

LIDA'S WEDDING

Bill Brown



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Preface

Bill Brown was born in Seattle in 1918, grew up on Queen Anne's Hill. After college and a hitch in the Merchant Marines he served in WWII, first with the British Army Ambulance Corps in North Africa, then as a staff sergeant in the US Army's 134th Infantry. In late 1944, after months of fighting his way north through Italy, he and his company were captured by Germans on the Moselle River in France and sent to a POW camp in Poland. He was liberated by Russian troops in early 1945.

Back in the states, Bill returned to the Seattle area, where he received an MA in English from the University of Washington. While at the university he briefly edited and published a Communist student newspaper, for which he was cited in the McCarthy era. He returned to Europe, spent a few years on the GI Bill in Paris. When he next returned to the US he joined a community of artists which included Morris Graves in Laconner, Washington. From Washington, he moved south, to Portland, then settled and worked in the San Francisco-Berkeley area of California. He worked as a landscape gardener, a trade he learned as a young man in Seattle. In the mid 1960s Bill and his family moved to Bolinas, where his literary ties grew.

Brown's literary correspondents included William Carlos Williams and Malcolm Cowley; his peers included Jack Spicer, Philip Whalen, Richard Duerden, Gary Snyder, Lew Welch, Joanne Kyger, Ricard Brautigan, James Koller, numerous other writers, and several painters, including Phil Roeber and Jack Boyce. In 1965 a section of his first novel, *The Way to the Uncle Sam Hotel*, which was based on his experiences as a POW, was published as *In Hometown* by *Coyote's Journal*. The entire novel was published a year later by Coyote Books. In 1986 he published his second novel, *The Kwan Yin Tango*, in a limited edition for friends. The short story collection, *We Are, Are We?*, which he considered his autobiography, was published by Coyote Books in 1991.

Bill Brown died in San Rafael, California in 1994, soon after returning from two years in northern New Mexico, where most of *Lida's Wedding* was written. He had five children.

Lida's Wedding

The Horned Rabbit
& Furry Turtle
Cross Nowhere Mountains

(Hakuin to a far-away monk)

3 May '91

Behind you now, already a past. Marguerite would say you've grown old just inside the edge of something called now. Doing it. The other shoe. You grabbed up the canteen or scratched your nose – not the whole fish, but something.

My early oyster eyes squint down at her card again. That's good, my oyster eyes, and of course your Palmer-method scribble, that sound. "Rocks!" trying to read your note. I never did eat a fox, though did the eye of a gazelle in Palmyra – plus that long German scrawn that wouldn't be stewed with our prison onion – we bought the cat for a pack of Camels. Why mind the place by the Oder – that it was prison? I wander..

I cry it again, "Rocks!" buttoning the coat with froze-up fingers. Pain in the bum. This old us yatter-yatter, ain't it the truth? Just fancy's what old Grandma'd say. I remember blood was always needed. Licking hot thick sugary. Famished ghosts. Passing the shadows of statues, Bloom'd crack forth, "The Gaiety!" We had The Society on Friday nights, Lon Chaney to boot. After THE

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA I ran back up Broadway, streetlight to streetlight, what's done's done. I don't know how I got here, young enough for Catechism class, Father Durgen asking how we felt about the Host. I raised my hand. He nodded down. I said I wanted to say Hi! Which made the old Jebbie smile.

Why do you say stuff like this?

There's more to it than that...

Take Durgen. Close to my grandpa. There when he died. He's who brought me up, the old man with pink hair. The Catechism thing must've been earlier. His black policemen's shoes. I liked the old guy. It might be better that I said it. There. On it goes, this wide place at the end of the bigger roadway, not a town, like they say. I found the wad of notes tucked neatly into the bigger wad of roadmaps, etc.

This's some of the etc.

Dreams, yes. The town's name was Sugar. Its Sheriff, and the one in the filthy hat, way into their snowball fight in front of Sugar's spiffiest whorehouse, windows full of titterers, all their pilfering, lippy eyes up there watching the flying white balls, me in my incautious strap-boots, O yes, they're noisier than monkeys midst so many lavish flakes, the two big old boys but shadows now in the silence.

Which cartoon's the real article. You well might laugh explosively. In my case, one of my sneezier laughs. Not enough to stop Spoon, my white dog – I call him my – who thought he'd follow me on down to Pod the van, me and this canvas suitcase thing, it being daylight now.

He's begun scratching the new blue door. With black circles under his eyes, he's taken to looking like Carole Lombard if she'd been someboy's dishwater blonde. So? The phone's ringing. Her in El Prado again, north of Taos, but one way to get to Lida's Tucson wedding. They'll put

me up in this big adobe whatever. I've heard it before – from her – she'd do better as my daughter. I already have two of those. Leave it be. Or say I'm counting my toes in D-minor, hoping withall. I see Keaton again in the mirror.

7 May

Back and forth to Pod, with the stuff I forget. Spoon's tail thumping on the floor. Must be he thinks he's coming along. The knee-high Jap anemone've given it up, too much riffing wind in there, withered now. No glary white flowers come fall. Kids shouting again on the street, same hammer someplace. Snooze, kicking off a boot, feel Spoon's eyes – hey you, one slice cuts the bread in two, hallahlolya! Him chasing to the turn with the church and its bell. Byebye to you – went farther the night back've the ambulance – old doggie, Pod's past soccer field, out to the big valley's bogless turfs' I-5...

What what, Manteca! In wrong place per always, feedlots plus feedlots under bright long roofs, all Herefords, wide sky above. We eat you, stockstill brown cows. Alberta on radio'd mean L.A. Yuh gotta live uhlittle. How come holy cows come only in white? Ok, us'n the pigs'd quit eating each other, lilies'd bloom in boiling soup.

I think so. Missing Spoon. We're sort of mates. Miles in the haze since himself's a pup – he has it bad like dogs do, we have that in common. Tight-cut plumtrees now, no rolling grasses. O, two of these roads, this one south, that north, plus acres of diesel gasoline place's asphalt, here next door to white wooden Holy Word church – blinks pink neon in the pink far-off blue hazes. Less said the better.

Which he liked when I hummed, about wailed the ditty itself – THET LITTLE SOD SHANTY ON MUH CLAIHAIM! He loved it enough to whimper up at my shut eyes like dogs being sung to do.

Maybe worse on this one, before, three of us, tiny Ez nodding in between, raining and raining, New Year's ballgames galore. I remember I have to piss bad about over there above the orchard, pulled over to shoulder, soon understood will keep one them styrofoam dodads handy, have me this grand thing to piss into in the middle of town, anywhere at all, plus never then climb out get all wet, etc.

Hoo, German George taking racetrack piss chomps ham sandwich, full mouth'd say, "Yagh's more to racetracks'n horses!"

Vast excess, long shots to dissolve raining highway, dark, low hills.

You want some H.Q. shit? As of now – Greenwich time! – short on destinations. Well-well, nothing realer than nothing. No, snake-necked heron back in the soccer-field puddle, now 1,000's of semiswhopping my way, which sign's just said DRAIN AND RIFLE RANGE ROAD, which's clear of I-5, somewhere called OILDALE, its high dusty fog deadstill above 30's L.A. streets nobody'd know.

What'd I expect? No strings attached – minus that P O M ! oblitative as China's trillion cherry-bombs'd make yor hand sting quite good.

Bakersfield

No sweeps of emerald grass, but acres of a stuff never saw before after I-5's mile on mile, stolid leaves keeping mum like they do, some evening streets, cars go by like it's too late for rain to fill the gutters, splash knee-high off walls. No big cops in slickers that shine like gun-barrels having fun carrying girls across the bad places.

Why try to be Raymond Chandler? The wide streets? I dreamed it's the Mongolia Hotel, ground floor all to myself. People around the dinky plastic pool, scrawny kids, fat people, like it's the beach. Agh-hagh, cold water! Highway glued in Pod too long's all Ireland versus the rest of Ireland, yawps Joyce again, a lot of money he spent on'is nose, O tales of circus life, they're highly demoralizing. We know these rooms? Ceilings not high nor their doors tall. The carpet doesn't look like the blue snow on my calendar with the wolf, nor do the windows look out on darkening hills, wherever they are.

What I'll then not do's sit on the edge of this deep, soft chair to look at Mrs... if I don't remember her name she's worth a stare – no trouble at all, with her slippers and her legs in sheerest silk stockings, visible to the knees, one well beyond.

As she had no drink, she'd hardly swallow or give me a cool, lewd look over the rim of her glass.

“I didn't know you really existed,” she'd not quite say, “except in books or snooping in hotels.”

Then, as if putting down her glass on the flat arm of the chaise-lounge, or flashing the emerald, even touching her hair, slowly she'd say, “Well, yes, then how do you like, I mean, do they really call them Kentucky Fried chickens?”

Item – no, BIG SLEEP'll not work backward, or forward, no part of the thing. Ok, then drop it, him plus his pewter-mouthed pals. Now MOZO THE SNOW MONKEY's amber-red Macaque face peering through the snowflakes, her bullshit-wrenching slow old eyes....

10 May

You pay up, watch their staring eyes, Pod idling after some coffee. “How do I get out of here?” answered at the

Texaco corner a long block away. Both of them in there just up from Louisiana, not spelled like he said it. Real tall girl, him, looking at each other unsmiling. Not much to say, but do tell me how to get out of the place. I nod like I hear, which I don't, two ambulances yopping at our corner too closeby. I can remember closeup I knew nothing.

Vermilion neon Taco Bell spells MOJAVE. To and from Tehachapi's wide airstrip highway's pileups of bare rolling hills, thousands of electrical have-to-be aluminum windmills whirling up and down the slopes, leather sky at top of said Pass. Hardly a car, I said out loud, my hedgerow voice – long semis up in back of the lavender Mojave hills.

A railroad place, that Shell where the old station'd been, the guy gives me gas. "Pick uh pack've pickled peppers," said I to his long-billed face, "Hoh, more to it than that!"

He gives me his "Hunh!" swallowing a passing ghost or fly, "Whah?"

"Well now what?" gargled I at his shoe, he who thought he'd sell me a map. "I got one!"

Then this kind of flat desert. Fields of big rigs, engines barely running, cattle-trucks, maybe two pink Grandma's Cookies, half a block each before Barstow, which's down below high and low bumpy hills, its miles of freight and oilcars dead still out there. Here there's longer, straighter roads than before. Before? O boy, all our late-sixties words. Saw the needles up back of Needles. Hottest little dump in the US the wheezy conductor told me. On 66, one turquoise pickup'd be hauling loose hay, looking worn down – another long Santa Fe's murmuring along its tracks through ancient dust as I kill a fly on one knee. "On earth," muttered I, "as it is in Heaven." Well now.

Somewhere – of course, somewhere – the dream not any dream, in or outside of Barstow's dowdy cross-streets with Limey names, me driving a cab again, in

CHINATOWN, nose-patched Nicholson now wants a no-number place, so he asks, "You know watersnakes?"

"Cottons yeah," I maybe answered. "Little fuckers'n east Texas, we'd keep one in the chamber – G-I soap'd plug'm up okay."

"Plug? What up?"

"Brass you got in the chamber," I went on, trying to find the man's number.

"Yeah?" All he said, must've been. I hummed cheerfully. He resumed, "You think this's goin' in circles?"

"Not a good question..."

Motel

Place's railroads, thinking like that, big engine roundhouse at the foot of this hill. Bowtie behind the counter trying to stare me down. The end of an afternoon you begin to see the day changing its colors in flat sunlight. Down in the parking lot about twenty Koreans far into a baseball game.

The old lame one at the top of balcony-stairs peering my way too. "See yuh had some sleep." Orphan Annie eyes, makes his somewhat growlier "Ughh!" as I step toward his step.

Pretending I know what the guy's talking about, louder than I meant to, "Hey, yeah!"

How does he manage the stairs on crutches – or has he stopped here in that he can't or won't try to go down on them? No gesture to using, trying to use the stair. He's just there, blank funnypaper eyes, stepping neither back to let me pass, nor, I won't say quite advancing toward me.

“Yuh cut yuhself?”

His almost smile twisted his mouth, whole side of the gray face, my finger now touching the scrap of tissue on my chin.

“Won’t say that toilet-paper’s bad idea,” he’d begun to frown again as he minced his toothpick lips. “N’any case ain’t bleedin’.”

Must have decided to cut it short, be on my way to the corned beef smells, only the man’s not budged, my one foot touching the top step, call it an inch, so my second step’s stopped, perched, caught in my tracks.

“Where you goin’ to?”

“Stuff to do.”

“Okay!” He’d begun to hum now, “N’what’s in the box?”

“Nothin’ much,” all but barging at the next step, past the two aluminum crutches, him half flattened at black iron railing, our eyes closeup, only now he’s nimbly shifted one crutch back to its yellow wall, so I pass close in front of him, down to wide asphalt full of red and purple Koreans.

In the box – two yellow #2 pencils, pen I can’t give away, two dubious batteries, one blue agate Richard shoved at me one mysterious laundromat morning, not a good handful wood clothespins, odd toothpicks like dirty fingernails, somesuch my clutched unwanted old box...

More than half true, I wanted to walk around down there, my legs want to, don’t remember if its still more of 66 beside traintracks. Making a tape of freightcars’ noises blanging by – call it coddling this cuckoo-clock bent. O, the straighter the face, more somber my eyes, etc etc...

So now! as our hairless rifle-instructor’d say, kitty-corner to my window up here, two Korean girls in Cincinnati

caps sharing giant Donald Duck grapefruit juice in blue shadows... Some more of hell's copious delights. Well and good, we're at that overly big cafe they call HEDY's, where I'd meant to go for coffee, too many long tables and yes, shapeless'd be a word, now filled with inhabitants of the R-V wagontrain tidily drawn up around full heat Korean ballgame. Said inhabitants' clockwork elbows jampacking Hedy's like real old honeybees.

No, wait, it's what first must be this voice, overperceptible and hoarse, entreatyful as any night street's commonest meow'n next'd come my odd mutter, presently chewing at some visible unchewables hid on its plate beneath a colorless gravy or no, these aren't it either. It being that gigantical TV that's all over the one real wall in here, since various genuine scads of us've found it best to ignore each and every putting face right there upon Pebble Beach's greeny links beside its inky blue waters. Said faces've, albeit side-show shadowed by any golfer's fruit-hued visors or bills, evidently dipped their numerous noses into what incredible varieties of well-mauved zinc oxide. So far I've been unable to detect, no matter where inside our contestants' visages, any clue at all that'd half-prove he or she's not but another ubiquitous, ice-hearted prick.

Hoo, take in their tassled Footjoys beneath this sky, the grinny earnestness atop each one's breathless putt, those whirring long drives, like faraway birds, none of it betrayed by our heartiest broadcasters, who on first taking such in, seldom if ever appear to be carrying on, urging our players beside the rocky-ledged sea to be more of whomever they already are – if obviously desirous of grasping firmest hold of the entire attention of one or all of these rabidly munching inhabitants, R-V dwellers I mean, etcetera, etcetera.

How do I know what I ate? There it was.

That's all there is, mused I as I grasped the red toothbrush I don't want. "Suit yourself!" said the girl in her Thrifty's-beige smock. I stumble on Free-Books-Box at

the glass door, old yellow hardback Zane Grey, THE
LAST PLAINSMEN...

*I never raised my eyes to the north that I did not draw in
breath and grow chill with awe and bewilderment at the
marvels of the desert...*

Unlit street across from Kingman's tracks and
roundhouse, handfuls of stars, down a block find tobacco
store postcard, Zapata and pals in Sunday hats'n boots.
Quick note to El Prado – Why not paint guys like in foto,
shined boots, their eyes waiting on camera? (See circa
1912 in corner.) Hey, Phoenix tomorrow, you on right
plane.... Love, B.B.

Her again, Marguerite, who said you never know a story
until it's written. This's not writing, not looked at that
way, us in the act of ourselves, me talking like this, Hedy
TV's rosy-nosed golfers – but leaving the place, hallway
beside the door, framed photo of Indians you don't not
look at – Ogallalas? – in winter cavalry uniforms around
Hotchkiss gun – WOUNDED KNEE 1890 – its careful
white scrawling over wheel, white signature across gun
itself. Isn't there more to it than remembering
inaccurately?

You mostly know. Sixties, our yellow pickup'd hit 66
from Death Valley by way of Searchlight. Here, by
daylight's big trains, freights bonging down cold tracks
higher than my ankles, poolhall bar open in next block –
Andy Devine Way – park in front, old injun guy dealt
table's quarters, the trains rattling bottles, pool-players'd
shut up, etc.

Try to send Shao other Zapata tonight. Us together here,
Whoa! Thirty years ago? Do he remember 66's Chinese
cooks, its dried colors, two lanes to Santa Fe? Nah, the
guy do not write like this – need funnypaper bad word,
GRARRK!

Type it later, the way it is. Pencil, ballpoint'll walk all over its page. You know, what you write's only a picture of itself.

Now, layers of mountains every whichway. Today 11th? Shell Station map's red teepees're injuns? No. Spikey spindlebrush in first light, earlier floating Red Tail now overhead, blinkless buzzards – this's Ok, narrow, dynamited, winding road, all sheer underneath spiders, thorns, snakes, gophers, earlier coyotes and flies, ain't no place we'll dance! – Shellmap shortcut to Phoenix or she there (Look up arrival-time!) – but beside narrow gulches, a draw, scrubby gallery more stone again, open a window for crinkled air, some minutes deadstill, breathing, desert airbath.

Us? Like before, me & Pod, who'd make wone mediano donkey, huh? Us and our little ways plus tell me another when we get there, OK? Then what? Why not, like always, we don't see why we come here...

So say I've snuck old Bonnard along? Him staring at the light – they have to have like some kind of effrontery, Cartier-Bresson's photos prove it, half shaved old guy by a wall, railed at, sunlight against his old head – himself, Cézanne bein' two Frogs drank down trees, rocks, the apples, which whatnots we live inside of.

Town, something. No, Wickenburg's on the road map, three signs – two gasolines, an eating place. Famous Jailtree in heart of almost downtown... Outlaws chained to the tree from 1863 to 1880 for lack of a good hoosegow where escapes were seldom known...

In GRANDMA'S FRESH PIES at the counter, in Duck-Heads, old train-cap, one coffee, his boots because they're what he's in. You'd like him to smile, ask where his suitcase's hiding, which must've held what else he do or don't have on, Pod next to his pickup now going up on nextdoor rack. We've agreed, nothing to say. Who goes on about Jail Trees or bum black oil in yr block?

Pretty postcards on Unocal beatup gascap counter –
out've which window a crew pouring new curbs to only
visible intersection, genuine yayhoos thereabouts stripped
to rivermud hides trowling away – more postcards galore
shrieking bright desert flowers, do I say doin' it? Plus
Joshuas caught in the act, also galore, one giganical
tourista Rattler, always, only by now Pod'n me we're
bouncing down I do guess straighter roads in the wider
valley, this out-o-tune face properly everyday grim
enough for prehistoric coins, early afternoon at it too
long...

It?

Look, pell-mell, grave faces'd fuck away – gas's low
down! main drag clouds, hooo!, all of it's toward, ticket in
teeth, vast cuckoo acres for parking, it and its whizzing
jitney all over the place, etc!

Only you've sure as all shit seen our driver's chartreuse
neck you'd duly say so again – “WHUUUF!” – which's
at some kind've oncoming vehicular fulltide'n “YAWP!”
barked out the redhead beside me, reeking of Lilac
swamps – or OBREGADO it'll say up where they say
stuff, sure, me gaping like I know what it means, but
thence, even thence, what strange places to be aren't, are
they, this close to brightest Egypt?

If we'll purr our HMMMNs beneath what numerous
glass doors – they're next! – doing their ins-and-outs in
the walls of this slinkiest, white building...

White?

Uncontainable white noises to pin words to that plane's
huge shadow

she just said

THUNDERS PROBLEM? long

bench's lines of

supernaturally sober faces

(which copybook invariably matters in this queer aseptic light)

“come’n go breathin’, huh Babydoll? beatsuh sheet outah yur faraway hurries”

Other advantages to bein’ a Scarecrow! mused Scarecrow Kingpin, which’s been at it longer’n what’d he say? BUM DEEDEE BUM?

then do one know oneself
why one laughs?

I saw the door open
my feet come out?

well most certainly they do too whole bunches of girlies off to the first dance down at the Taj Mahal like how they squeal’n titter’n always blush awfully if she’s the Queen of Lightning

OKAY
skywhite
waitingroom
mouth open asleep
dream I miss you / MISS? she tweets
Ahrr! she’d offer, OHHH-NOHHH!
HOO! I’ll gargle or some tender somesuch’s

faraway laughters

(from notebook torn-off page where the chartreuse jeweled driver guy’s pinned to the purple shirt that says Cesar McRoarty)

Windy blackbird bobbing on the three-blossom plum branch, here now or so went telephone plan to meet Stacia’s plane and on to the wedding dance, weekago notes in pockets like old cigarets, sit like this on the green tin chair at a too-green table facing the door she’d come through, it saying on the green-lit thing too high on the wall, she’d do her very such up there at Gate IV.

Funny, very. Foam on most of our noses, why not we're in clown class? Glen Miller CHATANOOGA CHOO-CHOO'n us, hardly a war to dance to. I mean, Hey you! Blondie there, in your wear'n tear face's Oz shades, front of two greener than black or blue eyes – faces'll stay in back of my eyes, Una Merkel's, not Sally Rand's, Lombard herself's, one or another numerous 30s blonde workaday ladies, only nope, this one's hair's more hers than any showbiz busybees.

I said “Nohoh, it's we're right here!”

She calls me “Officer Stinkthumb!”

“Naw,” I said, “what I said's you're your own juicer – equals why not despise that shit? Anyway you cut it, you're you.”

Only she's telling me I don't know what, snipping it off with one fine “CAPEESH?”

Yuh tellin' me via yor yippery NUH-CAPEESH! as pertains to any FUHUCK-OFFS I'd ever hear? Me now taking on shy, “Yuh gotta be using uh leaky pen, fingers're all purply!”

“You police? Due respects, drunktanks don't work...”

“Not for me they don't,” agreed I, “me nor anybody.”

Well now, enter two bikebooted scalawags who're totin' that boom-box or no, exit same pair, across what tedious doors, out've which somebody'd yowl something, shaking a hand to the taxi that dusk's always here's, not to say his heart's been traced by an arrow'n how he'd stretch like some motionless toad lapping flies off the air – so Blondie vamoosed, I never saw how. Gate IV's got no late-arrivals – none – today.

What?

Just now inquire of the porter guy, how do you get from right here into Tucson, etc. Ah yagh go awnder the Ten freeway ovuhpass'n up ontuh Tain'n bout wone ol' houah so, go peek at roadmap'n scratch muh tail or pick at my nose'n jerking out've said cindery place in nothin' flat, flat bein' dusk, like it be'n what's out there's smucky blue gasoline, playin' at nighttime's got to be dark as the dark, their daguerrotypes everyplace, or nah, this all's dustier than night's knives.

Well. So I do swear by all've the flying snakes in Borneo, herselfs not being here's bollixed it like which day's this? Why go on dreaming this's nobody's cartoon? How come it comes out different any time I tell it? It's not in my plans, which we both know there aren't any of – of? – and for that, a day or something later Stacia'll be telling me her thing in this, only I don't know, do I, what's out there...

Can't hear any shit if I did, which's not somebody's whisperings we let on to, which's Ok in prayers, I mean where our ghosts hang out to dry, only please, in this summer dusk, remember as best you're able all yur answers. Oh, for pity's sake – which's Granny's I guess – she who loved the bird'n her dominoes, her hands making things, like she rubbed my head. None of which's... fuck this scenery anyway. EEENOUGH! borbled the drowning sailor in Pod down Ten, as old Keaton's harried eyes'd come poppin' from that coalsack of stars – nagh! I guess an hour of billions anthracite lights okay, 'n right here down under its amber street ones'd be Tucson. O, the Mex kid in backward A's cap in gas place damn near underneath Ten freeway, he told me where.

Yeah? Huge ol' neon sign's CONGRESS HOTEL, right in my lap.

HOTEL

Open, window's creaking night birds. One, two slow passing cars, the one big unbusy green night thing – locust? – in wall lamplight to left of left ear. Underwater legs, Peter Lorre eyes, we did, stared at each other.

Well-well again and again. Airport. No, her isn't. Who cares? Nighty-night.

12 MAY

“Morning!” I said loud at gray window, street's dustwhite sky, roof-fringed to boot. Big signs, old streets. The bed, yellow linoleum's rag rug... drippy faucet, in sink there I want to piss into. Hayoose, who are you kiddin'? Too many meantimes since Spoon'd like it in here. Slow street below slow curtains. Big sack, 50 lbs parrot seed in my skull somewhere? Sort of promised in San Rafael for parrot, Elan. Two white birdies in other crate, too twiddly, her birds. Gets it on with horses means understands them, that inasmuch as am today liable to laugh off-key. Heard this place's bad John Dillinger hotel, doesn't mean much. Some Santa Fe train ruins back streets.

Are there any trips you mean? Now a car goes bloomp on street below, plus – long moment – think I'll refer to me as him, so closing Joanne's little book, he'd leave the bed to piss into he always felt the hole in the floor, now even glaring down into its tiniest bubbles, grunting to pull on the other sock, the blue one he found under the bed.

“Long night?” inquired the tall trusty Hindu back of downstairs desk. Discover this lobby coffee's fish scale cold. Find her in Taos, eight o'clock, too sleepy to go boo!

I persist. “Hey, like the Santa Fe Plaza day after tomorrow, noon on the button!?”

Strange, again strange saying that, on the button, time and again. No way am calling Lida. Sister Sadie, like on Mama's envelopes – South Grande – big adobe place. Please see old Wyatt Earp snoozing in kitchen. Lot of them at coffee around the big table, herself, Diana, on the phone at window hissing zippitty Mex to one of tonight's bands – they'll get \$75 more apiece per what they'd have on. Aka Seenyourah Beezie. Son Seth, last seen long ago skipping down steep SF hill, asleep in corner, sumptuous split-hair blonde close-by. He winks. I can't wink good, I nod. What nobody's said, there's D's mama, older sister from NYC, thereby so many howto's as regards tonight wedding – like take I-29 Nogales road to Exit 48 out to Reventone Ranch, y muchas enfasis, must follow signs to Mullins wedding. Which's not exactly what we are. Another family thing, waiting on the big night tonight, Sadie, Seth – not hardly, give'm another fifty. So goes the tale we go on.

There we were, looking into Pod's fancy insides...

“You never did this?” she'd be bound to come up with.

“Nah!” I'll return, “kind've a Texas pal, marine carpenter, told me they always'd have a Lida somewhere in the family.”

O, silence, like always the closeby cars, mamasan still giving Pod stuffings long look, “N'what'll you do with it?”

“Why not little trips like this, maybe Baja somewhere?”

“Yeah'n, hey, you do know how to get down there, before Five I hope, we'll be in front. Come'n sit with us.”

“Do sound right,” I said, closing the side-doors. Sadie's voice from inside the screen-door, another call, she'd shout back. “Give Lida a hug,” was all I got off.

“Lida, why not?” she hollered from inside.

The dry, grating noises in my head since daybreak. Also a cricket on her red road. You cicadas out of the ground instanter, ready to go. Looking for one big kind've brown insect, I'd see me in her little-girl's-gone-byebye eyes. Forgot to tell her'd slept off the main drag near Boron in back've Pod near big underpass, wake up first light by boarded-up front of QUEEN WANDA'S BEAUTEE SHOPPEE, tin-squeaking sign on pole in rubber-tire geranium-beds.

Now hear man through the screen, "Yeah'n that Aberdeen Angus bull we'd call Kink." Somebody said so, which, down here, is a thing they do, like Lida's pa Drum's ranch's on the west corner of New Mexico, almost into Old Mexico, etc.

Ok, again'n again, what's that in Keaton's wide eyes?

Never get too used to this kind of stuff – plus torpor under this brassy glare, yellow morning of black shawls, black-lacquered ducks? Pah! go the facts of life, if paddling her canoe she's changed, who don't? Tell her I might do that, move up to Taos a while, she said the winters get too cold. Anyway, now look IT up in their lobby Webster.

The desk backup's in blue turban, dyed-in-the-forehead protruding tangerine eyes, ivory cross hanging ear to ear below chin.

IT pron (ME akin to DU HET) it used as subject of impersonal verbs w/out referring to the person, thing, situation, which is connected with final, ultimate or perfect (Zero hour, this is it!) (slang) anemphatic pronouncement referring to an attractive personal quality such as vigor or sex appeal, or as one in the game of tag who must try to catch another. WITH IT (slang) alert, informed, hip...

Enough, it's tangled up – peeking for pop-eyed cricket on her dinky, red not pink roadway, said cricket before

Webster – ‘n driving past Mex grocery abt. 5, 6 blocks from cricket, here-and-there sky’s clouds all over, scribble this on yellow pad from postcard shop – rows of Kahlo, a heart she must’ve done, up and down walls, one to El Prado tonight.

Ok, always knew shopping-lists, reminders, do not or won’t trust memory – who the Happy Hell was Santa Fe, Saint Steel or Faith? Asked long ago, got that look. Near hotel green-light buzzbuzz traffic caught wit pants-down chariot racing, then silent but for injun girl on old bike, O boy, whatever, her brown legs in big chunks of sunlight – then more cars’ noises behind hotel corner. Hoh-hoh! Green Man in the Green Hat, those gloves, cries out to the Green Door, “Bless muh buttons!”

But for counting their passing cars, two clamorous firetrucks, which deadass Sunday’d be more itself than some other Sunday? Old man Bonnard’d go clap on my eyes, yes the whites on blues on early gold’s White Almond Tree, the red Cupboard’s lacquered dark reds’d be but our snoozy afternoon in Sligo, her Oirish good-evenin’ bein’ from noontime on...

Walk awhile, empty downtown’s empty – please see I’m this afternoon Church kid tiptoedly conniving what pennance he’ll owe a day, real thoughts of Lida, groom Mullins, us picknicking in tree’s shadow. Getz at foot of hill we’d wander by, big old Rodins under the sky. Plus what now’d be Broadway’s Auto Row – Pod, quick lube, ask guy, whatuhyuh do up here, tearass town to town?

“Way’ll yeah,” drawled he, “or yuh’r goin’ up to Santa Fe, round there? hay no sweat yuh jes take ol’ tain’n twanty-fahve far’s yuh’r goin...” Reknowned feeling, old as chores, gotta get muh ass in gear.

“Thinking,” wheeze I, “am smellin’ some Panhandle by now.”

“Nah, ol’ Estacado’s full’ve daid wells’n thet tain’s straighter’n snow piss, movin’ both ways today.”

“How long up to Santa Fe?”

“Buh-dark, yuh leave here early.”

Mice-eyed words wrong on paper. Forgot, by hotel door asking noon stroller where'd I get Pod greased, etc. “Mahl're so. Sahzahble place yuh sahd this street.”

Lobby's other Hindu's turban now more robin's-egg blue, but who, now seated by the glass-topped wicker writing thing's surely got himself into what appears to be the direst funambulistical funk. “Uh, Sahib,” scarcely grunted I, wagging Frida's heart at the guy's blue turban – which means tulip in Turkey – “I'd so much really like to write to somebody, right there!”

Himself confounded, of course, as morbidly so, thus caught disallowably seated, raising both veined amber eyes at me like I'd lost his Adam's apple, ivory cross's bouncing away, so now he stands straight as an icicle, clomps his heels to flee to their white wicker loveseat beneath its unbidden potted palm.

Sadie's pet weasel kept doodling all over her big kitchen-table, plus lahdeedah! Blue, twitchy, glare's ANIMAL CRACKERS again, Benarji now in hot pink Mao tunic, chin in hands like kid watching window rain as Harpo'd shoot down two golden statues who shoot right back plus, of course, Groucho's camera-conniving brow – please now see Marse Sahib's left iris's autonomic nerve-wreath's real prolapsis – the man's transverse colon – he'd be giving back to above movie's opening chorus this summer evening's first tripletongued sigh.

So? You've had little enough trouble by now guessing I'm considerable above average at skidding assbackwards, this lobby of us not unwarily stuck to our 3 or 4 Marx boys, not too unlike they're this new bubblegum stuck variously to all boots and shoes from inside that box's glaucous staring, plus the one in the blue turban's hung

yet another cross to his ears, which he's caught us all gawking at.

"Twoo T H I E V E S !" so screamed the avid fellow, no word more as our Marxian clowns get themselves caught up into more nets of their brotherly shitfits, like why not high-tail it up those stairs to hallway's abrupt turn into 214 to Joanne's little Yucatan book, plus one Granny Smith on dresser'd do fine for tonight supper, etc... Wait, jackeasy trick to pilfer anything from somebody's book. Two Bonnard pages sent up to next state. Or no, good looksee how the old guy put it together. Old evening road out past South Grande house, blazing white – no magenta ancient Xavier del Bac Mission (Cathedral?) in Pod's pink dust.

Reventone Ranch by Amado's one donkey – this side of Cairo, always one! – braying hiccups. Cars, mostly vans everywhere, ditto needless flashlights. Exit 48 like she said, over traintracks, uh-huh Mercedes in terracotta dusk, hundreds of chairs, bingo! Wedding in almost last of light.

Dim recollections in late sun. Lida and friends in ranch room getting ready. Yard after yard of long, white gown, Diana saying, "Hurry up, the guests are all waiting! The sun's going down!" Bouquets, full white lace veil.

Guests around altar on the desert, rows of folding chairs, sand and prickly pear, cholla, mesquite trees, Drum in formal western wear. D's relatives, bridesmaids (from Lida's pals to Thea!) all in white, turquoise, salmon-flowers accompanied by Atty's friends waiting in saffron robes.

Lida, Atty kneel in front of altar. Philip bows many times, reads what follows – all guests have copies to read along...

MAHA PRAJNAPARAMITA HRIDAYA SUTRA

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva when practicing deeply the Prajnaparamita perceived that all the five skandhas in their own being are empty and was saved from all suffering. O Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness. O Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness: nor they do not appear nor disappear, are not tainted nor pure, do not increase or decrease.

Therefore in emptiness no form, no feelings, no perceptions, no impulses, no consciousness, no eyes, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind, no realm of eyes until no mind-consciousness; no ignorance and also no attainment. With nothing to attain, the Bodhisattva depends on Prajnaparamita and his mind is no hindrance. Without any hindrance no fear exists, far apart from every perverted view he dwells in Nirvana.

In the three worlds all Buddhas depend on Prajnaparamita and attain unsurpassed complete perfect enlightenment.

Therefore, know the Prajnaparamita is the great transcendent mantra, is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra which is able to relieve all suffering and is true not false. So proclaim the Prajnaparamita mantra, proclaim the mantra that says:

G A T E G A T E
P A R A G A T E
P A R A S A M G A T E
B O D H I S V A H A

*

Tend? To watch over? (Also transitive as tendency to, etc.)

Watch, stare, gawk at no gap – time between here and there on yellow paper – evening desert or 214, this room's oxide pink book on lap's Joanne's little jungle trip, PHENOMENOLOGY to right off see her head's at work through her voice telling it, plus scrawled postcard inside's THE ROYAL PURPLE BROKEN-ANKLE PILLOWBOOK, has to be from winier afternoons in yonder Bolinas shack. No way, but Yucatan's here – pyramids, white monkeys, the old temples every whichway, Laurel & Hardy taxis midst masses of creepers, vines.

DZIBILCHALTRUN means where there is writ – writing on rocks.

2 PM IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE OF THE DOLLS

Etcetera, won't (?) can't sleep. Some stamps downstairs, Hotel bar crammed nose-to-nose with burlies, like now they're off work from steelmill, my hastily disposed-of Sabbath obligations upon empty stool equals quick shot of Irish. Not far on that street what's gotta be brand new bus depot's hifalutin terracotta mud-colored plaster, on down Broadway to pink neon LOS ROMPOPOS minus the R. Ompopos – not bad, swinging little door'd let loose unceasing voices, cuckoo-clock bursts of same. All here, its little barroom of us. Include our quiet, or noises which seem to crisscross our potations, not only for laughs, no, in that the flies are the flies upon two doorscreens, that dog yownking smittenly down the block, cars always passing in the desert night rain. Plus, nah, funny's not the right word.

But the then part of then too. Who'd know why this then of us likes it outside better? Better? No, this in here's for

truck-drivers, leastways tonight. They seem to go on with it, like their little radios, soft and mean. Not quite just them, no, I mean that tall lady and her elegant green butterflies, the innkeeper's sporty toothpick he cuts up lemonrinds. Two more too – her black smock or knitted thing, plus the nineteen watches – what I'd so far counted – up and down her long fingers and wrists, tiny ones like rings, tittering now into the ring-fancied ear of her coal-eyed stud. Me another Bushmill's.

So you tell piece of yellow paper, big wedding dance's bouncing along by now. Today? It's just here. Fuck it, all these odd and even pieces of us united by littlest glances. The tall one in green boots's put on her mirror-shades, I see me in them. Somebody speed plunking CHOPSTICKS on wang wang jukebox guitar, me I squeeze last whiskey from nasty glass. Well yeah, we drink, sip, nip, gulp, silent as silence.

Said coal-eyed Valentino the stud, exhaltations, mumblings, bad examples of what's going on. I'll know more tomorrow. More what? Whatever, Coppertop Duracell, innkeeper, shuffles on. "Art'n entertainment!" says he at sinkfull of glasses, ashtrays, whatnots at good arm's length. Me, one adios shot to Broadway's wet warmth, pissy half-mists to taxi's tail lights going by. Wet, empty street's like where I come from. Grab hold! the pickup's tires did ask. Little breezes, they're off dead streets, lit-up bus bumbled by – Johnny Ace's TELL IT LIKE IT IS equals two marine gunner boys, under the log's out of the rain, O this Korean song dear old Bob'd sing downtown – under big yellow aspen leaves, to Taos, earlying rains a while, the song on their faces, they're blank, stone eyes, Buddha's great eyes – one of the marines laughs at his cards, all broody'n fixed in space, silvered to streetlit halos.

Where Have All The Soldiers Gone?

Ok, sidewalk red neon my side of the street – hotel neon redder tonight – big part of a road's all kinds of signs.

BOUILLON MTNS CRAZY ED'S ICE
WEEDPATCH HWY YUCCA PROVING GROUNDS
POWERPOLE RD CHRIST THE KING (near
Shiprock) CATHOLIC CHURCH CALICO MTNS
YELLOW ROSE NEW & USED

Beyond Needles, the Colorado shrunk down, mud-gray,
thirsty.

HOLY MOSES WASH

Rotting pickup truck hung over the edge of
RATTLESNAKE WASH.

Bad Texas rainstorm near Seligman, white sheet Carmen
Basilio lightning.

BUTTERCUP CABALITO DONALEEN
SUMMIT

Spare-tire cover's big letters over tophatted skull BLACK
DEATH VODKA.

*

Lobby Lights, Theatre Itself, nobody here, Kassam bent
at crossword thing on desk, on boob Bing's I WISHED
ON THE MOON. Can't get around this version of us,
and you Lida on phone, our comical silences.

You're too busy by now to get half-pissed we haven't
danced?

Hey, Love!

5/12/91

*

So upstairs, dandered along to room, she'd have on her
ma's best voice, "You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of
yourself!" Surely me letting door close slowly enough to
not exclaim.

Forgot'd put little book (Joanne's) on pillow where I'd left it. So out've pocket yellow scrap, Valentino's names from bar. Rodolpho Alphonso Raffaele etc Valentino, which, snicker'd, put into his ear what sounds like the end of the war, had to've been the Clock Lady...

“GAWD-DAYAM! ! !” voice just cawed from another window.

From her little jungle book:

THE GUARDIAN OF THE TEMPLE IS A BUTTERFLY WE CALL THE AMBASSADOR THE AMBASSADOR GREETUS SITS ON MY HAND EATS A GRAIN OF SUGAR FROM SWEET BUN GETS ITS PROBOSCUS STUCK I GUESS SUGAR STONED A WHILE....

Sunlight dream, I stand there behind who I think I am on her pink roadway as Horny the Crow flaps into room so quick he snaps off light in the dark room, made darker by streetlights.

Sometimes I yawn out loud in more than one note – Short'n sweet, old Granny'd always remind me about good food and ear-aches. End this with this, it's only something itself?

& TEXAS CANYON ETC

Pissdream of one in bar I call the Clock Lady, we're far away on the white desert under snortling surveillance eyelids, vast Dromedary herd, as white sky's basso voice echos, “May you be on loan to my lowliest Dervish for keeps. My Dervishes have but one knee! As for your fingers' clocks, may they be less than the Nile's reekingest muck!”

“Uhh-hughh!” mumbled their dreamer into hotel’s curtains, cold water at face, teeth to some salt, catch me humming all wrong whatever it’d be of the MAGIC FLUTE’s prancing ribcage, another that-settles-that in mirror face’s incommoding eyes...

This page marked 5/13?

Leave, street still spidery-dewed, Pod near doorway. In there, note from daughter Maggie at desk, she dreaming we’re on her birthday drive to find us tall Mex paper-flower the color of three-alarm smoky sun. Lida’s lastnight note not mailed – feels like it wants to stay in pocket. What Jack called “my special nothingness in the common night.” Now facing old Santa Fe Station, I guess tracks back of hotel. Alongside in Utah car, I mean one contented dead-still German policedog, red tennisball in bright teeth, front-seat woman squinting into kookie finder Hitachi Camcorder, taking rear seat dog’s picture via overhead rearview mirror, on radio Marty Robbins braying tenor wails at sky’s perfect silence.

Begin to see the blue lines of all of it on I-10 East, archipelagos everywhere – Sonora? Chihuahua? – every bird up, summer hot day already, hills, mountains’ brown sand, 16-wheeled Granny Goose, a vibrating shingle, blue on the purple as last night’s streetlamp – equals Tucson’s scrubby dust, shale’s – two one-way freeways could easy be West Texas, once upon your old sea bottom. Always stick-cross paper hearts in between roads – Hiydeehoh Babydoll, we’re in pairs, paperwired two-colored bright, faded crosses – see you outside my specs, end of my nose like Mex toys, los pileups memorialized in windy dust, your deadgay plots below faraway mountains’ blue distances, like the sky, which it is, stockstill – plus Distance, good name for whole territory – whirly dust and stones, some more mountains down there plus one black tree beside the road. Willy Blake’s been by. Only what’s not growing from the sand’s the pink, smooth, giant rocks

I'd know pisselegant zero of – likely sandstone's about all, if they're that, or big glaciers' sediments, all over the place this far up off've runty Canyon poppies, trillions New Mex dandelion-shaped sunflowers, no etcs but near and far sides' glaring grit's one bum place to be between on a horse...

*

All set to say try out the roads like women try hats. High, wide plains' vast crumpled pancake, on and on...

Never'd know it had a name... TEXAS CANYON, Elev 4,975 went the road sign. Light glinting at light in washblue sky, only can't see what am trying to say, silent windshield faces inside of out there, a girl her raised can of Bud, eyes shut, maybe singing real loud at void's birded sky. If this is it it's no canyon – wider than a canyon, more like saddles it'd be up north, and west where 66 has to be, blue or brown flatland more than – or right now I must've blopped out my solitary "FRUITLESS!" at more than round, oblong or something, big pieces of pink stone against early sky.

A quick laugh's not much as noises go. Who'n fuck cares? Hoping for old pal Monk Philip. Later, if I'm lucky – you miss the ones you want to eat with. Has to've been a dream, him telling Diana, after I asked him to come down in Pod, that I'd make it too slow, etc. MINGUS AT ANTIBES tape's on now, Dolphe blowing it at warm airwaves on hills – guess we love whom we love, miss ourselves in airports, I blurt "on purpose!" at hands on the wheel. So you can't, won't cut a deal with yourself at edge of dearest Lida's wedding? Fuck the continuous broken line of whomever I fucking well might be. Not a sound, slow wind at bright rocks, sands, Dolphe quitting right here at crest, silent everywhere.

Noises?... Pod's all, flattened black prairie rattler beside the road, canyon wider on east slope, another semi

glinting maybe five miles down, big guy nodding – had to be at straight-up sun, then the glare, its colorless booming wind – he's gone on by, hear him shifting down. Z W O O O S H two noiseless dogs' snooty sideglances, fuck you, to boot! Plus you, Chapita, you quirky bitch nudging my ribs like, "Heh asshole, go on say something funny, huh!"

"Okay, this's the first chocolate cookie out on the great plains!" said I, not quite brandishing said cookie at two crows on a pink rock.

So Lida, once I got in your room had to tell you, "This here's the Green Toad, your Valentine!" Always more to it than you know. I knew. Maverick Mountains, Chihuahua down there, 6,000 feet in the air's the Cochise Stronghold Recreation area on Shell Map as loud as can be – whole effing country turning into Areas... Plus big BLT back down in Lordsburg, state-highway guy across busy counter from me – greener shades than mine, I do guess squinting at rest of us in place on old street, grim old women everywhere.

O, parked beside goose-neck cowtrailer, shit'n all, big, orange BORN AGAIN on rear bumper plus CHRIST STAYS ALL WEEK, do think so, another coffee to piss on the road before Santa Fe, or something, big warm piece of apple pie too, for sure, like it says on the wall – HEY! WE'RE THE WORLD'S RED CHILI BELLY BUTTONS! This's the famous double-bind now, an hour later – what's the name of where I ate their apple pie? Ma Quirk's? Bed of Nails Cafe? Nope, I swear it, Ed Sanders', his grin why try to say what evidently I can't know? Questions abound – too many questions – maybe how to win over too many ETCS...

Stack of old tires on poles ten feet high at corner, two snoozing dogs, chins on shut-off gas pumps. RABBITS 4 SALE in street's empty shop windows, real tall old man watching, two big hands hanging down, behind him old gray-blue buildings in noontime sun, three horizons, lavender as Chinese limestone mountains – but in stone

buildings smells like rain, only no dead worms or puddles. One old fart, funny hat and dark shades in wood wheelchair, basalt blue doorway, red hands plunk banjo like nobody knows he's here. JOLLY BEAN FLOWERS sound in yr head tastes itself, traveling. In hemmed'n cloudy Ireland on bike – tied slicker for rains I'd never guess at – one long tea afternoon at Willy Yeats' biographer's, wife filling saddlebag with lavender for when I'd be back in Dublin to be biking elsewhere...

No, cartoons, fuck your backdrops as if anywhere's not all of it. Was the Canyon place Apache Pass? No name on map. Chiricahuas, Butterfield Stage Line's one-way station, popping along across Distance, another coffee in Benson or Dragoon. Up past Leviton, Polvadera. The Truth & Consequences sign, San Acacia gas place's closed Sundays. Lichened words' names on pockmarked gravestones in last year's grasses, weeds. None, no, one date I can see. The word VILLAR... Stop there, stretching to stretch, touch, want to, but some I can't read.

In this forgotten cemetery on the hill below the road – you must know this's late afternoon – days like these never do go right, clockwise they don't, I must've expected it different – its stone grayer and whiter than the grass, all its clumps of something taller than sagebrush below on the wide hill – chamisa? – think you'd see the river from up here.

Cottonwoods in arroyos by creeks, rivers – Lincoln County out there someplace, O you Texas cows! Like in some other country, nothing looks too close. Big robin, almost gray, jumped close enough on a stone can see it's not chomping its dinner. Another bird, startling black and white magpie'd begun to clack. Kicked old beer bottle long kick, rattling at wagonwheel-rim, see all at once be dark soon enough, wind off river wagging dead grasses, maybe chamisa, sunflower stalks. Lights up on I-25 going by. Once somebody told me I must've been born before first light's Hour of The Ox. Could be – I mean today's just enough of itself.

Birds quitting too. Owl guy said owls hunt together at night. Owls plus barflies. White-handed the darker it gets, scribbling like kid's. Also am not sure – whatever sure means – why I'm right here. Big bunch of cars doing it up on the road, seem quicker than in daylight. Talking to myself's got to sound like that. Sage smelling Ok, grasses too in their dry air. Its silence. Throw a stone at something you won't hit, cough a cough, some lights – have to be across river, looks like a town. Dusk, I tell me, one of light's tricks. Cough again, look down at a place's gone wood crosses.

After Five now, tearassing up 25 in bum lights oncoming glare, faraway red blinkers everywhere on limousine-blue sky. No idea the name of motel on Cerrillos, hung out here years back, helping her put in strawberries up on Delgado, getting busted on a street one noisy night.

“I get one?”

“The one night?”

“Why not?”

Me versus too heavy canvas suitcase, leaning like this, twist key in the lobby. I call it a lobby – one old guy open-mouth snoozing in huge red chair.

Must do, watch the original TARZAN – the Weismuller, not the Elmo Lincoln original. Used to know a lot of these things, all over L.A.'s satin skatable sidewalks. Thus in the room's boob, himself, awake but not awake, Tarzan grunting to Jane, her ten fingers by now straight before her grasped teeth, wailing “TARZAN!” but don't get her wrong, not our Coleened maiden, what bubbling gasps, her staring Little-Nell entreaties, himself in his somewhere'd treetops Y E E A A A Y – yeeaaaying down from treetops, almost pierce each of our movie-house ears, while across windbent prairies somewhere do come the trooping Zebras, the great close- and far-shots of muttering Baboons, if by now our man's battling the Lion herself – O, I forgot the guy's loin-knife – stabbing, stabbing some

more if again noh! ohh nohh! he'll stagger, reel, rolls his eyes skyward as he rolls backwards in the weeds all or any of which, I must add, almost magically erases itself...

But deep within some L.A. movieplace's matinee-seats am I not mad for this Jane, tearing on my skates, across that town's colored sidewalks, or me swimming, Weismuller or not, into her Maureen's eyes, or can it matter at all, this searching still across old Africa's vast treetops etc?

*

Midnight, almost. The moon somewhere in Dog's Eyes, trying to stick lost stuff into notes, like on Fly-Catching Pigs, the spider roots of the Turkey Cucumber – plus telling him his likeness to Dismas, Patron Saint of Thieves. Vivid complaints he left in his path – her wedding's his too, now, still in saffron gown, if that's saffron, who knows? But both hands full of goodies to munch, “Santa Fe, huh? I should tell you about that place. There's no good Chinese food any more.” Here now either, to get back to proper pissing'n moaning, one complaint, that and “all the old houses are covered in Dolls' skins...”

Above line's said Daikon Monk's delineation between here and there, he who's now trying to eat a tangerine, if only he'd told or warned me such'd not be too easy. Also, nothing divulged above of his reading his own stuff, thinking of DIAMOND NOODLE, etc. That good Dr. Gwaark's what I always wanted to call him, if I could but I cannot, he who monked in this town long since, O happy, why remember what I can't know?

Again? Or what? Nah, this here's gumshoeing what's out there, the stuff I like to tell the dashboard, Uncle Philip's

names of his stuff too – OFF THE WALL, MEMOIRS OF AN INTERGLACIAL AGE, ON BEAR'S HEAD, others and others, let alone partake of any properly coffee'd meditational afterthought – now merely out of this silent, clanking monk as he bends to his marmaladed croissant, if that's what he's grasping...?

*

Now, today was there any of it? The poached hills or crumbled, higher away? Mountains, you must stay like that, going up and down too much.

ADDENDA?

To do with old Watt's Davus Complex, his morbid fear of Sphynxes

THE SUM ASSESS
OF THE WORLD'S WOES
NOTHINGNESS
IN WORDS ENCLOSE

HE WATCHES HIS LEGS
AS UNDER HIM THEY MOVED,
IN AND OUT

SANTA FE

Ours, or lots of cars, great rents in mountain overcast clouds out've windshield where've never been before – O, adobe on half-shell, no her on Plaza, no hairpin nor blue-booted toe. Place's new white-painted benches, walkway bricks, piles of Stetsons in windows plus one solemn FREE TIBET – I think Navajo – pumps slow bike up brick street. The Virgin of Dead Texas Oilfields, her junked shrine. Forgot her name but hear it in the glinty

wind. Huge Buick too close, smutching curb, like half my toes, guy combing his hair gives me the finger.

Cloudy freeze-foto black and white, La Fonda bartender tries to smile under over-gunked hair.

Ohh-hohh, don't see her – fixing flat on new Taos Rd? – again hoh-hoh, taking in some more dead still shop-windows' acres polished Turquoise, Roadrunner tee-shirts plus awesome ring Japanese gentlemen clutch cameras all round big robin also clutching bigger worm inside grass... ON EST MIEUX ICI QU'EN' Non! non! he'd go into canopied café en face de big gate, to Péré Lachaise what wit ol' Proust'n all've its beeg wones, old one's paper opened says FREDERICKS OF HOLLYWOOD but tiny injun girl'd do cartwheels on same blue grass, street radio SCHUR'S THE MAN I LOVE...

Herself, she'd find her happy last-week note on her way right here – WATERFALL ON WAY – THIS CANYON'S RED ROCKS, BIG PIG NEXTDOOR – ALMOST FORGOT BLACK HEN KEEPS COMING INTO KITCHEN LIKE IN MEXICO, NO?

Her face's grinning, big blue boots do click at bricks, lavender eyes' straw hat's black lines – back to bar for a beer, her out-of-breath talking, she do know where we gotta eat – it just happens! – that balcony place other end of Plaza.

Fast-fluttered words, O, our nervous hands, etc! Film colors'd be dim tints except match-lit reds, fieldstone wall beiges, grays for grainy lights – keep trying! play at Da Vinci! Or no, here, barroom's part-lit rattling stools, our two beers, she talking helter-skelter re: being late. Me munching green-bowl peanuts – close up – winking phone, the works, chuckling'n all. Man in white Stetson lights small cigar, admires blue ash. Next block's neon BOOKS discreetest background color. These towns're all villas now, etc etc... include please loud-voiced noontime cafes above yonder Plaza's almost not noises.

This place – wall of red-chilis end of the balcony, the stiff-tailed cat on its rail. Clinking. Salads, Margaritas, real glum tall waiter. Next table, pretty loud woman's opening line, "Anybody in here make me good pickle?"

"On this dream train in the Chinese mountains," said I, "the guy's in blue pants, carving a turnip into a rose. He's an acrobat with this big urn he throws in the air to catch on his head, only two Chinese singers in three-cornered hats keep going up'n down the scale in Eyetie. The Magic Flute! Big red poppy on each hat!"

Stacia mimes Gloria Swanson when she says, "So clear down to Albuquerque it's all pitchdark'n they grabbed up some Jack Daniels, they're hitting on it nice'n hard!"

I cough.

"Hey you, that's your first good one since you got here. Your nose must like it, I guess. Anyway, the two in the truck're laughing like crazy. Mean laughing. So we're delayed in the gas line, then running me into the airport's another dumb fight, nobody making any sense, him yelling, 'Fine! Go ahead on the fucking airplane, Okay? I'll see you'n maybe I won't!'"

"One've those again, you know, I'm crying, 'Maybe I'll meet Bill'n start all over again in Tucson or someplace.'" Everybody in the airport listening to us, Chuck stomping off, no goodbye, just 'See you!' for fucking ever! Me crying till this old lady gives me her hanky, sayin' 'all men are assholes, don't worry about it, it'll be okay,' on the plane, like really! two drinks bought for me! they're hearing my dumb life!"

"Okay, Tucson's not final, looking for you – I mean you're not there, anything could've happened. I'm outside in the black and white hat you gave me. I said I'd wear a red flower or you'd wear one. Must've been me, I have this flower in my hat, circular black and white stripes, a bull's eye and this flower."

“Rash of phonecalls even Paula trying to find you in Bolinas, so I call Chuck, he says I’ll be raped, thrown in a dumpster. Go into bar, have a drink, He’ll be there, I figure. Keep going to phone, from the other end, in Taos, Chuck’s being genuine neurotic. Now I can’t leave the building, wanting me to cover myself, put on the coat, he doesn’t want anyone to see me alone, so I call Paula again, you know, I guess she’s worried or something...”

Paula! What a fine girlies’ comic strip! This place’d look fine, Campbell & Hobbes fried breakfast... Her eyes changing.

“Sleep in the airport’s what’s going to happen. THE STINKING LIVING END! Some fig newtons, halfpint chocolate milk, sit eating middle of the airport, so I’m awake, vibrant sunrise people coming in to get their flights, only I’m pretty gamey by now, so I tidy up in the lady’s room knowing something’s happened to Bill, piled into a ditch, this awful scene.”

Back down on the real street metermaid’s writing Pod a ticket. Three bucks for the little envelope. On the street that way, looking in the windows, she saying, “How come you’re changing the subject?”

Tell her too much beer – us’n our two airports! – must plodge on, look now at windowful of pots, them plus big Mex calliope closeby fades to dead street-silence. We’d be in my movie – make it long boom-shot above street, us paying metermaid, she U-turns 3-wheeler, drives away.

EL PRADO, 5/15

Call it mile south of Cerrillos motel, a woman strolls all by herself at edge of squawking roadway, grasping leash of a nervous-eared fawn. At McDonald’s breakfast Albuquerque newspaper page 2 says THE JOYS OF REGULAR BATHING. Pod across street, PEP BROS,

big sign on rooftop. Wheels' bad vibes at 60 mph, yesterday, maybe, uh-huh, on long cemetery hill – waiting vehicles everywhere – new tires' smells, computer computes Pod's tag, big cattle rig out window – tons, tons slow-blinking, eyeful blank cowmeat.

O! I mean my legs' shadows on pissed-on adobe wall... Bolinas? Fields and fields earlying grasses full now, gorseflies, bees, puddlegnats, awry solitary bird, all kinds of ants.

Easy's can be, nice and slow Taos road. Stop, look at Rio Grande's dark long cuts – noontime trench shadow – your bare legs in Aspen leaves. Down back of town watch Taos Hi football team work out on green grass... Ten minutes ago ask in bank where is El Prado. No way. Hear in main-drag bar, ungringo plasterer in plastered shoes, white cap – his serious hands draw map on heavy amber pink paper can use as cover for notes. Not out of town but different, more than a little uphill.

FLOWER SEEDS sign over Jim's Hardware? Below lavender hazy Rio Grande valley a downpour like in tropics. Edges steep around here, see big notice to Pueblo injuns to one side. "That's cloudin' now down'n Gallup," grinning busted horse-guy said. Cheatgrass colors of hills. P.O. sign where main drag widens. (Above lines how to change colors of floating eye spots.)

People stand around like they do, her chin in hands at counter. Him half-Cherokee, looks easier than can be, add usable smiles. We've got to go back down to Taos – food again, then her Quonset, place where she paints, stacks of undone, done canvases, all stretched – now we're bound for six-pack, little Arroyo Seco bar say six miles mountainward – about 30 brown cows jouncing down roadway, old injun swinging rope, loud Count Basie tape, said cows bumping along in time, few playing at cows.

Then Ok, she's into Seco bar and back to the adobe palacio they're finishing up. Mud-brick walls, skinned, adzed log roofwheel "Vigas!" she said; "no rafters here!"

Quarrytile floor, the works on two levels, dimmers on all outlets, etc. Painters do this, studio in my head – plus tapes, mixes, whole wall full, no Bessie Smith. But a toy merry-go-round, ancient bentwood wheelchair fucked to bits by SF earthquake, include one long dead hawk.

Etc!

El Prado outside somewhere, she holds her beer in big pink light. Sun an inch from surrounding ridges, herself blurred – slender smile back of eyes, wind rattling old grass, sage by fence.

“Well yeah,” said I, “here we are, we’re kids whose pictures’ve just been snapped...”

She telling me I got to stop by high bridge over the Rio Grande’s gorge, “not ten minutes from right here,” waving flattened map at Pod. Route 64 up past Brazos Peak to below Jicarilla. “Okay, you sleep in Farmington (Big X!) this side, you know, of Shiprock. Keep on it almost up to Utah, huh? This map’s no good there, it’ll change. 160 down to Flagstaff the joke’s on you – you’re back on 40 again!”

Stacia in magenta air waves a map, little-girl sheepish, a field in front of mountains, clouds. Not smiling she blows me a kiss off her hand. Hey you, love. On my own now. Three times in a row, turn around, keep going. Here’s to BUSTER KEATON RIDES AGAIN (Jack’s translation) for the big cat in the sky...

Roads change things, some sun on the rocks, this air’s light, the sand, passing miles of them, phonepoles – each’n every one, triplettime HOLD THAT TIGER! again’s even the barkeep’s hour if there ever was one, or no, this’s where you’ve got to be this hour, slooching up and down big hills’ sea-wavery roadway, powerlines, late sky’s dinky vermilion clouds’ necklace of staring across desert’s pieces, peak’s shale, basalt – Ok igneous – fading lemon sky, blue air on soggy meadow, black pine shadow’s cold air. Roll up window!

Yes, the different darkness on windows, headlights at steely cliff, hands on a wheel – no other car in livid, rosy dusk. Old one beside road with navy cap over both ears, stomping with stick'n saluting each passing one of us, even cattle-trucks. Domelight on, try to find or bend over roadmap to find C-A-T in my alphabet soup. Roadmap's names – them here-before babbled dinky red teepees, or their airports big'n small, plus one'd be called Searchlight, pal Shao'n I either boompng closeby or on into the place, say 2 or 3 hundred years ago...

PABLO ORCHID'S SADDLES on corrugated tin-roof, place where we'd U-turned, so yahooow – our fits and starts, curves quick bending up or down long hills – O, one or more great road-pisses high in the air! I remember she said, "it's too high for big Wiley to keep any fleas" – yes or no, both of them. THIS GOING THERE'S BEING HERE. Headlights across a basalt's threadbare rummage – har-har! as wistful as can be! – 'n sure the dark, big hills bollixing what a roadsign's alledgedly for, which's why I call stuff in my head, this babble, this, its...

Anyhow, far enough into our mountains, that only gas place for sure – she handled the hose like dinner's on – some ballplayers in old sweaters on pile of old tires watching me close – which's where, like quick as that, figuring here's my U-turn, no more effing roadsigns'll try pin-stabbing Pod's Hong Kong plastic Coyote, my windshield grinster no pin'll go into, change our road-magic so, by now knowing such'll not work. Enough've this, don't try to remember, except:

I call Santa Fe movie WE WERE? And do not stop until it's on or at I-25 again, that thing'd say TIERRE AMARILLE which's on wrong road. Enter Senor Keaton's old ballgame eyes. MAL VU, MAL DIT.

Wiley Coyote's eyes in dashboard green light. What the fuck am I doing on this nameless road to DumDum Colorado? There was Jack at night with his candle under

these trees, knot-headed himself, somewhere near here. Said, "flashlights too black and white in the trees."

Acetylene blue lightning opens, shuts down canyons. Fuck my tiptoed brays for the girlies' cheekbone knees. Streetlaughter's easier than winter bells, thus this dented skull's said we're headed east, southish-east – shooshing, tall rigs coming our way, lights, little ones all over the place at their bittie-ditto dance. Road-sign, ESPANOLA, with fat .45 hole smacko through the P.

Saw you right now, here, you breathing perpetual quail. Per usual rest of right now in its greatcoat of stars. Place over there has to be food, bare light's yellow door, big bunch've bikes plownking along somewhere. Didn't she say that, Diana, this town big bikers' place?

What time now? Nine? No, the few around their big table's the center of things. 9:20 goes the kitchen clock, still lit up, no-shit old Xmas tree's the table's centerpiece for dozen improbable old boys in genuine suits like they're up the effing Amazon... So much pleasure. Pleasure's not the word! – now that you're Lida Mullins you'll not get liklier names to dance to in one lifetime!

A papa or uncle's come by, hands me the menu, which's solid red, looks dumb in my hands. "How's et goin'?" asks he, as we do.

"Sure!" go I, "So uh, what's..?" Or I'd blink as I do.

"N'uh minute!" over one shoulder, as the other man did.

She's frowning, the little girl – because? – is it there's me keeps tearing these bottle-labels off with his thumb? We'd go on about something, why not a word, El Sordo maybe? Little girl, me watching Ok as can be. So what? So what was this I call Little Girl? I don't know why I don't ask her her name, she careful to raise her eyes to watch me swallow a few drops of beer, does me perfectly enough I know she knows which's which, if no effing ideas how

many names we'd name the sky, so far nobody's called Frank...

Nah! Old man DeAngulo's... It don't take news long to travel in the sagebrush...

Item – by God, what now, to get there, someplace, to bed? Tomorrow Albuquerque, big 40 – the way I came if I'd not come the other way – so whose all set to see what this or anything's all about's wrong too. Dozed bolt upright – effing cough sinus gullet's junk out enough dripping down face's backstairs, absolute etc. If this's what's left, it's the rest of it.

Where's not anywhere (“More here,” say, “and there.”)

Down in

yr voice, exactly
right as new paint plus
Jaime's pilgrim warrior's
sage brush news

Said before, had to, Santa Fe's trillion lights, ditto Cerrillos beside stucco box's boobligh, sit blinking in the vasculating system of events. Long live tuneless, silent, humming rooms. Count the headlights. Him again, Genet...

E T C . . .

TUESDAY 5/16

Wide place on the road down from Alturas called Lively...
Wherever, don't blame yr shoes it's not.

Inasmuch as which of you took the pictures won't leave – who took the pictures with this camera here on 66 by Grants' Injun Rodeo turnoff, that one on the crazy black mare right there, old guy's eyes that won't chew on her bullshit, look at them. Who you wouldn't take won't go away anymore, always so quick, that too, you know, like love.

Also out from Albuquerque's big flat valley close to old 66's names, as, say Gallup to Holbrook up to Flagstaff motel's rain. (Like another policer word-dream back in last Cerrillos motel, only it's up in the mountains some more. "Yur initials?" he'd up and grouse. "Two B's," said I. "B's?" went his half-grouching voice. "Silent B's," said I, "like in dumb!")

This time, first Gallup Navajo's in big Exxon place near west end of town, gold-rimmed bifocals, to boot. Seeing that's maybe my age. This, as a kind of methodical radio voice said, "California raisins – they're now in Smithsonian," so anyway he'd keep right at it (Approx!)...

"LIKE UP IN NEBRASKA THE WAY THE HALF BLOODS DANCE, OR NO, WAIT! IT'S DANCIN' MY HATE WHERE I BEEN KEEPIN' IT! HEY, THIS'S MILO YELLOWHAIR'N SO LONG!"

Long, violet fintail at next pump, rear-bumper LED ZEPPELIN sticker, I counted 9 guys inside, no hats, bigger noise's slow plunking, two-fiddle backup's sad tenor-wailing, playback's tight harmony, you're about to say, Hayzoose, old Mozart again's GLORY & THANKS TO OSIRIS & ISIS's big amp sounds by the edge of town's empty noontime, lanky skateboard-black-hair coming by, cuts asphalt corner, diagonal weaves across Exxon, one skinny, hipless Navajo in dusty light, main-drag sirens not close...

66's one lane east'n one west thirty years back – first we hit this place it's big blush up ahead under stars in the dark. What goes by goes by. Beauty and trembling – Lady Duras, again. Shao and I then moseying up the night street, find the bar by east end of main drags ten minutes ago's Ace Hardware's GIANT HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS – jam-packed little corner place, two bare lights above more effing big hats in one room anyway since Tom Mix. Old sheep guy at bar elbows dollar-bill off top of the thing, innkeeper, both of them watching, etc, not counting

ours only blue eyes in the place. Big pile of Navajos, not unfriendly – not the right word – like skidroad guys in big hats, the females too, which, I go on like this winds up something else. Its balmy pavement outdoors, everyone coming, going, blinking at each other, muttery in the boothes like drunks anywhere.

Weeks now, note to Shao – his breath in the words, he could help me say this the right way, at which point in come two of New Mex's beeg woners, black dudes blue helmets shading four don't-fuck-at-it eyes looking room over, don't stay long, some almost words to innkeeper, other'd pat stick at leg like they do ambling back to street-light, hear bar guy say to the other one, "Yowp, snuffin' out runways..."

Like saying I saw street owl side of Gallup building, little bugger, pretty inactive. Strange collisions between faraway facts and the closeby things, plus desert flies've got some kind've guts, hearing me say to said fly on one knee, "Hey Cousin Turdy," or no, we'd just rolled, or bounced past Boron or someplace, but, "Yeah'n what kind of brains you keep back of those big, flat eyes, huh?" Likewise, some dust-looking fog, or the other way around – what Dorn said, little towns with "eye-liner shadows," this time of an afternoon. Gallup's afternoon's disappeared bar's done something dumb to one of my toes. Him likewise in Needles on next stool in icy Chinese fast-food counter, CASABLANCA full Forties' black & white above us all, LICENSED DISPENSER tacked behind blue flowers, us eating something, one or two beers, all at once able to see last night's little cafe girl must've been Espanola shy, etc.

Passing some funeral cars under hot evening's diesel sky, the windshield brims. Call this BEING THERE, MY EYE! No, fuck it. Three mirrors winking three blue lights, the siren around next curve. Who, me? Silent as custard, said Marlowe. Mojave after dark – try to say what's 66 some more. You look at a desert slower, longer than a movie.

Never mentioned before's slow as a nighttime fire. Window elbow sunburned again, so fine white stripe under old watch-strap. "Sambo!" quode Vanity Fair, "Give Miss Sharp some moh watah!" Do not take for granted things hidden in roadmaps, orchards of dozens of greens, lavenders in your eyes, thousands of whirligig aluminum windmills milking their winds. Again tried, cannot remember all or any of Valentino's names, apology to their curious pertinence, etc.

Beckett ok to travel with. A room and Sam noting, "Nothing's funnier than unhappiness." A spare quirky Irishman, humming. Racine's Berenice? "That's another one where nothing happens." Energy equals mass times speed of light – incandescent distances move by etc.

Ahr, Lida, you forget. I do, forget some sort of advisable conveyance, then it's another'n another.

Bloom'n more too, including voices, Police, Distant voices, Father Malachi O'Flynn, of All The Damned, that barking Retriever, the hohhohohohoing Horse and Everlastingly Stephen, Molly herself surely too – O, Stephen's hat festooned with shavings and ashplant – O, time honored adage, gone the way of all buttons nor'd that little rubber-tired town back of what bare mountains have it, even a creek, come what's come or may, for damnably sure it'd not, no Liffey, nothing like her neither. What's this I'd try to do now, thus wading like I'd wade in God's gumboots – all set to puke unanswerables?

May (?)

You couldn'a helped wonderin'n all if we're so effin indivisible, like the Bishop told us, then how come we do split up their Ogallala Aquifer twenty-five times quicker than enough? Ain't it a good one, huh?

Nearly dark too, this wide-edged dark's colors almost like you'd say the word lavender, its evening dusts on wide,

empty streets, as if I'm this or that L.A. kid I tried to tell you about in Santa Fe somewhere, these Basques, all of us, which takes this long, that music coming – wrong street's right Bakersfield bar's loud transom LOS LOBOS whose tenor's Rosas himself, yes, and faraway, Guadalupe Virgin on Perez's big drum – why not? So who dat, dark Poloan who sank into rather than sat upon what the Ford Motor Corporation provided in this quirky Pod? Do Tell..!

And who makes his movies, must've liked most of them, from the places where you get off... No ending, nowhere. A place to stop, get off, which's the ending to any of us. You'll get it, sounds right, too. Cutting off's not stopping.

Hey you, Lida Marie, coming at it like this – music, the beer around us'n all, your mama said you'd be here again soon – we're busy or something! – I'm glad I remember you, tonight I remember your name.

Bolinas, CA
June '94

Editor's Afterword

Bill Brown generally wrote first in longhand, then rewrote as he typed, corrected or rewrote in longhand on the typed work, and again rewrote as he retyped. In his last years he was assisted by Larry Kearney, who both put Bill's writing into a computer format and edited the material. Bill hoped Kearney's editing could "lighten up" the prose he himself sometimes feared too dense. When Bill discovered he had but a short time to live, he appointed me his literary executor. Kearney sent the version of *Lida's Wedding* they had been working on to me at Bill's request just days before Bill died in early July, 1994. The manuscript reached me after word of Bill's death.

Lida's Wedding was written over four years. There are four extant drafts. The first of these is the longest and includes a scenario, which in the second draft Bill reworked into his usual prose. In all, the content of the extant versions is similar, with variations generally little more than wording or organization. Initially Kearney thought he might discover further variants of the manuscript among those of Bill's papers he still had, but some weeks after Bill died Kearney reported that he had found nothing.

Per Bill's final request, I did continue the editing process. The version of *Lida's Wedding* that appears here is largely the version Kearney sent me, but does now include material from the earlier versions, which I as editor felt useful to clarify content.

Because the sound of words as Bill heard and spoke them plays such a large part in his writing, I read the material aloud as I imagined he might, and have added punctuation that I feel makes Bill's cadence and emphasis apparent to the reader. In the same spirit, I have eliminated those few words that seemed typographical errors, were simply redundant, or by my standards unnecessarily hindered the natural flow of Bill's speech. I would strongly suggest that anyone who wants to fully appreciate Bill's work read it aloud.

Lida's Wedding will at some point join Brown's final rewrites of those shorter works he thought of as his autobiography – originally collected and published as *We Are, Are We?*

— James Koller