

GREETINGS

In the winter months P and I retreat to someplace warm where they speak Spanish. This year it's Puerto Vallarta, but we stay in the old town, not in the condos. We don't go where the tourists go; we can't afford that. Some things never change, I imagine you saying.

I see from your "page" that you live in Florida, some place where tourists go. I must say, the guy in all the pictures seems handsome and well-dressed. He looks a little flushed, too, but that's probably the sun.

I guess we're both a long way from home.

Yesterday morning P and I got some wonderful oranges for pennies at the market and ate them with eggs and tortillas at the cafe nearby. This time of year in Kansas you can't couldn't even find oranges, as you know. I haven't been home in a decade.

It's hot in the day here, but it cools off at night and mornings we sleep as long as we want. And then we get fruit and go to breakfast.

Last night I dreamed about you. We were kissing in the front seat of my Pontiac—do you remember that one, black over green coupe. We were parked in front of your place on...and here I'm disappointed in myself. I can't remember the street, although I can see the front door and I know it faced west.

When we kissed last night, I knew you were engaged to somebody else. It was probably Robert Whitelaw. But you didn't marry him, I see, from looking at your page. I don't know the guy you did marry, but I see that he died some years ago and all your pictures show this other guy, the beefy one.

I see that you have a married child, that you have a grandchild. I don't care about that.

In the dream our kiss took place a long time ago.

I can't remember if you and Robert were *ever* an item, but you should have been. I don't know if you and he ever got together anywhere but in my dream!

When you and I kissed, we were both alarmed, in light of your betrothal to Robert. Your lower lip was much fuller than I remembered, as full as a segment of blood orange.

Maybe *you* imagined Robert was your lover. Even then. I don't know. He was not actually *in my dream* – that is, I didn't *see* him. He was simply there, a presence, the way you know things in dreams.

Of course I realize now that Robert was always on his way somewhere else. He couldn't have been in my dream. No time for that. He had bigger fish to fry.

When we kissed, we understood we were throwing everything into jeopardy. When you drew back, your eyes, your grey eyes, went wide with alarm. You wanted me to go away and still you wanted to kiss again.

There is a simple explanation: it was just yesterday that I “found” you on Facebook. I even said something to P—you wouldn't guess what I found just now—but we were in an internet cafe and she was looking at her own stuff and she didn't care. And so I left it at that. But not really! Because there you were in the dream.

Your grey eyes, your fragile jaw line that has not thickened!

How long has it been? That's rhetorical; I can do the math. Thank god I can still do the math! (By the way, I am happy to say your entries seem cogent. A little much perhaps—"Dancing With the Stars" updates and all—but cogent.

You know what I remember? I remember that we were together on the night of *that* day—the day Kennedy was shot. John Kennedy. We were all long long gone by the time Bobby got killed.

Everybody our age remembers *that* day which, as it happens, was our last chance.

I make it 47 years.

That's the answer, from now back to that night in the Methodist Church on 13th Street.

Do you remember? Bradley and I picked you up just after dark—at your duplex on Harvard Street (Yes, indeed, Harvard Street!). We drove around drinking red wine, listening to reports from Dallas on the radio. Do you remember, Bradley had that bota he carried everywhere in those days.

We got stinko. Then we saw that the church—the the big Methodist one on 13th—was open. Not surprising, I guess. It was empty when we went in. We sat in a front pew and Bradley unslung his bota. (I saw some of those at the market a few days ago and I thought of Bradley. His Hemingway phase.

We talked back and forth in the pew and Bradley giggled loudly. He had that giggle.

Then we heard someone come in behind us. We saw it was a man alone, in a raincoat and fedora. He hung his head and you said, "We should go."

I don't know if he giggled again, but I remember Bradley offered you another squirt from the bota. I intercepted it, but you were angry. "I'm going," you said.

The man didn't look up when we walked past.

Bradley dropped us at your place. From there on the night didn't go well. We went in. Your roommate, the blonde violinist was not there. I stumbled around a moment and you turned on a light and I got one shoe off before you sent me away. It was still raining. I walked home with one shoe on. And that was the end for us.

Facebook is not a good idea for me, but you seem to be "active." Maybe you'd like to know that Bradley—manic, subversive Bradley—is recruiting for his Facebook game, "Robin Hood." He wants me to join the band, but I am not going to. Maybe you should be Maid Marion.

I'll bet Robert Whitelaw has figured out how to use Facebook to be re-elected to something. Do you know? Robert was always getting elected to something. He was always getting better. The day he decided on law school is the day he started getting better every day.

I have gotten worse at some things. When I stopped being an athlete, I put on weight. Quite a lot. I have given up playing chess and the blues guitar. I wasn't getting any better. *I have* stopped smoking.

I don't think I will go back to Kansas.

I am sure that the night of *that day* is the last time we kissed. I don't think I will have that dream again.

It's okay ... I have loved P all these years with all my heart. Her lower lip is round and full as ever.

end

