Shifting brightnesses outside today, after sporadic downpours from midnight on. Fred was very restless because of the noise of the rain and wind. Kept waking me up. The sky now is a white light show, different kinds of clouds at different heights in the sky, the whole suffused with strong white sunlight. The air this morning on Fred's and my walk was soft, fragrant. Wetness everywhere, dry now.

I knew I had been dreaming the various times I woke up. Fred and I played for a good forty-five minutes this morning before I finally got dressed to take him out. He licked me, sat on me, lay on me, lay next to me, walked on me, pulled the covers down, came under the covers with me. But I knew he had to go, so I finally hauled myself up and out.

Read more of Pessoa's strange narrative, which makes much more sense now that I am imagining it as De Chirico and Robbe-Grillet and Camus. I had perceived him as too depressive earlier on, but now I wander along his dark corridors taking in images and maneuvering turns of narrative in an unhurried way. I've never read a Portuguese writer before. It's all a very ancient milieu, ancient Mediterranean. Classical.

Emotionally have calmed down. Have detached myself emotionally. No one can help me in my restlessness. Nights are weird. Just reading is pleasant but I always want more to my life while at the same time not having the energy to do any more than I am doing now. I am learning to listen to that sleep call from my body and to just get physically very comfortable before I drift off. I'm not anxious so much as restless at night. Night never seems, while it's happening, remotely the way I had imagined it during the day. During the day I think of feeling at ease at night. Then, while not upset, I am still uneasy and fidgety, though I do settle down usually once I focus. Sleeplessness has none of the previous anxiety that at one time led me to take tranquilizers to fall asleep. Now I get up and read, or smoke part of a joint, or lie there and drift, trying to feel as comfortable physically as I can.

Ivy's was very pleasant last night. I had a plantation punch that tasted perfect. Food was excellent, as usual. Marty is warm and there but also very detached. Good appetite. After we got home, I read more of The Earth and marveled at Zola's deftly drawn and energized characters. Very sexual. Physically, sensually rich.

Every day is its own journey, universe. The trick is to assert a purpose while trying to allow for as much comfort, if not enjoyment, as possible. The purpose doesn't need to last longer than the day, or the hour. But it helps keep one moving forward rather than feeling swept along or marooned in an eddy.
A relatively nice day, France here with all her can-do energy, greyish and mild, no wind, rain later tonight. I am somewhat less angry. Lucy called this morning and acknowledged that she knew something was bothering me, which was all I needed. So we had a longish exchange, no very heavy stuff. Dan left a message from around the corner at the grocery store pay phone yesterday. Nothing since. He is moving away at a rapid pace, I expect. I am just not responding and, though France suggested it would make me feel better, have no desire to talk with him and express my discontents. I just refuse to say: you've scared us by moving away from us. You've disappointed me. Dan would then help out of guilt. I have no desire to inflict any guilt. There are times in the past when I spoke my mind and then lived with consequences that were worse than the problem. So I plan to keep mum, in particular and in general.

The garden is in good shape, France has pronounced. She'll work more steadily. I'll have an impetus to get outside and to move forward out of this reactive and stagnant period. We are moving the fountain grass, which had fox-tail like plumes. Fred can't be near fox-tails. I would have moved the plant to a bed where Fred never goes, but Marty wants it out of the back yard entirely. So for the time being, we'll put it in front. It may thrive there, next to the bamboo. A lone evergreen shrub will replace the fountain grass in the back. France approves of the trellises. The deck will look very different perhaps within a week.

Yesterday was kind of a lost day, but at least I relaxed. I slept on and off during the afternoon. Read Pessoa. After dinner (pizza on Marty's bed and a Perry Mason movie) tried to read Zola but couldn't get into it. An in-between day of an in-between season of an in-between time. France was basically telling me today: Yes, it's limbo, and you have every right to be upset.

On grey days here, even the air is grey.

I told France I was entirely bored. I do feel that I am spinning my wheels. I am spinning my wheels. But, as France pointed out, I'll have another whole perspective after I get away. Less than two months. Fifty-three days. Imaginable.

Marty loves France. He really brightened up, had lunch with us outside. Talked!

I'm stagnant because I'm so tired. It's not a physical tired. I am worn smooth. I have no peaks and valleys. The inquiring, interacting aspect observes the world through a thick layer of clear glass. Protected, defensive. I avoid eye contact except while teaching.

I am very tired of the same thoughts going through my mind all the
time. Traveling made everything new. The things that are new now I don't want to know about, because they are mostly dangerous. There is a yearning for greater simplicity.

Called Gerard, who validated my boredom/stagnancy feelings. He is very much looking forward to coming out here in April. Basically implied that I shouldn't waste too much time worrying about Dan, talking as if Dan was already gone, which he is. Gerard is very un-self-pitying, objective, sensible. No emotional theatrics, minimal dynamics. Very careful to arrive at judgment, fair once he gets there. His friendship awarenesses are showing me the way. He decides first whether someone is his friend, then tolerates whatever behavior from that person because he is willing to be his friend, i.e. Gerard is willing to be the person's friend. Gerard is not as caught up in the action/reaction pattern as I am. He also has been clobbered harder earlier by AIDS, with John, his best friend, dying five years ago. I am coming to realizations now that Gerard came to then, or before. He is very sweet to share the appropriate ones with me so gently, in ways that I can think about and then decide how to free myself from the codependency "friends".

There is no doubt that I would not even be noticing what people are not doing if my life were more in motion. My world has shrunk, so I am more affected by the behavior of the few close people left. It's not healthy, but there we are. Perhaps that's why Zola is fascinating me. Small groups of family and friends become very adhesive and frozen, ultimately either striking balances and bargains with one another or cannibalizing one another. Not a pretty perspective, but then there's a lot that isn't very pretty out there in life, and there are also times and situations when and in which perspective is hard if not impossible to achieve or maintain.

The garden looks beautiful now that France has spruced it up. I'll plant the poppies and wildflowers tomorrow—even tonight. It's nice to look forward, as far as the garden is concerned. A spell of fine sunny weather will perk me right out of these doldrums.

No energy.
8 February 93

I can't seem to climb out of the Slough of Despond, into which I have made my way. Felt briefly happy this morning when I awoke. Fred was very cute, burrowed completely under the covers. Marty went to work early, looking very chipper. I was cursing him on my walk with Fred, but when I saw his face light up as we came up Saturn Street toward the house, I felt ashamed and also that I would do anything to make it easier for him. Off he went to work and down I went into depression.

I started crying while reading Arthur Ashe's obituary. But I couldn't feel anything even while I was crying. The crying was outside, and I was reduced to a consciousness behind it all, way back in my head, metaphorically speaking, and it also felt that way.

I cried because he was so brave and because he died in only three days from pneumocystis pneumonia. I've been believing Marty's propaganda that nothing swift would happen. This ordeal could end very swiftly.

I was angry at Marty yesterday for being so passive, for not helping me at all emotionally, for his denial, for being withdrawn, for never telling me how he feels. I cried some more this morning for having trouble forgiving him for wrecking my life. I have never been in such a dire mess, and I will only begin to emerge from it, if I ever do, when he dies, after which there will be a worse mess and an absence that will make me repent of every complaint I had while he was still here.

Do the emotional and psychological have any importance? I feel that our relationship didn't get there, or fell apart, psychologically and emotionally. But I'm here. So I came through. But what about the knowledge I carry with me?

I tell myself I need to get out of here more. But I don't want to go anywhere. I can't think of anywhere I want to go. Though I do periodically hit City Lights when I need new books, I don't really go outside for any reason except work and the most essential errands. I don't socialize any more. Marty sleeps more and more. He is withdrawing. That's why I'm angry. But many withdraw. He's moving away before I'm ready, and after I moved away only to return. This whole situation is so cruel. And such a tangled web. I'll never figure it all out. Over time I'll come to believe fictions that hurt least.

Forgiveness. The hardest? The one I hadn't thought of.

The garden in the rain is very pleasant. The garden soothes with its order.
Friends should not be confused with primary support givers. Stephen tried to communicate this at the beginning, when he said that we would continue to communicate about all of our lives and not just about AIDS. Friends have all the rest of their own lives, however focused I am on relief and support. I'm aware of this and also feel that AIDS is swallowing me up. My response is to isolate myself more. Marty isolated himself from the beginning. It hurts him to be with people, his hurt and their hurt. Slowly but surely, his pattern has become mine.

The main problem I notice in my reclusivity is boredom. There is no one to talk to, so I read and write. Reading bored me this weekend, for some reason. I admired and enjoyed what I read but felt very restless and dissatisfied emotionally. Writing I occasionally force myself to do (as today) in order to have something of my own for an hour or two. I spend much time alone but am never really alone. Frederick needs to be walked twice a day, Marty naps every afternoon, dinner has to be prepared every evening. Inexorable, daily, tyrannical. I am in a rut.

I could never have imagined at the beginning all the subtle dynamics that come into play over time. I am a much more hostile person than I have ever been in my life. No emotional outlets. My whole way of coping is gone, another casualty of AIDS. No one to lean on for me. That's healthy, in the long run. But it's hard to adjust to in the midst of all the scary things that have happened thus far. I am alone in life. Maybe I will be from now on. Maybe I'll enjoy it once I've exhausted my bitterness.

France tactfully brought up "outside support". How am I sounding to other people I do still communicate with? My impulse is to become more private, but, since it's France, I'll give it some thought.

It's softly grey and wet outside, misting rather than raining, a spring mist, though the temperature is cooler than it has been during our sunny spell. More time outside may help my spirit.

It is very pleasant out there. The quince is flowering, the two bougainvilleas are climbing, bulb plants are coming up here and there. The evergreen from the front of the house looks fine in the bed next to the concrete stairs in back. The fountain grass is now in front with the bamboo and laurel-like subtropical-seeming flowering bushes. They have five inch long leaves like a rhododendron and lavender flowers. The frost two years ago killed them, but they grew back vigorously. I'll do some cutting back later in the spring. For now, the fountain grass is spared and there's no risk of fox-tails for Frederick.

Out in back once again, France moved the dune grass down to the bottom of the garden, since the bed along the back of the house is just too dry for them. I did sow the wildflower and poppy seeds, Saturday night, and then it rained last night, so maybe we'll have a nice riot of color in a few months.
For now, it's clean and geometrical and wet. Enough cobblestones have been redeployed from the tops of various walls to give a sense of gentle ruin. I've worked with what is already there to offset what could be too severe a design, softening the edges. The walls that hold back the earth between the patio and the middle level do not need to be so high, and the top layer of cobblestones is nearly all removed. The stones are still above the level of earth in the patio-level bed. The patio is not mortared or cemented: it's just red concrete paving stones on a flat surface. It's not sealed, although there is a black plastic sheet under much of it which may discourage weed growth. The hard parts of the garden are left "loose" and the plants allowed to meander. If one of the walls ever crumbles, I'll have some of the stonework redone. But I want to keep the feeling ordered and soft as much as I can, continuity with the old garden, native plants, interesting individual new plants. A space to let the spirit meander, find solace, the reassurance of Mother Nature.

The misty wet evening yesterday flashed me back to Cambridge and to being out in the country with John and Angela Sayer and with Judy. I remember the bite of the air, the smell of growing things, squishy earth, a wood with yellow and brown leaves all over the ground, bright green grass covering some fields, other fields black earth.

England must be where I acquired my taste for gravel. King's had both stone and white crushed gravel or stone walkways. The London gardens like Russell Square still had crushed stone when I first visited in 1969. I like the crunch underfoot and the color next to green turf and to flowerbeds and bushes. Versailles! The sound underfoot, the canals, the enormous scale. I dislike asphalt very much, though that's the easiest to slap down and is used everywhere here. Stone was used fifty years ago, and, I think, to very pleasant effect. But those days are gone from the public arena here, parks abused these days across the board. So it's nice to have my little garden and to be able to lose myself a little in it.

Part of staying calm, maintaining equanimity, etc. is to let go and stop expecting things that have ended from coming back. Lost in the larger crisis is my inevitable adjustment to aging. My body is not the same as it was ten and fifteen years ago. Physically I have slowed down a lot. I'm glad I stopped smoking and drinking and wonder where I found energy when I did. I don't think I'll be socializing in bars again. A big change. Health and age. Seems so trivial compared to illness and death. Like all my other problems. There is just no comparison. But I still have to go through both at the same time all by myself.

There has been more and more the fear that my life is permanently wrecked. The looming shipwreck of the gay/lesbian studies department is more discouraging than I am admitting to myself and to others. School will become much more routine and I will teach, teach, teach. At least I won't hate my job as much. But a dream is over, too. And fifteen years of work. I will be back to my original plan of teaching in order to have time to write. But is it too late for my writing career?
I am blocked everywhere I look. But of course I can't see very far from my present perspective, if I have a perspective at all. This morning I was remembering two people telling me at the beginning that surviving was a question of developing a perspective. It seems that this is literally true.

Meanwhile Sylvia vacuums the dog hair off the carpets and cleans the house one more Monday. What is her perspective? Five years ago I could never have projected myself into my present situation. I could not have imagined myself or my situation. Lots to forgive, though no one can understand that except me. I have to forgive myself too for allowing myself to become so compromised. Or is it just the human condition, or original sin, that I feel?

Well, at least I've tired myself out, doing today's writing.
Gloom has lifted somewhat. I get so introverted and then class pulls me out of it. I felt better after meeting my students last night and am looking forward to my essay-writing classes today. As usual after a depression, I am fighting a cold, but I expect I can make it go away. Now I'm wondering what the poppers are doing to my brain chemistry, if anything. Do I use up all my endorphins for the next several days if I get off on a skin movie and poppers? Or was this one my cyclical three days down plus Dan's weirdness plus Paul's heart-rending memorial notice of Thom's death? There are so many overlays to the basic pattern of reactions to illness, death, job insecurity, and on, and on.

Dan called Sunday, wondered why I was being weird to him, told me he'd stop by, never showed up, never called. I have lost a lot of confidence in him. Clearly he will not be reliable in an emergency. I think his behavior is shameful, but he is in such a rush to avoid pain that I'm sure all he thinks of is his life getting better. There's no malice here, just avoidance behavior. It never occurred to me not to help George and Dan. I knew when I was wanting to avoid. I fought that feeling and helped even when it scared me to death, thinking of what Marty had yet to go through. Dan wants a drug buddy. The last speed he gave me, he made the weird remark: The more you do, the less I do. That was several weeks ago. The crash made me realize that I shouldn't be doing speed at all or anymore.

Marty's brother Andy wrote him the sweetest letter about our role in his growing up. I cried, it was so sweet. It meant a lot to Marty, too. Why can't we have more of that in our lives instead of all the dynamics? Nothing to fear in expressing real love, but that seems to be hard for Dan, among others. There is a rage in Dan toward other people, a contempt, a fear, that makes me wonder why he isn't a leather queen. He is motivated by power, with love and affection rather lower down on his scale of values. Near the bottom, I'd say. I feel betrayed but not surprised. I should have let go months ago.
So far, midday, it's been a slow breather of a day. Frederick decided to sleep on my bed last night, and, after we both awoke around five a.m. and rearranged ourselves and played a little and went back to sleep, I awoke late, at nine-fifteen, to find him out cold next to my legs. We then played until ten, went for our walk, and got the day off to a good start. Marty came in for half an hour and lay there while Fred and I fooled around. Today is his fourth Wednesday off. He went back to bed after breakfast and slept until after eleven.

This all brings back physical memories of early childhood, a time of daily naps and frequent rests and no responsibilities. There is a suspension of time that mirrors the nonexistence of time early in life. Like Frederick, we do a lot of reclining. Adults, however, tend not to except at bedtime and sextime. Adults stand and sit all day. Fred finds both uncomfortable for any length of time. So do adults, but we repress the feelings and experience stress and exhaustion instead.

I haven't just slept until I awakened for the longest time. Part of my depression may have been physical tiredness, which I tend not to feel anymore.

Dan just called and was "there" after a hiatus. He apparently went to his first group and was dislocated by the experience. I realized I'm not mad at him anymore. He's doing a lot of stressful things and is freaked out of his mind still. This is no time for me to be demanding or expecting. His house in Marin will probably come through. Hurray for him, I say. Why should it bother me? It's what he wants, has wanted, for years.

So I come down to the question: Why have I been so needy and worried these past two weeks? Why have I felt abandoned? I have been forced to change my life drastically. This experience is a point of departure. It is a deepening of life to where no one else can go except Marty and me. I will move on in perhaps radically different ways afterward. I am the one who is departing from my friends' lives, and Marty from mine. They are not departing. Some certainly have. Those still with us are being left behind in certain ways. And moving along their own uncertain pathways. I am more alone but not more abandoned.

It's my old syndrome of confusing being alone with being abandoned. Of course it's confusing to be in the process of being abandoned but not having been abandoned yet. So it's a constant underneath dread but it's not actual yet. This anticipatory shudder flavors the experience of being alone. I like being alone and am also haunted by the spectre of abandonment. Periodically I project abandonment by all my friends in response to the ambiguity of my situation. When I am angry at my fate, I project leaving everyone behind, of moving on without looking back. Dan has been acting weird, I have been acting weird, the situation is weird, and during it one person has already died. So accept each day, get angry when necessary, don't carry the
problems of one day forward to the next, don't judge, don't punish, don't criticize, accept, accept, accept. It's the only possible perspective.

Of course I am reeling from the news of the Chancellor's triple-bypass operation today. He is forty-six or forty-seven. I told Marty I felt the Grim Reaper all around. With his scythe. Mowing people down at random. Later, Marty was pained and philosophical, remarking how unfair it was that I should have to feel the Grim Reaper all around. For me, the image felt tangible yesterday, walking Fred up Corbett Street in the wet and dark. We reached the curve with the trees making a tunnel out of the sidewalk, which itself is always wet because of runoff these weeks but also springs in the hillside that finally trickle out there, beneath thick dense leaves, just before the end of the sidewalk at the small wild area marking the intersection of Corbett and Mars. It's a fell/fey spot, this bend in the road, one of those odd spots peculiar to San Francisco where you can feel what it was like a hundred years ago, feel nature itself or Herself. My hair always goes up a little on my neck as we walk through it and I also like going through it, look forward to it. In this windy spot I imagined the Grim Reaper, and understood why he was black, why he carried a scythe, why he was alone, why his face is a skull. He is Death in swift motion, a creature of the darkness, of the night.

Our profoundest mythology is tied to agricultural metaphors still. Harvest still implies sowing and replanting again in the spring. Reaping itself is not a negative image. The solitary Grim Reaper still implies the community harvesting and planting and living the cycles of Nature's year. He wouldn't be as scary without the foil against which He is imagined. Continuity is interrupted with a terrible slash but then it resumes, the bigger continuity. I can choose to be part of that bigger continuity, however the Grim Reaper scares me and makes me shiver. War. Famine. Pestilence. Death. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, are they not?

Robert Graves could probably tell me what the Harrowing of Hell is all about.

Marty is still pissed at Dan, but blames his mood on having done his taxes.
A glorious, timeless weekend, four days long, slight offshore breeze, dry clarity of the West, cloudless blue large sky, plants bursting into bloom, the buckeye about to pop its buds into leaf, days noticeably longer, the darkest part of the year recedes, daylight very bright, brilliant, I'm tuned into outside all day long, have sat hours in the garden, finding all its nooks, the geometry very pleasing, planning the next and final stage of the bottom terrace near the fence and under the trees. I sit out at night too, marvelling at stars, Orion in particular. Frederick sits out with me in the dark, loyal companion, warm, soft, benevolent, happy just to be there. Yesterday he got a bath and looked shockingly beautiful after his coat dried.

Valentine's Day is fine but preparing the card was harder than I expected. I lost it and cried and cried, though, as usual lately, the pain was numbed, dulled a bit. Not that raw sharp hurting, just sadness, chagrin, stricken frustration. Marty got white irises, I got red and orange daisies. His card was very funny: a sheep standing on a supine naked man, identical in stance to Fred standing on me in the morning as I wake up. The message I will always carry with me.

Dan came over last night with his brother Tim. There was something dead about Tim, only a year younger than I, something passive and calculating and observing. He wants Dan to move to the suburbs. Was very pointed about it. I found myself shying away from him and not making eye contact. I expect that Vicky is the success story in that family. He seems so much more alive and on the air than either Tim or Vickie, whom we met when George died. Marty is angry that Dan followed through with his shooting practice and bought a revolver. I am disgusted. Disappointed in Dan and disgusted that so many seem to feel so physically unsafe these days that they are getting guns. I don't think I'll ever get a gun. But who knows? Will I buy some "Original Mace" one of these days?

Gerard was very pleased with the flowers. I'm glad I made it down to the florist Friday, given his happiness, Marty's daisies, and the new plants for the house, a leafy palm for my studio and finally a philodendron for upstairs. The original Phil got burned on the deck by the powerful sun and died the week we moved in, an ominous development that freaked me at the time, made me feel that my bridges were burning behind me and that unpleasant surprises awaited me ahead. Now, nearly three years later, I'm trying a new Phil as a kind of Valentine to the house. And as a resumption of a certain way of being.

Had coffee at noon with Valerie, who is still grieving for her Jana. Among much else, we had an exchange about bitterness and forgiveness. I surprised us both by commenting that we had to forgive ourselves for staying alive and keeping on living. She cried a lot during the two hours. She looked still crushed by Jana's death.
A surprisingly rough day already, and it's only eleven-thirty. One of those West Coast fronts is coming through: some clouds, significant wind, sun, cooler air. All the trees and larger bushes are in motion.

Yesterday afternoon I scraped together a tiny line of speed from the two lines of dregs from xmas that Dan had left. After a vibrant early spring day, I fell asleep around ten, was deeply asleep then awakened at twelve-thirty by Marty turning down the heat. It scared me, starting waking from such a deep dreamless well and then I didn't sleep until three. Fred awoke me around eight-thirty and I was still tired. So between having my sleep interrupted and crashing from the speed, I'm out of sorts. But even so, I was surprised to have minor hysterics half an hour ago or so. They were triggered as I was cleaning up after breakfast when my internal voice, unbidden, delivered one of its infrequent whammies. If you really stopped to think about what is happening, it said, you'd go insane. And I knew there was truth here, and flashed so many thoughts instantaneously, like: Today is one day closer to Death. Marty is sleeping more. No one ever gets better from AIDS. My life has changed unrecognizably. And so on. The hysterics were mild, hyperventilation but no rigidity. I screamed into my pillows twice and then was distracted by the sound of the wind in the trees across the street and just lifted my head and listened to the light dry sound of the wind going on out there in the palish sunlight and then moved on from the hysteria.

I told myself that some of it was crashing from the speed, but I know the feelings are very real and that they escaped through the cracks this morning, the cracks of the wall of repression that protects me from my most anguishing and scary feelings.

I realized that coming to this typewriter was like coming to work, that I go to the office when I go to the typewriter. Working helps move me along. Meanwhile the day outside is brilliant and unsettled, sunny with clouds streaming across a sky too bright to look at, blue but steely, blue air to look through more than a blue solid bowl above to look at.

In the East, there were days like this in April.

I'm somewhere in the mid to late Seventies in my regression odyssey. Dusted off my purple felt fedora acquired at The Towne Squire on Polk Street in 1975. Fall 1974? Marty bought me a blue one, that I liked, but when I went back to see what other colors they had at what was then a posh upscale hip gay store, one of the earliest, I saw the purple one and exchanged it. I found the label in the hat as I was removing decades of dust and dulling patina, not exactly dirt but a layer of outdoor and indoor exhalations. The sponge got pretty dirty. I wonder whether anywhere in town still cleans and blocks hats. It looks about two years old now, the hat, newish, broken in. And I've had it for eighteen years. The weather this winter is also the way it was then, though on Buchanan Street I had a very different perspective.
of the city. Getting the philodendron was also trying to touch that time. It seems to like its spot upstairs, is dark rich green, will grow as tall, I hope, as Original Phil. At that time there was usually grass but there were gaps too. Drinking was daily. We favored gin (martinis, gibsons, gin and tonics) and red wine. Had cocktails before dinner. Marty made a great coq au vin and stroganoff. The kitchen was tiny, just a closet. The big living room had three windows: one facing treetops on Buchanan, one facing west into back yards of buildings on Pine, and one facing south onto an urban industrial vista, the Central Skyway snaking up the center, smog in the distance and the main freeway. We lived there for three years.

What would Fred have thought of 1961 Buchanan? In fact, I rescued a half grown puppy someone dumped into our garbage bin area over a fence from the street. He was a friendly but starving puppy. I dropped an egg on the floor and he scarfed it up in a flash, I remember. What did I feed him? Did I buy him dog food at the corner store? He escaped from me when we were outside trying to get something. I do remember feeding him something and giving him water. When I came out of the store? he was gone. We spent an hour of our lives together and I still remember the dog himself vividly and with helpless affection.

Fred is out on the deck chaise now. Marty is down below, in the garden chaise. He'll be fine now until bedtime, with a nap at four. He doesn't know that I got all upset just a short while ago.

The sun outside is hot, but Marty came in because the wind is so strong. A rainless storm. A "disturbance" in Newspeak.

The air is alive with movement and sound. The sound made by the wind on Saturn, in front of the house, as it sweeps through the Monterey pines that grow mature, even old, down the hill, the sound is like the wind going through the needles of the ironwood tree in Polynesia. In back, its a soft soughing/sighing sound through softer leaves and the thicker needles of the cedar. In June it will be a daily roar as the wind from the fogbank topples over the ridge and down the steep valley we look out and down and across on.

Awareness may be as important as achievement, in the long run, for me. Does anyone care except me whether or not my writing ever gets published? If watching majestic banks of clouds roll over the ridge pleases me fully, so what if life from now on offers such awarenesses? And I am aware and remain obscure? What is ambition, anyway? Chaucer found his way to auctorit~ in the House of Fame, to being an author if the man he sees is himself, the man who appears as the poem goes silent. He had to write about Fame before he could write. I wonder whether he could ever have dreamed he would be read six centuries later. I had hoped to become more known, but it doesn't matter if I ever do. And life at that time was so dangerous. He wrote after the Black Death. Travel was dangerous, courtiers lost their lives by chance, by design, by whim. Certainly life was physically much more uncomfortable. I am so entirely lucky in countless ways. Sheltered. Protected. It's a mass civilization and a mass age and I am of the mass but not educated to be and destined perhaps for awarenesses rather than accomplishments in a life that has in store how many more years?
Life these days is a kind of dream. The sun shines through the house. Time is at a standstill. Our jobs are no longer as important to either of us as they once were. We inhabit an eternal present with the unknown nibbling away at the edges of the big pleasant maze we wander through. It's a precious time, a golden time even, fraught with fear and despair now and again but not continually. I remember the Panofsky iconographical study of Et in Arcadia Ego, a pastoral tradition for several hundred years. Even I am in Arcadia/I too am in Arcadia. Death. This is a kind of Arcadia we're in. There is no future, so we move slowly through a timeless present, cut off forever from the past, the day of the diagnosis, of the x ray, that Wednesday evening in October cutting us off forever from everything before, all of it instantly a memory, the unknown already firmly established, rapidly advanced, invisible until the x ray, what a perfect term. Life has been a dream since that time.

The emotional fluidity has not only been necessary but even seems to be a better way. I never project what should be anymore. The day begins, pulls me along, it's like being in a river of wind and light, it's a fullness always moving through which I too am moving. I wonder how Marty experiences a day.

It's very gusty now in the middle of the afternoon. More clouds but still very bright. I've opened one of the glass doors on this side of the studio and wind is pouring into the room, sending paper flying and causing the mobile of carved sea creatures and sea urchin spines to spin. Sylvia didn't show up today so I've been changing the bedsheets and towels and throwing things into the washing machine. Sylvia works very hard. This house does not require heavy work but rather strenuous work. I'm used to it now, but at the beginning, I developed shin splints from the unaccustomed going up and down stairs all the time. The mattress on Marty's platform bed, once our bed, is wearing out at the corners. The box spring on my bed is also wearing out. Time passes.

The brightness in the sky and in the air, sunlight slanting now from the west and (slightly) south, could only be a spring brightness. The air is suffused with white light. It's very fresh today. One of these weeks I'll start the semi-annual (and main) cleaning. This year I think we'll discard a lot of stuff.

Last night I realized that I am entirely accustomed now to sleeping by myself.
16 February 93

What a wild teaching day. In my first class, I called attention (halfway through) to how the discussion groups had been segregated by the students themselves. For a revealing and uncomfortable fifteen minutes, we regrouped, waved at each other, and felt how much we preferred to be comfortable and then realized that being comfortable was based on segregation. The students settled into two groups, one large merged group (of three) and two groups seated open to each other but not communicating across the group boundary. In the large group, two or three took over and did most of the talking. But a Filipina was able to talk uninterruptedly for awhile. The dynamics have had me thinking for the rest of the day. In the second class I read a narrative on having an alcoholic father to a dead silent class. In their groups they talked with great animation and didn't want to stop at the end of the class period. The students in the second class are older. It was shocking how many of us come from alcoholic settings. Then Andrei Frolov, one of my writing students from last semester, showed up after the second class and, though exhausted, I talked to him until four about possible ways to get a literary agent. It was great to see him. He wrote a series of stories with a narrator who is a taxi driver. They are very original sketches, wryly humorous, and human in a way one seldom sees in American fiction. No wonder I'm wired three hours later.

Removed the weathered, warped kitchen table from the deck and put it outside to be collected tomorrow. Marty

17 February 93

19 February 93

Well, Marty commented on how many hours had been spent at that table, which is now gone, thrown into the maw of Sunset Scavanger. Lucy, it turns out, got rid of an old wicker loveseat the same night, confessing also to a pang. My pangs came earlier. By the time it was time for it to go, it was gone for me. But Marty had a pang. I think it was a good idea to just let it weather out in the sun and wind and rain and fog and hot and cold. Nature changed it into a sculpture and into a table no longer, the top warped and curved on one side almost entirely down, though it never actually cracked, just bent. I watched it change and lose its human associations.

I did say to Marty that we may have lost a kitchen table, but we had gained a philodendron. He brightened.

Today is day four of a wild storm. Downpours, wind, hail, bright sunlight. Five more days expected.
Yesterday, despite guilt, I took off for complex reasons. It was pouring outside and I felt groggy and crummy. The gogginess was from the poppers I sniffed before going to sleep and while enjoying some of Dan's porno. I decided I didn't want to be goggly like that anymore, and then I threw out the little brown bottle, almost, but not completely empty. I also decided I had seen most of the best porno available at Superstar Video, that it had been great, and that I didn't need to do it anymore. Weirdly, later in the day, when I went down to the Castro to get a Bay Area Reporter, the front page headline was "Porn Star Tim Lowe Arrested for Murder". I had never seen his particular body, and, in fact, had shied away from the casette packages illustrated with his photograph, why, I don't know. Very handsome, but something about the image didn't appeal. Picked up with his girlfriend in a red Pontiac, 1951. Somewhere in the Southwest, like Arizona or Utah. I have often pondered the connection between porno and "the underworld" and with criminality and evil as I have watched obvious juvenile delinquents and hustlers cavort. Prison settings, with real ex-cons. Orwellian? Slaves and gladiators at the service of the boy next door? The physical fantasies are often mythological and liberating. But what of the social and political contexts of the fantasies? Models? Voyeurs?

I just feel tired of skin movies. I feel I've seen everything I want to for awhile. And whatever chemicals are in the poppers, they make me sleep a lot more, make me hostile, distracted, goggly. So why continue? It has been a nostalgic rush and the poppers have fueled a film festival over the holidays. But I feel a shift to the next chapter going on, inside, unconsciously.

Cleared all the boxes out of the closet of my bedroom and the odds and ends of shoes, clothes, sweaters, shopping bags. Left four gallon jugs of water (earthquake supplies). Rearranged the bookcases so that all the books I have piled on the top of one of them are now shelved. Maupassant, Mishima, Zola: lots of reading accomplished. I am not keeping the Julian Green. Began to get rid of clutter in my studio, feeling curiously paralyzed, but I was just determined to make a start. The big cabinet with my own writings and best books is de-cluttered, as is the small bookcase. The big gay collection is next, with only fiction to remain. The leafy palm was the trigger here. I used to have a similar one that I loved way back on Alma Street. I moved one of the Trobriand Island idols from my desk over to the small bookcase and put all the Herman Melville into the bookcase instead of on top of it. It is very hard, making me feel just torpid. But I will get through the resistance bit by bit and and try to unfreeze from the past, to which much of the studio is a monument.

It was a relief to be confronting just myself all day instead of reacting to everything around me. It unnerves me to find Marty sleeping all the time. I know it's good for him and better than so many other things, but it still unnerves me after all this time because it reminds me how sick he is. There is a strain just being physically around someone very sick that is under all the other strains, having been the first that had to be repressed. I peek in on him, and he's out, and I think of death, and absence, and I
get upset thinking that he's here now but he's not, he's asleep, and so some of the comfort of having him still here is haunted by the knowledge that he is often only marginally here, and I've somehow become accustomed to this, though I'll never feel easy with it. What must the loved ones of comatose patients feel? I begin to comprehend why some families and loved ones keep comatose patients physically alive for years. I wouldn't do that, but the physical body living seems at least to be something. I know that Marty will wake up from these long naps and that he is at peace during them. But yesterday I did not even have to think of him asleep until he came home at three. I felt better during the five hours I was able to spend with what I've read and accumulated. Such time is necessary before moving ahead. I have so little of such time and will have less and less. But it is so essential. I felt I was meeting a stranger from the past. So much of my perspective has been blocked.

As the day unfolded, I reflected that I am down to coffee and grass on the drug front. I am drinking more coffee to compensate for the nicotine from a pack a day of cigarettes. But I don't drink coffee at school anymore at all. My afternoon naps are less frequent, when they were almost daily. It is a drag to be waking up in the middle of the night, but two nights it has been at five am, nearly a full sleep. Addictions pass a lot of time, being compulsive. I am not trying to fill time as frantically. Spend time just listening to the rain and wind, watching the sky. Last night I opened my bedroom window just to hear the downpour and gusts.

Marty and I had one of those unreal talks at supper, about after. He is very critical of Dan and what he sees as suffering for bogus reasons, i.e. that grieving for George is not the cause of the anxiety he is manifesting these weeks. I found myself talking of Evelyn Reid and how calmly she helped her husband through five years and more of leukemia and then spent a year deciding what was next for her. Marty said he was very reassured, but I found myself uneasy afterward. I told him that the basin in the garden would be his resting place, that I had realized finally that I was making the shrine. We talked about the Tahitian and Samoan houses and compounds that included the family members who had died, with the graves right in the yard. I want an urn, and perpetual candle, and a hummingbird feeder. I promised him that if Fred and I ever moved, we would take him with us. We discussed the service. I said I would be a rock while everyone else freaked out. Just like my mother.

Today I have to go to Silly College for a meeting on Jonathan's tenure prospects, which are fine but for which we may need a battle plan. Audiovisual equipment is arriving, so I have to fetch packing slips. The head of a/v complained to me about how expensive our film course was for about half an hour the other day. Today another administrator was testy with France. Having decided that I can resign on a day's notice, I don't care but am trying to be constructive. I will probably have to go out there on Monday, too, as we begin the long six week slog to Spring Break, during which time financial turmoil will finally erupt.
City College, which aims to empower, actually makes everyone feel powerless.

I like my Trobriand man across the room. He stands slender and sharp against the white wall behind him. Outside, the sunlight makes the wetness from the last two downpours glisten. The deck floor is dry even though it was sluicing down just half an hour ago.
Awakened at five am by a noisy downpour. Opened the blinds and, joined by Frederick, watched the show stretched out prone on the bed, his front paws and my hands hanging over the side of the bed. Went down after awhile to see if Marty was awake too, which he was. Fred and I lay with him until he went back to sleep. Then I went and made myself breakfast, read the newspapers, and took Fred out for an early walk, a little past seven, through a fresh clean wet landscape, huge white clouds sailing east, the sun a miracle, the air cool. It was a great walk! I went back to bed for an hour and dozed, joined finally by Marty and the canine, and we all lay for a while looking out at Saturn, Fred jumping up two or three times to bark and run downstairs because of other passing dogs. A nice beginning to the day.

I deliberately smoked less grass yesterday and went to bed early, at ten. Slept through until five. I'm also beginning to shift waking to earlier, since the sun is up before seven now. I feel better during the daylight, which is lengthening very noticeably, so why not begin the day with the sun? The noisy neighbors are asleep, the nerd who plays Madonna at eight-thirty the mornings he washes his gigantic Cadillac is still in bed. There's a lot of time in the day, and a lot of potentially quiet and private time. So why not adjust my schedule to times of maximum enjoyment purely for moi?

Reread this journal up to last weekend, from the first February entry. Clearly I went through a nasty depression after the death of Thom, Paul L's lover. The usual—three weeks. I can see the depression symptoms clearly in the writing. Nature keeps rescuing me. And articulating my experience when I can. I'm shocked by the anger. But at least if I express it in writing, Marty doesn't have to experience it, nor anyone else, for that matter.

This morning it occurred to me that very few people know all that I have experienced internally, if anyone. For friends at school, I must appear and disappear into the vagueness that is taking care of Marty. They are probably concerned if I seem upset, relieved if not, and think of me as taking care of my sick lover. No more, no less. My private paranoias and weirdnesses are private, and I have probably done a fair job of not projecting them openly.

Twin Peaks is a rich green, darker than kelly green, lighter than forest green. The bushes and trees in the panorama out the glass doors of the studio are engorged with moisture. Fruit trees are blossoming, so there are sprays of pink and pale purple from the plum trees. The margarita has sprouted seven or eight yellow daisies. Lucy pointed out that everything has been dormant for six years. The lushness is shocking, and what I remember from my first year here, when I didn't know what the rainy season was. I used to walk parts of the landscape I see now, before the Castro was gay and gentrified. I remember the streets as being empty at mid-day or at mid-afternoon, when I would walk up Diamond or maybe Douglas.
I didn't register the street names then. But I can see the wet concrete pavements and smell the spring and feel the heat of the sun and then sudden chill air currents. I knew the city so little then. Twin Peaks, at the top, was just a parking lot, not the spiffed up observation area it is now, with stone wall, neat parking spaces, asphalt. I remember Diamond Street because I was surprised it was so long and because there was a restaurant way out on it called The Diamond Sutra which served vegetarian food only and which we looked for for ages one night, Judy and I and someone else. I think we finally located it, but it was closed. Did I ever go there? But I do remember the green and the spring, walking and exploring by myself, never dreaming I'd be walking a Labrador in parts of the same landscape more than twenty years later.

San Francisco seems always to be breathing with all the wind and air currents. It's unusual for the air to be still, unusual enough that it always seems ominous, since earthquakes seem to happen on very still days and evenings.

The deck seems enormous without the table and chairs from our kitchen on Central. I like it clean and uncluttered. The Navajo bowl and the abalone shells are now with the cactuses. I will move an Adirondack chair up from the yard at some point, probably after I get some bushy plants to create a visual barrier that will screen out the neighbors.

Now it's nearly one-thirty pm and I've been sitting out on the deck watching the sky and scanning everything beyond the deck with the binoculars, to intriguing effect. The plants and trees in the garden are quite startling in close up, reaching toward the sky, buds on the buckeye bursting open, revealing leaves compressed within. Cedrick's bark of course disqualifies the huge tree from being a redwood. Found a staircase in the distance over near Kite Hill, a woman with groceries walking up them, must open off Nineteenth Street. Sharp edged clouds became less distinct, magnified. Abundant sun has given way in about fifteen minutes to a solid cloud cover composed of two or three layers of moisture, whites and greys, a short cloudburst, the deck dry again now.

Thought of upstate New York and England in March and April out in the wind and sun and sky. Not warm but not winter anymore, either. It's probably as humid today as it would be typically back there. But that would be likely only this time of year here. Otherwise, it's always drier, except in winter, which is why it feels cooler here even when it's above seventy degrees.

I'm gathering strength to continue working on my book collection. Slowly I am tidying the study and will clean it up and streamline it a bit as I progress. Make a few changes. No rush.

Raining again.
21 February 93

Only one month to official Spring, to the Equinox. Despite all the rain and clouds, the brightness makes the days very spacious, by contrast to xmas, when it poured and was also dark, dark, dark. Night and dark grey then, day and green now, white brilliant skies.

Yesterday I found that I had done a pretty compact job of arranging my library of gay/lesbian fiction, all fitting into the one tall bookcase. I also found another box of weeded out books in the stair closet. So I weeded out some more, found room finally to shelve virtually everything floating around, even moved a few fifties novels with dust jackets upstairs to the living room. The closet was easier than I had anticipated to clear out. I found a great 1826 view of the Mission San Francisco settlement, this area in the background, pristine, Twin Peaks a green mountain sharp in outline against the blue and white (golden) sky. A huge xmas card from Antoinette and Warren Howell, the view a plate from the wonderful plate book of 1980 of California painting that Warren was promoting at the time. 1980. He died in 1984, and the shop is long gone. I miss it. It was an anachronism at the time, but in retrospect it was a bastion of a finer era, aesthetically and culturally. Just the printing job on the plate makes me gasp.

Minor rearrangements in my studio and a de-cluttering. I'm ready to clean it next, oil all the wood sculptures, windex glass covering paintings and pictures, polish chrome, clean the rugs and the white wall-to-wall. I'm noticing that Native American charms are reasserting their power. It's dusty rather than dirty. It really is a perfect room. Just the view would make it a great room. But making it a studio has transported me close to nirvana. It is a vibrant happy room, a serious room. Too bad sadness hovers all around it.

Postcards, mounted on album inserts, black paper, plastic covers, of my 1969 travels in Europe, of Mendocino in the early Seventies. Extraordinarily beautiful landscapes and visual ideas by Phil Dynan. I even ordered a supply of his cards direct from his business in Sacramento and used them when I wrote to friends. That was a very wonderful time personally and creatively. I was very Hockney-like in my style. I've been wearing hats the past week or so with enjoyment. I tend to forget all that good energy. More than anything, AIDS has taken away all that happiness. One could not maintain such exuberance in the face of such devastation and terror. But I can personally celebrate and assert the colorful and the beautiful. Recover some of the person I used to be.

Everyone is unique; no one is important.

Dan came over for pizza and wine (champagne and then Chardonnay) after venturing out to the Detour, where, he reported, he played pinball and was approached by three guys to play pinball. He seems calmed down. He announced that he just didn't like this brother very much (his visitor last week, Tim). Yet he flew him out here and got him
to paint and even to tile two bathrooms! Something from a long time ago going on here. They shared a room when teenagers. Tim is a closeted gay and this is making Dan very uncomfortable. He doesn't want any part of it, won't be held responsible, etc. Felt very invaded. Felt guilty that his brother had been out here last June in the midst of the nightmare of George's last weeks. However knotted the nexus, Dan seems to have moved on, is looking more patiently and less compulsively for a new house, has turned a metaphorical corner, moved on from his condo already. Ironically, now it is perfect. But psychologically he has to make a fresh start and finding a new place is the symbol of this next phase of the recovery.

I wish I had given them more time to talk alone. I went and did some errand and returned to find them earnestly talking. Next time. Marty is still irritated with Dan. Dan makes me think of a startled bird still flapping around after a terrible surprise. But he is in the process of settling down. The surprise is relatively far in the past now.

I was glad to see him a little sloshed, relaxed, expansive. He has been grim and tense, though always making a valiant attempt. I feel much grimmer and tenser than he appears. Yet, not being used to drinking anymore, I laughed a lot and got pretty high on the champagne. No hangover this morning, perhaps because I drank a half a bottle or more of Crystal Geyser before I went to sleep. No porno and no poppers, so no headache and no gogginess today.

More a trance. It's another quiet day. Marty is sleeping (at twelve-twenty). This morning he told me he took a pill in order to sleep through last night. It had been prescribed for the neuropathy caused by D4T. It also made him drowsy. I'm worried about his waking up. I expect that Fred will come and tell me and that we will keep him company if it keeps happening. Early yesterday morning he was able to sleep when we piled into his bed at five am. Sometimes I feel that Fred comes to me for comfort, a projection, I'm sure. But I imagine that the puppy knows that Marty is sick and that sometimes he comes to me for a break. He is so affectionate with me, just an adorable being, and adoring, pure love, something humans have only at the very early part of life, when they do have it. Physical, nurturing, playful. Wordless.

The clouds are moving across the sky slower today and, though there have been several showers, the light is very bright. The air is cold enough that I had to close the door opened to the deck. It's still cold enough that I've put on the heater, the little disc furnace that I needed at xmas, it was so cold. In the East it would be a March day, warm enough to be outside but still too cold to sit down. The ground is soaked. I noticed that the seeds thrown into flower beds before the rain are all sprouting. So hopefully we will have California poppies and assorted wildflowers before too long. Leaves are appearing and unfolding on the buckeye. The whole landscape is sparkling with new life.
Raining again, grey sky, not bright today. Worthy of blue paper. I'm having a hard time motivating myself for school. I just want to float along and not do anything that doesn't directly make life just a little more bearable for Marty and/or for me. I am in a trance of memories and projections. No one has died for a month, so I am not actively grieving for anyone. Reordering all my most private objects this weekend has triggered a flood of feelings if not images of the late Seventies and early Eighties. Reveries, but blank.

Blankness and numbness. The twin perceptual distortions of AIDS. I can't remember anything and I can't feel anything. Unless I try. And I do. Even remind myself to. All the realizations about mortality in under three years, instead of thirty.

So I note physical changes instead. I've gained some weight around the middle, but not as much as last year. The areas under each eye are a tissue of wrinkles and the skin is always pale (something to work on in Honolulu). My hair is much greyer but still looks dark when it's wet, after a shower. My chest and arms are no longer those of a swimmer, muscles slack. Chest hair very grey. I used to be smooth. Unless I stand up straight, I have the beginnings of the pear shape prevalent among the English and Irish in their middle years.

A very upset Lucy called yesterday and we talked for a long time, almost two hours. Robert is being mean to her as only he knows how, and she, though, like myself, not blameless and often obnoxious, is really upset. She was crying on the phone, even, and that hasn't happened in a long time. Very dissatisfied, I suspect sexually thwarted, time slipping away. I see middle age through the lens of chronic and terminal illness. My life is filled with things I don't want in it and never did. She is trapped by having most of what she wanted and not having a clue about what's next. She doesn't want things to change from the fear perspective and is suffocating with the changelessness of her (and their) achievement. I envy Robert his certainties and his materialism. He will sail ahead (literally) no matter what. For him, it's the effort rather than the goal and then the good life that is the reward for the effort. Lucy has been shocked into realizing that her mother is very old and that she will be an orphan, as she put it when her mother was ill, before she is ready. The breast cancer is the beginning of her mother's extreme old age. This may be the beginning of many new and unwelcome responsibilities, on top of a stagnancy that is driving her nuts. How familiar. Are the best years over? I go around feeling robbed of my best years.

Willa Cather wrote a story called "The Best Years" that is one of my favorites. Wrote it three years before her death. It's set in Red Cloud and she is about twenty in it (the consciousness of herself in the story, not any of the characters, the young teacher
too young and the older inspector being too old. The landscape in
the story is wide open and we ride through it in a buggy. Being
out in it all is what makes it the best years. Her best years
were before she left Red Cloud, she saw later, though she had to
leave Nebraska and was frantic to do so and was nervous every time
she went back. For Herman Melville is was Taipivae. For me right
now it's the early to mid Eighties, before AIDS really hit. We went
on to have great times in the islands and, for me, there were
trips to England and Tangier after the golden time. In fact, my trip
to Red Cloud was fabulous. But here at home the epidemic made
local life grim and crazy and took away the best years of thousands.

No group of people who experience a Holocaust ever escapes the
psychological devastation accompanying the deaths. The Jews, the
Irish, African-Americans, Armenians, Cambodians. The darkness is
always there in the background. And some groups never experience a
Holocaust. Epidemics and genocide. Different from mere war. Though
the Japanese Holocaust was Hiroshima. I'm thinking that the French
have been repeatedly defeated in only the last hundred years and
throughout the last millenium. But they have not as the French
suffered a Holocaust. There's no permanent recovery from a
Holocaust. The numbers are always staggering in a Holocaust, the
casualties incurred over relatively brief time periods.

No wonder Native American charms are comforting me. Their hearts
were kicked to death and yet these charms exist, have been made,
recently in time. One is marked forever but one can also still
respond. But no more best years.

The rain today feels like an English rain, a Cambridge rain. It's
drenching, and flat surfaces are very wet, the deck floor mirroring
the paling and the sky. The rain is like a cloud sitting on everything
in this canyon. Mist and rain fill the air. Greens are dark today,
and there are shadowy places beneath and between boughs, within the
outlines of larger shrubs and bushes. It's colder. No driving
wind today, just gusts here and there. Not strong ones. A gentle day.
Frederick and I got our walk accomplished just before it got wet.
The Saturn Steps are lush, especially on the house side, with garden
and yard plants extending out beneath the railing, making a thick
green border with flowers here and there, purple ones right now.

I'm amazed that I have begun to do spring cleaning, rearranging,
pruning. I am down on myself for being so slow, but why not savor
everything I can? I am sitting in the middle of my life, trying to
locate everything. My life is reified in the book collections and
the art and the way things are arranged. Going over things like the
book collections has been reassuring. There is a tautness and a
sense of sure instinct and wholeness and things having been thought
through, though he is a shadow to me, the person who did this two
summers ago. I remember nervous sweaty trips to bookstores with
surplus books. I remember walking Frederick extensively on foggy
days. The rest is a blur. I went to Hawaii at the end of that time.
I remember Hawaii better than the rest of the summer. I couldn't
write at that time. I could not have believed that Marty would still
be here and in such good shape, compared to then, second pneumocystis, so sick, so angry. It's amazing to be sitting here with him at work and the dog walked and Sylvia expected. At the time I could think only in terms of sudden catastrophes. The house was a wreck. I remember shivering one day at the derelict quality of everything, the untidiness, the dog pee stains on the stairs and all over the foyer carpet. It looked like a madhouse. And it was.

It's strange to have been in this experience so long that I can have perspective on earlier parts. I'm so glad that there have been no sudden catastrophes and pray that there not be any.

Despite the catastrophes, there are all my books systematically shelved and books among them still unread, like Captain Cook and the biography of same. There are four distinct collections, five if you count the art books and Surrealist odds and ends. I found that everything I had saved in my gay fiction collection was worth keeping. Imagined selling the books later on. Realized I could sell them now, but don't want to yet. I may go through the personal correspondance and jettison a few folders. Whatever I'm tinkering with, it's an ongoing process of adjustment and experiment that has been going on since we moved to Central and I had my own room. It goes on at its own pace, by its own rules. I feel like a spectator, sometimes a censor, watching the activity of, yes, the shadow again. All those earlier writings about my shadow, the photographs, discovering the Jungian Shadow. He's still there beneath all this turmoil and personality stuff. He is the permanent me, visible in the art as the narrator or the eyes. I've been disconnected from him for so long. But he's there. Opaque to consciousness. He's the creature Fred knows. Perhaps the shadow disembodied is what we call the spirit.

It's very chilly today. It's a good idea to make time for something like this writing before turning to various required tasks. I managed to slip through yesterday with hints of guilt only. Actually got very rested by a mid-afternoon nap, to the point of feeling truly physically rested and psychologically clear, tranquil.
Went to bed at nine-thirty last night and woke up at eight this morning, with only a short interruption in the middle of the night during which I determinedly did not completely awaken, trusting that then I would be able to slip back into sleep. Felt more refreshed than for ages. My body felt entirely solid. When I walked Frederick, I felt alive, from my feet hitting the pavement to the top of my head.

The landscape stretched out virtually mythologically, the hills across the Bay rolling for a hundred miles in green ridges, the sky clear but filled with moisture and vapor, the well-risen sun shooting white and yellow rays through and on it all, the ground green everywhere it could show. The temperature was cool enough for a sweater but the air did not feel cool, soft rather, on the edge of fragrant. The Saturn Steps were wet. No one was sleeping on the top benches this morning.

I got through annoying tasks like updating the college catalogue with surprising equanimity and also ease. One symptom of the psychological malaise I've been in has been a panic about tasks with deadlines (just the word says it all!). There was not much work to do here, but I had fretted about the catalogue for two months. The fretting was about completing the task, not about the task. The trip out to campus was actually pleasant, all the encounters very friendly. I wish that just sleep could cure all my chronic anxieties.

At four in the afternoon it's grey and green outside, the sky overcast and every plant vibrant, trees and bushes thrilled, lush. Marty and Fred and I went to the beach at two so Fred could run around. The wind was very brisk and cold, whipping the foam into froth and suds. Clumps of suds were detaching and then skidding inland across the sand. Frederick was fascinated. He ran into the water as soon as we let him off his lead. Marty was in heaven watching him run in and out of the water and up and down the beach. Fred was in heaven, too.

Yesterday was very intense. My student [redacted], who came and told me his story of the worst evil I have yet been made aware of personally, showed up after my second class. He is having flashbacks but is functioning pretty well, I'd say. His uncle was shot during the Iranian Revolution, during which time I had him in class at Cogswell College and he confided his troubles to me. He is a darling, sweet person and brought me a bowl he had made with his own hands. Seeing him shook me up in many ways. The sheer horror of his having been falsely accused (by his ex-wife), arrested, and then gang raped in jail has been enough to make me just sit and stare out the window for hours. He is a very good person who is having a very hard life. Our encounter triggered a flood of almost axiom-like realizations: This is all we have. Life is all there is.

Waves of almost feelings have been washing over me today. I just
can't bear it that Marty is so ill. It breaks my heart to go to the beach with him and Fred. We can't stay long because he is so frail. He can't run. We can't go far. I imagine being there alone with Fred. I remember being there with Marty so many times, from the very beginning. It was wonderful to be there today. But I don't know how I managed to do it and feel so good while I was doing it given all the realizations just flooding across my consciousness. There are respites but there are no rests. Awareness is relentless. I don't know how we're doing it. But we are. But we never talk about our awarenesses of what is happening to him and what is happening to me. He doesn't tell me how it's wearing him down, and I don't tell him how it's wearing me down. We spare each other.

Crying helps. It's been more lately, three times a week, sometimes just a minute, sometimes half an hour, nothing as bad as at the beginning. It hurts, but it is like a grimace. It's fewer feelings fused into the same pain. Then the pain ceases and I move into numbness again and have the sensation of a certain relief and release.

And there are hundreds of thousands of people across the land going through the same and worse. And there are tens of thousands of caregivers helping someone with HIV and AIDS, going through much worse than I am. But I can only (and only I can) directly experience my own pain, and it is the hardest and most long lasting and unknown pain I have ever felt, and life has become a strategy for coping with it, relaxing from it, waiting it out, letting it out safely, etc. I regress and return in memory to periods of my life when I was miserable and had to tough it out. At least this time around I am sure of myself inside. Previous hard periods included deeper depression and confusion and doubt about my place in the world. My disaster is a result of another person's disaster, and his disaster is far more dire than mine, though I will face Death at some later time.

Such have been the floods today. At least I'm rested physically. And we are safe and secure today in our beautiful house after a beautiful day.
Up early this morning, at seven, both because Marty was up early and because Frederick decided that he wanted a walk at that time. Had a very realistic, clear dream of an earthquake as big as the 1989 one, or bigger, this time standing in the living room upstairs near one bookcase, about to cross the room and prevent the other bookcase from falling, everything shaking, then rocking, then a kind of "twist" in the movement from the southeast to the east, a sharp shaking, and then it was over. It was daytime. I was concerned about Fred but not about Marty. Flashforward?

I continue to feel physically better, sinuses clear, for example, no tremor in the hands (from drinking and cigarettes). Dan announced that he was "seeing Bob" tonight (i.e. to get speed). I didn't respond. During our very nice dinner at Ivy's, as he obsessed onto the sale of his condo and what next, I was imagining getting some poppers from The Jaguar and some videos from Superstar and I was feeling the pull of the compulsion very much. But when we got home, I just went to bed, came in the dark, fell asleep. The orgasm isn't as good without the visual and chemical stimulation. But for now the physical side effects of the chemicals aren't worth it to me. I am breathing more deeply. Sleeping better. Have reduced grass too.

Is it just because the days are longer?

Wrote a card to Miki this morning. Three years ago I ran into him at the Phoenix and took my plunge. Stupefying, what's happened since. It's been a good idea to separate from him. I miss him, but I feel less stressed, have more time, have no guilt, etc. I feel back in my own life again and both diminished and enriched. He is very powerful psychologically. I both respect and love him and feel that being with him is too much for me. I've reestablished boundaries around my ego that he/we dissolved.

Meanwhile life continues here on Saturn. Marty is neither better nor worse but seems content. He has to have a new catheter implanted in his chest, which is a drag, but he has decided to do it right away (Monday) and will also take that day off from work, something he didn't do last time. Work is bit by bit becoming less important for him, though it is very important. He likes staying home. And he must be more tired, too. He seems genuinely happy. Considering.

The sun just came out, changing every green in sight from dark to luminous. The sky is changing slowly from white to blue. Darren's cactus and Miki's pua plant sit on the deck and inside the double glass doors of the studio, respectively. The cactus is thriving. The pua will start putting out leaves when the sunlight gets strong enough. I wonder how Darren is. Princess Makaila from Oahu.
Finally a day of pure Spring, warmer than it's been in ages, sky cloudless, green reaching everywhere. When Frederick and I went out at nine, the temperature and brightness surprised me. The air is washed clean. Arcadia.

I can feel a depression arising or descending. It could be the old basic cycle. It could be due to watching too much television coverage of the bombing of the World Trade Center yesterday. It could be Dan's unreliability (flash of irritation). It could be the lesser amount of chemicals in my system for over a week. It could be my boredom, but with depression, that's a chicken/egg dilemma. I certainly am bored. Physically I'm rested but psychologically I am so tired of this situation. Marty was weird last night. I was sound asleep and he came upstairs either to turn the heat up or turn it down and woke me up. I was up for two more hours as a result. He reported this morning that he had a hard time sleeping last night. I went down to check on him after he woke me up and he was offputting. I thought: I've been doing this for eighteen years. I could just not have checked. Maybe I should not have. Let go. Let go. Let go.

I was upset to write to Miki and to hear from him yesterday. A sweet card. Hated Marty last night. Thought: I went through all of that and you didn't give a shit. Today will be a break, because he is going out to dinner. His illness makes him self-absorbed. He is very self-centered on top of that (or under). Me, too. But I have always been concerned about other people. He has not been. Is not. And so it goes.

If I were going through all this because of something that happened just to me, it would be easier. But it is all displaced. I suffer vicariously. My life is distorted and stagnant. Marty rolls along as best he can, in his own world. I react, adjust, fix. Meanwhile my life moves ahead numbly. I am living as if a solitary but I can never be solitary. I am isolated but not free.

Marty is not feeling well, I can tell. There is apprehension in this depressed state as well as irritation.

Later on, I want a single life. I don't want to be in a relationship later on. I want my own life back. I don't want to be in a predicament like this ever again. It is not worth it. Suffering is only itself. It does not make me "a better human being" and it is not ennobling. It is tedious and crazy-making. It is an opportunity to show unconditional love, but once in a lifetime, please.

I'll feel better if I make it to Honolulu. A whole week to myself in a setting where I don't know a soul. Perfect. No obligations for a week. If I can go.

And then Marty comes home with beautiful lilies for me.
It's a very insecure time of my life while at the same time I've achieved all of my previous goals except getting my novels published. This house is stunningly beautiful, especially today. Frederick is a gift from the dog god. Marty is still here after almost dying nearly two and a half years ago. I am teaching and getting paid for it. I have tenure. I have achieved what I wanted (or should have wanted), partly by hard work and partly by luck, and now I can't move ahead. I've hit a brick wall of illness and death. I'm a passenger, not the driver. I've been injured too. I'll recover, but I'm not on the same road anymore. The car was totaled.

There are small beauties throughout the day, like the churchbells ringing the noon hour from Holy Redeemer down in the Castro while the spring sun beams down.

What if this were all going on and I hadn't finished Noonlight? Or had only a part-time job and faced being laid off? I need to get my frustrations out, and all those feelings are true, but at the same time I must not forget all the blessings. Among them, that Marty is still here and doing so well, no matter how irritated he makes me.

And I'm facing all this stress without drinking or smoking. And though things are slow, it's better to be still than to be going over the next precipice, which is most assuredly there ahead. I need to keep doing what I have been doing: as much as possible, do what I want; get feelings out through writing; maintain good health and health habits; recognize the progress I have made and the value of the care I am giving Marty.

Now it's mid-afternoon. Marty is sleeping on the deck chaise and Frederick is watching me from where he is lying on the other side of my desk, on my Moroccan rug. Now he's come over behind the desk, I'm sure to look around for remnants of the oatmeal cookie I just finished eating. There. Now he's gone out onto the deck.

It's an endless day. I should enjoy that.
The last day of February and the end of winter. It's summer outside except for a barely noticeable coolness beneath the breeze. Sunshine as in California sunshine. The buckeye has sprouted leaves all over in just two days of sun after holding back during the most recent period of rain.

Marty is reading on the deck and Frederick is dozing on the landing just off my studio. Fred knows that today is a potential bath day and has been deliberately avoiding going higher than the foyer level all day. I maintain that he understands a lot more than he lets on as, for example, when he sat and then lay briskly down when I took an oatmeal cookie out of the refrigerator a few days ago. When he's barking, he doesn't recognize the command "down" at all.

I'm in a better mood today, less aimless and hopeless. I still don't want to read any schoolwork. It isn't that I'm not interested. I just don't want to do any serious outside work today. Marty remarked the other evening that he wished I would take more breaks and just goof off. I feel that I am doing this all the time but of course I'm not and am under considerable strain all the time.

After reading more of Pessoa than usual (and grim nothingness it was) I wandered into a PBS special (BBC filmed) on Queen Elizabeth II in Marty's room and watched it till nearly eleven. Then I managed to fall asleep even though there was a wild party going on across the street and way up the cliff in a house that faces Lower Terrace. It was very heterosexual, very white, and very loud. And very young. I put a pillow over my head and two beneath and drifted off. This morning my first sight as I opened my bedroom door was debris floating into our back yard from the German neighbor woman's vigorous carpet shaking out her top window. This explains the cigarette butt, the medicine sachet, and the clump of hair found in my cactus garden. This morning it was a piece of white tissue. And the patio table was covered with dust and dirt, which I immediately hosed off. The worst neighbors I've had in all the time I've been in California. But of course it could be much worse. When I see items in the newspaper about feuds between neighbors that escalate into murder, I now understand entirely. I really do hate my neighbors and pray for their departure, expulsion from the country, etc., with the apprehension then becoming: who would replace them?

Gerard called this morning at ten and we had a very nice chat. We always make each other laugh. We also had a good exchange about Dan, whom Gerard feels is just crazy right now. The gun thing struck Gerard as just totally crazy. He counseled staying loose and avoiding any kind of confrontation, since Dan would deny that anything crazy was noticeable in his behavior. Of course it's all unconscious. And of course I am distorting and exaggerating because of my own warped perspective.
I wish he were more consistent. And I don't want to be demanding. It struck me as Gerard was talking about a friend of his that had no one to help him that Gerard will be doing the same for us.

I told him about my realization that I had achieved most of what I wanted despite the disaster that has torn through our lives. He commented that the second part of that was not having the friends around that you had expected to always be there once you got there. Gerard also asked who was still in my life from twenty-five years ago and whether I kept track of anyone from that time still. That's what it will be like twenty-five years from now, he said. Gerard is a walking advertisement for the benefits of living alone, I must say. Clear-headed, steady, wise, strong. He helps me establish perspective in the most unobtrusive way.

When I had none yesterday, I just relaxed. Sat in the garden. Thought. Read. Felt the cool air on my skin. Didn't try to do anything. As a result today is better. Despite the aggravations. I'm also three days away from school. No matter how I prepare myself, every week I am unnerved by Thursday. So Friday and Saturday are bound to be problematic if I'm not careful. Friday I'm so relieved that Saturday creeps up on me, with its errands and dislocations and afternoon void. I didn't drug out yesterday, resisted the impulse to break down and get some poppers and rent some skin movies, didn't drink. Feel better today as a result of not stressing myself physically with chemicals.

Maybe I'll start getting out now and again for lunch in North Beach and little San Francisco excursions. I don't do anything for fun except read, write, and sit in the garden. It would be good to get out of the house more. Afternoons. Without Frederick or Marty. Perhaps it's time to work on the agoraphobia. Certainly I can choose times when I can relax and enjoy without crowds of straight people (weekends) and/or tourists (much later in the year). I'm a San Francisco old timer by now, yet never do the San Francisco things I used to enjoy. Now that the weather is nicer, maybe it's time. I do want to try one of those French restaurants in the Richmond we used to go to. La Maisonette was cute--and very good. Maybe Marty and I need to get out of the rut of the three restaurants we go to. Is it Spring yet?

Oliver gave me an extra pinch of grass in return for the Sunday papers. I realized on the way over that I know Oliver as well as I know (knew) many friends. We dish about the latest dick he's gotten, most recently an Aussie spending his last night here: last night. His boyfriend of the last month is his straight muscleman who got nasty last weekend so Olive is keeping him at arms length. Oh, she sighed, he says the most vile things to me when he's dark like that. Olive is very interesting. Doll collection, Joan Crawford collection, porno, weird little knickknacks from junk stores across the land. He talks mostly about getting laid with young straight guys, and I find myself wondering what he looks like when he goes out into the night.

Dan has visited for several hours, mollifying me but not Marty, who
is irritated indeed about Dan's not paying enough attention to him. Marty is also, despite the brave talk, scared about getting his new Groshand (?) catheter put in tomorrow. So we'll be up early tomorrow to make sure he has a nice warm emotional envelope around him.

Dan is family, of course, and all the bitching and judging and reacting to him remind me of family dynamics. I pulled back emotionally while he was here and decided that wherever he decides to live is his business and shouldn't matter to me at all. I do have to get out more. It breaks the feeling of being embattled.

As I was sitting out in the garden just now watching the first stars in the evening sky I realized that for all my complaining about Marty's selfish aspects or behavior, there is the supreme unselfishness he is practicing by sparing me as much as he can negative information about his health. I don't mean denial, but not letting on when he is feeling crummy. And never complaining. He is sparing me as much as he can, and in terms of being sick, he is very undemanding and unselfish.

Introjects. The images one has of others, subjectively distorted.
I feel slightly dazed after mythological yesterday but thoroughly rested even with only seven hours of sleep. There is something to the idea that sleeping too much can make one more sleepy and tired. I became aware that Fred was stretched out at the foot of the bed at least an hour before I woke up. He got me out of bed in about ten minutes once we were both awake. We were out the door at eight and, at the bottom of the Saturn Steps, it became clear why he needed to get outside.

Marty was waiting for us out in front of the house, so we ran the last leg. The routine is that I turn and look down at Fred as we walk along and ask: Would you care to run? He then leaps into a run and we race up Saturn. Frederick loves to play and has a sense of humor about play.

I sat out in the garden for hours yesterday after France left, blissed out and almost disbelieving that it had been such a great day. We three sat out on the deck in the twilight watching the nearly full moon rise. Then Marty infused and I went down into the almost Moorish complexity of the terraced Garden of Earthly Delights that the back yard has turned into. It was balmy, the moon was shining a pewter softer silver than usual, an almost yellow tinge to the unearthly brightness. We went out to have a delicious dinner at Ivy's and then, when we got back, out the back door I went again, the moon at its zenith, bright enough to read the Tarot by, so I did, with a shiver. The first throw yielded three pentacles and Justice, the second the incredible trumps of The Hanged Man and The Moon.

The moonlight was tinged with neither blue nor purple. The radiance was such that all the scents and breathings of all the new life had permeated the moonlight. The light seemed less stark because of the spring.

Today the air is pale blue, almost like steam rising toward the white sun. A second summer day, with a hint of a chill beneath its smiling expanse. Yesterday the temperature reached 78°, a record. Cool weather will return, as always here. Summer-like heat happens here sporadically all year round but lasts only rarely. 1984 was an unusually sunny hot year, with no fogbank. Otherwise, we joke about the six days of summer here, the six hot days per year. There are usually more than that. Even as we think of how few days it really bakes in the city, while it's hot it's irresistible to imagine the heat going on for weeks, or even a week.

The bottom of the garden is so spacious now. I sat there for ages last night, looking up at the moon through the new leaves of the buckeye. A dream garden. Shadows became fascinating, like the grid of the trellises. Traffic sighs off in the distance very unobtrusively at night, so I could feel the stillness all around me physically. A cat leapt onto the fence at one point, fled when I stood up. The life of the hillside continues almost invisibly
beyond the human life in the dark houses late at night.

France laughed yesterday when I showed her my old Versailles cards and said that I wanted the garden to look that way by June.

Marty is out reading under the trees. A Life in Science by Stephen Hawkings. I got it for him on impulse in December. He is very interested in Hawkings, having read A Brief History of Time. There is also the long illness and physical incapacitation, like Marty's Uncle David and like Marty. He has bought himself another book, An English Patient, which was reviewed not long ago but which left no trace on my memory.

Last night I had him scan the view with the binoculars and look at the moon.

Resolutely keeping fear of the disease away. Floating gingerly through the day. I asked Marty how he was feeling this morning and he said fine. And he looks fine. So that's where we are today. But fear does flicker around the edges of the day like cold flame.

The dream Deathscape of yesterday includes, among other configurations, the campus of Columbia University, whose buildings looked like the ones in the city where John and I strolled. I've retrieved flashes of memory of walking across the campus toward the river at twilight in all seasons. I also walked across the campus the night of a famous acid trip and Low Library melted! And I walked there once, maybe twice, with John. And John was there in my apartment the night of the acid trip tripping for the first time. I was walking across the campus because I had gone out to another acid party with Richard Gutrie and/or his brother. What did that acid party have to do with dreaming of John and being reassured by him after he died? Does acid connect to that realm? Why did the dream manifest as the visual memory of that trip? John left that night to go home. We never walked outside together. The infernal as non-ordinary reality. Mental landscapes. The Death one had no color.

Superimposed are visuals connected with a winter night in Mount Kisco. Bare branches, snow, blowing wind, clear sky. Cheeks tingling with the slap of the cold. Nighttime. Black starry sky. No lights on in any of the houses. Was I taking the garbage out? Ice and snow on the driveway. Nothing alive in the landscape except me.

Imagination is bits and pieces of memories. I'm beginning to realize (think?) that my dreams are less populated than I had thought, assumed. Writing fiction is like visiting a dream landscape. It's possible to populate fiction voluntarily.

Sitting out in the garden last night was like sitting in a dreamscape. Fictionscape?
The first truly glorious (what other word could apply?) Spring day, cloudless, yellow/white waterfall of sunlight, hot temperatures (it will hit 80° today), plants outdoors needing to be watered for the first time this year. France is out in back, clearing the bottom of the garden. She'll uncover, weed, assess, and then we'll make a list of things for me to get from Sloat's and Goodman's and the stone, brick, gravel place over on Bayshore Boulevard. I knew none of these places this time last year, and the garden was an overgrown ruin.

Frederick whimpered at the closed door to my bedroom this morning at seven-thirty, about a minute after I woke up. He knows when I wake up. I had been having endless anxiety dreams, just barely in dreamland, just beneath the surface of consciousness, for at least an hour. Some of it was grass withdrawal, since I had smoked my last joint around eight and then went to bed around ten. I was out in the world somewhere. Marty was not in the dream, so I expect it was a flashforward. I've been having dreams in which there is not a trace of Marty for the past few weeks. One was a vividly realistic earthquake dream. I was worried about Fred in the dream but not about Marty. Part of me has accepted the aloneness that is to come. And part of me is always alone now.

Though I have so often felt at a standstill, there has of course been psychological development and growth. Perhaps adaptation is a better word, but when one feels something new in the psyche, it feels like growth. I perceive myself as being alone in the world now, and not half of a pair. Marty is a child and an old man as well as a lover. My mother must have perceived herself as being alone as she became more embattled. Mothers are alone. The role is a solitary one.

Marty told me that the last year and a half have been "much better" than the first terrible year. I felt so relieved.

Thursday night both Lucy and Camilla called with death news. Lucy called and chatted along for awhile and then told me that Robert's father had died. Thirteen years of incapacitation. I have never been told whether it was Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, lung disease with brain damage, coma. Lucy went once to visit him, before she and Robert were married. He was not as ill then but too ill to come to the wedding. Robert did not go home to be there when he died. Robert is phobic about illness, a vitamin fanatic, and a drinker. Lucy and I had one of those talks about managing the near future and bracing for grieving behavior. Robert had started drinking as soon as she told him the bad news (was it bad? for whom?) and R's mother also had made a remark on the phone about waiting for Robert to get there so she could start drinking. I told Lucy that he'd sail through the next week and just to let happen whatever happened. But if there is to be a weird period, it will happen after they are back. Robert is about ready to blow anyway, what with the big five-oh in the offing and job insecurity after all these years and everything. I haven't found out yet what losing one's father feels like but I know
that, last year, when my father was operated on for lung cancer, I just felt a blank enormousness every time I thought that he could possibly die. So Robert will, I'm sure, be going through a lot, whether the feelings begin as sadness or not.

They left this morning for Cleveland. There is always a rushing when someone dies. As she talked to me on the phone, it was as if I could hear the wind in the background. Death for me is associated with wind. I imagine twilight, dark trees, skirling leaves. The landscape in which John Fox visited me. The sky is not dark but the landscape is. The sky is like a winter sky, after sunset but before night. There is not snow on the ground. It is not wet. But it feels like that. And the wind makes a noise that comes from childhood, the sound of the wind at night flowing through trees without leaves, making branches creak. No clouds in the sky. No stars either. The sky is darkly bright. Shapes are silhouetted and are black. The landscape as I imagine it now is deserted. But in my dream about John, we were walking side by side in that landscape which was also a cityscape. There were no people or cars, just the two of us walking along. But there was a sense of a city around us. We walked down a boulevard, and there were trees and what seemed to be apartment buildings like the ones back East and in Europe, stone buildings. I felt as if I had been in this city before. John and I walked along together and then he moved off to the right while I kept walking ahead and to the left. The other world. How many are there?

Then Camilla called out of the blue to tell me that her beloved Pa was dying and that Stuart's father had died last Friday. She and I last spoke in October 1990 and then for the first time in seven years. At the time, she was starting her own business and was all happy, so I didn't tell her that Marty had AIDS. But I did this time. She may visit later in the spring. Frederick is named after her beloved Labrador, Fredricka. (Fredrieka?) Marty loved the first Fred very much. After our long talk, he said that he had always liked Camilla but not her drinking and her involving me in her drinking. It was comforting to talk with her, though I am wary as always of letting her get too close given her codependent patterns. We talked for a long time. I felt how much life had changed for me.

So Thursday night was wild. We were supposed to go have drinks with George's deathbed guardians but when the time arrived neither Marty nor I wanted to go. This is the first "reunion" Dan has planned since one way back when (three months?). It's too hard for me to think about that day when George died, and I think for Marty too. So we opted out. Dan hadn't bothered to call us all week and then just left a message when he knew I wasn't home. So I left a message for him at work. He has unplugged his answering machine at home. He called pretty high from Trader Vic's between Lucy's and Camilla's long calls. I was glad we hadn't gone when I heard how sloshed he was. We just heard his message, as I went downstairs after Lucy's call and didn't hear the phone ring. There is no consideration there for Marty's feelings. It is beginning really to irritate me. And clearly I am not comfortable drinking or being around drinking anymore. I think of being thirsty and hung over and hyper and drunk and it seems like a bad dream, a sloppy way to get high.
Dan is somewhere in the ozone. I am going to stand back while the next month unfolds. I think he is going to try to escape from AIDS in a very pointed way, like by moving away. He is treating us very offhandedly and shabbily though not deliberately so. He's just out there. Too bad for him. But not for me. I decathected, as Jung would say, after xmas. It's also weird to realize that he was using me to justify his speed thing. Certainly I was a willing participant, but as I realized that it was just a very draining drug, after the great high, and stopped, he tried to keep me hooked. He was in his own mind being generous, but the night he poured out some speed and said: The more you do, the less I do, I decided I didn't like this relationship the way it was anymore.

I've asked him three times now to help with the ladder (after he offered the help) and he just doesn't help. That was the last thing I depended on him for, getting an extension ladder. So now I am disentangled from him as far as obligations are concerned. It isn't about me anyway. It's about avoiding Marty and the guilt of not helping him by offering to help me (but then not helping). It's really gross. After Marty is gone, assuming Dan and I see each other, Dan will regret not having spent more time with him while Marty could. Maybe I won't want to see Dan. Maybe Dan will be gone by then.

Around and around and around we go. He is fun to be with when he finally does sit down with us. And we will offer to take him out for his fortieth birthday.

Dan reminds me of the high school and/or college kids who were "cool" and outwardly welcoming but never there. Like Bruce Fogarty. It's very WASP, the way Dan acts. Like someone who tells you to come visit but who will give you neither a phone number or directions. Insincere. Like Mary Redick. And me, too, on a number of occasions. I've been very bad that way over the years.

There is no wind today. Earthquake weather. Abnormally hot, calm. Fred is overheated, so he's just sprawled. His coat in the sunlight has purple and green highlights. It's very hot at patio and deck levels, cooler down in the bottom of the garden, where France is meticulously weeding, thanks in part to the buckeye, which has burst into leaf over a week of time and which will now provide shade for seven months. France found two strawberry plants, wild strawberries. Native to this area. Blown in sometime this winter, the seeds. They will cover the ground down in the bottom flowerbed. As last year, the garden will tell us what to do. Much of the fun is seeing what comes up this spring after the deluge. The weeds are not outrageous, since we've gotten rid of the oxalis twice now. Several different kinds of bulb plants have emerged and we're seeing what flowers. France was amazed at the irises next to the basin, which are very tall, shocking, in fact. Nearly two feet tall. Just leaves. No flower stalks, yet. But the ones in the big pot are budding. Fuchsia. Yellow. Just about to bloom. First time since we moved in. The poppies and wildflowers are coming in in two beds. We'll throw some more down at the bottom level. Maybe I'll hit Sloat's early tomorrow. Or even go Monday morning, if I can get schoolwork done.
Record the perfection of the moment. Temperature is perfect. Warm enough to wear a t-shirt. Studio luminous, alive. Red and blue of the plastic transparent boxes on my desk and the Kiribati flag. More orange and yellow than I had realized. My 1993 studio. It's perfect. I could sit here all the time and do nothing but be here. All that's left is cleaning. The sporadic tidying and takings-stock are done. I've emerged from the winter and this is me for the rest of the year. Birdsong from outside in the full sunlight. Air scents. The air smells sweet. Birds chirping outside. I will go off to Honolulu in three and a half weeks (four weeks from today will be my second full day there), bring some things back, island baskets or even fans. Then it will be even more sunny and blazing here. Maybe we'll continue to have clear sailing and the spring can expand without interruption all the way to summer, each day longer until we reach that impossible stretch of longest days, more precious every year.

I've really decluttered the bookcases. Where all of Herman Melville's writings sat on the top of the small bookcase, now an idol from the Trobriands stands on a piece of tapa, feet encircled with a Tongan necklace of pink shells (from Vava'u), along with several other smaller artefacts- two other necklaces, one red and white and black shells, the other golden shells and sea urchin spines. The whole wall space is more uncluttered now above the bookcase and below the flag. The pua has started its annual sprouting of leaves after losing every one on both branches. A tropical plant used to sunlight above a certain amount and intensity, it has adapted to this climate, losing leaves by December and going dormant during the darkest months of the year (light, not temperature, is the factor). The single palm, all green leafy, sits in the middle of the Moroccan rug and softens the whole room. The Corbusier chair and the glass and chrome table weren't even here last year. Two hats have become part of my wardrobe again and one sits above the headrest of the Corbu chair and the other on top of the squat Tongan basket. There is a feeling of having focused, having honed down, but not having stripped bare. The room is nice and soft with clean lines at the same time. It's filled with color but is not garish, remarkable given the intensity of some of the color. The browns of the tapas and mats help keep the intensity strong but not overwhelming. The room of my dreams.

It is HOT today. We got the dogloo up onto the deck and out of the garden, and the jade is going next (at last!). France, Marty, and I all finally came to the consensus that the jade was ugly and did not look as though it belonged in the garden. So now the bottom terrace of the garden will begin to emerge as a three dimensional space to be in and not just to look at (the depth was increased dramatically after we pruned back the buckeye and got rid of the rest of the jade last year). Now I can start getting what we need in stages in between the times France is working. She is doing her usual fine job, and figured out the logistics of tying a rope around the dogloo in about ten seconds (wire hangers and nylon rope). The dogloo now sits on the deck and will soon be gone from there. Will I follow through? Sooner or later. I may have to buy more outdoor chairs. The deck will be my own project, and it could look very different two months from now.

For the past two nights Marty and Fred and I have gone outside to sit
in the moonlight. Fred's coat sparkles and glints in the silver light, while he stands there all sleek and looking entirely at home as a creature of the night.

It feels as if we've gone back in time to the Twenties out there in the brilliant moonlight. The garden looks very glamorous. Then too I feel the past of the hillside whenever I'm out there at night. The older San Francisco sighs out there in the breeze, the country and pueblo from long ago. When this was all a green mountain, the only sound was probably the sound of water falling, and hawks probably swooped along on the air currents, the way they do still on Mount Tamalpais. Except that we are in the lee of the mountain, so it would have been more like the valleys on the eastern slope of Mount Tam.

I should stop writing. I'm stretching it.
Instead of the usual rough-housing in bed this morning, Frederick just climbed on, lay down, and put his head on my foot. He is a droopy puppy today, and was yesterday as well. I hope it's just the heat wave that wore him out. His stool was normal this morning and he ate okay last night, so it's probably not gastrointestinal. I'm so used to his bouncy energy that when he is listless my heart worries about this creature who has brought us so much happiness and who depends on us for care and protection.

Another spell of anxiety dreaming for me in the period before waking, and then waking without exuberance. A bad mood threatening to descend but slowly enough that I've been able to think about it while resolutely fixing breakfast and reading the Chronicle, tidying up the kitchen and my sleeping room, showering and cleaning up my increasingly middle aged (beyond!) body. While I was smoking, a morning like this would be spent chainsmoking. And I would be hung over, too. Neither are true today, and that's an accomplishment. Coffee and grass are all that are left.

I keep going back and forth about grass. It is helping me get through this long sad ordeal. The only physical problems are respiratory and very minor, though I worry about effects over time. It keeps me emotionally even and clear-headed at the same time, unlike tranquilizers, which make me groggy as well as relaxed and which make me forget things in an alarming way. It is expensive. It is illegal, however hypocritically. It makes the day an intriguing mystery. It keeps my imagination alive. If I abstained, I would become much more compulsive and would trap myself into a narrow neurotic cause-effect pattern of chores, fretting, planning, projects, and so on. So for now I keep smoking grass, up to five joints per day, and work instead on not smoking more and cutting back steadily to fewer.

The bad mood is due to school beginning for the week, to Marty's father's planned visit next weekend, and to boredom and exhaustion with the tasks involved in caring for him while not making him feel that I am caring for him. His work day is getting shorter but I don't let on I notice. There is a certain amount of functional denial that I have decided is necessary. I want him to feel autonomous as his general frame of mind. But then I have to be careful not to get mad at him for the denial.

He is needy and I get exasperated when, turning from the tedious tasks associated with school, I have him in my face with his always unacknowledged anxiety. His whole family has the habit of demanding attention as soon as someone is in the room. Bam! They all do it. I'm here! Pay attention to me! Does Marty ask me whether I'm tired? No. Bam! Let's talk about nothing. As I prepare dinner for the millionth time and think: I hate what my life has turned into. I am bored entirely with our conversations, except when I am terrified that we are getting close to enormous painful areas (enormously painful areas?). Part of me is shocked that he watches television by the hour to pass the time. For all the achievements and brilliance, there is a junk side
to Marty that I find very unappealing. It is related to mother's habits, the junk side. He absorbed a lot of anger from her. In fact, both his parents are very angry people. Is this why he's with me? I've been an angry person too.

I'm thinking of our strange dinner years ago with Floyd and Marge at Central. We were all very nervous so we drank too much and Marge got sick. Floyd shouted out: My albatross! as he put her into their car. I felt that Marty was on Floyd's side at the time. But it never occurred to me that he might think of me as his albatross. And I don't know if he ever did, either.

I shouldn't be so judgmental. Marty watches television propaganda, I watch porno propaganda. I am irritated because he shuts everyone out and watches tv. I shut everyone out and read. As Martha said years ago, Marty doesn't "try". And I am always"trying" to improve my mental capacities, keep growing. I'd keep reading even if I had a death sentence. I'd rather be in the moment than pass the time. I am hating passing the time now because that's what he has chosen to do. I'm not the sort who just wants time to pass emptily.

I was so shocked that he abandoned all research because he would not live to be rewarded for it. Has his whole life been a tantrum? Was power the only meaningful reward for him? And prizes? Ambitious. Arrogant. But always a nice guy. What it must have cost him psychologically. Sad. I bristled years ago when Judy called him "driven", but she was right. Not that she's had a happy time of life. She's been more dishonest than he.

His father has many of the same qualities, with envy added. No wonder I hate him. I project what I don't like about Marty onto him, blame him, etc. And he is a cold angry person to boot. His visit is enough to make me very angry indeed, just that I have to have him in my life at all. And more than enough to account for a bad mood on a Monday morning.

It will be interesting in Honolulu to witness moods and behavior unaffected by anyone else. Miki was bothering me the last two times. Why did I let him? Co-dependency, that's how. Marty's mother is a food abuser but there are no alcoholics in the family. My father made us all co-dependent, which is why I've put up with Judy and Marty and Miki (and Frank and Mario). Taking care of them in return for their love. And doesn't it suck. Here I am in the ultimate co-dependent role, helping someone die. The fact that I thrash around a lot with my role is probably healthy, guilty as I feel. I have finally realized that I don't want to take care of other people as a condition for love anymore. While I've been seeing the regression to the feelings of my teens as regressing to the Regis student, there's the other half of those unhappy years to consider too. The unhappy family life. Daddy making everyone feel responsible for his unhappiness. Daddy turning our own insides into a void. Helping Marty has taken me up against the ultimate unhappinesses while at the same time I have been very clear that I am not responsible for his predicament. So in a queer way this ordeal is healing me from an older emptiness while leading me into new landscapes of pain, futility, and loss,
not the phantom losses my father threatened us with, his demons, but real loss. However I do remember at the beginning feeling that my "infidelity" with Miki had caused Marty to get AIDS. So I was worse off then psychologically and stuck entirely in the patterns my father had created for himself and indirectly for all of us. I am more critical now perhaps because I am more clear-headed. I am not being critical to be mean. I am not angry because I am mean. I am realizing a lot about why I've lived the way I have. I'm saying no to strategies and behavior that have been fallbacks for years. Decades. Involuntary, reactive strategies and behavior. My life.

I think a lot about the time after, when I will be "free". If I can keep figuring out the hidden causes of some of my discontents, perhaps that later time will be more likely to be "free". Or freer. Fewer interlocked neuroses. Interlocked with each other and interlocked with the neuroses of another person.

When I am scared, it is about the suffering Marty may go through in the time ahead, about losing Frederick somehow or not being able to care for him and having to give him up, and about losing the house. I am scared about what may happen to what is close to me. But the fears are not about me myself. I don't see myself going nuts, being afraid (later on), being unhappy. I see sorrow and grieving but not eternal unhappiness. The eternality part comes from childhood and adolescence, from Daddy's problems and depressed outlook. Just the simple act of coming and going will be different, wherever I am coming from and going to. I will not be coming home always to illness and an impaired Marty. I will not be going out only to work and do what has to be done before coming home. I will actually be able to go to North Beach (my symbol of happier freer times in the past) and return with a shitload of anxiety and worry removed from my life. Earlier, my heart would sink when I would return home. Now I feel nothing. My heart sank permanently.

There is a quality of virtual reality to this experience. Marty and I are inside it, and Marty even more inside it. Even close friends and family are outside. Our reality is very stylized, both because of the need to maintain connections with the rest of the world as "normal" when the situation is not and because the experience is so primitive and solemn way down deep that it makes life stylized, period. The animal and spiritual aspects of life come very close in the face of impending mortality. The intellect is often superseded. This latter condition may have been a factor in Marty's abandoning his intellectual work. Maybe he couldn't bear the helplessness of the intellect in the face of his illness. Not only his body but even his intellect betrayed him. So he rejected both. Life as a tantrum. Poor Marty. He was betrayed all around. His body, his intellect, and I. We all betrayed him.

From my perspective at the time, he had betrayed me. Now I have agonized through to the assertion that nothing was anyone's fault. But it is an assertion. There's no easy way to define what's true at this point. When I get lost in what he has suffered, I remind myself that I was suffering, too, before he was diagnosed, and that he wasn't paying any attention and hadn't been for awhile.
In Honolulu in 1989, when I was finishing Noonlight, I changed. I got myself into trouble, took terrible risks, and generally misbehaved. I took a turn in my life. Part of it was my obsession with the Richard character in the novel. I abandoned my values. I became corrupt. I glamourized the night world. Part of this was sheer work, investigating the character. But I lost my own bearings, too. My path diverged from Marty's at this time. The earthquake happened. I lost myself in pickup bar sex. Marty earned the down payment for a house by working for Ferdinand Marcos. We went to Ecuador and visited our last Pacific archipelago. Found the house. I met Miki. Fell in love. Got extorted into an avowal by Miki. Wanted him too much to say no. Figured that if things had gone this far anyway, my relationship with Marty must be crumbling. Braced myself for rough times. Got sucked into Miki's disordered life. Marty encouraged me. Didn't care. Got AIDS. What a mess. I'm still telling the story to myself over and over, feeling partially to blame and partially victimized, feeling I was on the road to hell and now am not, realizing that neither of them really was trying to help me very much though each of them took full advantage of being taken care of by me. I'll never know whether I would have left Marty. I know I was heading that way. I had said I would. But I hadn't. But I thought I wanted to. Life with Miki would have been a drastic change and almost certainly a disaster. As I continued on with him after Marty got so sick, I got caught more and more in a web of guilt and reaction. But I tried to act honorably by both Marty and Miki, whatever they thought of me. I can't say the same for them, though neither was intentionally evil, however hurtful. Oh, my.

I certainly won't ever let my life get into such a mess again. Ever again. What a naive fool I have been. And certainly so sobered by all the repercussions of intimacy and sexual ecstasy that I will probably never have a lover again. But there was no other way to find out, either, given the hand I was dealt by family background, opportunities taken and not, emotion, sexual orientation, the milieu here, development, etc. La selva oscura. The next life beyond. If I can get there. Dante had to write the whole Commedia to get there.

Quite a lot going on inside today. No wonder I felt dazed when I woke up.

The fog came over the hill yesterday afternoon and evening for the first time this year.
10 March 93

Frederick has moved walk time up to seven am, so we were out early. There were a lot of people walking to work, or to Castro Station on the way to work. Down the Saturn Steps, down Seventeenth, down Corbett. It's the only time there are really people out on the streets in this district. The buses are probably packed at the end of the day when the morning walkers make their ways back up one of the longest steepest hills in town.

A tree in the little park bounded by Corbett, Ord, Seventeenth, and Douglass vibrated all newly and faintly green. Spring, for real. The garden is now heavily shaded by the buckeye, whose leaves are still expanding now that they are out of their bulbs. The space has changed entirely. The back yards down hill are now invisible. The bottom terrace feels roofed. The sun also shines more vertically every day, so the area below the deck is getting some shade at last, good for the fern, which has suffered burns from the sunlight, mostly in the fall during the two heat waves.

It was very pleasant to go slowly through breakfast. At eleven we went to the bank to talk to a financial manager. Marty flat out revealed that he had AIDS. The man was very nice, and then the woman whom we had met when we opened an account there was also very nice. There's not much that we can do with our cash. But Marty has nudged me toward the kind of people who will help with the financing of the house later on. It was pretty stressful. I'm glad I pulled myself together, took a shower, dressed semiformaly. By the time we were done it was still too early for lunch, so we got deli food for later this afternoon.

I had a glass of wine last night for the first time in awhile. Marty asked me if I was upset. I was offended. I know he meant well. I was tired and decided to unwind a little. Switched to juice later on. Pessoa's meditation last night was on death in life. It was very profound, but defensively I fell asleep after reading the entry twice.

A raw spring day. Very light rain, a thick mist, for an hour or so. Grey clouds and glimpses of blue now. Air is very fragrant. And clean. Landscape has dried but is still very fresh. Not cold but too cool to sit outside, though I have one of the doors open.

The greens have a lot of yellow in them. One is now aware very much of all the trees and bushes and vines and plants, asserting themselves after years of dormancy. Nothing had been growing. Maintaining and surviving. Dark greens and hot dust. This spring this area feels like the countryside.
16 March 93

I'm very numb but the good news today is that Marty's retinitis remains in remission and that I will be back by the time of his next appointment with his ophthalmologist. Some of the exhaustion is artificially enhanced by the coming week away, i.e., there is a tendency to feel it more right before a break from it. Some is familiar. Some is new. Sometimes I feel that I am so ground down that I just can't get any more weary. Sometimes I feel blankly in good spirits. I cooed myself into gastritis but that is going away pretty quickly and might have been food poisoning anyway. That has knocked me out for two days. I cleaned the house extensively this weekend and got it all done but wore myself out and alarmed myself in retrospect.

My department has been threatened and then protected. The atmosphere at work gets more and more panicked and depressing. The proposal by the consulting firm is announced Friday, four hundred pages. The cuts will then soon commence. Pay cuts? We're due a two thousand dollar raise in July. Layoffs? I am quite irritated by it all and also still freaked that one of the layoff schemes cut off just two years after I was hired full-time officially and three years before I started full time in fact. My department is stymied. I will have to lay off part timers, in all probability. Fucked. I will resign if it gets too hard, and just really have to last a few more months until the year and the department are over, if we are to fall apart.

I haven't felt like writing but I have been very busy physically. The carpets are shampooed, several rugs are at the cleaners, the kitchen is decluttered and cleaned (it all started when I pulled out the refrigerator), all the pictures are windexed and the windows of my studio and the door to the garden (bringing the gorgeous green spring right inside). It was compulsive and I did too much. But it's been worse in the past, and it's done. Outdoors, both the jade and the dogloo have been removed from the back yard, the dogloo picked up this morning by the SPCA. A lot has been accomplished in a short time. I am a little freaked to feel so worn out physically and to realize that those muscles are no longer young, by any stretch of fantasy. I am physically much clumsier and slower.

It's been a strange couple of days. I feel very depressed.
19 March 93

The nightmare at school rolls along, with the big consultants' report due today. Rumors abound. Everyone is upset. I went yesterday to a depressing Academic Senate meeting and came home feeling that I had lost my mind. Ended up taking a nap at two-thirty in the afternoon and then set out resolutely for City Lights when I woke up.

The other side of town is so white, except where it's Asian. I had a nice meandering drive on a gorgeous sunny afternoon, movie weather. Stopped at the German bakery over on Van Ness to buy some bread pudding and some strudel and discovered that the whole little area there is German. Zigzagged through Russian Hill, parked finally on Taylor halfway up the Vallejo Steps, a steep hill. That area was once a version of the Saturn Street area. Gazed off at Grace Cathedral to the south, at the magnificent views of the Bay and Bay Bridge and Alcatraz, and thought: of course this is where rich white Episcopalian and Masonic people would live. Camilla lived on one side of the hill and David on the other, and they just had to.

Found a treasure trove of books by my favorite and some new writers. Flaubert's very early November, Robbe-Grillet's first novel, Zola's writings about art and asceticism The Masterpiece and The Sin of Father Mouret, two early semi-autobiographical fictions by Huysmans, more prose by Pessoa, more stories by Maupassant, two story collections by Mexican writers, and a non-fiction piece on Chile by Garcia Marquez. Why am I looking at first efforts by my masters and new Latin American work? I've also changed the visuals on my desk and replaced Polynesian vistas with American Surrealist landscapes of interiors giving onto sky, ocean, distant mountains. Red, blue, purple, black, white. I wonder what's going on, if anything.

I was pleased to make this new start, since depression had been overwhelming all week. What was meant to be a break turned into an anxiety rollercoaster. I got food poisoning, not severe but very uncomfortable, so Monday and Tuesday were shot. I was physically aching to the extent that I just went to bed and slept. Marty's checkup went okay Wednesday but I was very anxious before. Yesterday was a nightmare until I finally broke out of the anxiety and slept. Today I feel much more like myself.

We even went out to dinner last night and tried a new (for us) French restaurant in the Richmond. It was a real treat and comfort, in that the food was excellent and the setting and Frenchness of the cuisine also reminded us of oldest times, when we were living on Buchanan and exploring the city as adults for the first time, such young adults in retrospect. It was a nice break and we discussed many happy memories. I had forgotten how smooth French vin ordinaire is. I haven't had escargot in years, literally. I suggested that our new fad be trying new restaurants. Midweek, when things are slow and we need the treat.
22 March 93

I continue to feel scared and unsettled as the next week begins.

Gorgeous spring sun and plants just bursting all weekend. But I spent less time outside than I probably should have. A lot of napping and holing up in my room. Escaped into skin land for the first time in weeks. Hours spent Saturday reading the report on City College, which was devastating and also reassuring. There is plenty of waste but the crisis is primarily of the State's making. Nothing was really terribly out of line though numerous reforms were suggested.

I spent all day Saturday reading that report. So my impression of the weekend is not accurate. Yesterday I goofed off but the day before I worked all day.

Anxiety, anxiety. I hope my trip calms me down and restores me a little. This is not as bad as xmas but school is going on, adding its own anxieties.

By yesterday evening I was telling myself to get a grip. Thoughts of moving along by force of will. Must definitely decrease grass consumption. But really my substance abuse is not serious, just symptomatic. I have made amazing headway in only a year. I have a grip but am emotionally erratic. But since I tend to experience the world through my emotions, they make me suffer to the point that I feel I have no grip. But I do. I keep the house going and cook dinner and go to work and care for Fred. I'm keeping Marty going. I'm just feeling the wear and tear from the task.

He told me yesterday that at one point he looked up from his chair in the garden and saw Fred and me and the garden and felt very happy. So you've achieved your dream, I commented. We're all here. Here, I was saying, you got where you wanted to.

I'm careful not to talk about my own despairs and discontents. He knows it has been a rough weekend for me, but none of the torrent of demoralized thoughts flooding through my consciousness were audible to him. I keep trying to let go of the Catholic trip that one sins in thought as well as deed. I try to repress bitter or angry thoughts as if I were shouting them at Marty. Then I let them come. Marty never sees or hears them. But I feel as if I have communicated them. And that I have sinned. I have to keep reminding myself that my suffering has been mostly internal, though my fantasy is that I have broadcast everything to everyone I know. My paranoia keeps undermining me, helped along by guilt so deep that I sometimes feel I could drown in it.

When Sava was ill, no one knew what was going through Chuck's mind, or indeed Sava's. The very close helpers, like Charles, must have listened to everything and paid little attention to the content as the long-term and short-term disappointments, aggravations, angers, and sorrows came out, just offering love and comfort. I am so literal that as I verbalize things they become real, even if I am just blowing off steam. And then I feel guilty for anything negative.
But all of the thoughts that Sava had are gone forever. Chuck is living with or not living with his. No one thinks of their thoughts, only of them. This is undoubtedly true of Marty and me and our friends and associates. But I go along feeling guilty, in exile, rejecting, rejected, betrayed, unworthy. This must be what the current psychojargon calls "beating yourself up".

This morning Fred arrived outside my door at seven. We played and then went out for a walk. I made myself a nice breakfast of toasted potato bread and grapefruit, orange juice and coffee. Read the Times and the Chronicle. Marty shuffled upstairs and into the kitchen right after I sat down. He made himself a bagel. We ate together though didn't talk much. He went down to his bedroom with Fred. Half an hour later I found him sound asleep holding Fred. I hugged them both. He woke up and we played on the bed until the first phone call of the day. He got up and ready for work. Asked me if I was going to be okay today before he left. I made strategic calls over the school report. Started this. It's now eleven-six. Oh, and talked to David Forbes for twenty minutes.

It's only been four hours since I opened my eyes.

While I was hugging Fred and Marty, I was scared at having found Marty sound asleep after breakfast. He is having headaches and stomach aches but he refused to tell me when I asked him where he was uncomfortable. Just three years ago, it would have been unthinkable to come upon Marty after nine am sound asleep. That began a few months after we moved in here. I register that it would have unthinkable and that life was once that way for me but can't remember what it felt like then to be alive. In three years. I know I had feelings and emotions and ups and downs, but they were almost superficial compared to the emotions I've had since October 1990. I am alienated from most of my previous life, except when a regression is happening, and I notice that I do regress to times of strength while coping.) The negative regressions happened with Miki: not coping, escaping, reliving my twenties, avoiding pain via hysteria. Negative does not mean bad, in a moral sense. Maladapted. To the situation, That's what it means. So far from being "bad", my acting out with Miki actually distanced my emotional turmoil from the situation at home. I was "good" at home and "bad" primarily at times when Marty was asleep, late at night. I shielded Marty from my freakout to a very large extent despite my guilt and self-blame. Psychoanalytically, the "split" is noteworthy. My life "split" when I was very young. There was the world where I had to be perfect (school) and was. Then there were worlds I escaped to. Reading. Being outdoors. Being with other boys. Occasionally eroticizing being with other boys, sometimes boldly, always with guilt (and the obligation to confess). The polarity has always been there. Being with Miki was characteristic. But when AIDS came down the pike, the polarity became untenable and dangerously neurotic. I recognize that now, though at the time I was lost in every way. I must remember that neurotic does not mean morally bad. It means dangerous to me. And when I felt endangered enough, I did the right thing for my own survival. And I never endangered Marty, though I
hurt him for sure.

Considering how school has been an anchor for me since the age of five (though kindergarten was scary), it is no wonder that I am so upset by the turmoil at school. This time being the smartest in the class doesn't help me at all. The events that I feel threatened by are beyond my control. So I am being very deeply threatened by events at school. But no more than many others. And my own phobic reactions are relatively invisible amid the general uproar. There is no threat to my survival at school, but I am reacting as if I were on trial.

Paranoia. I hate it.

Many may be wondering how I'm managing to run the department and take care of Marty. Meanwhile, I feel that I'm having a terrible time doing a terrible job.

I need to accept that my life is really extremely stressful and to assert (will!) that I'm doing the best I can to survive and to help Marty. I need to stop feeling guilty that I am not doing "better". I am doing what I am doing. I'm here. I make life very nice for Marty. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed. Most people would be even more overwhelmed. I have certainly felt overwhelmed, but in actuality I have not been overwhelmed but am surviving.

Caregivers who go to support groups must hear this every week. I did fleetingly consider it. Surely these groups must provide reassurance and reality checks on a very regular basis. I'll have to consider joining a support group.

Gerard is being a doll. He was very insightful about the erratic behavior of Dan. He, and Marty, too, both seem to think that Dan is doing more drugs than I think. Gerard even thinks Dan's behavior at work may have been erratic, and also noticed. Gerard shocked me by suggesting (rightly) that our decision ought to be: Do we want Dan back? Since Dan isn't helping with any consistency, he shouldn't be involved, or, we should not involve him, or, we should not let him be involved. Dan has in fact been very little involved since before xmas. Three months is a long time in the life of a close friend with AIDS, eh?

I told David a few things flat out, when he guilt-tripped me about being hard to reach. You'd have to be a daily caregiver, I commented. It's very hard. I'm in and out. I surface when I can. Don't take it personally. He got very serious right away. I realized as I talked that I don't tell people very much what I'm going through. Explicitly. There are certainly plenty of imaginary conversations.
24 April 93

It seems eons ago that I last wrote anything. In fact, it has been three weeks since I sat at my writing table in the Hotel Honolulu getting ready to come back.

Come back I did, to a deteriorating Marty (pain in the gut, fevers, disorientation that was more disturbing than severe and which went away). Just like last time, reentry felt like a slam to the body. But I had little self pity this time and just went into alert mode, making soup and generally mothering him. I was shocked when he told me he had cried several times because I was away. He and Gerard had put quite a different face on things. I concluded that there are things Marty doesn't want to show anyone except me and that he was maintaining to a certain extent while Gerard was here.

After two weeks of tests and procedures, the infection (one of them) has been identified as a bacillus, either TB or MAI, following a liver biopsy. The pain in the gut may or may not be related, but it seems unrelated and is possibly non-specific, given that no CMV cells have been found after a colonoscopy and retrieval of tissue for biopsy. An eye infection (not visible or vision-threatening) may be due to the bacillus. Three problems at once has been alarming and a warning that the disease is moving along. However, it seems that treatment and pain-killers will get Marty through this, though they also will continue for the duration, i.e., he will always have to take the new meds. He's up to thirteen pills a day, now.

He's fine psychologically, and so am I. We have embraced the concept of "bonus" days. Each new day is a bonus rather than another day lost on the road to the inevitable. This seems much healthier, bonus time.

Physically, we are both exhausted. Yesterday afternoon we both had three hour naps and then also slept soundly last night. After a week of steaks and lamb, high protein red meat, I switched to pasta last night and noted that M's appetite is good. So it has been back to physical survival mode and I've remained focused on physical tasks. Last night I was finally able to read Zola for awhile and realized that I've done no reading of my own since Honolulu.

On the way home on the plane I met a wonderful woman (we shared a row, twenty-nine) who was returning from a six month trip around the world. We came out to each other instantly and then had certainly one of the best conversations I have ever been a party to. In my life. She is about a month younger than I, brilliant intellect, big heart. Had worked with Mother Teresa and handed on the blessing the Mother had given her to my own hands. It was the most curious shiver. I did feel as if Mother Teresa had touched me. Sad and apprehensive as I had been feeling, suddenly to feel peace was most comforting. Tangibly. At one point I asked my new found companion whether an angel had sent her. Now I am trying to decide whether to call her or to trust that friends (Kit, in fact) will bring us together if that is meant to be. She told me about her travels and stays: Poland, Prague and Budapest, Zimbabwe, Kenya, India, Japan, Honolulu. She had left the US right before the presidential election and so was
very curious about Clintonian America. It was such a pleasure to have a friendly loquacious (and always interesting) dyke to return home with. The hours flew faster than the plane did.

Lucy and Robert are about to arrive so I'll break for now.
Life was never the same again after Lucy and Robert visited, a nice visit, I might add.

Marty developed a fever so high that he had real tremors (beyond the shakes) about halfway through their visit. Once they left, he let go. At first we surmised that there was an adverse drug reaction going on, since he had had a glass of champagne and one of the meds warned against using alcohol. Then in the morning, after what I thought had been a peaceful night, I found him semiconscious under the covers and having terrible tremors, which he indicated had begun at seven-thirty am.

An hour later we were at the emergency room after the scariest hour of my life. I had to drag him down the stairs bodily after he passed out in the kitchen. His fever was 104°.

He spent the rest of the day and overnight in the hospital, though he was not admitted. Three units of blood, IV antibiotics and fluids. Painkiller. Meds for MAI/TB in the liver. He came home the next day.

All week he has been in terrible pain from the colitis and nauseated by the meds. Finally we got liquid food called Ensure which he can get down, but before that he didn't eat for two days. He willed his way to work Thursday and Friday. Thursday was tolerable but Friday he came home after two hours, because he had vomited in the parking lot. He still went to his meeting, however.

It has felt like the beginning all over again. Terrible reaction to the meds and life-threatening infection going on. He is very depressed and we have been having an alarming number of "those" talks. I do think he will stabilize and that we will get through the summer at the very least. But it is also possible that the end is beginning. At the least we are being put through a drill for later on. It is shocking how much worse he was feeling in so short a time.

From the time I stepped off the plane, it has been tense and very worrying every day. My premonitions in Honolulu were entirely on the mark. I'm glad I got over the emotional stuff there. Aside from hysteria-like symptoms Sunday morning during the scary hour (and it was reaction to fear, not hysteria) and a few screams into the pillow early in the week, I've been steady. The weirdness has not been sorrow and grief (no time, and the adrenalin keeps me numb) but the awareness of the perils psychologically in this now changed situation. He can't eat. There is an impulse in me, in reaction, not to eat. But I have fought the reaction and have kept eating. But this is the tip of another iceberg and also something I had not thought about until it happened. Frederick stopped eating, then threw up when he began again. What a week. I'm tired.
Another haunted day, brightly sunny, windy. A fog bank has formed, so it's sharply cooler than scorching yesterday. France was here all afternoon to put in varied ground cover and even uncovered more of the old stone stairway down the east side of the property. All the loose ends were attended to, like the baby's tears and scotch moss that had been kept wet down next to the west fence for two weeks. Now the area under the margarita, the rosemary, and the new bush I put in [?January? the fall?] will be various greens and textures. All they need is moisture. The ones she put in ten days ago are already spreading.

I've been watering in the evenings and when necessary in the mornings. One of the foxgloves has bloomed, the stalk a formidably elegant pink and white tower, the pink purple-toned. The clematis has thirteen rich violet flowers. Nasturtiums twine along the fence and up the lattice on the top terrace. The margarita, at least three feet in diameter, has blazed a rich yellow from the middle terrace for a month now. It is as if the sun has taken up a place in the garden. The irises are all green leaves and few flowers, but those are both large and exquisite. I'm hoping for more flower stalks in the weeks ahead. The poppies and lilies in the top bed have revived now that I'm soaking that bed, the most exposed to wind and sun of all the beds and the driest. There's evergreen ground cover in there now, one type with red flowers in the spring and the other green and yellow with tiny shiny leaves (not evergreen in the same sense). The latter has a great lemony smell. In a crack in the concrete pavement where it joins the foundation of the house mint is growing; I put some in my tabouli last night. I bought the tabouli in a box at the Arab market near the bakery. Though I was skeptical, I tried it, and it's delicious. Mix plus olive oil plus water plus two fresh tomatoes finely chopped. Mix it together, put it in the fridge for an hour, add green onion/green pepper/celery/cucumber.

Meanwhile, Marty sleeps, lies on his bed hurting, tries to get down the Ensure. I give him massages, very light, head and back. Fred sticks with him for long intervals, dozing with him, sharing the world of that bed with him as no one else can. Marty gets up and around too, periodically. He lay in the sun for awhile this morning. Gave Fred a bath this morning!

It's indescribable.
10 May 93

I finally caught up with the writing homework of all my classes and am enjoying a morning of not having to do anything in particular, with Marty miraculously off to work and even beginning to eat again after the last horrible month.

Last week was difficult psychologically and emotionally. Steve had a serious talk with us both on Wednesday, ordering home care (infusion service) and telling Marty that he had to stop working soon. Marty took this as a prediction of imminent death and was very upset for two days. Finally, during a snappish little spat with me, he just let go and part wept, part raged as I held him, really just cried out about it all, like a youthful Job. I knew then that he would start feeling better. It was a very animal thing, like a dog or wolf howling. I felt exhausted and devastated for the rest of the day, but it was a good thing that happened.

Since then, he has started eating a little solid food, more each day. The pain in his gut is under control. The nurse from the infusion service is super: addressed him as Dr Cogan, gossiped and talked with him as their initial interview, laughed a lot, as did he. What a relief. The meds for MAI have been started. One hard one can be administered intravenously; Steve called it "very potent". I think we'll have another plateau and am certainly ready.

My month-long adrenalin rush began to falter last week, and these past several nights I have slept like a log. Frederick, too, has been sleeping a lot after being very upset and scared at what was going on. He stopped eating when Marty got really sick, let out strangled whimpering and distress sounds now and again, and got very wired a few evenings. He has been acting more normal these past several days, too. But sleeping. Just out. Sprawled across the middle of my bed. He's been very affectionate, and I've been careful to maintain his usual routine and pet, scratch, and hug him a lot.

As I write, I note that the tendency is to write about Marty and Fred. Where am I?

I had a few cries during it all and felt scared all the time. But I was much more together than I had been during the previous bad crisis, at the beginning. I was very sure of myself this time and terrified for Marty. His being in pain was very hard for me to bear. The helplessness felt very upsetting. I was angry that he was in pain, stricken, wanting to do anything to make the pain go away. When the first pain drug made him depressed (almost psychotically), I was frightened to see how different he was. He seemed like a different person completely. I remembered the few times I saw him on Quaaludes. I felt he was very irrational and that he could turn against me. But he didn't, and the morphine sulfate has controlled the pain and makes him spacey but not depressed. So that unease is quelled for now.
Most of the time he just lay in bed flat on his back, getting through it. He despaired a few times.

I couldn't tell whether Death was coming soon. I could feel his presence in the landscape but far off, not close. I fretted and fretted, but each day was so exhausting that I slept nearly every night, and the night I didn't, I slept late in the morning. I smoked grass and drank coffee. But no alcohol and porno only once or twice. The latter suddenly seemed so unimportant. The release is very temporary and hardly feels sexual. And the amyl substitute, whatever it is, makes me drag physically afterward for a day. I was able to read before going to sleep, Zola's The Masterpiece, which, I discover from the intro, is an exaggeration of the more Zola-like title L'Oeuvre. This change does affect the reading of the novel. I am much more comfortable with Zola's more understated name for his book. It is making me nostalgic for my previous classical view of art. But his characters seem so innocent compared to the nihilists and assholes strolling around my contemporary literary neighborhood.

Will the second half of my life be more ordered and classical than the first half? Will my education finally really kick in? I am very weary of the low level of discourse in general and at school. Marty's friend Marge visited Saturday and as she commented on the light in the house I thought: I remember when my life was like that. She said more about beauty in a minute than I've heard in months. The current trash culture and mentality seem bent on erasing the past. I had always thought this was something peculiar to godless Communism.

I have been thinking pretty steadily of being in South America. The Marquez book Clandestine in Chile seems to have got me started. Yesterday as I was doing something else, I was musing about how Nighttime ended in Mexico and how my early stories also pointed to Latin/Indian culture. I have caught myself imagining being in a nice small hotel in the Andes. Walking city streets. I imagine traveling there alone. It is not an escape but a search.

I still can't believe Marty looked so well this morning. Just last week he was writhing in bed, quietly and in despair. I've been very steady through this one. Even the hyperventilating on our rough Sunday was from fear. It wasn't hysteria. Just raw, cold fear.

Now today I feel cautious relief. I woke up feeling better physically. The bright sun has been bathing the landscape in sparkling silver light for the past several days. Yesterday the thermometer hit ninety degrees, a perfect breezy scorcher. It was so warm that Marty was able to sit down under the trees with just a T shirt on. I kept an eye on him, feeling a strong rush of love for him as he thought his thoughts and observed the flowers in that bottom bed, especially the foxglove, which has become monumental and very regal. He was physically comfortable for the first time in more than a month. The sun is good for us both. Warms us through. Connects us again to the universe. Today is very bright but cooler. The new vines on the deck are slowly but surely screening out the neighbors and one has flowered, tubular red flowers with yellow inside the throatlike tube. The vine down below has grabbed onto its trellis and is already shading
the fern. The sun is high enough in the sky that the fern gets no
direct rays now, and it has burst forth with four or five major fronds.
By the fall, when the sun is lower again and starts shining on that
bed closest the house, the passion flower vine should be pretty
thick. The whole effect has been shifted from arid, desert-like
harshness and heat to a soft, leafy, cool environment. It would
be achievable even in a drought, but thank the gods our seven year
drought is over and I can water to my heart's content, which I do,
in the mornings and evenings. The first poppies and wildflowers
are blooming, the latter yielding so far a red star-like flower
and an intricate set of tiny pansies, purple. I am very thrilled
that I have such a great garden. Thanks to France.

Last night it was so warm that I was able to sit out on the deck
in the dark wearing a T shirt and lavalava. The garden is actually
becoming fragrant at night, with honeysuckle having bloomed, or
begun, and jasmine getting ready to. The wind sighs through all the
soft leaves. Last night the wind was barely a breeze, the day
remarkable in its stillness. Today all the foliage is in continual
movement.

It's a blessing to be able to sit outside whenever I want. I derive
a great comfort from being outside and gazing up at the mountain,
or, last night, at the stars, or at the houses across the canyon, or
at the original outlines of the ridges here and there. I feel as if
I am in my own body and experiencing the world through my body. I
must spend a lot of time outside my body as I cope with what we are
going through. Last week I started having back spasms and began more
purposefully to physically relax. It is a trick to go from worry and
fear to pure appreciation of sensation. In between lurk unshed tears
and disorderly emotions and the temptation to fret, to be compulsive,
to clench up. But pure sensation is very healing and full and
restful, so I usually get there when I put my mind to it.

Frederick comes out with me nearly always. He likes being outside, too.
Midnight the Moon Dog.
Things have been looking up again after a difficult month. School is almost over for me and Marty is recovering from the onset of MAI. His painkiller and his meds have been fine-tuned. He is not in pain all the time or as much. He has even been eating solid food every day in addition to drinking Ensure. It is a huge relief. He went to work all week, except for his usual Wednesday off.

I've been pretty tired all week, aching muscles, a minor virus for a day and just plain exhaustion. Did some physical work yesterday, reclaiming housework in anticipation of letting Sylvia go on Monday. Marty doesn't want the intrusion; I don't want any more carvings damaged and can easily do the work myself. It felt good to be cleaning up my own house by myself again. And in a shorter time than she takes it was really clean. I have been dissatisfied for months, and yesterday found more to be irritated about. She is average, I'm sure. But, as Marty remarked, she's just not helping. So why have her?

I felt better being in control of my own house again. Of course it's a reaction to the chaos of AIDS, this need to be in control, but I've never liked having personal things done for me. I also have tended to be angry at Sylvia (never in person) as a vent for my general anger. It's not her fault that things are crazy here, but I do rant and rave to myself often. I'm glad that at the beginning I banned her from my study. There's a lot she could have wrecked in here. I can probably get the water stains off the artifacts that she splattered. It is very aggravating that even after I showed her the damage and told her not to go near the artifacts she still did. Very passive aggressive, though not so much at me as just a general acting out. Steven told me at the beginning that sometimes she "did things". Better that if something gets broken I am the person responsible. And vacuuming is not hard. Some of having a cleaning lady was time, but some was, for Marty, status or freedom from manual labor. His family had cleaning ladies while he was growing up, or at least starting at some point.

Perhaps most important, and the whole issue seems trivial but it isn't, I feel that I am taking care of myself.

We had our usual aggravation this morning over the Saturday shopping. I told him not to bother, that I can get what we need in a few days. He insisted. But I told him not to get any produce, since from our very expensive status supermarket, produce is always terrible. I asked him to pick up some sponges of a certain kind. Showed him the package, the color, the brand. Told him not to get any if he wasn't sure. He got a different kind. When I complained, he threw them out. And I stood there thinking how tired I was of all the little hostilities and trips he subjects me to as he "takes care of" me. And there will never be any way of getting through to him. But during his rough times I did what I had to do for myself, did my own shopping for what I like to eat, and managed fine for a month without the usual compulsive production Marty turns shopping into.
Some of my own hostility toward Marty is due to the discovery this week that Dan and Marty had had a very hostile phone call while I was in Honolulu. Suddenly Dan's behavior began to make sense, or at least some sense. Dan finally called and left a message, I left him an angry message, he called back and said he had some information that would explain things, I called back and said I would listen, and he told me about some apparently hostile, rude treatment from Marty.

Marty was enraged that I had talked to Dan and that I had entertained the possibility that there were two sides to this story. I listened to the rage and paranoia and felt very tired. Decided just not to mention Dan from now on. However, I will maintain my friendship with Dan. And try not to provoke or upset Marty.

On the one hand my heart goes out to him and I am entirely with him in this terrible ordeal. On the other, I am seeing the traits about him that are most infuriating. Dan called it "mental cruelty". In some ways, Marty is as obnoxious as his parents, not surprisingly, of course, but I've been in some denial about it or tried to overlook it all these years. Both his parents are such hostile people and both of them think they are "better" than most people. There is a certain arrogance and aggression about Marty that drove me finally to consider leaving him. And as he was just a pig the other night about Dan, I thought about how hard he has made it both on himself and on me during this long illness by driving people away and making very little effort to reach out to a number of people who have loved him for years.

While my presence will be required to a large extent and also unpredictably, I will try, at least, to get out for dinner or lunch on my own with friends or alone in the months ahead. I am shocked at how potentially out of touch it is possible to become during this kind of intimacy and difficulty. Marty will inevitably distort things and so will I, but his distortions will tend to be irrevocable. During my recovery, I will be correcting at least some of mine. And I need to remain in touch with "outside" whereas for him "outside" will become less and less meaningful. He may be a real rip, as France would say; both his grandfathers were stern autocrats, difficult, demanding, self-oriented personalities. Marty may have inherited more of their traits than I had realized, or yet know.

It has been eerie to have him twisting my sense of reality and then to have to insist that I am definitely in touch with reality though doubting myself and then to find out later that I was in touch all along despite my doubts and the weirdness. This round, he was so upset and in pain that he started attacking my perception of things directly, very angry to be told that he seemed better, for example, and then days later admitting that he did feel better. I can handle his anger but his hostility is unnerving. During the depression caused by the Percocet, I actually worried that he would turn on me. And, in arguing (I wasn't, he was) about Dan, I felt accused of disloyalty and wondered what we might be moving into. John Fox got very enraged as he got sicker.
16 May 93

Strangely, I feel wonderful today. How times have changed from the time I told Anne Diskin that I expected life to be a high every day.

Frederick and I slept until ten am, ten hours of almost uninterrupted sleep (I got up around six to go to the bathroom). Aches and pains were gone. My whole body felt light. Hysteria? I wondered. Too slow and easygoing a feeling to be manic. Perhaps I slept so well because I was so tired. Or perhaps I went to sleep with no immediate worries haunting me.

Marty went out with a woman and her husband last night for dinner, the man a fellow editor of the Journal of Clinical Investigation, perhaps Marty's favorite activity of previous times, his wife terminally ill with colon cancer. Marty and she have become especially close. He was aglow when he came home.

The previous night I had gone out to eat with Lucy and Robert, similarly a glowing evening. I actually stopped worrying for a whole evening and had a delicious South Park Cafe dinner of yellowtail tuna and a perfect green salad.

The mantra is: Go out. Enjoy life. Get out of the house. This afternoon, out in the garden, Marty told me that he might go to New York to see Angels in America, Pulitzer Prize winner and smash hit of the year. I told him to do it.

Last night I was at ease just sitting on the deck in the twilight, making myself a nice dinner, being alone. The weather was as glorious as today's, with a fog bank over the mountain but bright silver sun and caerulean sky on this side, windy and coolish but hot in the sun. Perfect California and perfect May weather. I feel a thousand years old, but a solid, healthy thousand. Today.
21 November 93

4:20 AM. Sunday.

Arth of lower back muscle spasm, dulled by ibuprofen.

Four big books read in one week. Boredom and irritation of jury duty.

The inevitable spelled out in support group titles: Satanic Stages of Illness. Dying. Bereavement.

No writing except letters since June.

Exhaustion. Numbness.

Sabbatical beginning next year.

Marty's health stable, but...? He's exhausted, too.

I am so tired of being depressed and apprehensive. Being brutally and pitilessly aged against my will. And for so long. Three years and one month.

Frederica has grown up.


Gerard said today that he gets numb now when he discovers someone is HIV+. I had mentioned numbness at death's.

Time races on outside our eddy.
Life stands.
Still.
Tranced.
mute.
Silent.
Paralyzed.

Time

Ice
melting.

I've been
immobilized
so
long
now.

Sadness.

I imagine Fred
howling when
the moment
comes.
Comfort now

feeling scary in
the center of our
house.

Waking or
sleeping.

But....

one of these days

he'll

be

gone.

I'll

be
delivered

into

life

again,

but....

he'll

be
gone.
Terrible
knowing
worse
pain
coming
that
I
will

Aftew
so
much
pain
already.

Helpless.

Not
all
patients
get
well
again.
Solitude.
Rest.
Recovery.
Rebirth?

More or less
down back
pain?!

Maybe I'll go to Honolulu for a few days.
Just to lie down in the tropics for a few days.

But how can I leave beauty here in the dark?

It is so pitiless, this inexorable progress toward what beauty calls "the dark tunnel."

Part of my struggle is not to be pulled under myself. It is narrowing to know that I could be if I didn't struggle. For my own survival.
Just physically recovering is going to take six months to a year.

Dan suggested initiating my own continuactions now to provide continuity later, to map out areas of my life that will continue to belong to me. I remember the night that he said he had "just gotten a piece of my life back."

Tebby drove Dan away several months ago. Terrible. Feels genuinely betrayed. Won't forgive.

I keep in touch with Dan. It's harder. But he helps me as much as he can as he tries to move on without George or anyone. George died nearly a year and a half ago. I feel old compared to myself on that terrible Sunday.

What a vacuum I'm in. Most of my friends are gone. Happiness is gone. Sex is gone. Travel is gone. Writing is much changed. Much is undergone.

But I haven't gone unter.

My time with atkei is like a complex dream. I don't try to remember our physical passion. Too upsetting.
I'm aware that in the solitude that will follow, a burden will have lifted. I can't measure any more the weight I'm carrying. It's always there. But it won't always be there.

I don't feel fragile. Just tired. For a fragile person, this experience would be even more dangerous.

I try to imagine my body feeling good again.

Try to imagine.
A joyless Thanksgiving is finally over. Marty and I had a lonely meal at Ivy's at six pm. Of both our families, only his mother called, and he didn't call her back. I myself went on a cocaine binge starting Tuesday night and ran out of the white stuff on Thanksgiving morning at dawn, having watched porno almost the whole time. Guiltily and in some desperation, but also on vacation from sorrow and anger and frustration, if only for two days.

After Thanksgiving with Dan for many years, and with George and Dan the two years before George died, I felt very bitter about what Marty has done, kicking Dan out of his life. Not to mention the horrors following diagnosis in 1990. I suppose I should "let go" of all this, but the sense of injury and grievance remains, perhaps because I feel in my heart that Marty has just kept on doing worse to me what he has been doing in smaller doses for years. Betrayal remains at the top of my list of disappointments and disillusionments. Marty has been less deliberate than oblivious. I can remember within the first year lamenting that I felt entirely on my own in our relationship. He never addressed my grief. I was right. And now that I am on my own in this nightmare, I think back on how alone I've been for the duration. Good training at least for being really alone for the rest of my life.

As such thoughts go constantly through my head, there is a deeper apprehension that this alone feeling is part of the separation before death, the "letting go" that everyone alludes to. Yesterday I bent down to pet Frederick, on the floor in a heap with Marty, and I saw the AIDS suntan on Marty and the pain lines and the suffering and then I ran upstairs and had hysterics. His suffering makes me feel so unworthy, freaked out of my mind as I am by my own agonies. Then, undeniably and worst of all, the disease moves relentlessly forward and death is an ever-present possibility. For ten days I've been fighting the feeling that something is coming. I feel that if I don't feel this fear and don't give in, Marty will live longer. Maybe what I'm feeling is the hand-to-hand grappling that we are now engaged in with death, the beginning skirmishes.

What pleasant writing. I stopped in May. Of the four summers from when we first moved in and Marty started getting sick, this past one was not as bad as the second summer and not as good as 1992. I worked miracles getting things fixed around the house and then just packed it in before school began, watching thirty films from the Sixties to now in under three weeks, manically absorbing as much as I could before life got hard again. John Payne died the first week of school. I can't remember September except for the feelings that are part of the three to four week routine of acute grieving. October was great. Judy came. Marty gave me the wonderful gift of a framed greeting from James Purdy for my birthday. November has been a nightmare, triggered by the depressing and infuriating experience of jury duty and the nosedive another colleague at work, Ron Cerruti, has taken after five? years with Kaposi's Sarcoma.
Of course I feel very guilty about the drugs. I am bingeing as a substitute for real sex, for travelling, for vacation, in a sense trying to live two weeks in two nights in fantasy landscapes. I don't only watch porno during these "trips". I've read David Hockney and Carlos Castaneda, devoured art books (the first I've bought in a few years), looked at the stars. As with Miki, nearly all my coke snorting takes place after Marty's day is over. Like my mother, I can only be alone at night. I love the chemicals and the vacations, but then I have to return, both physically and psychologically. I know how to come down, and I minimize the crashes with sleeping, reading, and, last night, deep breathing exercises that were very relaxing. The guilt is less about the drugs than the intensity of the bingeing. There is so much to escape from that it's scary.

On the other hand, as Gaye K[sic] said, "whatever gets you through". The bingeing is reactive. Drinking would be much worse. I can go to a world where only I can be. I have had a break from Marty for three days in July and five days in October. I work all the time, between school and the house and Fred and Marty. Unlike the euphoria of grass, the cocaine high is a true, however temporary, escape from the depression I've been in for more than three years. I am expecting that this depression will lift afterwards. Yes, it will be replaced by a different kind of depression caused by grief and absence. But the depression that is making me binge is not going to last forever. And bingeing, as distinct from fooling around, will come to a halt. In fact, whenever things take a turn with Marty, I expect it will stop immediately.

Marty says nothing. I think he is upset when he sees it, but then he is so seldom focused on me that I am probably invisible most of the time. He is off somewhere more and more. My drug taking is in fact a way of coping with being alone but on duty when he is off somewhere--sleeping, watching television, living in Fred's world.

My life has been at a standstill for more than three years. I can feel time ticking away. My writing career may be over. I may have lost my best years. It will never be like it was before. I'll have to rebuild from the ground up.

Though I know that the "right" way to think is that I will have opportunities as well as grievous loss. But I wonder how I will leave the wreckage of my life behind. There is increasingly the sense of irrevocable harm internally. Large areas of possibilities wiped out.

Still, I go through the daily drill of survival. At the very beginning I knew mornings would be the worst, and they have been all along. So no matter what my mood in the morning, however dark, I remind myself that it will be better in a few hours, and it usually is. I never do catch up with all the work. Bruce, a "widower", remarked when he visited: Oh, you've managed to keep the house together. I couldn't do housework at all. I expect I'm doing better than I feel, and thank god no one else knows what is going on in my brain.
29 November 93

I am a mess. Here it is twelve-thirty on Monday afternoon. The rain pours down outside, grey from grey into grey. I went to bed at eleven last night after two days of grading essays in fractured English by sixty students. I am smoking too many cigarettes. Woke up at three am and couldn't go back to sleep again until nearly seven, getting up finally at eleven. Burnout, depression, exhaustion, fear, sadness. As I sat looking out the window in the wee hours, my mind was actually a blank. No thoughts for up to a minute at a time, just a quivering screen, an awareness of self, a stillness that was not unpleasant, just empty. Maybe a good thing?

As I lay awake in between sitting at the table, I speculated that, later on, problems would seem much more manageable because the gigantic problem will be over. Increasingly, I feel Marty's depression and slide and I feel that it could pull me down too. He is so inward that I have given up trying to break through to him. I find myself musing that so much of the psychological destruction is unnecessary. I feel exploited. I find myself thinking of his grandfather eating steak in front of his wife and sons (including Marty's father) when they had nothing on their plates. I think of his now-psychotic lab tech whom he exploited for ten years and who now is stalking him. I think of his anger, life-long, and the emotional abuse his parents dumped on him, and the promiscuity that went on without my ever knowing it, Marty in control, doing as he wanted regardless, secretive, lying by evasion and omission. I think of his cruelty to Miki and to Dan. I don't feel antagonism so much as a great sadness. How driven and embattled he's been for his whole life, with intervals of wild pleasure, extravagant vacations, and dizzying professional success. I think of how he has always had to win, to be in control, and of how such a perspective is one of the most difficult possible with which to face a terminal illness because there is little control and no win in the offing.

Poor Marty. I do love him unreservedly. But I am often appalled at what I have realized.

About both of us. I've sought shelter and placated away for all these years. I've allowed someone else to control my life, with my own breaks for freedom and sexual and emotional solace. I've been depressed on and off for years. Though I pursued my writing and the gay program at school and my teaching, internally I gave up. Like my mother? Years of feeling hollow and shaky inside. When I finished my novel in Honolulu in 1989, I could feel myself falling into moral and psychological anarchy, internally. The bottom was falling out of my life before Marty got sick. I felt real fear, on and off, about my fate in that abstract hotel room on the twelfth floor of the Queen Kapiolani.

What must Marty feel.

I feel so guilty.
Though it is not the case externally, in terms of keeping the household going, I feel internally that my life has become dangerously chaotic. Nothing seems to be possible to schedule. I have thought of following a written daily plan. But every day brings some new disruption. Just now, I heard water dripping and discovered that the big skylight over the atrium is leaking. So now that will have to be dealt with, just as the rainy season begins in earnest. Yesterday Marty slept so much that I became alarmed. I kept grading essays that had piled up since October and all through jury duty. I feel that I never catch up, that no matter what I do, life will remain chaotic. Perhaps this all is a way of saying that I have been living on the edge for more than three years now. I'm tired.

Burnout, as they call it.

I guess all I can do is keep going. Solve problems one at a time. Eat. Sleep. Work. Read. Write. Try to keep steady. School ends in three weeks. There will be time over the break to catch up. Marty will be in whatever condition he is. There is nothing I can do about that. When the crisis comes, or the first one, adrenalin will get me through and life actually will seem more manageable since everything else will fade in importance.

There is an apprehension that is new. I felt something akin to what I'm feeling now in July, when Marty had incipient pneumocystis. But this foreboding I have now is darker, deeper. Animal. It is deeper than thought. So last night as I lay sleepless and smoked sleepless at the table I wondered whether my inner turmoil is actually a reaction to something terrible already happening. It has been ten days at least now.

I am probably picking up on Marty's terror as well. Are we both sleeping so much to blot out the fear? Fred has been very subdued as well, very...what?

One day at a time. I sure wish this day would end. The depression is making time crawl. I've been up for two and a half hours and I feel as if I've lived a day.
29 November 93

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am writing to inform you that I will not continue as Chair of Gay and Lesbian Studies after the expiration of my contract in June. I have made this decision after many months of thought and self-assessment. My being granted a sabbatical starting next academic year offers me an opportunity to recharge intellectually and to think of new academic directions, so completing my administrative service in June makes even more sense.

Together we have created a program and developed services that make City College a model for undergraduate institutions nationwide. And despite the budget crisis that brought fundamental change to our institution last year, our program not only survived but also has found a home in the School of Liberal Arts. I am confident in the future of Gay and Lesbian Studies and very proud of what we have accomplished since February 1989.

At Tim Wolfred's suggestion, I am calling a general meeting of lesbian and gay faculty for 17 December from 3:00 to 6:00 PM at my home (61 Saturn Street) to discuss in general where we want to go from here and in particular how the new chair should be selected. This meeting is intended to be informal and will be more of a general discussion than a meeting with an agenda. I hope that as many of you will attend as possible, but of course you will be kept informed if that date is inconvenient for you.

Saturn Street runs parallel to Seventeenth; access is via Temple Street (halfway up the hill) or from Roosevelt (farther up). My home phone is 863-9754.

My thanks and best wishes to you all.

[Signature]

Jack Collins
6 December 93

Death approaches. I am no longer seeing Death as a He. Death is an It, but only in the sense that in language one uses the pronoun as a marker for the ultimate void, the nothing behind things. The no thing.

Last week I dreamt of Death in the period before I woke up. I was in a concrete highrise building corresponding roughly to the building at school where my office is, though the interior was nothing like Batmale Hall. My anima-figure was in the dream (after a very long absence--since I wrote Noonlight--more than three years). She is usually a blonde woman. Here she was a tall woman who I knew had blonde hair but whose face I couldn't see. She was helping me organize my writing. We went through cards with words typed on them, but although I could see them I couldn't understand them. At one point she went upstairs. I went to a window and looked out. In the distance, in a landscape roughly corresponding to the view from my office but without the Bay, I saw a tornado.

The view faced northeast. Approximately where the University of California would have been in reality there was a black cloud, very dense, and as I looked at it in wonder, a twisting funnel formed. Black vapor billowed up as the funnel hit the ground. The billowing was very furious, as if a horse were stamping the ground, rearing and stamping in a frenzy of rage. It occurred to my dream ego that this must be the first tornado in the Bay Area, since we don't get tornados here. As I gazed in awe at the blackness, I saw nothingness behind it. Then I realized that the tornado was coming in the direction of where I was. In terror, I raced back into the room and told people to run for shelter. At first no one comprehended me. Then a panic began. I remember running into a concrete stairwell and being blocked by a grey concrete wall. Then I woke up and sat up in bed, heart pounding, thinking: Death approaches.

The whole day following (Tuesday) was almost preternaturally clear. Everything seemed very bright. The next day I took Marty and Fred to the beach. Halfway there our progress was interrupted by a funeral cortege. Marty lasted about twenty minutes at the beach. We came home and he went to sleep. In midafternoon I was looking out the window from our dining table and two black birds, crows, were frolicking in the valley/canyon that is our view. I noticed them because one seldom sees black birds out there. One of them came almost to the window. I felt that we were looking at each other. Go away, I muttered. In several minutes, they both disappeared.

Thursday Marty had a CAT scan to try to determine whether the pain in his lower gut was being caused by a tumor. The CAT scan showed nothing new. We found out Friday. Steve Follansbee said the pain may be caused by HIV. The pain is nearly constant now for Marty. He has been having trouble eating and has lost four pounds (105, down from 109, but still up from 98 this summer). His mother called that night to ask what was going on, that she felt that something was seriously wrong. I told her to get ready and to
come see Marty soon. We made arrangements for her to stay with his brother Andy in San Jose when the crisis comes. The father meanwhile showed up with his bitch/witch wife and some LA friends to show off his new Lincoln Continental to Marty and our house to the friends. I realized that I hate Ralph more than I've ever hated anyone. That fuck broke into a phone conversation I was having with Lucy as "Dr. Cogan" in an "emergency" and then yelled at me when he got on the line. The emergency? Whether to meet for dinner at six or six-thirty. I decided I wouldn't be seeing Ralph and Ada and avoided dinner and also breakfast the next morning, starting the day with Dan in Mill Valley rather than committing homicide.

My adrenalin has been pumping for a week now. Everything else has receded in importance. I am being efficient and capable and I can't feel anything except when the anguish breaks out and I cry into my pillow.

Lucy has been wonderful. She came over with chicken pot pies and salad and sweets the night before the CAT scan and was an entire up. She has the gift of being able to bring joy in dire circumstances. Dan fixed me a delicious breakfast Saturday and took my mind off things by relating the phenomena and dynamics he had experienced at his parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary over Thanksgiving. He also had gotten me some coke, so Saturday was a respite. I haven't touched grass for a week and notice the difference. Sunday I was pretty fresh after seven hours of sleep, even though I had snorted a whole packet Saturday and Saturday night and watched porno for many hours. Last night I slept ten and a half hours and today I feel clear and fresh indeed. Grass is a euphoriant but also a depressant. Coke is clarity. No withdrawal this time whatsoever.

As I watched William Higgins boys from the early Eighties, I wondered how many of them are still alive. Eros in the face of Death.

I told Marty this weekend that every pound we can put on him means another week of life. But I have to persuade him to take more pain killer, even if it means he sleeps more. As Lucy said, why be awake in excruciating pain?

Oldest friends continue to get in touch. Christine wrote from Vienna out of the blue to say she had been dreaming about me and had the feeling she should get in touch. Camilla has been calling to get me to talk. Bless them. They are reminding me of my own continuities in the face of all this disruption. I myself am not worried about my own survival but about what Marty is going to go through. I found myself hoping that he leaves in his sleep and have been wondering whether his poor heart will just stop beating at some point. I know that he is not telling me the half of what he is experiencing now. Poor baby. [Frederick alternates between sad quiet spells and temper tantrums. He is very protective physically of Marty and spends hours curled around him in bed.]

Unbelieveably Marty still makes the attempt to go to work and has even arranged a Christmas party for his staff at our favorite restaurant. I wonder whether he will try to keep working right up
to the end. Today he took a morphine pill and drove off, leaving me wondering whether he could drive safely.

My sense is that we have months, but it could be weeks. I am seeing Marty's spirit rather than his body at this point, partly because when I look at his thinness I want to scream. But I may also be seeing his spirit because it is getting ready to separate from his body.

It's all new territory. Part of me is actually trying to learn from this horrific journey toward No Thing.
8 December 93

Slept until noon today after finally visiting Oliver last night and getting some pot. It definitely makes me slower and more sleepy. The impetus was a visit from one of my brightest students, totally freaked by the suicide of his best friend. Seeing Olive cheered me up, and the dear girl even invited me for a hit, and we smoked and gossiped and watched Larry King Live on the Michael Jackson pedophilia scandal. I realized that Olive and I have become sisters, kind of the way Ultra and I were back in the early Eighties. Ultra was ten years younger than I, while Olive is a year or two younger. His room is a wild fantasy of Maxfield Parrish (original posters and prints, magazine illustrations), Americana and Holywoodiana, and young male dick pictures and photographs. I have a feeling that we are going to go on some adventures together later on.

How was Texas, I asked him. No dick for ten days! he lamented. You had any fresh meat?

Undoubtedly energized by Olive as well as the pot, I created a new porno movie out of an original starring a stunningly gorgeous young man who comes closest to Eros of all the models. I reedited the very brief loop from the late Seventies? early Eighties? and (though it is skin) I did create something and did a remarkably smooth job of it. What a laugh. Though later on on poppers and grass I was mesmerized. He has a smooth golden body and black curly hair and dark glasses. And a cool enthusiasm. My little cubist sculpture is a thousand times more erotic. It is shocking how the editing revealed more of this young man and got me closer to the actual event recorded on the videotape, closer to the dance of the archetype. Repetition intensifies perception incredibly, puts me into a trance with my eyes wide open.

I can't wait to watch it on coke or speed some Friday night.

I'm glad David Hockney is unabashed about porno in the latest book of his autobiography. There is something very mysterious there. Do the hormones produced by sexual activity stimulate the image-making mechanism? The first images must have been sexual. There must be a part of the brain that locks on to sexual shapes and starts pumping.

A storm is pouring itself across the landscape. The wind is very strong. Audible gusts.

Marty has decided to make turkey today and is decidedly withdrawn and uncomfortable physically. I felt relief as soon as I came down here to my own studio. Safer. From day to day it is a rollercoaster. He was better yesterday so I relaxed. Today I feel his precariousness again.
12 December 93

Another long sleep. lots of dreaming at the end, the theme of which being that no one will give me the answer to the questions I put. The first one was a huge party in San Francisco in an old house in the Haight. The landscape was more horizontal than vertical. Though there were many rooms, I don't remember stairs. There were scenes outside. Guests at the party were doing lines of cocaine in twos and threes, and though everyone was happy to share with me, I couldn't get anyone to tell me where or how I could buy my own. There were no women at this party but everyone was clothed and there was no sex going on, though the possibility flickered. I didn't know anyone and no one looked familiar. The second one was a high society indoor party in an imposing apartment building. I was trying to get the telephone number of a woman who was interested in buying art or books with myself as middleman. David Forbes appeared, and actually said no, I won't give you the number. I awoke chuckling, the dream figure of David being so close to the real person.

Time crawled yesterday. I am very depressed, clearly. Part of it is the end of term depression that always happens, only this term it registers mainly as time crawling by. We are halfway into the holidays but I have no sense of the holidays, just long nights and short days. Then there is the deepening sense of dread as Marty sleeps more and more, though when he is up he is often so vigorous that I almost forget, until I hear him breathing hard and notice that going shopping was followed by a two hour nap. Last night he had dinner with another terminally ill person and her husband. She has brain cancer. Marty is into it, but I'm just not. He described her very upsetting symptoms at the restaurant and then, when I said: It must be hell, he said that, no, it wasn't, and that Carl was a devoted caregiver and that it wasn't hell for him. Oh, boy, thought I. Stay away from this one.

I am sometimes seriously alarmed at how far I'm being pulled into this vortex. I try to avoid feeling guilty about taking care of myself my own way as best I can. Marty wants me to worry less, to be happy, of course. He also sees other caregivers as being more "positive" though he has never criticized me directly. I keep thinking how long this has been going on and how exhausted I am. I have been living with unbelievable pressure that I don't feel anymore. The psychological tensions alone would send anyone to bed for a week. The depth of the dread is new. What does that mean?

Part of the depression has been the crash from last week's adrenalin days before and after the CAT scan. No lymphoma but no spleen left either. Chilling. Atrophic. Blood production is shutting down. The serious news is there, but was lost in the relief over the absence of lymphoma. He has mentioned poor kidney function as well. But he made it to work four days this week, and out to dinner last night. His thinness makes me very upset, but I think it is reversible. When I stop and compare to a month of the past, of course there is deterioration. But I try not to think about that too much, focusing instead on the being who is Marty. Hope is a day to day virtue.
Jackie's resolutions for 1994

1. Stop drugs.
2. Fight depression.
3. Make every day count.
4. Find ways to relax.
5. Accept being 45.
26 May 94

For the next week (until Camilla's arrival):

1. REST.
2. SLEEP.
3. PAMPER YOURSELF.
4. SLEEP.
5. RELAX EVERY MUSCLE.
6. TAKE HOT BATHS.
7. LIE IN THE SUN.
8. AVOID ALCOHOL, CIGARETTES.
9. EMPTY YOUR MIND OF CARE.
10. DO NO WORK WHATSOEVER.
11. REACH INSIDE TO THE GOOD CORE OF LIFE.
12. STOP PUSHING THE OLD CARCASS BEYOND WHERE IT WANTS TO GO.
13. EMULATE FREDERICK.

I've lasted through another academic year, and

mysty is still here. All the things I feared
didn't happen. Celebrate!

Yes, the mind is dull. But how could
it not be?
27 May 94

It is still dawning on me that summer vacation is beginning. Structureless days. The wind comes every afternoon. It is light from 5 in the morning until nine in the p.m.

I feel physically a little worn, but I think it's from backsliding into cigarettes, wine, gins, and now two weekends of cocaine/scorpio nights. However, some of this will cease when Camilla arrives in a week. And my inner ethical debate yesterday lingered on not doing it again for several weeks.

The physical fantasies are just the most appealing: the boys don't have a care in the world except sex. And neither do I, for two days a month.

The real thing is shorter and infinitely more intense. I can still feel John's body seven weeks later — and that passionate kiss in the parking lot on Kulioc at 4 a.m. still has a forever quality to it. I was so startled when he just started kissing me — and we both really kissed back, and it felt as though I wanted to lie deeper forever.

But the drug side effects are a drag. Sleep, stomach, moods. Jet leg. Daunting.

But the orgasms!
I should start my sabbatical this summer!
Cut loose from structure. Wander. Write. Get
in tune with the days. The long days. Another
California summer. Windy, bright, cool verging on
cold; the San Francisco summer shines!

Everything has bloomed this spring out in
the garden. Even the cactuses bloomed! Hydrangeas
are next.

Creativity is stirring, though my mind is
stiff from all the student writing absorbed.

Vergil's Georgics have been a comforting
re-discovery, as has been the realization that
Vergil was a homosexual, primarily. The real
man! Should probably not use the "a."

Proust's "Pierre," A big memoir by Mario
Vargas Llosa. Photographs by Mr. Bowles.

This summer I want to find my own self
again. Beneath all the reactive patterns. Below
the numbness. Though the numbness is not the
emotional block it had been. Now it is
physical exhaustion. Too much input!

An ideal day —
up with the sun
breakfast / coffee in the garden
freshening shower
write / read
light, healthy lunch OK
late lunch at a good restaurant
walk / errands / Fred to the beach
nap
tea
garden time / studio time
fish dinner
two glasses of white wine
reading in front of the fire or in my
studio on the comfortable chair
darkly asleep
dreams of Mr. Bowles

My year at King's Parade in Cambridge was
very aesthetic and "clean". The flatlet was
a perfect contemplative environment, the
front room looking out at King's College Chapel
and the kitchen onto St Edward's passage and
church (chapel-like). Orientation was east/west.
There were stressful times, but overall the
problem was very pleasant. I drank beer at
night in a pub, usually. In the summer Stephen
was in town putting on I Due Foscari. Judy
and Frank were gone.
The heat when I came back to America in late August was a surprise, after two years in cool England. The dry September heat here felt so familiar. Nearly twenty years ago, nearly brought joy, love, and anxiety into my life. I've pretty much eliminated the anxiety.
The sunlight comes from the north these long days, so the contours of Twin Peaks look very different from the rest of the year. The houses across the canyon are illuminated from overhead (eleven a.m. on) and then from the northwest until the sun smiles behind the ridge. In January, the same houses are always in shadow.

The afternoon winds are strong, a steady twenty-five miles per hour. Very majestic and huge. The sound is peculiar to this month, the river of wind. The sky becomes more blue as the day goes on, after the indeterminate mornings when the fog and sunlight and sky are mixed. The other moon, the sky was neither blue nor white but both, and very bright. Strong wind.

There are wind sounds that remind me of particular moments from childhood. In August in Mt. Kisco, the wind blew harder as the equinox approached. The air became cooler and the humidity less. There was a full sound of wind in the trees, in the middle woods everywhere. I remember as I write one afternoon
when I was lifeguarding at the pool. It was very bright, not many swimmers were in the pool, the wind made the water and getting into and out of the water cold, uncomfortable, the wind roared in the trees up above the pool, on a hill that had benches and picnic tables at the top of a steepish bank at the bottom of which was the large municipal swimming pool. The wind roared. There were no cicadas to be heard. Cicadas were the sound of the earlier part of summer, the last part, the part that was pure summer.

Last Saturday the wind sounded the same as today. We visited Marge Rector's studio. No, that was the previous Saturday. Last Saturday I was waiting to hear Soan Dave, and was tense and nervous over all the schoolwork I had been doing. What an anxious time it has been, these past few weeks. All people. Anxiety because of other people.

Marge Rector was a real reassurance. She is a pure medium now for her art. She paints all the time now, and is lost in imagination. She seemed brewers. Sparse. Her body seemed to be a sculpture shaped
from a material very durable, dense. She seemed to be visiting us from a much larger, more primal world. She was physically what she saw: her world there in the hills and the world she perceives and renders in paint. But the world of the studio and nature was of a different material than she. She was a concrete colorful being, a genius, no doubt of that. She is the genius of that hillsite, in the classical sense. And what she paints expresses genius. And she is in tune with both worlds, harmonious intermediary.

It was like being with an old friend who had become a saint, a god, a holy person since last we met. It had been perhaps eight or nine years. Shocking.
28 May 94

Either Dave gave me a huge gram (if that's the amount in the little packets) or I've been more moderate, but this is the gram that won't quit!

Today will be very moderate. I'm orgasmed out. Crashed at one a.m. Slept nearly twelve hours. My nose was a mess, but otherwise I feel good. And my nose was less of a mess than it might have been since I blew out my sinuses with warm water several times before I crashed.

The drugs will have to stop, though, for physiological reasons. I'm more and more averse to putting things into my lungs. This whole week I smoked three packs of cigarettes, much better than previous ends of semesters. But I really felt the difference. Grass I had stayed away from for three weeks. I still like the high, but notice that it makes me sleepy - sedated!

I compensated by drinking - wine - the drug I really hate the most. It is a sloppy drug, and screws up sleep, eating, and mood - a real depressant.

All in all, I've bringered this past week more than I should have (I suppose I shouldn't
at all) but at the same time have missed school and all its disappointments and anxieties. At Columbia I noticed that periodically taking on LSD rearranged "it all" (my brain chemistry!) and helped me start afresh (the tabula rasa syndrome). I suppose it's manic-depression. Is it learned? Is it innate? Before all these drug crises, I developed migraine headaches in the middle of high school.

Mom taught us lingering with her Friday night Coca Cola and potato chip treats for us. Caffeine, sugar, salt, grease. We'd watch the Flintstones and gorge ourselves. The reward after the week of stress: three or four huge glasses of cola (the plastic glasses in green, rust, yellow from the gas station promotions) and soup bowls of Wise potato chips. We'd all sit around. Where was Daddy? Was Friday her "free" night? In retrospect, it was fun—sitting around the living room (at least 5 of us) and mom may have simply wanted us all too hang out together, come to think of it. It was her release after shopping on Friday night. It started in the big house on Barlow Street—it is that living room and kitchen that I remember. Eight or nine years old?

Daddy drank scotch every night and leave the rest of the time—though not in the morning.
I guess the impulse (compulsion!) is to eliminate anger and fear. The image that comes to mind (as I wonder which emotions) is that of being in a cage and hurling myself at the bars with my whole body. A dull animal hurling - like Fred in the back yard throwing himself at the door when I used to shut him outside. The drugs create an illusion of escape. For me these days the escape is solitary, though earlier on I did enjoy the mass freakouts of the end of the Sixties.

Confine:ment. Catholic school (though not Columbia, King’s, Stanford); the 40 hour work week; now my teaching job (due more to the place than to the profession, though teaching certainly is a manic-depressive activity); the plethora of complex responses to helping reality, a confining situation by nature. This last is very confusing because fear of death complicates the entire psychology.

The sexual organism is my answer to death. I’d rather annihilate my consciousness that way.

I suppose this is the reason why people hide after earthquakes, during wars. There is a vast part of me that lies beyond sex, that is contemplative, serene, observer of nature - another way of projecting self into the "beyond." But the bringing I do with cocaine is purely for
sexual ecstasy. Not release, but ecstasy. I can achieve release by masturbating without drugs or porno.

Certainly ecstasy with another person has been possible, and I have been lucky to have it. But two people never have the same moods and/or desires for long, so one gets tastes and glimpses of ecstasy and then becomes entangled in relationships and other patterns in order to maximize opportunities for ecstasy. I think this is true of any relationships where ecstasy has happened. It is also true of the sex with strangers scene, but time is manipulated more than the other person/partner.

I’ve had some memorable encounters with strangers, but always too brief. And my primary relationships have imprisoned me after longest periods of ecstasy sexually that went away never to return.

Is this what Dante meant by the wind and the scorching heat of desire? Desire can be sated, satiated, but never satisfied. At least desire as I seem to feel it. Spencer had the more cheerful vision of the Garden of Adonis, but it was lifelike.

Did the Romans have the right idea of having holidays during which everyone just ran wild? And what were those festivals actually like?
At should be very challenging, the coming summer. I trust I will be in better shape than for the last three, and I am finally trying to think about what I want from life and what I can expect to get. I hope I can develop some routines and patterns that will even out my swings of feeling and mood.

Just stopping the Times has broken an obsessive pattern that ruled my nights. I read that damn newspaper every night before going to sleep - to save time in the morning! Just nuts. There must be many other such patterns to break. This summer I want to rid myself of various useless habits. I'll also be going through my file folders and writing folders and shedding as much as possible. I've already rearranged the studio a bit and finally polished the chrome/glass table and Coster chair after literally months of inertia. I want to oil and clean all the wood sculptures and objects. Lucy commented a year ago that in the whole house, only my shelves and books were dusty.

In the future, I am going to be very wary of demands from others - not because they are bad or anything but because I tend to shut down my own self in taking care of what
Just like Mom. No more losing myself. In work. In tasks. In other people. In prisons that make me compulsive. In distractions from the propaganda machine. Lots of quiet time. Just the garden would be the dream of thousands here in town. Making fires in the fireplace has been very relaxing. I need more of such time spread out more evenly through time. I need to think of each day, and not of weeks, months, or years. Just days.
24 October 94

Michael Nava's mystery novels have set off some depth charges, especially the last one, The Hidden Law, in which his AIDS-stricken lover (Henry Rios', Nava's alter ego, that is) dumps him because Rios has acted too much like a parent in trying to "save" him. Thud. The lover is a young Jewish boy. Rios is a detective/lawyer/public defender with heart whose father was an alcoholic. Thud. Rios is a recovering alcoholic. Thud. The lover is developing dementia at the end of the novel. Thud. Thud. Thud.

This is the only one of the excellent four that I did not give Marty to read.

Marty is failing at a pace that seems moderate but which may actually be swifter than I am hoping. He is so skinny that the word skeletal comes to mind, though I try not to let it. He pants when he climbs stairs. His hearing is gone unless he uses his hearing aids. He is leaving for Florida tomorrow for a medical conference at Disney World.

And as I wrote that, his friend David Levine called from Canada and we worked out an unobtrusive surveillance that has eased much of my anxiety, including getting him on a plane back here if that becomes necessary. What a strange coincidence and what a relief.

I am exhausted and depressed, but still functioning. I haven't written a word in months, except letters to Stephen. During the summer I finished the garden entirely, took care of most of the pressing problems around the house, and stopped using cocaine and grass entirely. I now drink a bottle of wine a day and smoke a pack of cigarettes, but what the hell. I am guilty about that, but rather proud to be off real drugs, the grass especially, in that it made me so sedated. I crave calling Dave for some white stuff occasionally but have not done so and do not plan to and do not want to.

I have been reading voraciously and enjoying it. I found Sheridan Le Fanu, more Wilkie Collins, and various odds and ends, most of which have been interesting. I have also rediscovered North Beach and found a superb (gourmet) hole-in-the-wall Italian restaurant where the dour proprietress has cooked me some of the best meals I have ever had right in front of my eyes.

I try not to give in to the dread, but it's there all the time now. I sleep very late and try to keep rested, but I am always tired. Depression, for sure. David F [redacted] has been stalwart and has just the right touch. He is not involving himself with Marty at all, just with me. Dan continues to hang in. Dan cooked me a delicious dinner for my birthday and David took me out this past Friday. Lucy and Robert have withdrawn to a safer distance, partially because I freaked out at their house a month or so ago after Robert decided that getting me drunk and talking would be a good idea. Well, they got more than they bargained for. I was completely shocked at how upset I became. They were forgiving but have also avoided me ever since. Rather, Lucy has avoided me. I understand and all, but I am also
somewhat angry and humiliated. She doesn't mean it, of course. But it is all too much for her. She has been there for the whole ordeal during emergencies. She is simply helpless as a counselor/therapist, though I had not intended to put her in that role and certainly never thought I'd be sitting there shrieking after too much to drink.

A lot of this whole experience seems to be about accepting the frailties of others. Too bad I cannot be frail. Though as I write that, I am glad I am not frail. I am glad I am so strong. I am angry because I feel like a punching bag for everyone who can't cope, but I sure am strong. Sometimes I can't believe how strong.

There is a strong sense of saying goodbye to the first half of my life. I have begun disentangling myself from my job and the sympathetic but useless people I work with (except for a few). Politically we achieved something historic, but psychologically so many of them are codependent and/or narcissistic. I am appalled at what the gay department is turning into and am keeping a very resolute distance. My successor is a selfish, self-aggrandizing, spoiled politician, and infantile in his delusions of grandiosity. But as with Warren Howell's bookstore, style was keeping alive something that had already changed. My top-notch academic program was living on borrowed time, and those to whom it was inspirational were all of my generation. So I guess it is better that I moved on when I did, in that I have not become a relic the way Warren did, though bless him for being so ferociously protective of his own ethos.

I do feel very ripped off. But that's life, and that's risk-taking.

My medical check-up and its sequelae seem finally to be coming to an end. Myles found a polyp in my rectum that has since been cut out. He also found high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol, both of which I am rectifying. I need reading glasses, but that is no big deal. Everything else is normal, including my lungs. But what an ordeal! On the one hand, I was very upset to be reminded of Marty's diagnosis in the same hospital. On the other, I was angered that my own health has been affected by this whole mess (and how could it not be?) and found myself thinking: What about me? I try not to feel bitterness that five years of my life have been fucked up, and I do not tell anyone about my bitterness because the inevitable response is that Marty is going through much worse. I never, ever, want to be a caregiver again, ever, ever.

I suppose I feel better having written something.

I do feel better. And I am doing a good job.
25 October 94

Today is marked by tentative relief. Marty left for his trip an hour ago and I felt only glad that he was able to go. He was excited. David Levine will be his Jewish mama in Orlando. I will grade essays tomorrow. Though I have to meet two classes today, I am going to be very low-key and enjoy my freedom if only by being so.

Yesterday I broke my routine and headed for North Beach. I bought more classical writers at City Lights: Ovid (Heroides), Lucan, the Younger Pliny with his account of the eruption of Vesuvius and destruction of Pompeii, Longus (Daphnis and Chloe), a book on bisexuality in the classical world, with an eye to identifying more writers who included homosexuality in their repertoires, and Paul West's novel on Jack the Ripper.

Talking with James Purdy yesterday was very refreshing. Younger critics of "radical" magazines are discovering him and perceiving his greatness. It was refreshing, very, to see the current pack of Establishment writers reviled in an article he sent me. We talked about Ovid, Vergil, Melville, and Edith Sitwell. He is one of my very best friends and I love him very dearly.

I am still dazed that I am actually alone and free in my own house. What a weight Marty's illness is, every day.

North Beach was very fresh, clear blue sky, the grass of Washington Square Park brilliantly green, the deciduous trees yellowing, Sts. Peter and Paul's Church whitely elegant across the park. I sat in a little cafe looking out as I ate canneloni and drank a delicious pseudo-Chianti and watched all the Italians in the cafe enjoy the afternoon. By now, going to North Beach is like coming home to a new but familiar city. Some of the streets are very narrow alleys. I parked up on Taylor and walked down Pacific for the first time. I've lived here for twenty-two years, yet there are still streets that I have never walked down in this mountainous city of Northern California, as the encyclopedia in my room at the Hotel Honolulu described San Francisco.

In the past, I would always want sexual release when I found myself alone at last. Today I feel simply relaxed. I have no desire to go out this week. I just want to look through clear air. The season is shifting from summer to winter. The air is quite cool. The garden is all flowers and shades of green but no longer lush. Dried leaves cover the ground. The sun is very low in the southern sky. This morning as I walked Frederick, I calculated that it is late February, counting backward from the equinox. The sky is very brilliant as the overcast thins and the vault of the sky very far above comes into view, thin cirrus clouds today alternating with metallic caerulean.

My own life again. Briefly, but also again.
31 October 94

I'm feeling very distressed today having lost it last night at dinner with newly returned Marty. He told me to get a therapist. I became entirely enraged. So I'll write instead of getting a therapist.

My situation is unbearable. My life is entirely distorted by the endless demands of caregiving. Marty plods on, isolated, stubborn, terrified of stopping work. He is so skinny that I want to scream every time I see his legs. There is nothing I can do. He is in pain a lot, and, the other night for four hours even the painkiller didn't work. Psychologically he has put me in an impossible situation and rejects any suggestions I make that might make it all easier. Or, rather, he grudgingly makes a change after screaming at me and making me feel like the coldest, most insensitive person on earth, this after I have given up more than four years of my life to help him stay alive.

All I can think of is that I have to distance myself emotionally as much as I can. As Dan said, the entity that is here now is not the same Marty anymore. How could he be?

I realized last night that he has spoken to Larry about our battles, and that this is the reason that Larry has become so solicitous about giving me breaks. As usual, it's not for me. It's for Marty.

He does not mean it; he just is the way he is. He has put me through hell. I feel an increasing bitterness. His generosity takes the form of giving rewards, but he is unable to offer emotional support. There is a core selfishness that takes my breath away. It was there before the illness. I just worked around it, always feeling that he could dump me at any time. And, I suppose, dying is the worst way of dumping your lover. After sucking him dry.

I had such a nice week alone. I had Dan over on Friday for dinner, something I can never do when Marty is here. I had David over on Saturday. Then yesterday it was back to hell. I cleaned the house, did the laundry, watered the garden and on and on until nightfall. This morning I awoke at six, tried to fall back asleep. The dog arrived for his walk. We went out at eight-thirty. When we came in the door the phone was ringing. It was Mr ___ the father of an old friend, telling me that his sons Michael and Sean would be arriving in half an hour to check the plumbing and make adjustments ordered by the water board to comply with new water rationing regulations. I raced to take a shower. I managed to pull myself together and they were at the door. At eleven I finally had something to eat. Now I have twenty short stories and several scores of essays to read by six.

Who could stand it? My life is fucked.

On the bright side, it was wonderful to see Michael _ again. He's going to visit on Friday evening and we will catch up after a hiatus of four years. And Thursday I am taking Gaye _ out to dinner. And I am not going to feel guilty about not having dinner with Marty all week.
Marty's parents ripped him off and I am now in the ambivalent role of parent. But I am not his parent. And I cannot give him what he never had.

I am not going to apologize. I was angry but I was not wrong. He's pretty angry himself. He never apologizes. I will move on and try not to get so ferociously angry again. I am doing a good job. I am under unbelievable stress that is damaging me. Permanently. And he can't help me. He blames me for not handling it all better. The way he has handled his illness has helped him preserve his life longer while my life has been wrecked. I resent the burden bitterly. It all reminds me of John Fox, who made life a living hell for his lover and best friend, who were both masochistic enough to tolerate it. What John needed was a good swift kick in the rear. Selfish to the core. It was only happening to him. Except, it wasn't.

I'm exhausted.
6 November 94

I am in an affectless robot-like state that is even worse than anxiety. It must be depression. Last night I managed to shed some tears after putting Marty to bed. He was in pain and my heart was just breaking. I felt very afraid after I went upstairs. Today he seems better but I can tell he is exhausted. Yesterday I made a fire and he liked sitting in front of the fireplace. And we had a nice dinner and he was reassuring about my being angry last week.

I am reading, reading, reading. All of it is connected to the Roman Empire. Ovid, Pliny, and a superb series of thick and lavishly illustrated volumes called The History of Private Life. I am also sleeping a lot. Drink a bottle of wine a night. That may be physically contributing to the depression. I suppose I should take a break but then I wonder how I will sleep.

Thursday I had a great dinner with Gaye K... Friday Michael T... came over in the evening and we talked until after midnight. It was very reassuring to be with old friends. I had not seen either of them in three or four years. As previously I found myself very attracted to Michael, but since he is straight I keep my feelings to myself. Gaye is having a rough time, her husband out of work. She wants to get out of the marriage but said she would decide after he gets back on his feet because she just couldn't make it worse for him now. She said she often feels angry at him when she gets home from another grueling day at work. She is also going through menopause, an experience which has freaked her entirely.

My classes have been emotional. Last Monday a man who has AIDS read a moving autobiographical piece that had the class in tears. Wednesday my essay class got into Proposition 187, which would deny services to illegals, and a lot of anger and anguish was expressed.

Winter arrived simultaneously with the change back to standard time. It got much colder and then the past two days the rain has poured down. The big skylight is leaking and the wall of the garage that abuts the house next door is soaking wet. More chores. But we got the flow restrictors installed for all the faucets and put dams in the tank of the old toilet in the upstairs bathroom. I feel unable to cope, but I know I will when my energy level rises again.

Emotionally and psychologically I am exhausted. No doubt about it. I feel very detached, as if I am watching a movie of my own life. I try to live each day but I also dread both what is coming and the aftermath.
I am planning my careful descent from the stress of the term and so far, so good. In thirteen days, an eight-month free period begins. I am very excited about perhaps writing some fiction based on the photographs I've had on my desk for months.

Tuesday night I realized that if I kept up with my class just until today, I would then have five days to coast, except for and including a party, an hour or so with Dan, and a dinner. A perfect stretch for a carefully managed drug binge. That has just begun.

This morning, after an interesting dream that I will describe below, I took care of the rest of the household chores. It all didn't take me long. I called Oliver and got grass, I finished schoolwork and school, I called Dave, I took care of the cocaine and poppers and lube, I cleaned and tidied my room and the kitchen and lit a fire for Marty and his brother Larry, I sat with Marty for five minutes and got Fred up on my lap, I caught up with my desk and my study.

I talked to my mother, who told me that Peter Maddock, my oldest friend, from childhood--infancy--had died yesterday. I talked to Dan, who told me that Ann is either totally sick from chemotherapy or dying or both. I talked to Larry and I hope reassured him that Marty is doing fine on hyperalimentation, which started Tuesday.

Now I am in a sharp crystalline world in which my study sparkles with colors and linear shapes, blue light glows out on the deck, and the garden breathes coolly and scentlessly, lush with flowers, the red hydrangea red even in the starlight.

I lay calmly on my black and chrome undulating chair for twenty minutes or so after the first rush. Purest pleasure, the cocaine filtered by the strong grass, sense and intellect at the same time, skin to come later in videos I've already started dreaming about. I decided to go slow and careful and taste every second.

A four-month process of medical check-up, removal of polyp from rectum, change of diet due to slightly elevated blood pressure and cholesterol, testing for tuberculosis, getting ready to wear reading glasses, and submitting to blood tests: an anxious but finally reassuring process is finally over. I am very healthy and I know what to do to stay that way and even improve my physical health.

The dream: discovering a drugged-out man in my apartment? house? and arguing with him and throwing him out. I chuckled and also spent some minutes bemused this morning after having it. I decided to think about my chemical escape during the day and then everything went like clockwork. I will not addict myself again. I will not take too much. I will just go along slowly and savor every second.

I want to see naked men raw and delicious with one another. I want to sleep after and then wake up and continue. And tomorrow at noon I want to watch Perry Mason. And maybe it's time to dive into Vertigo again.
heating me up / telling me

The 3 go on, laughing

Someone is to be murdered

I / we feeling man

lying on floor of Vietnamese

laundry / stone pieces of
Vortex dream again
This time in Castro
Tornado / blade cloud
Market sheet
Conversing with others along
Concrete / alcoves of concrete part of subway
on Market / Castro / it
missed me (subway = underworld)
walking down Market
3 men, one black
he grabs me
I talk him out of
poison vegetable - I am wondering how it could be poisonous - it looks innocuous - yellow squash-like vegetable

awaken to distinct sound of 3 knocks on my front door
Second death dream

I am able to travel again. Am trying to go to the islands and to South America. Expect crates Friedenreich could travel in, including one elaborate one that has an apparatus with water and food. However I worry about cold, oxygen.

Plan a route that will take me between Quito, Lima, and the islands. Remember (in the dream) Melville's description of Lima from Moby Dick.

Find myself outside Lima in a rainforest. Walk suddenly down an avenue of trees and see a beautiful waterfall in the distance. Slide down a grassy bank into the stream coming straight along from the waterfall. Do it a few times, sliding + then splashing, swimming.

Scene shifts. M and I have found an old hotel on the outskirts of a Latin American city. It is completely dark. Rain outside. He is very sick. I find us a room.
Find myself in an old ranchos far away.

Have phone of place where I've left M.

Wooden house, porch that his springy floor bounces. Mr. Bowles lives here. A little girl brings me to him/men arrive to paint and fix the porch, latino men who are speaking Spanish and who remind me of soldiers. Campfire in the distance. I try to find M's hotel address + phone. Can't. Ask Mr. B if he will call for me. He says "Sure." But needs to make a few calls first. I wander the house (the room where I've left my things) in increasing desperation. He makes the call. I can't speak for the terrible lump in my throat. He touches my language. "Don't be going to pop out if you don't relax." I touch my language.

Sound of coughing/sneezes. I wake up.

Run downstairs.

In real life M is awake, covers pulled down, needing to leave bowel movement. I get a diaper + cloth ready, + basin of warm water + soap. And write this.
And so I sit, listening to Marty's spirit trying to leave his body. It was supposed to be the nightmare of all time, and, yes, it is terrible, but he is gone, as Marty and his body reacts, as the on-call nurse said involuntarily.

I feel so calm and stoic that I wonder whether I am some horrible psychopath. As I write, I can hear the most inhuman sounds—barks, yelps—over the intercom. I bought three days—a lifetime—ago. And I wonder how I took a shower, shaved, brushed my teeth, etc., this past hour.

I said goodbye to Marty on Monday night (4 hours of nights ago) when we looked silently into each other's eyes and knew, accepted, loved. I felt that my tears imposed on his serenity. Frederic slid from away. He simply gazed, Marty,特种。

I am calm as his family endures terrible pain with good grace. Darling Andy, red-eyed, shaking, brave. The most vulnerable because the youngest, hugs me tight and I tell him she has been the best woman in the world and his wife
tells me that he has felt closer to me all these years even than to sanity and I tell them both
that I will always be there for them.
And now I listen to the terrible "involuntary"
words of death.
Tomorrow the rest of the family arrives.
The nurse/ aide has called, the RN
supervisor has called, the doctor has
called, they're all there for me, but
somehow I'm managing this death right
on my own.
I have called the mortuary, the lawyer,
I have been handed a desk entitled
"Signs/ Symptoms of approaching Death"
pulled together by a Ph.D. whose ongoing
studies on the impact of the epidemic I
participated in for years — and who himself
died of AIDS two years ago.
I know the drill. The nurse who called
tonight said that I have been the rock
I thought they all had been.
I hate being a rock. But someone had
to be. And I was. And am. And
will be.
1 July 95

Marty's spirit left his body at 5AM.
I awoke at 4AM, knowing. Brewed a pot of coffee.listened to the death rattle over the intercom.
Fred and I went down together to help Marty as he passed. He lay rigid, eyes rolled back in their sockets, foam on his lips.
I took his hand and pressed. The pressing worked. I put my lips to his left ear and told him he was safely home with Fred and me and that I loved him with all my heart. I lit 2 blue candles.
An hour passed. I held his hand and kissed his brow and told him it was okay to let go and to jump into Fred and me so that we could share him inside us for the rest of our lives.
Just before 5AM apoptosis began. I felt my heart pounding very strongly but felt no anxiety. Went to the window, opened it.
Said aloud: all right, Mr Death. You can come in now.
Simultaneously, Marty stopped breathing. Fred left the room.
I held and kissed my darling for the next 30 minutes. Felt his spirit strongly. Felt his body slowly grow colder.

The sun rose. I removed his ring from his finger and put it on my own.

Began the telephone calls.

Began my new life.
24 July 95

Marty's spirit left its physical body more than three weeks ago. How swift and perfunctory most funerals are — unbearable for the living, the passing, who want to get the passing over with and simply resume the living of each of their own living. Because of the long 4th of July weekend, we all had to wait 13 days to congregate, witness, mourn. But the delay made the resulting service and reception all the more meaningful and even beautiful, everyone having had time to cry, feel, hurt, remember. The delay allowed remorse — in addition to closure, healing, and all the coping
Today I continued to order the classes of nearly five years. Separation of belonging and simply gathering all the notes and cards we sent to each other over all the twenty years—simply separating, gathering, sorting—takes enormous energy. 

But so far, not lengthy pain—like, a 45 minute spasm of extreme feelings once a day (at any time of day) with the rest of the day being a kind of relief, a deepening, heightened mystery (the consequence of this passing this time of year—the shocking, pushing clarity of the summer here—blue, green, wind, dust). 

I saw red, violet, and panoramas as I walk, Fredericks, drive around on red errands, catch
A glimpse of the ongoing world here and there, shocked by the out of time quality of the snow, left breathless by the realization that the snow, my snow, began the out of time quality five years ago, a moment more than 107% of my life open in time today. And San Francisco seems suddenly as exotic as Tangiers, and as transitory and appealing and dangerous. Today as I walked Fred, I thought: Today has been like traveling in the past. It's the directness without the closure. I like the directness. Feel now, don't want to stay now, just vibrant.
25 July 95

Today, after putting all the utilities in my name and mailing in Marty's passport and driver's licence and making an appointment to see my lawyer tomorrow, I lay down for a nap and was entirely out for two hours (between 2 and 4 pm).

The flashbacks, that go on constantly when I am awake, play across a subliminal screen of awareness like two televisions or computers "talking" to each other at fast forward speed. Occasionally I stop the flashbacks/playbacks and savor an entire memory.

Anne Diskin told me on the phone this evening that Marty had waved to her in a dream last night.

Just now, gazing out at the sunlit panorama across the canyon at 6 PM, I thought: Thank god he left in summer. He was born in summer and had a great birthday last
When AIDS struck, he was at the mid-
summer point of his life. While the
disease took its unspeakable toll, aging
him thirty years in less than five, it is
a comfort to know that the personal
grief he attained never degenerated over
decades of "normal" life.

And, for me, struck so profoundly by
Vergil's Georgics and by Theocritus' Works and Days, Praxite's departure
at this time of year integrates me into
the healing progress of the seasons, from
summer to autumn, from autumn to
winter, from winter to spring. I fantasized
this afternoon sitting in the garden in
October, with Fredericks and Shidler,
watching the clouds turn scarlet against
the enamel blue sky at sunset.

I am experiencing sacred time. Though
exhausted, I am feeling a serenity that
is untainted with anxiety through short
bursts sporadically and usually briefly
by intense pain.

There is finally being born and coming to
the surface to deep "me."
Looking back, the slide began in May—mid-May. Manile god we didn’t know for sure what was transpiring. We did maintain hope up until the two last days. The entire love passing between us is something that will always thrill me. We didn’t talk a lot. Just knew. And loved very purely.

The so-called “paranormal” aspects were astounding and experienced as entirely real and as new—not explainable psychologically and psychoanalytically—and I did run down the checklist, each time a dream or vision occurred.

When Steve, Marty’s physician, told me that Marty had experienced me in 3D while getting a scan, I knew the passing was coming. Then there were my miserable death dreams the two weeks before. And the passing itself. I saw the spirit world and I was awoken and I experienced the vision physically. I began to see it in mid-May when I traveled home to the East to say goodbye to my grandmother. I saw it when Marty’s own grandmother passed late in May.
And I saw it every time I closed my eyes from Nancy's passing for about a week.

I saw:
- forms
- faces
- movement
- fley
- plenitude
- spirits known
- spirits unknown

I gazing at them
They gazing back, aware.

This week, the third week, no dreams or visions. But this awesome playback of images and sounds, memories. The engagement was very profound.

Comfort.
26 July 95

Today was rough. It's only been in this last afternoon show that I've been able to comprehend how hard it was to see the lawyer, file the last benefit forms, etc.

Discuss the future. Wow.

I feel profoundly guilty that Mary has suffered and died, and that my new life is beginning. But I don't feel guilty about this almost physical guilt. I try to comprehend the manifestation of the feeling as a reaction to the shock that has buffeted me.

This shock will require months of recovery, acceptance, healing.

Part of me wants just not to move, for time to stop. Yet the momentum of the tragedy propels me along with breath-taking speed.

The erasure of identity in the sense of official forms is very harrowing.
Stephen called today from London while I was collecting my paycheck at school, paying my large Visa bill from June, buying a new toaster oven to replace the faltering ten-year-old model (or older) that makes me think of Central and the 80's withertainty — when we left Camp Central, everything began to go wrong — driving around the very beautiful city. The grass that is not cultivated but still in a wild state all golden brown, summer in California, Stephen called while I was doing all these things. I called him back when I got home and we had a reassuring, warm, wonderful long chat.

John D’Emilio called out of the blue last evening and is here in town today and tomorrow, though he may be too busy to see me. I told him the bad news. We were both pretty upset.

Fletcher and Carol will be here Tuesday.

These are my oldest friends — from age 14, 17, and 25 (John, Fletcher, Stephen).
And July here from the 11th to the 16th. And my brother until last Thursday and my parents over the weekend of the 14th for the service and receptions.

There is the shock, too, then, of connection and history.
28 July 95

Well, today was a very strange day indeed, another new adventure.

Up at six with the dogs. Mid-morning slept right through from 10 pm - eight hours and held his pee the whole time. Fred got his walk in the early foggy dawn.

I had a nice breakfast, cleaned the whole house, finally. Watched Perry Mason. Brought in handy's car for service (it hasn't been in since December 92!). Tried to find a place to turn in his eyeglasses. 4 pairs. Ordered my first reading glasses. A staggering $49.5. I blew it, but who cares? I like them. I have to wear them. The car will cost $800, but with any luck I'll be rid of it this time next week.

And the insurance rebate on credit will be in the vicinity of $800.

Fare today at the rundown costs. I've never spent so much money in
So short a time. There’s plenty. But I clutch and fret.

Allan dropped in unexpectedly (and uninvitedly) at 5:30 p.m. He is doing all the work-related disentangling. Brought the Amagon feather crown from Marty’s office. Here to check on me.

On the one hand, given the suicide of his and Diane’s son, Brian, I know that he knows even worse what the grieving process is all about. On the other hand, I felt invaded, though I remained affable. He was pretty hostile, actually. Has commented on my drinking though it’s “not an issue” for him. He seems to be trying to eliminate “cravings.” No pot, no booze, no meat. Is this what I’ll be doing in 5 years? I hope not.

Cecil sent me wooden carvings from I’m sure, Western Samoa. A fa’afa’i and a little tano bowl. And a loving, brave, intelligent letter.
Bought Dennis Cooper's *Dream Palace* - collected/selected poems. Very fine. And broke down and bought E. White's *Skinned Alive*. The first new books in two months. Rearranged the "art" bookcase a little. Claimed it.

It's been a hard day, though I only cried a little.

Slow progress. This weekend I'll clean up the front yard.

There are so many details. Reminiscences.

Colobus. There was a lot of dust today.

Very tedious. Yet my energy persisted.

The sun is new. This time around.

Of course, I remember it from before.

I think I know how to handle it. Accept it - better now, at nearly 47.

There is nothing I can do regarding this grieving process. Except endure it, accept it, learn from it.

I miss her. I'd do anything to have her back again.
1 August 95

The past several days have been very hard and painful, tempered by Fredericke and midnight, who keep me sane, but hard, hard, hard.

It's the worst pain I've ever felt, but it is not constant - intermittent short agonies with chores, errands, ordering, cleaning. I think I am doing all right. I'd be in trouble if I were not attending to the everyday, and that I do, robot-like at times, enjoying at times.

I certainly do not feel social. Roland's came by today to pick up forms (I told him in June he could use my address) for school. I gave him an hour and then politely kicked him out. He is a sweet person but I just don't want my solitude interrupted - I'm just too raw. He understood, I think. Other darlings have called to check on me. I've told them thanks, but I need a few more weeks of solitude. I think my dear ones understand.
At midday I finished *The Melville Saga*, which ends with Herman's funeral, and cried my eyes out. I have been reading it slowly for months, since before nearly died. I will never forget reading it amid the sufferings and gatherings and waiting, the traumatic weeks that tested me as I never dreamed I would be tested. Though I am mourning now, I do retain a sense of pride in myself. I came through, with strength, love, class, and style.
2 August 95

Yesterday really was terrible. Today Fletcher and Carol arrived and grounded me.
I took a long, deep nap this afternoon.
This evening I have tried to reassert control — made lists for the next few days, re-read the puppy books carefully and made notes to correct Midnights aggravating behaviors, de-cluttered Patty's study, finally. I feel tremulous but much better.

Part of the panic was surely the aftermath of the speed I did Saturday and Sunday. I gave myself a real pseudo vacation, which was great, but the crash is simply not worth it. Last night I drank too much and got manic in a long (great) talk with my sister Patti and then cried my eyes out in a depressed long talk with Milan. It's all okay, but to smooth out the highs and lows, I have resolved to stop using drugs and
to cut back drinking to maybe two glasses of wine a day at most. The binging became a coping mechanism during his illness — and I am not guilty at all about it — but the emotional consequences (and physical!) are not worth the escape. In a sense, I am trying out these mechanisms for comfort. They are familiar friends. But having spent so much time just surviving, now I find time just being well very precious. And I don't want to waste any time.

Yesterday’s panic was precipitated by Robledo’s unwanted visit and later by going through party’s personal box of things from the past — yearbooks from junior high, high school, Stanford, Boy Scouts; more photographs; letters from people in the far past; term papers; awards; autobiographical writings. I ruthlessly sorted everything, in total pain and crying, and got rid of a lot. This evening I took what I saved into my study to go through more calmly when I feel the time is right.
Today UPS came and took the telephone hearing device. Soon I will donate the remaining hearing aids (one got inexplicably lost) and batteries and all of that part will finally be over. I remember hating that damn amplifier when we installed it. Then the other day I broke down when I realized that Marty had had to adjust to being nearly deaf—long before he had to get his 'disabled' parking placard. I was just horrified at what he had so patiently and bravely adjusted to.

Yet age brings most of the same problems. He endured an accelerated aging process. He has given me a permanent and noble model of adjustment to my own aging process. For example, I have finally been able to get my reading glasses after years of denial! It was hard, but it’s done.

I will look back at this month, and be simply amazed that I did it. And I will be very glad that I did all these difficult things immediately. It is not a betrayal that I am asserting control over my own life.
Part of my recovery is learning through play. The two dogs learn through play. They play with me all the time in their different ways. The other night (four or five nights ago) Frederick and Midnight began to play with each other for the first time. I was thrilled, awe-struck, fascinated. They were entirely canine — and they interacted in an entirely different way than either of them do with humans.

Midnight is three months old tomorrow, August 16. Frederick turned five years old on April 26.

Gerard remarked over the weekend that Marty must have been incredibly pleased about Fred when I was so enthusiastic about getting Midnight. I had never even seen that. I was so entranced about getting a Labrador puppy. I felt that a puppy would make Marty happy and perhaps even extend his life (at least, not to be).

In the late winter/early spring, I was standing on the deck in the evening (after
daily), and suddenly I felt midnight come into the world.

Weeks later I was racing back from New York because Manny had been hospitalized with phlebitis. On the plane I thought about midnight. He was born that night, May 16.

Early in June (? ?) on a Saturday I drove up to Nicasio to sit on a deck in the redwoods and have midnight look at me, walk over to me, and sit in my lap. His mother walked over and licked my face.

My dog.

Now we play. I watch him play.

I learn.

Fred and I have started going to the beach early in the morning. He races around (after a disbeliefing start the first day) and really runs at full speed. In just a week his muscles are quite visible beneath his coat. He is a powerful, mature animal.
He and I are taking much longer walks in the afternoon. We have discovered the most spectacular staircase in San Francisco: the Pemberton Steps. He is leaner. I am lean, tan, alert.

I am doing all the things I loved to do when I first moved here in 1976: walking, being outdoors, exploring, savouring. Only now I have no pressure. Then I was embarking on my doctorate.

Now I can really play.

Perhaps I will play (in the most serious sense) for the rest of my life like Frederic and Midnight.

Wow!
21 August 95

Yesterday, Sunday, I let myself do nothing except read and sleep and tend to the two dogs. This was my first day of real rest since the beginning of May.

Going slower is the hardest of the psychological tasks. I have been living in crisis for so long that compulsive/obsessive patterns have become survival mechanisms. Now I really don't need to rush any more. It feels strange.

The morning routine has settled into a nice first four hours of the day. Midnight awakens between six and seven and needs to empty his bladder. He now scampers down the stairs! I let him out and then take Frederic for a walk. Breakfast follows. I feed the dogs and then take my time with coffee, juice, fruit, and crumpets. Read The Chronicle. Fred and I then head for Ocean Beach, fog or sun, where he frolics and I briskly walk, my mind as empty as possible.

This morning there were moments of painful sadness. I found myself remembering...
that last two weeks of visits, during which scores of people came to say goodbye to harmony. On one of the busy days, the realization that I would not have enough time with him rushed through my consciousness. This morning I cried about that. I also remembered his question to me in the hospital: How is your pain? And I blunted out to the waves this morning: It’s terrible.

But then I thought of how he remained so private about his inner experience and that, to spare me, he shut me out of those inner thoughts. This loss was his choice and not my fault. I actually followed his own wishes by not probing, by allowing him space that for me meant a certain uncomfortable distance.

He feels more gone than last month. The candle lighting every night means something else now than quieting him home. His home is out there now among the stars and the wind. He is free.

Dan came over Saturday and we had a wonderful afternoon and evening. We decided it was too hot to move furniture.
He brought some grass and we drank two bottles of chardonnay there, after walking back down the Pemberton Steps. After showers and dog play with the mop head, we had a delicious fish dinner and another bottle of chardonnay. It felt great! I was hung over on Sunday, but who cares? I needed to blow off the anxieties of the week—Marty's parents, school beginning, midnights two one-hour sessions at dog school, a termite and dry rot inspection, getting the dog door fixed at 7 AM Friday.

This morning I mailed two letters and met the PG&E meter reader on the way back. I thought: The heater has been silent for seven weeks after being on almost constantly for nearly five years. How I hated the sound of that heater, and feeling too hot all the time.

I'm worried about Michael. He's recovering from incipient cryptococcal meningitis, his first serious opportunistic infection. It scared him, of course, and I'm scared too.

Milei seems to be adjusting to my desire for privacy and wish to be friends only. He is getting an apartment. Good move.
and a good sign. Rolando is leaving me alone, unless the occasional hangups are lim. Thursday I got quite a shock with Sister Bell, a teacher my age at work, who is in a manic phase and who wanted me to assume more responsibility in the creative writing program. He was really in my face, and I got mad. I am 네, I snapped at him. And my sabbatical resumes in January. I'm not assuming any extra responsibilities. He backed right off. So insensitive. He has his own problems at home - an ex-drug user, wife, two children, not enough money. So he overcompensates at work. I know the drill, but work is just work for me now.

And so it goes.

Physically I feel better than I have for many years. I've cut out drugs except for special occasions. I drink much less. I still smoke. My legs are all muscle. My waist is 30 or 31. I don't cough any more.

Meals are great - what I like - lots of vegetables and salad, lean hamburger, chicken, lean sausage. I read while I eat. The Willie Collins biography absorbs me at present.
I'm finally able to be me. Except for the pain, I feel generally positive. I laugh out loud at the dogs' antics. There is a greater sense of focus. There is certainly no need to escape from anything. Time is full, and does not drag.

Dan, at this point, was still much more upset. He went to Point Reyes and howled for months after George died. Dan got more quickly and dramatically drunk. And he was more emotionally withdrawn to start with. I learned from him as he went through grieving. And I spent three years longer as a caregiver, so I am more ready to have my own life.

What a wrencher. We all went through — Dan, Lucy, Robert, Riki. The loss of Marcy is terrible, but so was the ordeal of seeing him through his own ordeal. Though our lives all went on, parts of all of us remained frozen for nearly five years. I still can hear Lucy screaming when I told her Marcy had AIDS.

Screaming.

And I learned to scream into my pillow.
And Robert cried his eyes out last September
at dinner when we all lost it and ended
up on the floor crying and shrieking. It
was a wringer, and we were all devastated
by what tragedy was going through. In retro-
spect, it seems unbelievable. And yet it all
unfolded, relentlessly.

It is a miracle to sit here at 10AM on
a Monday morning with the fog lifting and
two happy dogs. And learning to be happy
me.
22 August 95

Midnight woke up at a quarter to six this morning,reed and dumped down in the garden, and then went back to sleep for an hour. Fredericke and I did our old rug and stretch routine from when we slept upstairs — up until only two months ago. Then, Fred and I got up between nine and ten. Harry slept more and more and more and more.

Yesterday I was on-and-off weepy, more than recently. Teaching began last night, and it hit me that I'd be coming home to twoサラダ and no Harry. But then when I came home I watched the dogs play for an hour and felt fine. Fred now trips midnight by gently locking his jaws on one of the puppy's hind legs. He reverts to puppyhood himself with me, jumping up into my lap to be hugged, all one hundred wonderful pounds of him. Midnight runs around with either his purple ball or the mophead in his mouth.

I'm glad to be in the classroom again. The students were great. My colleagues were fine, though subtly undermining in their badmash. They are afraid of my pain, even when I'm not feeling it. Alain commented that I had lost weight — his major fear, because
He is HIV+. For ten years?

Kerry and Kathleen and I have adjoining classrooms. Feels great! We are old timers now. Our classes are packed with young gays and lesbians, something that was only a dream ten years ago.

I had a great bottle of Rutherford Chardonnay, too many cigarettes, a delicious pasta and meat and tomato and squash dinner, and dessert of berry/cheese tart. Read more about Willie Collins and Dickens. Slept very soundly from eleven until midnight woke up.

On the way to the beach with Fred, I felt how much I liked the rituals of early morning these days and then reflexively wondered how long it could last. I'm still afraid of being interrupted by reality's next crisis. Having realized this in the car, I enjoyed the walk on the nearly deserted beaches with a new serenity. Realized that if I had to move, I could move, say, to Pacifica, where it's easier to leave dogs. This is definitely a new me.

The sky and waves were grey. I found two perfect sand dollars, one large, the other
tiny, and half of a bivalve with delicate blue line markings. When we first met in 1974, Marty and I used to go to the beach at sunset, and I would find sand dollars. I still have six of those sand dollars on the Pacific/Polynesian bookcase in my old room. There are eight on this dining room table: the first I have gathered since that time.

Jung would love what I'm doing! They are nature's penatcles.

Judy called from Washington last night in a demoralized panic. Her marriage on the rocks, her house up for sale, now her board is trying to ease her out of her directorship of the nation's largest private arts lobby. She enjoys the power and the status that she has deservedly accumulated. She is also terrified about losing that power and status. Our conversation made me think about how the world changed for me so abruptly when Marty was diagnosed. I took the same kind of nose dive, confusing the loss of privilege with the loss of my existence. I remained angry and depressed for years. And now, through worry, feel lucky that I had
what I lead when I lead it.
She, like many, has never known real economic deprivation. So her demons are different from mine. And, despite her despair, she will never know real poverty. I on the other hand, am bewildered and uneasy at finding money, and expect it all to vanish in a second.

The meanness and wariness are my experience of life itself. They are survival instincts. They are not bad. There is no real need to wish them away. In fact, they sharpen the smaller happinesses.

Midnight's tale (and mine) are to become more confident. I am so glad he has entered my life. Coming for him is an excellent way to learn how to live again.
This morning the ocean sounded like a vast river of raw sound, and I noticed that hearing that white sound is something I look forward to each day.

Grey overcast turned the ocean a metallic grey, the sand smooth with the tide receding, not brown, grey. Yet to the north the mountains north of the Gate glimmered yellow in sunshine: a faint yellow that reminded me of Turner.

Fredericke rounded a flock of sea birds spread out in the softer, drier sand, a flock of pelicans flew in formation about a hundred yards offshore, scanning for food.

Adorable Midnight slept until six. I took him out and then put him back into his crate for an hour while I got some extra Z's, dreaming of Salvador Aguilar, the handsomest student I've ever taught, who showed up in my English 1A class last night wanting to talk. I expected the resulting rush of warm affection on Fredericke, who stretched his full length in my arms and wagged with content.
Yesterday became a strange day of anxiety as the hours wore on. Although I had plenty of time to get to my 2 PM class, I felt guilty that I had watched video noir Perry Mason and began mulling, subliminally castigating myself for enjoying my daily noon ritual. Another web of survivor guilt, I expect, and a dread of returning to my teaching life, which is mine. I shouldn’t have mine, since Marty no longer has his. Drove off to school with real butterflies in my stomach.

Donald offered me the detective fiction elective next fall. I am toying with the idea of teaching all night classes - 4 nights a week.

I came home to a returned benefits form (with Marty’s death certificate) telling me to send my social security number. There was no place on the form for it, never had it been requested anywhere. I was furious, but felt better after the on-the-ball woman at the VA who is handling my case reassured me, gave me phone numbers for each agency involved, and told me she would call the Thrift Center in New Orleans and tell them
to revise the form. Also in the mail were Sam Stewart's will and a note from his executor that Sam's house had been sold, and that I would receive another distribution soon. Gerard sent a sweet note commenting on my "spunk and determination." A mature (60's) student from years ago sent a sympathy note telling me I was a very special man.

The anxiety persisted. I was crushed when Fred refused to play with midnight before I left for my night class. Today I realize I was just plain tired.

Class overwhelmed me. Fully fifty former students are either on the class list or writing to add. Their love and respect touched me profoundly. Some of them wait two years to get into my classes. I feel immensely proud of myself — more survivor guilt. How it needs.

My Persian student, Nader, showed up. I love him, but am wary of his obsessive ness. He is 41. He wants to be my friend. I told him frankly he'd died and this eyes filled with tears. I explained him up for Creative Writing and hoped I was doing the right thing.
On my way out, Sarah punched me on the arm. I resented it.

By the time I got home, I was in a real anxiety attack. The puppies played after Fred really growled at midnight. Fred was picking up on my turmoil. I lived a lifetime in an hour. But I talked myself down, made a nice dinner, read more of the Willie Collins biography. The lead to keep his lifetime love secret except for close friends. Stick to his own values. Dickens’s divorce was a big scandal. I drew strength from their determination to do as they wanted in the sex and feelings department.

Midnight went to sleep very quietly. Me, too. It was a deep, restful sleep.

Today, so far, feels better.

This time feels like the summer of 1969, when I traveled alone through England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia, Amsterdam, and Paris. It is less scary than my two trips to Tangier. Some of the uncomfortable feelings come from my being so open. I feel the intensity of other people in ways long buried beneath relationships. It’s better, certainly.
Am definitely in a bad mood today. A long complicated dream involving danger to life and limb in a subway ended with me saving myself but a person I was trying to save racing through and then slamming a huge metal door. Death’s door, of course. When I told someone in the crowd that there was still someone to save behind that door, a voice said: Sometimes people can just die of sorrow.

My mourning is happening on the dream level. In other dreams I have cried and cried, but am not doing much crying during my waking hours.

This morning’s Chronicle had a story of the government’s planning for a shutdown in October due to the impasse between President Bill and Newt Gingrich. I immediately thought of the VA benefits. Aside from my lifelong money worries, I am anxious to prove on. I am forced to wait until I resolve my obligations and am dealing with enormous bureaucracies all over the country. I have been in a holding pattern long enough.

My other primary anxiety is personified by Natalie. She is very needy and wants me
to be his friend. I don't want to help him as a friend. I can help him as a teacher but do not want to see him socially. I will probably tell him that I welcome him to class but that I won't mix work and socializing. The choice is his. Last year, he was living in his van. What if I invited him to supper and he then started showing up when he felt needy? I have successfully set limits with everyone else. My other two problematic people, Miles and Roland, seem to have backed off. Allen has backed off.

On the other hand, Trandy's family has been absent in a very rude way, except for his mother. Trandy and Charlène have been very rude. Not to thank me for the black pearl I gave to Char. The whole lot are selfish to the core.

I guess the anger phase of mourning is in full swing. Yesterday I was remembering the things about Trandy that drove me crazy. I found myself thinking: Why did you get me into this mess?

Then on the beach this morning I answered the question: Because he was scared.
Class went very well last night. I liked the students very much. Julio returned after disappearing last year. He had had a rough start. A weird illness made him seek AIDS testing. He told me he was negative and I just hugged him and said: Thank God. But he was derailed just by the scare. He looked gorgeous but more covered up (as in clothing). He was loaded with seductive energy last year. This year he is a grownup. I like him.

The dogs played pretty violently last night. I had to break it up when midnight got too excited. During a brief phone call from April, she managed to get several placemats, two film canisters, and, nearly, the camera off the table. He is a fast little devil. Tonight he goes to puppy house, where he can work off some of his pent-up energy. Three weeks to go before I can wear him out with walks.

He and Fred are good therapy. They keep me physically absorbed and prevent too much brooding.

After drinking a little too much wine last night, I found myself craving poppers and porno. But, realizing I had a long and busy day today, I refrained. Good for me!
Some of my irritation this morning is due to my drinking.

The beach was lovely this morning. The fog bank was breaking up, and there were patches of pure, radiant blue in the sky. On the wet part of the beach, the blue gleamed. The sun caught the froth of the waves. This ritual is very healthy.

Frederick played with eight dogs and ate some of the bait of an amused Chinese fisherman.

I need to work on being firm and very positive in keeping people at bay. There is no need to be upset or angry. If I am friendly, I will not feel the anxiety in others that makes me wary in the first place. If I am anxious or irritated, they will just grow on more. It's a question of respecting their pain while giving myself room to cope with my own.

The Willkie Collins biography is making me interested in the pre-Raphaelites. Last night I discovered that Evelyn Waugh has written something on Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

I guess I am accomplishing a great deal during this strange period of waiting.

Good for me.
25 August 95

Today has been irritating so far (it's 9:45 AM), but I've noticed that when days begin on a rocky basis they usually get better - as yesterday did.

A phone call from VA payroll this morning at 8:15 informed me that Marty's paperwork had not yet "hit accounting." The very nice woman could not tell me when it would or whether the process will take weeks or months.

Then, after a discouraging time at the beach, another very nice woman was on the phone from Los Angeles asking me for paperwork I completed a month ago to close out his IRA at CalFed. The problem at CalFed's local office is an incompetent asshole named Milton Jones, who has botched my application from beginning to end. So I complained about him.

Hopefully, the process will now finally get moving. As with each snafu, I now have a contact inside a bureaucracy. How do people cope who don't have my tenacity and time?

The beach was a drag this morning. Having noticed an ominous group of people with very large dogs standing in our usual route, I took Fred in the other direction, only to be accosted by a young Latino...
key who gave me no peace. I finally shot him and set off in our usual direction. A mastiff with two ominous owners, a man and a woman, came running up. I reached Fred. The mastiff approached. He was wearing a metal muzzle. I got us out of there and walked across the beach to the seawall and then up to the car. The couple stared at me, solemnly from the water's edge. They scared me.

The lurders are all emerging from Golden Gate Park, evicted at last by the city after a shooting last weekend in which four people were wounded. Now they will wander the beach and adjoining neighborhoods.

Many already were.

The problem is not these poor deranged people but our ruthless rulers who will not help these unfortunate. Some are thugs, but most are not. The existence of this sub-undertaker frightens everybody. The authorities do little or nothing, until a cop is shot.

Grace just called back. Milton made no copies of the paperwork he claims to have sent in. I will deal directly with her now, and do all the paperwork again.
Midnight just toppled several flowerpots.
I took Gwen's advice and removed them from the garden. I also gave Midnight a scolding.
On September 13 I can finally start walking him. Screw the dog owners who won't vaccinate their dogs, thereby making us all suffer.
Oh, well.

Class went well yesterday, though I felt quite anxious before. My mood was improved by running into Jeff, a dreamboat young man who exudes a sweet physicality. If he isn't gay, he should be. He has been accepted at UC Davis — another student who will go far. Very rewarding.

I received a check from First Investors which will enable me to pay off the second mortgage. Dare I try it today?!?

Puppy hour was riotous. Midnight finally fought Nicole against an obnoxious dog named Fozlo. Poor Fozlo is owned by a helpless man who loves him and a woman with a hard face who doesn't. He is a bitter already. Whatever said they take him to, the other dog owners keep their dogs away from him. Gwen's class is a safe place for him to be aggressive, but what a drag. Luckily Midnight is picking up pointers from Fred,
who plays pretty tough with him. Midnight is fearless. He extricated himself thoroughly at class, and then later with Fred during our at home dog show. I got down on the floor with them both last night, and they jumped all over me. Bliss.

Sue and I had a great table last night. She is hilarious and perceptive. She has stuck with me through the whole ordeal with Marty. He loved her dearly. We discussed our retirement compound, with its moats, gun emplacements, electric fences, and a device to melt metal worn by pierced people.

I drank too much wine again. But it's still much less than I was doing only last month. I also did poppers and pomp, but afterward I threw the poppers in the trash. Predictably, I have been groggy this morning, and I don't want to be.

Let's hope the day improves.
28 August 95

By Thursday, I was a wreck. Saturday, Dan and I moved furniture around — very stressful, emotionally and physically. This moving of two desks and a bed eliminated Marty’s office, my bedroom up until barely two months ago, and a whole network (two whole networks) of living patterns, memories, daily recoupings and recoveries during the illness. My studio downstairs will look very different. I have in two months changed every room except the living room and the dining area/kitchen, and both of those were areas are different because they have been “puppy proofed”.

Physically, the furniture moving was very hard. Dan is a rock (physically too after all that working out) and also a slave driver, so we got it all done in under three hours. Marty’s desk was very heavy, and we had a couple of scary moments on the stairs. I felt oddly exhilarated and partly weirded-out looking at the aftermath & lots of minor cleaning up to do, and traces of my own
House. My bedroom is now a video room (already!). I will drag the stereo cabinet from my studio upstairs and put it there, removing the bookcases (more puppy proofing). Midnight's crate will go in there. With the blue metal blinds, that room will be darker - for video, for Midnight who awakens at dawn. Marty's old office now has my old bed in it now, along with memorabilia sorted and unsorted. I'll put one bookcase in there and order metal blinds to replace the cheap plastic ones that came with the house.

My studio I will work on today, having started to pick up piles of folders and stick them into desk drawers yesterday.

Progress. But by Thursday I was an emotional wreck, and Saturday night and yesterday I speeded. Bob called a week early (the speed was meant for Father's Day weekend). I decided not to wait. Though I did it all ($30 worth, as opposed to $200 worth of cocaine), my escape was more leisurely and orderly than in the past. I was careful about the dog's routines and maintained them. I did manage to eat, except for Saturday.
dinner. I watched my favorite porn stars for two hours at a time. I avoided wine and cigarettes entirely yesterday. I re-entered the mundane sphere last night at nine-thirty. Took a bath, threw the clothes I had been wearing for two days into the washing machine, fetched midnight from the garden and put him to bed in his crate, ate some delicious berry tart, took half a ranit and two ibuprofen tablets for the possible muscle spasms and muscle aches of withdrawal, coughed up some junk from my bronchial tubes, went to bed. Midnight woke me up at three to pee.

No big deal anymore. I needed to escape. I did. Now I’m back.

The beach was autumnal this morning for the first time this year. The air was sharply cool. There was overcast (clouds) instead of fog. Edges stood out sharply. The ocean had ebbed very far out. Fredericks sailed around on the sandbars. His physical beauty, coursing along, captivated me. None of the strange people from Friday were in evidence.
Saturday morning Milzi bothered me one too many times at nine-thirty. I stood listening to his self-absorbed reflections on himself, asked myself why I was having this conversation early on a Saturday morning, waited for him to draw breath, and asked him why he had called me. I told him I was sick of his problems, sick of the pressure he puts on me, sick of his passive aggressiveness, and sick of his selfishness. A real shouting match ensued. Rather than back down, I really lost my temper.

And told him not to bother me for at least a week.

Finally.

Judith listened bemusedly to my account of this incident. She knows better than to act like Milzi, but there are plenty of similarities. Apropos of passive aggression, she is finally this week going to mail me two copies of *Noonlight*, which she promised to do nearly six weeks ago, and she "can't focus" enough to read it now but she will.
None of the people I have known ever....
30 August 95

I am taking it very easy today after the crash from the weekend drug binge. I finally had the scare that will stop me from doing speed or cocaine ever again—I couldn't breathe for nearly two days. It was terrifying. I propped myself up in bed and panting. I made it up and down stairs but nearly blacked out coming up several times. I couldn't lift anything. My powers of denial are so strong that I walked Frederick, taught classes Monday and yesterday, and maintained public roles. But in between I had to lie down for hours at a time.

I am trying to learn from all this rather than castigate myself. What have I learned? How heavy felt for several years in terms of breathlessness. This made me cry. That part of me wants to die. On Sunday night, I wondered whether I would wake up in the morning. Cared only because of the puppies. That I don't need to escape any more from anything, but that the pattern of
I'm glad I'm back. Fred and I went to the beach this morning. I have to be brave. I have to be patient. I have to reclaim myself. I have to be me.
31 August 95

Tomorrow Marty will have been dead for two months.

Certainly these months have been the strangest, hardest, most intense months of my whole life.

Having survived them (and Marty's illness) and realized that I can survive, I begin to feel my own pain. The last five years, though filled with life and all kinds of good experiences as well as what was going on, the last five years have been a catastrophe, a tragedy, a nightmare. I never wanted any of it, never dreamed of such a time previously; thought it would never end.

In a sense, it never will. On the other hand, I am so far emerging with at least an identity, a strong self, an eradication of certain anxieties and fears that have beleaguered me since childhood.

The effects of the speed have mostly worn off. I seem to have stopped smoking. Midnight slept right through last night, so I did too, except for surfacing to swallow some cough medicine at 2 AM.
Parts of the death agony have been repeating in the screen of memory. Mysteriously, he was somewhere else as his physical functions collapsed. I can still hear the breathing, then the rattle. I can see his eyes rolled back in his head. It breaks my heart now, but at the time I became an attendant of a very ancient kind, like a monk, or a priest, or a sister of mercy. I performed the offices of death, all by myself. There was a sacred quality to the way both of us were present, but no longer able to communicate. I had never felt closer to him, or loved him so much. I'm sure he felt it. If he couldn't or didn't, I still did. So love brooded there, regardless. And that's a great deal in this harsh world.

Just thinking about that day reduces me to tears and achings and whinnings like a puppy. Yet thoughts form alongside the feelings. I whine, He yelped, That horrible yelping. I thought I'd go out of my mind.

But I didn't. I funained. Somehow, I was there. He knew. I'm so glad I was able to be there. Yes, it was worth it. I really loved him, all the way to the end.
There was nothing I could do to stop the illness. Why have I felt so guilty, as if I had failed him? By surviving. If I hadn't survived, he would have had a more terrible time. But I comforted him all the way. I must somehow embrace this fact. So much of the pain I've been registering was his pain. I had few chances to know my own. It emerged explosively; it lay quietly beneath the surface and manifested as depression, anxiety, hopelessness. It showed its face in dreams and made my body hurt. I tried to flee from it with drugs and cigarettes and alcohol. I escaped sometimes. There were great sexual escapades that lasted a few hours. Maybe I was dissociated. Maybe I was out of my mind at last, briefly. I had some fine days in Honolulu. But it always lurked, the pain, the dread. I never relaxed for long for five endless years that in retrospect went by too fast.

Part of the strangeness of the now is that the pain is gone, replaced by loss, which hurts in a different way. The pain comes from memory. In the present, I am not
in pain.

Today, on the way to the beach with Fredricke, I thought, "This is the life I've wanted for twenty years. I feel my body getting leaner and stronger. As Fred frolics and I stride along the water's edge, everything becomes smooth, fluid, ecstatic. He canters along, a magnificent animal. My ears are washed clean by the sound of the ocean waves. There is a fullness that I am owed to be a part of. Fred gallops after a sea bird, catches my eye, smiles. I think: This is my life. My life."
to live, or just be. True or false, I think it's difficult to separate life from work, but we must somehow. I've found myself lumped with most of my peers, to be a bit of a party animal, to enjoy the moment, to live in the moment. The moment may be the most important thing in our lives. However, even in that moment, we must strive to improve, to be better, to make a difference, no matter how small. In the midst of our madness, we must find moments of serenity and tranquility. My job here is to take notes, to keep writing, to maintain a balance. This is a difficult balance, and I know my work to keep doing. Best wishes.

Night

5th of August 15
were invisible to him.
3 September 95

The ocean was blue this morning, a metallic, dark blue, Russian blue. I felt the spaciousness of the ocean as a result. The grey mornings are beautiful, too, but the horizon is closer, if it's there at all. The mountains north of the Golden Gate sloped gently but sharply outlined into the Pacific. A milky streamer of cloud hovered between the headlands and the first interior ridge. Fredericke's black against the blue and the whiteness of the waves, cleansing birds, breasting deeper water, a happier dog for sure.

I spent yesterday alone with the dogs, grateful for a break from puppy obedience class. I finished The biography of Willie Collins, disgusted with the sanctimonious biographer but glad to know more about the writer. I got tons of dog food, brought in more film of the dogs for processing, got Kona coffee and some spices at Falletti's, stocked up on soup and sandwiches over in Cole Valley, and cleaned out more of my studio.
I cried my eyes out when I cleaned out what’s left of Brandy’s memorabilia and put it all into a large box to spend time going through later on. His black doctor’s bag more than twenty years old, just wrenched my heart. I remember when he showed it to me in 1974, and I remember him listening to my heart once when I was sick. I hate the crying. But it has to happen if I am to heal. I don’t want to go near the pain, it’s so intense. But I do a little at a time, and it hurts, and then the dogs do something to make me smile, and the pain is over, again, and I’m here, and Brandy is emphatically gone.

Last night I think he visited me in a dream. There was a sharp audible sound that I thought might be midnight in his crate, throwing toys around. It was a sound of plastic cracking. I awoke into silence and thought: Was that you, Brandy? His candle was burning very brightly after just guttering the last couple of nights.

Yesterday I thought of myself as brave for the first time.
The bronchitis that resulted from last weekend’s speed binge is abating. A lot of congestion may have been due to stopping cigarette smoking all week. Dan brought some cigs on Friday evening which we both puffed at as we drank chardonnay and ate meatballs and Sunday appetizers. Yesterday I smoked only a little grass and then the last cigs in the evening. The physical craving is gone. And I breathe deep, and the air tastes fresh and cool.

As far as re-arranging the lounge (Dan called it “moving in”), I’m about two-thirds of the way there. I’m liking the increasing elegance of the result. Now I can start allowing midnight in more, carefully supervised, of course.

Today I’ll take it slow. Make some phone calls.
Sunday afternoon

In some ways, I was as alone (more?) than Marty. That last stretch, he was accompanied by all the people he loved and/or who loved him. He had lots of company. But I, the arranger of the flood of well-wishers, was very alone - without relief until Judy and then my parents and Eddie arrived.

One thing that makes me cry is remembering that I wouldn't get to have enough time with him in the midst of the tumult. And I didn't. Not that I would ever have had enough time with him. But I had less so that everyone else could have (and give) what she or he needed. And as time ran out, I felt caught between a grim satisfaction that it had gone very well, considering, and that I (and lute and morphine) had help make it all go well - I felt transfixed by the contradiction between that satisfaction and my loss, knowing that we had said it all to each other but desperately hoping for more time, more time, no matter what could be said or what would be left
unsaid.

Alone now feels better. Except for missing

Mort have commented on his laugh - and
not being able ever to hear it again. I feel
the absolute absence. Like Fredericke, I don't
wait the way I did during the hospital
stays. I sit like a statue in a broad
bright desert. I accept his death, I fear
for him no more. Part of me has turned
to stone. Perhaps that's what statues are
about.

I sounded very different to myself on the
phone today. My mind is very clear. I know
a million things. I knew nothing about or of
just three months ago.

Not to dwell, but the two most shocking
events were him being wrapped up in a
body bag and removed from our home
and my signing the cremation order in
the late afternoon, sunlight pouring down
on changing cable cars reaching the end
of the Hyde Street line at Fisherman's
Wharf.
Fabia Day 1995

There's something to be said for American secular holidays. The three big ones mark the stages of summer: beginning summer with Memorial Day, marking a midpoint of sorts with the Fourth of July, and officially ending summer today, Labor Day. None of these holidays coincide with astronomical events that religious holy days are grouped around. These American pauses call attention to distractions: death rites for those killed in war and, in practice, for all the dead; independence, freedom, patriotism, fire and gun powder; the ideal of work. Death, freedom, work. No gods or goddesses. Barbecues and sporting events. No obligations, as at Thanksgiving or Christmas.

San Francisco is deserted. The autumn sun, the light dazzling white, the solar disc silver, sharpen the edge of every plane. The air has a cool tang to it.

More realizations about Leonty.

At Stanford in under a year he blossomed.
He joined the crew team as coxswain, became muscular, rough and physically around men. The touche down, conservatively dressed boy from LA became sure of his good looks. By year two, with long hair, he became sure of his sepulcros. What a gorgeous boy! No wonder, I thought this morning, he needed the gym so much. And put up with the straight gym at UC for years before starting at the Muscle System with gay men.

He was never meant to be a hippie. No one from LA could ever be a hippie.

During the physical transformation, the intellect forged brilliantly on. Imagine leaving Linus Pauling as director of your seminar.

His intellect was so brilliant that his physicality was often extreme. There was that disturbing month he spent in isolation in the hospital doing an experiment on his own body. I had to rescue him in the middle, on a Saturday halfway through. I had always wondered whether he was hurting himself in an extravagant way because
of me. I think I was leaving an affair.
I felt totally scared of what he was doing.
Was I leaving an affair because of the way
he was behaving? Would he have done it
anyway? I think, now, yes. He adopted the
same mindset to handle AIDS. He measured,
thought about. He did a profound experiment.
The gym was the opposite extreme. There
he made himself sexually desirable.
But it was the opposite extreme of the
same continuum — the mind controlling
the body, creating ideas about the body,
disciplining the body, perfecting the body.

And then AIDS. The body's ultimate betrayal
of the mind and the psyche.
I rescued him both times. I should give
myself more credit. I saved him. I
loved him. I healed his limits the best
I could. I always came through.

Emotionally and psychologically we were
both complex and difficult. My behavior
was as much a reaction to his as his
was to mine. Yes, it was a turbulent.
relationship. But we were both turbulent people. Turbulent men.

I was never quite sure of him, though he demonstrated his loyalty over and over again. The secret side scared me. I always felt haunted that he could hurt me terribly. At times the hurt would make me think I had to leave him. I felt weak not to. Some of my endurance was due to patience, some to fear of facing the world on my own.

The demands of his profession allowed very little quiet time together, and that was always rigidly structured, except during those glorious trips in the Pacific.

Maybe it was hard on me, too, our relationship.

Randy's drive was pretty overwhelming. One day I thought: He got AIDS from Prada. I flashed on the reaction Randy had to Prada's obituary. Grief, and also fear. And Prada sent him out while he was ill.

Though Randy thought it was a fuck in 1983 with a one-night stand.
In 1983, I was mists about Mario. And felt guilty, but persevered, as he was physically so hot and handsome. I had no idea that Marty was fooling around. I blamed myself for the rockeens of our relationship. I knew nothing of Marty's secret life.

Then we went on our first journey, to Tahiti, Rarotonga, Fiji, both Samoas (where we met Milici), Melbourne, Cairns, Sydney, and Honolulu. We achieved perfect happiness. Do that when we found Milici, too? And spun the pass on Rangiuk?
5 September 95

Yesterday I managed finally to vacuum the whole house and to read through written homework for today’s two classes. Finally talked to Fran, whose caregiving for Nana is wearing her out. Spoke to a demoralized Judy, who has put her house on the market and is thinking of looking for a job in New York.

Drank beer, smoked grass and cigs. Slept hard last night, until midnight woke me up at 3 AM, drifted after until I was awake at dawn, put lunch outside and slept hard again until 8 AM, the latest I have slept in two months — or more.

Still have trouble believing I am not on the run anymore. Didn’t cry at all yesterday. Feel fit and rested. Still can’t quite grasp that this is possible.

Fred had a ball with several dogs at the beach this morning. He was so happy that I overlooked his refusal to come with me. Called him. It is hot today. A T-shirt was fine for usually chilly Ocean Beach. Mount Tamalpais and the Marin Headlands were brightly illuminated by the increasingly
The beach is much cleaner than it used to be. The reconstruction that took much of the 1980's has taken hold, and the grass covered man-made dunes look as though they have always been there.

I felt very light as we walked. I've lost the spare tire around my waist and walked springily for the first time in ages. This newfound physicality has reduced my sex drive. I'm not fantasizing my boys of life anymore. Or craving speed or cocaine.

The transition back to school wore me out more than I realized. But it is over. Fourteen weeks before another eight months off. I think I should take a mental health day a month, as I did when caregiving. Take Fred and midnight up to the Marin Headlands and let them race around. Take them to Point Reyes later on.

What a shift! I'm back in my life again.

There's no great urge to go anywhere. Of course, I'd love to go to Honolulu and get laid with a hot island boy. But that will happen whenever it does. I'll take a long weekend late in autumn or in the winter. There's no rush anymore.
3/ I'm getting more accustomed to the rearranged house. I slowly sorted and moved the piles of photographs and slides in the guest room. Re-installed the framed "Exactitude" poster in my bedroom. Found the panther poster by Reggani Felton and will get it framed this week. Need to move two bookcases out of the movie room and get the stereo cabinet up there. This winter I will watch movies in there to my heart's content, with the dogs lying at my feet.

Tardy's desk in my study feels more like mine, now. It's larger than my old desk. The mountain of paperwork has dwindled to a few drawers and boxes. I have my personal objects and images rearranged on its expanse. Now if only the federal insurance would come through so I can pay off the UC mortgage - my last anxiety.

Today will be long. But the rest of the week, I hope, will be a breeze. Maybe I can finally get downtown to buy some new shoes.
Night

The weakness of the guilt —

In reviewing the whole relationship, if there
had been any action I could have undertaken,
or not that would have altered the flow
of circumstances so that hardly never would
have been infected, I would have done or
not done, said or not said, lied or not
lied, anything that would have altered the
flow of events.

Every "mistake", therefore, becomes
a possible or remote cause of this being
infected.

Yet he had a secret, autonomous
life, especially sexually
Would he have, anyway?
Was I to blame?

The weakness of the guilt.
My choices. His choices.
Accident.
Ignorance.
Fate.

The weakness of the guilt.
7 September 95

Evening / night

I have felt exhausted all day.
Midnight awoke at dawn, a good prep.
But at 3:30 AM, a mosquito had bugged
me mercilessly. So when I heard him,
I took him out (and he peed a quart)
and left him there. He slept, and so
did Fred and I. Until half past seven,
give or take.

In between, I dreamt of arriving in Rome
with Marty, he frail but ambulatory,
he walked off into a crowd, it was
8 or 9 am in the dream, all dressed up
in a nice jacket and tie, and he
wanted to wander around, and I agreed
to look after the hotel and arrangements
and we separated. And I ended up frantic
in the late afternoon in a hotel in Rome
wondering whether Marty had fainted, or
taken ill, or become endangered. Frantic.
Got up again.

The dull awareness of Marty’s death. It was
such a certain awareness that I dismissed
the dream. Except that I felt tired all day.
8 September 95

Night (9 P.M.)

I continued to feel upset and exhausted today, crying in the car on the way to the beach, in response to a haunting song, woman's voice and instruments, electronically mixed, it gave me chills, something "... Caribbean," or "... Caribbean..." Blue? Red? It was a color. The tears streamed. I was relieved when the disk jockey revealed that the song made chills run up and down his spine every time he heard it, from the first time on.

Tired and depressed.

But I got a lot done today, anyway. And the dogs played four times.

Judy invited me for dinner tomorrow. She's depressed and tired, too.

I remarked: It's the depression phase of the grieving process beginning.

Her friend Bill has retinitis in one eye.

"Flipped out."

"I'm worried about Michael Lohnstone."

"I can't go through this again."

"We will, again, and again."
There's a big publicity campaign beginning to address the needs of HIV negative men. The BAR had a color resource guide / psychological checklist that I designed. But first I had just wept at reading Wayne Friday's angry column about "negatives," whose needs are as nothing compared to the needs of the dying.

My life has been derailed by AIDS. I am negative. I'm numb with suffering. I even thought of writing a response. We are all hurting.

There are psychological brute that afflict "negatives" that are bizarre and also taboo to discuss and dangerous.

Two weeks ago, I went on a speed binge and only cared if I woke up because of the drugs.

Dan punched a stranger without using a condom. Declared he felt "fatalistic" about HIV.

The substance abuse is pervasive. Risk taking behavior is pervasive. Obsessional behavior is pervasive.

For older "negatives," most of our
Contemporaries are dead and died long drawn out dreadful deaths. While we helped, watched, dug, fed, and tried not to go bonkers.

Maybe just life outside my recovery process caught up with me today.

Just life. Now.

I'm glad I took it easy and read and played with the dogs all day, and smashed cans and cigarettes and ate good food and drank good wine and read good books.
Sunday 10 September 95

I'm emerging from a depression that began Friday as a feeling of exhaustion and forlorn. Then last night Lucy and Robert had me over for dinner and Robert poured wine and cider into me to make me talk, and I did, I hope I didn't wear them out.

Slept little, toiled maps all day today. But got difficult tasks accomplished in between. Cleaned out the main desk drawers from my old desk, in pieces now in the garage. Found the twenty folders and burst into tears.

But I did it.

Then I slept for forty-five minutes.

Then I read the submissions from the creative writing class.

I'm okay. I need to keep going, one step at a time.

I will be a different person when this process is finally over.
11 September 95

A good night's sleep, though the depression lingers.

Midnight jumped onto my bed with Fred this morning: a first! The two of them made me smile. Such energy the little fella has — wow!

I find a dull anger simmering against the world. This process needs. I'm waiting, waiting, waiting, and I'm side of waiting. School is more strenuous than I expected physically. Free time is still plentiful, but I feel unfit.

Shrew out the peepers again. They are some of the reason for the tension.

But when I get in the mood for an orgasm and they are around, I can't fight the urge.

I haven't had sex since April, Mary.

made little attempt to see Yoshie this weekend. So she passed. I was relieved.

Now I need to talk to Camilla about not coming. I am too edgy to have anyone around up close.

Loneliness is not the issue for me. I like being alone. There is an avoidance
going on of those closely connected at the time of Arty's final weeks. My real friends are avoiding me, and I'm avoiding the co-dependent feeders who want to help me to fill their own voids. Avoiding voids!

As usual, when the day begins on a down note, it tends to get better. I just want to sleep all day.

Depression, for sure.
14 September 95

Willie Collins

"Miss Bertha and the Yuletide"

p. 619 "... vain regrets for the dead..."
22 September 95

Today I wrote a check for two hundred eighty-two thousand dollars and paid off the first mortgage on the house.

I received payments from a liquidated IRS and from the sale of a painting requested to me eight years ago by John Fox.

I feel like a total space cadet. I'm blindsided out.
26 September 95

The mortgage from U.C. was paid off today. I am free.

The whole last week has been so stressful over the avalanche of money in and out that, unsurprisingly, I have a rotten cold. So much has happened in so short a time that I am overwhelmed.

Lots of new grief feelings have surfaced. Lots of raw bursts of crying, then an eerie peace the rest of the time. Clearly I am depressed, but I fight the anomic and am managing to get something done every day—lots of things—and am making steady, if slow, progress toward my life as I see it.

The dogs alternately tickle me to the max and stretch my reserves. They are a lot of work, as is the house. But what would this all feel like if I were by myself or had only Frederick? At last dog school had ended. Saturday was a disgrace the last class. As it turned out, we had to dump and
was holding it. Gwen, the teacher, gave us the dubious gift of a trial semi-choice culture, which I've kept.

Part of it all is timing, as far as the dogs are concerned. If I let M. play with F. after breakfast, he doesn't wreck things in the garden. Today I took F. to the beach before feeding M., then let them play. Eventually I'll be able to walk them together some of the time. And midnight will calm down. He's much less wild (so far) than Fred was at his age.

And when F. was this age, Brandy got sick. It has been five years.
27 September 95

The last two days have been nightmarish. Midnight's wildness yesterday completely unnerved me. Plus I was sweating from whatever loathsome rhinovirus has invaded my respiratory system. By noon I was so strung out that I called in sick. I tried to block an area where Midnight has been digging. I was frantic! He had to be fixed, right then, and for all time!

Later in the day I thought: you can always refurbish the garden after he is more grown up. Let it go. Let go. Most of the garden is fine. But I was still a wreck.

Managed to wash the car and clean out all the sand and dog hair. Decided Fred did not have to go to the beach every morning at eight, no matter how I felt. This morning tried walking him, feeling them both, then walking Midnight, then letting them play. I need to just keep
trying new patterns. I realize now that the dogs require good old hard work and attention. I may pay Gwen for an at-home consult and I probably should enroll Midnight in the next round of obedience school. And I should break down and take him to the park, at least once! It doesn't have to be at five. It could be any time, all day.

I am resisting altering the patterns of Marty's and my life together. I want some things to remain the same.

Last night I entered the living room and took all the sympathy notes down stairs. Rearranged the plants. Put some wood sculptures (a manta ray and an outrageously canoe model, the former Penanian, the latter carved by a Marquesan Islander on Tahiti).

Late yesterday afternoon I moved my fiction bookcase into Marty's old study and Midnight's crate into my old bedroom. Now, neither room looks remotely the same. Deep down, it_eludes me, the change.
There are more photos to go through, both
Marty's and mine. There is family stuff to
ship off. Then the guest room will contain
his bird pictures but nothing else of him.
When will I allow a guest?!

The Dietrich Vanyu print of the birth of
Mumi looks fine in there, and the terrifying
photo collage that Marty got - the man
wading through floods of water toward
two dimeter giant escalators - is off the
wall. What a relief.

Last night I realized I could get a
new sound system whenever I wanted. So
midnight's room will be complete, before
too long - in fact, whenever I want.

That's the problem. I want. I don't
want. Push and pull.

I also will get rid of much of the
patio furniture. The next neighborhood
cleanup.

There is so much to do. And I want it
all done now. But of course it will
take months to redesign my house.
And there's no rush. And a large part
of the painful tasks are over and done

That's another problem. Goodbye.

And hello to what? To whom?

That's the hardest problem of all. As I wrote that, I also flashed: and this will be exciting, too.

Why am I so hard on myself? Why do I criticize myself for not being in control? I'm not in control after all I went through. How could I be, after all that has happened? And how could I not be devastated after all that has happened?

This morning I thought — of course I'm crying. It's anniversary of diagnosis time, that night that ruined our lives forever. Destroyed our life's happiness. Took his life. Took mine. We were never the same after that night.

Oh, well. The misery seems to have lifted. I feel calmer. It's going to hurt terribly, sporadically, for a long time.