

Vol. 2, No. 2

THE  
**PANNUS**  
INDEX

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*New American Romanticism*

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*The Pannus Index* is a theme-oriented literary journal, published by *BGB Press, Inc.*

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No subscriptions/limited edition issue no.  $\frac{18}{50}$

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## I AND THOU

She wondered why. Why did she do it? She knew he'd been looking at her since the first day of class, and she could tell he was practically sick over her—or, rather, her body. Sex, she thought. That's what it always comes down to. Me and my . . . shape.

She was sitting on the corner of her bed in her bra and panties because in her depressed confusion she'd felt vaguely like masturbating. It often focused her. Afterwards, that is, she often had a moment of simple clear feeling. Her roommate, she knew, would be out for at least another hour, but now her desire had been lost in her brooding, so she just sat there in the dorm room's semi-darkness. The late afternoon light cast a pale grey shadow over the dark tile floor. Across from her, the silhouette of her roommate's empty half of the cell exactly mirrored her own: a bed, a bookcase, and a small goose-neck lamp.

She tried to think clearly about him. He was so different from the boys she'd known in high school. She felt sure he was from the city—his nervousness, his intensity, the way when he spoke in class he always seemed to be thinking about more than one thing at a time. Chicago, she thought, the great corrupt city of Chicago. That must be where he's from.

And she knew that's what made him attractive, partly. To her with her small-town roots, Packer-country, the Girls Academy, her father's loving Catholic death-grip—she wanted to get away from all of it. And he seemed so free, the way he'd sat there in class and found the nerve to disagree with the professor about . . . about everything . . . about God. Or conceptions of God or philosophical categories or whatever it was. Her high school boyfriend—in fact, no one she knew—would ever have done something like that, would ever have taken any of it seriously in the first place.

What was it he'd said? She'd copied down a fragment: "*mutuality and inclusiveness . . . the two suffer together the destiny of our conditioned nature and meet one another in it.*"

She hadn't followed the whole idea but whatever it was it stopped Professor Picarsky cold. She remembered now the long tense moment when there was only the sound of rustling papers, scattered coughs, people shifting in their seats. The lecture had been an introduction to the history of disputations in religion and about twenty minutes into it this guy suddenly yelled, "What about Martin Buber's 'Dialogical Principle?'" Then he read a short quote while Trish craned her neck to get a look at him.

She thought now of his wiry frame, narrow shoulders, long nose, nervous eyes—and her spirits dropped. She felt no physical attraction to him at all, and she knew it. But when after class he'd slipped in line behind her at the drinking fountain, she—well, it wasn't flirting. Was it? She wasn't sure. She'd meant it when she said she wanted to talk to him about her term paper.

But goddamn sex messes everything up, she thought. I can tell him now that I only want to be his friend and I'll never talk to him again, or I can be coy and avoid it until the last minute, and then I'll never talk to him again *and* he'll think I'm a bitch . . .

She leaned back on her bed and stared up at the grey ceiling. She knew she could be friends with guys. She'd done it before. But this time it was different. She didn't want to be just his friend. She wanted to know him—intensely, deeply. She wanted to know his opinions about things, what he considered right and wrong and good and



bad, and how he understood the ambiguity of it all. He seemed like he'd have a lot of patience and even appreciation for the ambiguity of it all. But most of all she wanted to know what he would think of someone like her.

Still—and there was no denying it—she had no desire at all to be physical with him.

Non-erotic intimacy, she thought, fingering the waistband of her underwear. That's my fantasy. Intimacy without sex.

The notion made her feel strange and sad. She sat there breathing slowly, trying to calm herself, waiting—wanting—to cry. Her room was directly across from the hall's common-bathroom and she heard now the faint sound of the showers running. It reminded her of her father. She sometimes used to hear him showering at five a.m. to get to church for six o'clock mass. When she got out of bed later to go to school, the smell of his talc and aftershave cologne lingered in the steamed-up bathroom as if he were a spirit hovering in the humid air. The scene came back to her vividly now, and she realized that for the first time since she'd left home she truly wanted to go back. Not because she missed Green Bay and her mother and father and everyone else; what she missed was the simplicity of it all. Sex had been wrong, then. But her guilt had been clear. Her father's morality had stood as a fixed point around which she revolved. And in those revolutions her own complicated feelings about intimacy and God and love and everything else hadn't really mattered.

Morris couldn't sleep that night. He lay awake listening to his roommate's whistling snore, then about two a.m. he crept out of bed and went into the kitchen. He didn't live in the dorms. Because of some screw-up with the Housing Office, he ended up off-campus in a pre-fab two-room apartment with a tiny alcove for a kitchen.

He sat down at the small, wobbly table near the sink. His skinny white legs jutted out of his baggy boxer shorts like lollypop sticks. His terri-cloth bathrobe, a going-away present from his mother, hung open. He was shirtless; his small chest hairless. He couldn't help it, he knew, that—well, as some guy in high school had once put it, he was "built like a girl." He knew it was true, in a way. His small-boned frame, slender neck and deep-set eyes gave him an effeminate gentleness—although he'd be quick to argue that gentleness is not necessarily a feminine quality in the first place. Whatever. Morris was grateful for his hands. Unquestionably masculine, with long wide hairy fingers and big knuckles. With those hands he could palm a basketball—his single greatest athletic achievement.

He took a deep breath now, expanding his chest. Then he heard the faint sound of rock music coming from another apartment. The same four chords over and over again. He sighed, then looked around. His roommate's junk seemed to be everywhere: a weight set sticking out from under the blue sofa and a pile of medical textbooks stacked on top of the TV.

Morris stared at the blank screen and for the millionth time tried *not* to think about Trish bent over in front of him at the drinking fountain, the bottom of her red T-shirt pulled up out of the waist-line of her blue-jeans, and him just standing there, staring at the fine blonde hairs on the small of her back, listening to the sound of her swallowing.

The vividness of the memory embarrassed him. This whole obsession is ridiculous, he thought. I'm stuck on one damn thing: her looks.

But he thought of her again, this time as she appeared to him in class from his seat in the last row: honey-colored hair pinned up in a bun; a thin, freckled neck; cream-

colored arms with grooves of sleek muscle. And the way she listened to the lectures — head cocked to the side as she twisted a loose strand of hair around her index finger. Was her hair as soft as it looked?

After class, Morris always followed behind her in the hall, watching the firm curve of her small buttocks and the easy sway of her slim hips.

Her body, he thought, was simply perfect. In fact, it so perfectly fit a sort of “media image” of sexy that Morris sometimes wondered if he found her attractive mainly because advertisers had told him to; as if the power of an individual to make his or her own judgments could be totally controlled by advertisements. Morris was especially sensitive to this because his father, who had once wanted to be a novelist, worked for one of Chicago’s largest advertising agencies, a sore point with Morris’ mother that had come close to ending the marriage. His mother believed the power of advertising was one of society’s basic problems and that some people have had their consciousness reduced to the cumulative sum of the commercials they watch. She worked as a clinical psychologist.

“It’s no longer religious authority or economic forces that determine who we are and what we want, as your long-lost Marxists would have it,” she said, arguing with his father, “but advertising myths and media images carefully aimed at our emotional needs!”

Morris, growing up with all this, understood it more simply: his mother was pissed because his father sold out. That had always been Morris’s line on it, although it seemed now like there might be a lot more to it than that, and the whole issue haunted him as he wondered why he found Trish so attractive.

He leaned back in his chair and put his feet up on the kitchen table. The rock music from upstairs droned on, punctuated now and then by muffled shouts. Morris stared at the wall in front of him. The cheap wall-paper, a black-and-white checker pattern, was yellowing in the corners. Just then the refrigerator kicked-in, humming softly.

Is it because of who she really is? Morris wondered. Or just who she looks like? Or perhaps a third option: because of who she isn’t.

She isn’t Jewish, he thought.

And he suddenly found himself choking off a weird, unexpected laugh.

The thought surprised him, that’s all. It surprised him because he hadn’t thought it before, and because it mattered to him at all. Those blue innocent farmer friendly eyes, he thought, and that milk-white healthy Wisconsin skin—how could I have thought for a minute she might be Jewish?

He thought about his own Jewishness. It struck him now as a fact of his identity — sort of like being a Cub fan was. How the Cubs were these famous failures, who weren’t really failures. These characters whose character somehow rubbed off on you if you cared enough about them. Yes, he thought. That’s the way it is with being a Jew. It’s not the existence of Israel that matters, or the Talmud, or even lox-and-bagels; it’s just that the Jews are the home team.

But, he wondered, where did this leave Trish? Trotting onto the field like a star from the visiting Cardinals?

Back in high school, Morris had dated some non-Jewish girls, but they’d come from the same sort of leftish progressive families as his. They might as well have been cousins, he thought. The suburb of Evanston, with its integrated schools and intellectually prestigious Big 10 university, had at one time experienced its share of anti-semi-



tism, but by the time Morris was growing up in the early sixties those ugly stories seemed as far away as the Holocaust. On his block were a Japanese family next door, blacks on the corner, a Catholic priest right across the street, Hispanics in the apartment building near the alley, and about a dozen Jewish families sprinkled in with an assortment of Christian denominations reaching all the way from Ridge Avenue at one end of the street to the cul-de-sac near the softball diamond at the other end. And all of these families had children, and all of these children played together. Not in some sort of perfect harmony, of course. There were fights and rivalries and all the rest. But never did Morris think of himself as singled out in any way because he was a Jew, and, moreover, never did he think of himself as particularly attracted to anyone else because they were *not* Jews.

But Trish? He hadn't considered it one way or the other because to him such distinctions—religious, ethnic, cultural, political—were secondary to what he simply called “the over-arching unity of the human species.” That's why he took a history of religions class in the first place, he thought. To get a beat on how all these different conceptions of God cause so many problems.

He recalled now the way she'd given him her phone number after class. So poised, reserved, deliberate. It excited him shamefully. The way she'd pulled out her felt tip pen and bit down on it, holding the top between her lips.

But this is not just about sex, he told himself. Lust is one thing, sure. But she's not just a picture in a magazine.

He tried to think clearly about lust. It's a form of attraction, he thought. A kind of gravity, a natural force. You can't ask why there's gravity, why the sun and planets gravitate toward one another. They just do. It's a mystery. The basic binding energy of the universe.

Ok, fine, he thought. But what about lust. Does a proton *lust* after certain particles?

He knew the question was absurd. Normally, it might have made him smile, but this was different. His thinking illuminated nothing—and that frightened him. Because, in fact, there was no getting off the hook: he wanted Trish. He wanted to have her, to own her, to hold her body against his and have her do to him whatever he asked, no matter what.

The whole business, he felt, revealed the most egotistical immaturity, and he got up quickly and went back into his room. He threw himself down on the bed and tried to sleep.

Trish stood in front of her closet trying to decide what to wear. She'd already changed twice. Her old blue-jeans, she thought, were too tight—the snug faded seat of the pants just a little too sexy for this date, if you'd call it a date. She preferred to call it something else. She really wanted to discuss her term paper.

Besides, she thought, it was a Sunday afternoon, they were meeting at four p.m., and she promised herself she'd be home for dinner. Distinctly un-datelike.

But she knew that Morris's voice over the phone had had that nervous intensity about it of someone asking her out on a date. Twice he said, “If you're busy, I understand.” And when she suggested this afternoon, his voice cracked into what almost sounded like a hiccup as he answered, “*Tō-da-ay?*”

The whole issue of leading him on concerned Trish. But she told herself she couldn't be responsible for his feelings; she could only take care of hers. Then she pulled out a pair of cuffed baggy yellow shorts with big pockets in the front and back and a loose-

fitting grey sweatshirt.

They sat on the floor in front of the blue sofa-bed. Trish spread her notes on the coffee table. Morris held a copy of Baruch Brody's *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion* on his lap. They each had a glass of Coke.

Maimonides, St. Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Leibniz and Clarke—the names meant nothing now to Morris. He couldn't concentrate on a single thing. His mind was occupied by pure fantasy. And it wasn't sexual fantasy. He'd prepared himself for sexual fantasy. This, he thought, was even stranger.

Trish is his wife. They're living in a clean spacious apartment with plenty of windows and a balcony. In the big bright kitchen, a small baby is playing on the floor at Trish's feet while another is feeding at her breast. She pats the head of the baby at her breast, then looks up at Morris and smiles with a calm, spiritual glow. The apartment smells of fresh-baked bread.

The scene continued to play and develop in Morris's mind. Then Trish spoke, jarring him back to reality.

"That's the one I'm thinking about doing," she said, leaning over and tapping her pencil on the page of Morris's book. "*John Hick, Theology and Verification.*"

Morris looked down at the page. He hadn't even realized what page he was on. "Really," he said, taking a sip of his Coke.

"Basically Hick says that to ask 'Is the existence of God verifiable' is to ask a question too imprecise to be capable of being answered."

"Hmm, right." Morris nodded and focused on Trish's eyes. They looked like large blue wet stones, serious and heavy.

Trish felt his fixed-look, and it saddened her. She knew it was turning into the same old thing: a sexual thing. She could tell he was turned-on by the distracted way he was listening to her, which he compensated for by leaning forward and nodding too much. She considered turning away, simply snapping the thread that held his gaze to hers. But she couldn't do it. She couldn't do it, she realized, because part of her, a part she would have liked to deny, thrived on this power: the way she could draw a man to her and hold him there, in suspense.

The realization unsettled her. "What Hick does in this article," she said quickly, "is start off by compiling lists of various different concepts of verification . . ." She stopped suddenly. A wave of self-consciousness overcame her. She felt as if she were watching herself from the outside, listening to herself speak. It frightened her.

"What is it?" Morris said.

"It's just strange."

"What is?"

"This whole thing." She paused. She felt unsure about how honest to be.

"What do you mean?"

"The idea, I guess, of taking a class and talking like this about God."

Morris nodded. "Buber says the relation to the 'Thou' is direct."

"Exactly," Trish said, quickly. "It's not a question of ideas or knowledge. That's not what it's all about."

"Well," Morris shrugged. "Yes. But that doesn't mean there isn't some value in studying these things."

Trish smiled. His response comforted her. The way he saw both sides—the point of it all and the futility of it all—at the same time. She wasn't sure what to call it but it



was exactly this quality of his that made him so attractive. She imagined being understood by him in a way no one else had ever understood her. She slipped her hand onto his knee.

Morris covered her hand with his. "Anyway," he started to say, looking back down at the book on his lap. But then there was a long silence. He couldn't think of anything to add. He'd just had another passage of Buber's in his mind, but he lost it. He just kept staring down at the book until he felt the heat of his palm against her hand. "... you want some more Coke or something?"

She nodded and Morris took her glass and went quickly to the small table in the alcove. It felt good to move. The tension between them, he thought, had increased during that silence. Why couldn't he think of anything to say? Her hand on his knee had really thrown him off. It made him wonder, in fact, if he hadn't been showing off by bringing up Buber again. The seduction of a good spiritual quote: high-brow flirting.

But that's ridiculous, he thought. What's the matter with her simply being attracted to me? Is that so hard to accept? So she's gorgeous, so what? This isn't just about how she looks.

He poured the Cokes, watching the head of foam bubble off. Then he wondered if he should turn on the radio or suggest playing a record, something to loosen up the atmosphere. But, at the same time, he didn't want to seem to be . . . what? Too romantic?

Just then the Coke bubbled over the top of the glass. "Damm," he said.

"What happened?"

"My cup runneth over."

Trish got up and reached for a roll of paper towels at the same time Morris did, and then everything happened at once. He tried to get out of the way; she continued toward the towels; he jerked back and knocked over the bottle of Coke with his elbow. Then, as she tried to stop the bottle from rolling off the table, his arm shot out and bumped both glasses off the table's edge. They crashed to the tile floor below and shattered.

Neither of them moved. Morris stared down at the brown puddle of Coke and the glistening shards of broken glass. He bit his lip.

Trish looked up from the mess and tried to read Morris's expression. "You okay?" she asked, softly.

He didn't answer. He kept staring at the puddle of Coke. A tightness, like that of a faucet's holding back water, settled into and around his throat. Tears, he thought. But he didn't want to cry. He didn't want to put on some ridiculous display of sensitivity: crying over a puddle of Coke. But that's how embarrassed he felt. Embarrassed and awkward and unmasculine, fearing he wouldn't be able to hold back his tears if he looked away from the puddle for even a moment.

Trish waited a long time. She watched him, amazed by his silence. She felt partly responsible, of course. Not because of the physical clumsiness but because the accident, she knew, would never have happened if she hadn't put her hand on Morris's knee. It was as if she couldn't help herself; it had been a reflex. Or a formula: sexual gesture = men's attention. And since his sensitivity had impressed her—at least for that moment—she had wanted his attention.

"It's my fault," she said.

"Don't be ridiculous. I knocked them over."

"But only because I was in the way."

They looked at each other. Morris realized he wasn't crying, actually heard a voice

inside himself say, well, you clumsy jerk, at least you're not crying.

"I guess that's one way to break the ice, huh?" he said.

She smiled faintly. "Morris—" She stepped forward. A piece of glass crunched under her gym shoe.

Morris watched her closely. She turned her head slightly to the side and brushed her hair away from her face. Then he focused on her mouth, her fine small lips. They seemed to be trembling. He leaned forward. It happened quickly. He drew nearer, his eyes closed, he smelled the herbal fragrance of her shampoo, the trace of Coke on her breath—and he tried to kiss her.

But she turned away. She stepped back several feet from him, and he opened his eyes, confused, and his anxious gaze wandered past her, beyond her, and focused on his roommate's weights visible beneath the sofa: the long rod, the discs stacked neatly in threes, the box of chalkdust. He stared at it all in silence for a long time.

"Morris," she said, finally. "I'm sorry."

He didn't turn to her. He couldn't. He felt grateful for the apology, but his gratitude embarrassed him further.

"Do you want me to leave?" she said.

"What?" The question startled him.

"Do you want me to leave?" she said again.

And again the question startled him—the directness of it.

"No," he said finally, turning to her. "Not unless you want to."

She shook her head. Then, slowly, they both crouched over the puddle of Coke and began to clean up by first picking out the larger pieces of broken glass.

Trish told herself it was perfectly fine to break her self-imposed curfew, and she ended up staying well past dinner. They never did get around to really talking about their term papers, but it didn't matter. By the time Trish left a little before one in the morning, they had exhausted, it seemed, every other topic.

She told him all about breaking up with her old boyfriend, how difficult it had been. She hadn't even realized herself, she said, how frightened she was of being on her own. But Morris seemed to understand.

"Freedom is scary," he said. "Real freedom is real scary."

They also talked a lot about their families. His family fascinated her—how they had this radicalism that went back three generations. His grandmother, he explained, came to the United States from Russia, where she was a communist because the communists were overthrowing the Czar, who, of course, did terrible things to the Jews.

That's when it came out he was a Jew. She felt right away that this somehow made him even more interesting. She told him that she'd never actually known a Jewish person before. There were a few in Green Bay, but not at her school. He just smiled and took her hand. Not in a sexual way, either; rather, protective. He squeezed the back of her hand and wrist, his big fingers gently gripping her forearm.

She listened intently as he spoke of his uncle. That was his father's brother, he said, who inherited the family's revolutionary spirit. He was a member of the Young Communist's League in Chicago in the '30s and '40s, then became a lawyer and defended some famous actors and radio personalities during the McCarthy era. His father, on the other hand, was, as Morris put it, "an ordinary coward," writing television commercials.

Trish wasn't really sure what he meant by this. Writing television commercials



sounded kind of unusual to her. At least she'd never known anyone who did it. But the tone of Morris's voice made it clear, she thought, that the conflict between him and his father was deep.

She liked this too. The way he seemed so determined to be more like his uncle, to go against the grain and fight for what he believed in. This, she thought, was sexy. In fact, Morris's whole Jewish history was sexy—his version of it all anyway. It seemed to break down the divisions between inner and outer, private and public, spiritual and political. For Morris there was just this one whole life, which he described as—well, at one point in the evening, he climbed up on the coffee table as he read again from Martin Buber: "In the beginning is relation," he read. "It is simply not the case that the child first perceives an object, then, as it were, puts himself in relation with it. But the effort to establish relation comes first—the hand of the child arched out so that what is over against him may nestle under it . . ."

And the point he was trying to make that day in Professor Picarsky's class—about Buber's idea of "the destiny of our conditioned nature"—Trish listened excitedly as he went on about that too, quoting, paraphrasing, mixing in Buber's ideas with his own to explain that what he was trying to say that day was how every religion must, as he put it, "expose itself wholly, in a real way, to its humanly unavoidable partiality, and thereby experience itself in a real way as limited by the other. That's how the two suffer together, what Buber calls, the destiny of our conditioned nature."

But this isn't a bad thing, Morris went on, as Trish watched him wave his arms at some imaginary objector. "Because if the religions suffer this destiny together," he said, "then—just like two people—they will meet one another in their common destiny, and in that meeting which is the experience of being limited, there is also the experience of overcoming that limitation . . . together."

Trish felt his excitement overcome her, and before she knew it she was saying things that to her would normally have seemed outrageous—ridiculous, pompous. But she was amazed by the way nothing seemed to intimidate Morris. No idea was too large for him to articulate; and she loved it. At one point, late in the evening, Morris asked her to get up on the coffee table with him. At first she refused, giggling, feeling vaguely guilty.

"It's bad for the furniture," she said, though she knew it was just one of those generic fake-wood type of coffee tables you find in crummy hotels.

Finally, after Morris kept urging her, she climbed up, and, feeling his arm snug around her hip, she recited this passage she liked of Bonhoeffer's about a "non-religious" understanding of the divine, in which a right relationship to God doesn't depend on any creed or doctrine.

At that point, Trish thought an evening like this must surely end with them together sexually. They climbed down from the coffee table and sat cross-legged facing each other on the couch, their knees touching. Then Morris's roommate came in. The three of them talked together awkwardly for a few minutes, until Morris offered to walk Trish back to her dorm.

Outside, the warm night air smelled like rain. They walked slowly, not speaking. The silence, Trish thought, was intimate. In fact, she felt like she'd never known a more intimate evening. It had been better than sex—not just because she was free from her usual guilt, but because the excitement, the tension, the mystery was out in the open. A living reality, she thought, mutually recognized.



At her dorm room door, Morris joked, "Aaah, to kiss or not to kiss . . ." Then he gave her a passionate hug, and she felt the pleasant pressure of his hand pressing firmly into the small of her back.

The next morning, Trish woke with a feeling of lightness in her limbs, a warm tingling joy. She thought instantly of Morris. It was almost frightening, the way she felt his presence so strongly. She wondered if she'd dreamed about him. Then she recalled, vaguely, what she had dreamed about: something to do with climbing up on the coffee table and reciting Bonhoeffer.

It had felt wonderful then to stand up there and speak so boldly, but now it struck her differently. Lying in bed, the memory of that moment suddenly frightened her. What had she done? What had she meant saying those things out loud? Standing on a coffee table reciting like some sort of preacher—who was she trying to mock?

She pulled the covers up close to her chin as a chill of guilt struck her like a dark blow to the chest, and it occurred to her that the target of her mockery, obviously, was her father. A non-religious understanding of the divine? One religion limited by another? In a flash she saw the entire evening through her father's eyes. And all of it—the enthusiasm, the ideas, the excitement—seemed utterly pointless.

Morris walked toward campus that morning feeling as if he had made a great and important discovery—and that others should be told about it. He fantasized about stopping total strangers—other backpacked students trudging groggily down Langdon Street—and telling them: *We are all deeply linked!*

He traced the feeling back to this whole complicated business of Trish not being Jewish and to what she had said about her disillusionment with Catholicism. She had described her father's piety, the way he never missed a six a.m. mass and all that, then she said that what bothered her so much was the basic hypocrisy in it, how he was not really an open and compassionate person and how could a religious person be anything else? And then she used this phrase, a phrase that Morris wasn't sure where she'd found, since he didn't remember it from any of their assigned readings. The phrase was: "the dogmatic vulgarities of the public church." That's what really made her sick, she said. And the way she said it, in a low serious tone, the phrase seemed to capture the whole problem for Trish, and for Morris too. He felt sure—completely sure—that Trish's conflict between her personal spiritual yearning and what she called "the dogmatic vulgarities of the public church" exactly mirrored his own conflict—and his father's—between a deeply felt impulse to be moral and the utter failure of—as his mother would put it—the "Marxist Jewish left-wing legacy" to provide a meaningful framework.

But this was the secret, the great and important secret Morris felt he possessed as he walked toward campus: that the humanist and the religious believer had shared the same fate. Marxism as a noble humanist theory, he reasoned, had deteriorated into Marxism as totalitarian practice in the same way that Christianity as a personal religious experience, in Trish's view, had deteriorated into Christianity as "the dogmatic vulgarities of the public church." This means, he thought, that we are like the lion and the lamb, the believer and the non-believer, who must lie down together. And it's more than a physical thing, he went on, because Trish and I are a microcosm of all humanity's shared adventure, regardless of anyone's beliefs. That's where the energy is—not just sexually, but historically.

The whole excited notion seemed to grow in him, rising from below with every step he took. As he drew closer and closer to the campus, the large white Greek-columned buildings on the quad came into view.

Then he spotted Trish. She was exactly where she said she'd be, next to the guy selling cookies under the clock in the mall. She waved. But it was a small wave, and Morris was immediately confused. He was too far away to make out the features of her face, but something in the wave, he thought, was definitely tinged with a trace of sadness.

He slowed his pace, then stopped. She didn't wave again. It frightened him. It pierced the glow he'd had all morning. He stood there, his legs heavy, fear sinking deep into his loins. He thought suddenly of his father. Imagined him smiling, making a soft smacking sound with his lips, whistling through his teeth. His father, he knew, would say he'd been fooling himself. Oh my God, he thought. What if I *am* fooling myself? What if Trish and I aren't deeply linked? If we're not on a shared adventure? What if all I really want is her body, and she's figured it out and doesn't ever want to see me again? Then what?

"No," he whispered. "No!"

And with a panicked jerk of his arm he began to wave wildly. Then he rushed toward her, his fear overcome in that moment by a terrible sense of love which seemed almost not to dwell inside of him at all but rather to require him to dwell inside of it.

