looked women were pregnant. The word itself, a hated word now, appeared constantly.

Finally I told Gina, one of my friends at school. She was the only girl I knew who seemed tough enough to give me advice.

"You have to tell him. It's his problem too," she said briskly, looking at me like I was a little slow-witted.

For some reason, this had never really occurred to me. It felt like my problem alone. Or maybe I just hoped I could somehow avoid the humiliation.

When Bridget and Sam took Ramona to the Tot Lot, I called Vale.

"Could we meet?" I asked.

He didn't ask why. Instead he said, "I'm going home to New York this weekend. I could see you next week..."

Did he imagine that I was pursuing him? If I could, I would never lay eyes on him again. It wasn't hatred- I saw that he was polite and even thoughtful to others- but I felt a deep, deep aversion now. If there were any other choice…

"Bob," I said. "I'm three months pregnant."

He was silent for only a second. "Do Bridget and Sam know?"

"No. I don't really want to tell anyone. I…don't know what to do."

"It's alright," he said, calmly. "I'll pay for an abortion. I've done this before. But someone in your family needs to know. You have to tell Bridget and Sam…"

Only after he told me that he would see me at their house in half an hour, did I register all his words. *I've done this before*.

If you imagine the worst scenario often enough, it rarely meets your terrible expectations. It was sharp and painful, like a knife cutting my old life, to tell Bridget and Sam. Vale sat there and repeated that he was willing to pay for an abortion, *of course*. He didn't really count anymore- he seemed like an extra that wanted a bigger part. Sam, in

an uncharacteristically sentimental- and therefore horrible- voice, asked me if I wouldn't want to consider having the baby. Vale shifted nervously.

No! Why would I choose to ruin my future? But I just said, "No. I'm sure."

Bridget looked toward Vale as though he were a pile of vomit, her nose twitching, her eyes flashing. She was wearing a pink velour baby doll dress but acted like a corporate executive, suddenly all business. "Jim. We need to call Jim." She turned to dismiss Vale.

"Don't worry, Bob. It will cost you nothing."

I loved my sister.

At Jim's apartment, he handed me a Bloody Mary. I had seen him spike it heavily with vodka. Even though he was a notorious womanizer (which of course was why he'd learned to do a catheter abortion), even though he'd once drunkenly stumbled down to the basement where I slept, and I'd had to tell him, *No, Jim! Go home!* the way you would shout at a sloppily exuberant dog- and he'd stumbled back up the stairs- I liked Jim. Because he was more in love with Bridget than even Swanson, he had taken it upon himself to show me the city. He took me to Maxwell Street to buy mangoes; he took me to Chinatown. We all went to a Mafia restaurant in Calumet City, and he bought me a dress and high heels to make me look more grown-up (I was fourteen then). He treated me as someone who was curious about life, and he explained things- and he never, except for that one comical moment in the basement, had been inappropriate. He was Buddy Jim, the Irish uncle. The relief I felt at *solving the problem* and the hefty slug of vodka allowed me to insulate myself against the acute embarrassment and discomfort of lying on his bed, and seeing Jim, sweat pouring off his forehead and rolling down his fleshy

nose, grunting with the effort of trying to insert a floppy length of yellow rubber catheter the diameter of a straw, into my cervix. The idea was to create irritation. The introduction of a foreign object would cause the uterus to contract, trying to expel that object. In order to make that happen the catheter would have to stay in place for at least an hour. Jim pulled the covers modestly back over my legs and said, "Good girl. I'll get your sister."

Bridget came in with a second Bloody Mary. Except for my horrible sloe-gin night, and trying to seem sophisticated by drinking wine or a beer sometimes, I didn't drink much. The Bloody Mary made me feel woozy.

"It's okay, Hon. Just drink this."

Bridget smiled- a tight smile, a nervous smile, but genuine. The room was not quite spinning. I giggled. I wanted to cry. But I didn't.

Jim came back and said, "It's okay kid. You're brave- it was a tough break." He turned to include Bridget. "It ought to happen within the week. It's just like a miscarriage- it *is* a miscarriage really."

We had a plan. School was out, so I could stay with Bridget and Sam on the pretext of babysitting Ramona. The Parents were used to my spending time in Hyde Park.

Vale called, solicitous. He knew I would go to Jim's apartment once I had cramps. "I want to be there with you," he said.

I didn't want anyone there. Only Bridget, and really, for her sake I wished she didn't even know about all this. But Jim was there, and then Vale came over. I wanted them both to leave. My body couldn't let go with either of them near me. Vale tried to talk to me, but we didn't have anything to say to each other. In our respective worlds, with other people, we talked. But now my face tensed with pain, as my body tried to fight its own

conflicting impulse, to keep and not expel what started on a cold winter night four months before.

Vale hovered. He followed me and tried to caress my back. I paced the room, trying to distract myself from the cramps, trying to keep him from touching me without having to say anything to him. Vale whispered reverentially, *you look so sexy like this*. I looked at his face- his benign face, a mildly handsome even-featured face really, his eyes glowing with sympathy, his eyes glowing with lust, and felt a fleeting impulse, only fleeting, to smash that bland face.

That summer, I spent less time in Hyde Park. I had a boyfriend. He was a green-eyed, long-haired, tall and skinny, traumatized ex-Marine, a member of Vietnam Vets Against the War. We'd met a peace rally. His apartment was the center of political discussions. A half dozen guys gathered there, rabid and gesticulating, tempers firing up over whether Marxist-Leninists or Trotskyites were *right*. Right about what, I thought idly. I saw the discussions like a form of pantomime, as though I were on the other side of thick glass, watching what men do to test their power in the world. In August we were tear-gassed in Lincoln Park, a scene of smoke and chaos and shouting and fear.

In the fall, expelled for smoking pot in the parking lot at Assumption, I transferred to public high school. The boys in the hall called me "twentieth century fox," from the Doors song. They were sweet, boys I could talk to, boys who were friends. Dad had agreed to help me with my college applications, "but not to University of San Francisco," he said gruffly, though it was a Jesuit school. Even he had heard about the Summer of Love, knew that San Francisco was its epicenter. I got a weekend job at a seafood

restaurant, to save for college. Every weekend, I tied bibs on lobster-eating businessmen, sliding their tips into my apron pocket.

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