



Lux

Edited by Steve Reinke and Tom Taylor A Decade of Artists' Film and Video

She

Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak

December 3, 1998, a Pleasure Dome screening. I had just adjusted to the premise of a rather quirky storyline offered up by Sadie Benning's *Flat Is Beautiful* when I saw him and seeing him, I got a little dizzy, mouth dry, a bit light-headed. It had been a couple of months but I always anticipated him at these evenings. He'd missed the British tapes earlier in the fall. Maybe he was sick or out of town. Not that we'd ever spoken directly. I had heard his voice once, though, when he spilled a bit of beer on the woman sitting in the row in front of him as he was taking his seat. It was tight (as usual), full house. She was very chilly about it. But I'll never forget his voice, a rich, warm, not-deep-but-with-depth timbre marking his deferential "sorry." I replayed it over and over that night as I tried to sleep.

Tonight he was uncharacteristically late and ended up standing at the end of the row I was seated in. As usual, his notebook came out immediately and he began his automatic writing, his eyes never leaving the screen but his pen scratching

away. Over the last decade, I had had many fantasies about what exactly ended up in that little book. Not all of them repeatable. He had gotten to me.

The audience that night adored Sadie. She's grown up a bit now. I remember seeing her in New York when she was about seventeen, overalls, shy, well spoken. She's still got the gift of gab and the crowd had a hard time letting her say goodnight. At the end, after the applause died down, I realized that I was almost totally alone in the hall. And a small innocuous notebook lay on the floor at the end of my row. I had to keep my excitement under control for a few brief seconds as I casually made my way towards it, taking care not to look too anxious or direct, and turning to exit, I dipped—gracefully for a person of my size—and the prize was mine. Haste made my shoulder bag hard to open but I did and the booty was deposited safely. I made my departure, not so fast as to draw attention to myself, just as he was returning to his former standing spot, obviously looking for something he had lost.

256

Home, I abandoned my usual spritzer for a single malt, neat, to steady my nerves, before I opened the door to my stranger's soul. His notebook, however, yielded no immediate thrill; instead, it seemed to be a kind of meditation exercise with codes and puzzles that denied me the guilty pleasure I had anticipated. Other than his name—Sam Allen—and his address—in Old Cabbagetown, a neighbourhood I was familiar with only by name—the notebook might just as well have been written in a foreign language, so mute did its pages look as I leafed through. Well, I thought, I'd better start where I know what's going on. So I turned to the final page of the notebook, written, as I had witnessed, just that evening:


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1854

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1998

Military enthusiasts celebrate the 700th anniversary of William Wallace's victory over the English in the Battle of Stirling

Bridge in 1297. On the same day, Scots voted in a referendum to have their own parliament.

There are days when I can almost draw a floor plan of one of the places even though it's so many years ago. And this guy who would always be at the end of the bar, very quiet, named Emmett. How you had to be careful

with what you said or else he would cry but only after a couple of hours of steady drinking on his part. So you could be pretty sure of not provoking anything if you were in and out before 10pm. Tonight I liked the part where the mom brings in the groceries and they have to eat with their masks on. I liked the bus ride. It looks like Cleveland or some place like that although I've never been to Cleveland. She looks like the girl Yvonne who lived on Taylor Street, short brown hair and her socks were always dusty. A bit like Sadie Benning.

257

Closing the notebook, I come up for air. It's a different world under there, weightless with just a whiff of danger. Armed with another single malt I contemplate my prey. He's different than he appears, stranger and more elusive than at any time over the past ten years that I have been in pursuit. Physically, he's changed little. Behaviour too is unaltered: his stillness in the bright room before the projector comes to life; the intensity of his gaze once it's fully dark; his trance-like state, eyes locked on the screen; his pen moving, scratching like a trapped hedgehog. Whenever possible I have seated myself near him at screenings—especially over the past eight years when my stalking has intensified—craving the sound, the smell, and the feel of him. I enjoyed a bit of pressure on my thigh once and the excitement of disengaging conjoined umbrellas one fall night.

In a state of surrender, I sleep. Perhaps the weekend will yield a clearer picture of him. I have put the notebook away for the next twenty-four hours.


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1854
 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1989

Intelligence leaks prompt crisis talks

DUBLIN

British and Irish government ministers held crisis talks

co-operation was staged in a tense atmosphere after Northern Ireland

yesterday after a string of intelligence leaks to Protestant gangs in Northern Ireland developed into a major security scandal.

The meeting to plot cross-border

police disclosed on Thursday that a list of suspected IRA members had been stolen from a top-security Belfast police station....

258

I suspect that you can record anything, every thought, every idea, every fantasy - and people will watch it. Just give them a reason and they're there. We didn't have any storms - not like those. Not with big skies and all the fireworks that attend. Just a lot of rain. Sometimes for days. Kuchars' video shows it off beautifully. He's a strange one, so personal and confessional, even showing his shit and so enigmatic in the end. I couldn't do that, show my shit to anyone. It would not be a thing I would do. I had a favourite spot in the house, when I was in the basement room, where I could see into the next door house. There wasn't much to see but I always looked. Once the guy who lived there, I forget his name, took a lot of time to first clip his ear hairs and then to cut a piece of paper - or maybe several pieces of paper - into very small pieces and then flush it all down the toilet. It took about 4 flushes by my count.

Over coffee on Saturday, I open the notebook at the first page. I remember that date because it is my birthday. I was there with a couple of friends from work. It was Pleasure Dome's inaugural screening at the Euclid Theatre. The Euclid is gone now. I had a t-shirt for a long time that said LET'S NOT LOSE THE EUCLID but I recently cut it up for rags. Sometimes I walk by the condominium that has replaced the Euclid. It gives me a strange feeling, hard to explain.

I suspect now that he sits in the screenings and lets them release a lot of memories for him. Maybe he has trouble remembering any other way. I am conscious of how little I know about him. I turn the page:


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1859

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1990

Rise feared in cost of dying GST a nightmare, committee told

by Kevin Cox
Atlantic Bureau

The proposed federal goods and services tax is going to unfairly increase the cost of dining, driving, doing business, dancing around a Christmas tree and even dying, a Senate committee was told yesterday.

To the obvious delight and encouragement of the Liberals on

the committee, groups ranging from the Funeral Service Association of Canada to the Nova Scotia Christmas Tree Growers Association condemned the proposed 7 per cent tax, saying it will be an administrative nightmare and will be hard on those who can least afford to pay it....

He's right. Tom Dean. Right in that architecture is not the answer. But what is the answer? The floating deal is good - up to a point. But it all can't float. Structures, that is. We would get a lot of branches, sort of the same length, and then lash them together with string mostly, little bits of rope and some wire. Not very solid but it would float. And we would set sail. They were doomed voyages. Never got more than 100 yards from shore. But it was scamp none-the-less. Because from the moment that you reached that outer limit, you knew it could go either way. You might be smacked to pieces by the waves as they proked up or you might be driven back to the beach by those same waves just differently directed. And you weren't sure where the direction was coming from. That was the fun. Not knowing.

It's Sunday morning and I've got time on my hands. A dangerous state for a stalker. Armed with his address and a disguise (dark glasses, a loose-fitting trench coat and a miniature poodle with an Airedale cut) I take the Carlton streetcar to Parliament and disembark. I'll proceed the rest of the way on foot. I find his address without much problem. It's a kind of in-fill housing situation on a small street but my Perly's map serves me well. I am standing outside with a peeing dog just as he exits his domicile around noon.

260

Lucky break that my pooch had to relieve herself. But I am struck with how strange my object of desire looks to me now. Not looks, but seems. He is completely different from the person I was attracted to ten years ago. Or so it would seem. His intensity is inward looking, self-absorbed. He's working out a lot of stuff but it's all very personal. No room for an other. And I'm definitely an other. But, I remind myself, that's the result of my reading his diary. On the surface, he hasn't changed.


THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1854

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1992

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's up to you how much public respect you want. You get that respect by disclosure, not by conceiving ways to hide things." Former

Ontario Supreme Court Chief Justice William Parker to a parliamentary committee studying conflict-of-interest legislation...A6

When I'm there, I just don't think about a term like "slut". It's just not a term I'm comfortable with. It's not a term I attribute easily. When I see those long thighs, they look like pictures of thighs, and if I have the chance to really look, they look like sculptures of thighs. That's a very different experience from say, pornography which makes me feel rushed and a bit anxious (although relieved after; that's sort of a conflict). But when I am there - in flesh, as it were - with the attributee, the thighs, it's different. I am different. I feel a bit like an explorer. Not that I would touch or anything. But I would look as if I need to map for the future. That's what I would do. That's what I do.

I sat behind him the night that Annie Sprinkle showed her work at A Space. She was very sweet and he seemed very attentive. He seems to be a bit more in the here and now at this point but I can't swear to it. We all were, really. That's what she does.

I'm having a bit of difficulty at work these days. My direct supervisor is having a nervous breakdown (personal reasons) and I am having to take up the slack. But he is never far from my thoughts these days because of the notebook. I ration myself but I have to read some each day.

261


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1854

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 1994

Harding knew of attack Didn't tell, skater admits

Associated Press
PORTLAND—

Her hands trembling and her voice strained, Tonya Harding admitted yesterday that

she failed to come forward with what she learned after the attack on Nancy Kerrigan, but pleaded not to be denied "my last chance" at an Olympic gold medal....

It could be true that any one picture could be substituted for any other without substantially altering the meaning. Reinke could be right. Just put one picture with another sound track and see what happens. Indeed, if there is any meaning available from pictures at all—given what we know about the alteration and falsification possibilities inherent within any photographic or electronic image. We might be better off to trust the other senses when it comes to interpretability. I remember having a lot of similar feelings and thoughts as I entered university. But that was a long time ago and I thought I was over this doubting phase. Perhaps not. But doubting, in and of itself, is not a destructive thing. Sometimes it is very liberating.

I had a long weekend out of town with friends at their cottage. Opening up for the season. It was a great time if you consider trimming trees and pruning lilacs fun. I personally get a kick out of burning the bagworms. Brings out the commando in me, I guess. It was almost enough to keep me from my obsession. Not that I refer to it that way. But with friends, I have begun to talk about him. It is a relief, in a way. It gives me a chance to be with him in a social setting. In a way.

262 After dinner on the Saturday night, I bring out the notebook. I have had a bit to drink, I admit, and I have a feeling of exhilaration. I am flirting with danger here. He is emerging from the shadows. Becoming real for others. He is already real for me.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1854

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1994

First column

Hydro-Quebec, Inuit sign deal

The Inuit of northern Quebec could receive more than \$1-billion dollars in compensation

MONTREAL—

from Hydro-Quebec under the terms of a tentative agreement with the Great Whale hydroelectric project.

I have been quite transported by this story. I wish I had been in the room when she was actually telling the story, reciting it, letting the camera record her. Not visible, I wouldn't like to have been visible, just present.

I was in the situation a few years back where I overheard a conversation - it was a neighbor, not a close friend or anything, but a neighbor. She started talking to a friend, they were in the backyard and I was sitting there, it was evening, not yet dark and I was reading the paper and relaxing. She was, all of a sudden, talking to her friend - a woman by the way - about her feelings when someone touched her breasts. It was very intimate and I was trapped

there then. She was so open with her friend. I'm not happy with the fact I can never reveal what she said, but it has stayed with me since then. It's so different to hear those intimacies - not just to read them.

There were some other things that happened which I am not willing to discuss at this point but they have, shall I say, passed. Anyway, I got a raise and a promotion and with this increase in status has come the responsibility of caring for a lot of other people. It sucks. But I am good at it and do it with some flair. That's why I got the promotion, I guess.

263

But now, with my new executive status, I can invent reasons to get out of the office mid-day and I have begun to follow him—not obsessively yet, just once or twice a week. I found out, by a weird coincidence, where he eats lunch every day. My periodontist has an office in the same building as the little place where he eats. It's not hard to be unnoticed by him. He never looks up. Sometimes I slip into the back of the place and sit behind him, sometimes I don't even look at him, it's just the sensation of being close to him that gives me that buzz.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1844

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1995

Gene offers clue to predicting length of life

Simple blood test could identify individuals at
increased risk for Alzheimer's, brain hemorrhage

by Wallace Imman—
MEDICAL REPORTER

A simple blood test could predict how long your body is programmed to live, a study has found.

Scientists at Rockefeller University in New York have suggested yesterday that the form of a gene you inherit to keep cells repaired is an indicator of how long you could survive if your life were not cut short by accidents....

*The things I knew or sensed before tonight seem
pate now. It's one o'clock and I'm still very much*

alive to the night. I don't know when I will sleep. Henricks' ghosts got to me. About how places hold memories. I had a very small room for most of the time I was growing up. I think it was about 10' x 12', just slightly larger than the bed. It certainly was strange when I was there with her. She took up lots of room because she was a bit big. Not overweight, just big. All over. I liked the feel of her but I am not sure I could ever go much further than we did.

I'm not getting any closer to this guy. His notebook is so random, so unfocused. Random clippings and random memories, all mixed up. The fact that I was in the same place at the same time isn't much comfort either. It gives me the creeps to think that I was sitting there, dreaming away about Mr. Wonderful while he's mining his id for traces of weirdness. But he still holds that attraction for me. And I'm not getting any younger. Sooner or later I'll have to confront him. Maybe this weekend. As usual, I take heart in the idea that he has been close to a "she" that was a bit big. I like that.


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1844

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1996

Science

South Pole moves to new site

LONDON—

The South Pole is in the wrong place, or at least it was, U.S. scientists say.

Researchers working in Antarctica said they had been marking the wrong spot for years...

If motion is aberrant then the deviation can't be predicted. Like me. I'm spinning too, in a way, like that gyre that's off kilter. Maybe it's an inner-ear problem. Maybe it's fixable. I just can't keep out of that path. It's open, a real clear channel for me.

After she was dead for awhile I could still go outside, at night, and just have little talks. I wonder if I was really talking, or just I mean.

I liked him when he got desperate. It reminded me of me. Not on the outside. I'm very cool on the outside, a real professional. But inside I'm another animal altogether. I've developed a whole set of disguises that I employ on the weekends when I want to be closer to him. Wigs, hats, glasses. And he's never caught on once. I even toyed with the idea of posing as a cable guy to see if I could get into his house. That was a very exciting couple of days for me; I had the clothes and I must say I could carry off the ruse pretty well. I've never done drag before; it was kind of exciting, in and of itself. I walked around my neighbourhood and I don't think anyone recognized me. But I ran into one snag. I had let my driver's license lapse a couple of years ago, so renting a van would not be possible.

265

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1774

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1996

Unabomber suspect to be moved

HELENA, Mont.—

A federal judge yesterday ordered Theodore Kaczynski moved to California to face charges that he is the Unabomber.

U.S. District Judge Charles Loveli signed the order after a 15-minute hearing where lesser charges against Mr. Kaczynski in Montana were dismissed.

Mr. Kaczynski, 54, appeared for

the hearing, his first time in public view in more than two months.

He was indicted Tuesday in Sacramento, Calif., on 10 counts of transporting, mailing and using bombs.

The indictment marked the first time Mr. Kaczynski has been charged in the Unabomber's 18-year campaign of terror aimed at smashing the modern industrial order.—AP

There was a place, in the back of the house, where I kept all the teeth. It wasn't something that I shared but people knew about it. I know they know because of the fact that things were moved around every once in a while, not messed up, just slightly

altered. I guess it could have been animals but I'm pretty sure it was the guys up the road. I have never thought that signals come back out of the cable television connection—other than the television signal itself. But I've read about people who have heard voices and claimed to have gotten messages from their television. That's not my problem. But you would think that people in high places would be a bit more careful when they know there's a camera there.

It's crazy, really, how little I miss going out with friends and socializing in general. But the way things have gone now, it's not such a big deal. Most of the gals from work I used to hang around with a few years ago have moved on and the new ones are a lot younger than me so it doesn't come up very much. And if they do invite me out, I always say I've got a "date." Ha ha, that's a laugh. My "date" turns out to be a trip to the grocery store in full disguise for an encounter with my beloved. Lately I've taken to wearing a grey wig styled in a bowl cut that makes me look like Jane Jacobs, complete with owlish spectacles and a shapeless housedress. I've followed him around the Loblaws filling my cart with an array of products that I have personally never bought before. I usually go through the checkout line two or three lanes over. He usually gets out before me so it's over then. I have to get a cab back home but it's always fun to extend the fantasy as I put away "his" groceries. Sometimes he does surprise me though. For instance I would never have pegged him for someone who would get the toilet cleaner in Potpourri scent. I would have thought he was Fresh Pine. And I have to say that the non-alcoholic beer was a bit of a shock too. It's not half bad but I admit that I didn't finish my six-pack. It's been a long time now. But he's my social life—he just doesn't know it.


THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1844

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997

Stocks incomplete

Because of production problems, some editions of today's paper do not contain com-

plete stock listings. We apologize to readers for the inconvenience.

I know she was alone most of the time because he was out of town so much. For months at a time they would only talk on the phone maybe once a week. He had to go where the work was and sometimes it was right across the country. Yet the only time she would come around was usually right before he came home. Like she couldn't wait for him so she would be with me but because he was coming right away it didn't leave us anymore time to get together again. It meant that I was only with her about 6 times in over 7 years. And we never were in a bed even though once we rented a motel room but we were up against the counter in the bathroom instead. It had an interior courtyard with a pool and I could smell the chlorine all the time. I think it was in her hair too. Tonight I'm thinking that it might have made an interesting film but I haven't owned a camera since I was a teenager. I just don't trust myself.

It was a slow day at work and I was dreaming away on company time—about him, of course. I decided that enough was enough. He hadn't been to any of the screenings since I'd found the notebook and he didn't seem to be getting out much lately. Or if he was, my timing was off. I hadn't seen him in over a week. Deception just seems to come naturally to me sometimes. Almost immediately I had the whole plan. I would be very casual, just go up to his house and ring the bell and return his notebook that he'd left at the Sadie Benning evening. "Sorry it took me so long," I'd go. "Just happened to be in the neighbourhood, going to that great pet store to get a new set of dog booties for my little pooch—salt on pavement hurts the poor little paws," I'll confide, and she'll look up with her big dark eyes; he won't be able to resist...on the other hand, her left eye has been a bit runny this week, better leave her at home...excuse still good. Then he'll invite me in for coffee and the rest will be history. Just one more day to finish the notebook.



THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1859

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1998

What's a poor dominatrix to do?

Judge refuses to clarify the rules

Thornhill's Terri-Jean Bedford left frustrated after
being found guilty

THOMAS CLARIDGE—
COURTS REPORTER,
Newmarket, Ont.

Professional dominatrix Terri-Jean Bedford is frustrated.

After being found guilty yesterday of running a common bawdy house at her bungalow in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, Ms.

Bedford said: "The judge still hasn't said what I can or can't do."

In his ruling, Judge Roy Bogusky of the Ontario Court's Provincial Division sidestepped completely the initial issue between the Crown and defence—whether sado-masochistic acts constitute sexual activity...

With the screen so split up like *Hoolboom* does it's quite difficult for me to follow at times but the overlaps and layers are so luxurious. I wish I could sleep in this movie. I don't mean here in this seat, I mean right in the texture of the projection, in the light. I can't sleep very much at all now. It's another symptom, I guess. I like how he calls it *Panic Bodies*. I hope I don't panic. I did once. But I can't think about that now, not tonight. There was a space at the back where we would play pool sometimes and when we did, you could still see the front door and see who was coming in and going out. The guy behind the bar didn't mind even though we were too young. But sometimes, he would motion us into the bathroom. I figure it was because a cop came in or something but I have no way of knowing that because I

was in the bathroom. One night he forgot about us there and we stayed until after midnight. I guess one of the patrons who used the bathroom told him and he came and got us and we went home. He was nice enough otherwise. He had a son who was about 18 years of age and the two of them looked so much alike that you would have thought they were twins. But I always found that a sad thing for the son because it meant that he looked old even though he was just out of high school. He was losing his hair and everything. Just like his dad. They were both named Ken.

As I rounded the corner, I was glad that I had worn my good coat. It was a rich green wool, quite stylish and a good match with my paisley scarf. The front door to his house was slightly ajar. I knew enough from my snooping that he lived alone and had no tenants so I naturally quickened my pace to get into his view before he closed the door. It would seem more casual. But given my somewhat graceless ways, I was soon skipping, which even I knew was ridiculous. So I again slowed, stopped in fact until I could recover myself. I covered my actions with an adjustment (unnecessary) to my short boots, tugging at the zipper of the left one. Finally I had composed myself again and I entered his front gate to see a woman about my age standing in the front door reading the mail that had obviously just been delivered. She looked up and I could see a hint of him in her eyes. Brazenly, I offered my hand, saying that I had come to return "Sam Allen's notebook. I found it the other evening at a film screening." Since she didn't say anything right away, I continued with both feet.

"Yes," I rambled, "sorry it took so long but I was just in the neighbourhood..." (It had his address in it, blah blah). I was getting a bit sweaty in the palms with this story. Especially since she wasn't saying a word. Just looking. I finally had the good sense to take a breath.

And she said thank you very much but she was sorry to report that Sam was dead. Committed suicide last week. She's his sister from Vancouver, here to sort out things, funeral etc. Sam didn't have many friends—how long had I known him?

"Ten years," I lied immediately. "Suicide? He didn't seem depressed last time I saw him," lie number forty-five of the conversation so far.

"No, he didn't seem depressed but he had been planning this for quite awhile," she replies.

"Planning? Why?" I gawp.

270 "He didn't want to go any further 'out there' as he called it. When he was diagnosed he decided to set up some milestones and when he crossed the last one he would know and he would take his own life rather than deteriorate. I guess he crossed it earlier this month."

"Diagnosed? Do you mean Sam was HIV positive?"

"Sam had Alzheimer's."

"Oh."

I start to hand over the notebook. But his sister says no I can keep it, there's plenty more where that came from. I can see inside the front door now and she's right. There must be over 100 small notebooks, most identical in size and cover colour, each labelled on the spine carefully, lining a bookcase just inside the front door.

Before I can ask, she answers. "Sam wrote crossword puzzles for a living. He was good, too. Very good. His stuff was bought by the English language daily papers all over the world, Bangkok, Buenos Aires, Tokyo. It took a special talent to do that because you couldn't be too local or regional in your word choice. It's a perfect job for a Canadian."

"What about the notebooks?" It's all I can think to fill the space between us.

"Oh, he kept notes on sets of things. That's how he would start a puzzle. With two seemingly random words. So each notebook is a set of references. This one, for instance, uses recipes from women's magazines over a three-year period juxtaposed with pages torn from pulp fiction paperbacks he bought in bulk." She opens up to two pages, "He could have used whip and heist. As his starting point. See what I mean?"

I did, sort of. But my head isn't good with words at the best of times.

I'm a bit hesitant, but I ask her what she thinks he was getting at with the notebook I have. After hearing my explanation of each entry (I did leave out the sex parts, didn't want to tarnish her brother's memory), she asked to see a couple of pages. Immediately she pointed out something that I had missed. Each entry was accompanied by a single word in the upper left hand corner of the news-

paper clipping. In the case of the Sadie Benning evening, he had written in his tiny script "FLAT." Learning that this was the title of the video that evening, she concluded that he would most likely have used a word from a film title and a word from the random newspaper article he had included to start his puzzle. She suggested a very complicated way I might check it out. It involved going to back issues of foreign newspapers at the reference library and midway through her suggestion, I went kind of blank. She could see it and she allowed me to retreat after my offer of condolences for her loss.

271

But it was me who had lost. All the way back to the streetcar stop, I mused about how this afternoon had painted a new portrait of Sam. I don't know if it made him any more interesting but it sure didn't make him any less. Oh, I forgot one thing that she said to me. I accepted her explanation of the main "code" of the notebook but I couldn't make any sense of the personal bits. This seemed to be a deviation from his pattern—at least with the notebooks she had shown me. "Oh, those writings are his automatic memory works. He's done that since he was a little kid. In school, on the bus, in the grocery store. He must have felt comfortable in those screenings. He could just let go."

★

