Companions: Dallas

Jerry's Mason & Hamlin, my Magnavox stereos: their journeys draw the map of our lives. After the years on Bennett, the piano returned to the Hunts' home in Casa View; it moved again to the Green Shack, where it effectively had its own room. It had three more stops ahead of it. My stereos, after an ignominious hour on the highway shoulder somewhere between Houston and Dallas (where they had to sit while Bob and I unloaded his station wagon to get at the spare tire stored beneath the floor)—they waited for me at home while I was in Austin, and our reunion was a joyful one, lasting the two or three months that I lived at home, teaching and saving enough money to be able to make a deposit on an apartment somewhere with Jerry.

During holidays and semester breaks in Austin, I always came home, getting a ride to Dallas with my drama major roommate, who was on his way, in his new hatchback, to Iowa. I spent as much time at the Green Shack as I could, bringing my books and reading in the shade of the fig tree on the east of the little house.

Jerry and Houston etched circuit boards in the kitchen sink, wired interfaces, and practiced pieces for performance. When we were alone, Jerry and I made love under the piano, the only available space.

Houston's wife, Jill, met us at the shack on occasion. The four of us would go to dinner, or sometimes Houston and Jill would invite us over for dinner at their apartment. It had been on such an evening two years earlier that Houston and Jill announced their engagement, the same night that President Johnson told America that he planned to withdraw from politics—news that added to our celebration.

Jill had a rich, warm voice of wide range, and she was to perform in Brahms' German Requiem and the Requiem of Fauré with the SMU orchestra and chorus. Her obliging nature and sense of fun led her two or three times to perform with Jerry and Houston in situations that must have baffled her: Jerry's "theatrical extensions" of pieces by Mauricio Kagel and others, not to mention his own compositions, might call for the unrolling of whole boxes of aluminum foil or the use of unorthodox, primitive percussion devices. When I was able to attend Jerry's and Houston's concerts, I would sit with Jill (when she wasn't performing) and share her amazement.

Throughout his life as a composer and performer, Jerry encouraged those around him to put aside their expectations and prejudices in order to experience something different. Jill was only one of many people with a traditional musical background whose imaginations Jerry stimulated. Part of his success in doing this was surely due to his rather formal dress and demeanor: his suit and tie, his unprepossessing manner, and the seriousness with which he so obviously took his work—all of this inspired the credibility that was necessary for many in the audience to be able to open themselves up to what were very new ways of experiencing art.

The young, of course, don't labor under the weight of fixed expectations and hardened categories, and they have always been drawn to Jerry's work, predictably gathering around him on the stage after a performance, examining equipment, marveling at props, asking questions, and just enjoying being close to his independent spirit. Jerry's association with SMU's dance and music departments, formed at first on the basis of his piano-playing, developed in the early 1970s into guest lecturing and, finally, teaching, as the head of the electronic music program. Jerry's courses were popular, but several students dropped out each semester when they realized how much work was expected of them.

We moved into our apartment (at the "Court of Two Sisters"!) in the early winter of 1969, a two-bedroom, upstairs unit with a closet-sized kitchen and a good view of the traffic on Lemmon Avenue. The manager and his wife interviewed us, at length, in their own immaculate apartment; they wanted to be sure we wouldn't disturb the other residents with loud parties and unspecified "suspicious goings-on." Our both being teachers, in a prep school and in a college, no doubt helped argue our case. And to be fair, we were ourselves eager to assure that we could get our work done and lead our lives undisturbed there.

The Green Shack had become too small. Jerry and Houston and Phil began sharing the rent on a house on Glencoe, a one-bedroom cottage that they soon filled with audio and electronics

equipment, music and technical literature, and, of course, the Mason & Hamlin. I'd spend time there with Jerry evenings and weekends, reading teachers' manuals, preparing lesson plans, and grading papers, while Jerry worked on his own projects. He maintained a rather complete kitchen, turning out gourmet meals after a day of practicing and wiring. Gordon, an electronics engineer with Texas Instruments, became a frequent visitor, working with Jerry on electronic devices and enjoying the freewheeling conversation.

With Houston, and Phil (a musicologist by training), and Gordon, Jerry conducted what might be described as a combination of a salon and a boys' club. One never knew who would be there, or what project might be underway, but it was always a place to have fun, to put aside for a while the pressing concerns of career and family responsibility, and to do something creative that might just count only for oneself. His dedicated hard work notwithstanding, Jerry set the example for all of us of a way of living that nourishes the imagination. But, in truth, those of us he influenced in this way were always only able to play at living like, at being like, Jerry. He had it down naturally.

The very restrictions that had at first appealed to us about the Court of Two Sisters shortly forced us to leave. Someone complained about the loud music coming from our corner apartment (I think it was the E-Z-1istening lady next door), and the manager relayed the complaint to me. I kept the stereo turned way down thereafter, and I hated it.

And one night, after a performance or gig somewhere, Jerry returned home with a strayed chihuahua he had found freezing in the parking lot. The little creature took to sleeping under the covers with us. We had to take her out clandestinely, hidden under our coats. I still remember the sight of that little dog's head sticking out over the top button of Jerry's trench coat as we'd start out for our walks in the neighborhood park. (In a week or so we were able to find a home for the dog, with Phil's parents. She lived a long, happy life with them.)

After a few weeks' searching through the newspaper ads, we located a house for rent that sounded too good to be true: two stories, with an attic and a basement—nine rooms and three baths (not counting the separate garage apartment). We drove by one night, discovered that the back door was open, and went in to check it out.

The electricity had been turned off, and we had a hard time making our way through the rooms, having only the light from streetlamps and the neighbors' houses to guide us. The kitchen was our first view of the place, and it sold Jerry with its central, free-standing work counter with shelves below and its walk-in pantry. Next came a breakfast room with bay windows, followed by a formal dining room (with a chandelier and a wrought-iron gate), a spacious entry hall with a dramatic stairway, a living room with picture windows at both ends (either one of which would be perfect for the piano), and, finally, a sunroom with a tiled floor and French doors opening onto the large front porch. The four bedrooms upstairs would give us each a study, and we'd have a spare bedroom for guests. Although we couldn't get in to see the garage apartment that night, Jerry surmised that it would make an ideal electronics workroom, as indeed it did. The garage itself was small by modern standards, but it was adequate for Jerry's VW and my Austin America.

We submitted to another long interview, this time in an office downtown. It turned out that the house was owned by the family next door; they had had bad luck with the prior tenants, and the agent (who was in fact the brother of the owner of the house) was determined to find occupants who would not cause disturbances and who would maintain the property. Again, the two teachers, the serious young men, sold themselves, and we moved in almost immediately, for about the same rent as we were paying in the apartment. I set up my Magnavox stereos at the back end of the long living room, and Jerry had his piano moved from Glencoe to the space near the picture window at the front. The hardwood floors made our music reverberate throughout the house, apparently bothering no one, for the ten years we lived there.

As a boy, I was sometimes awakened by my grandmother's nightmares. She had her own room until my sister got to be too old to sleep in a room with me; then she shared a room with Judy — not the best arrangement, given the difference in their ages and temperaments. When the

moaning started, it was enough for one of us to approach her bed and say "Granny" a time or two to awaken her.

I remember standing beside her bed one night, watching her open-mouthed breathing a while and thinking she would die someday. Perhaps I had begun to worry about losing her because my cat, Melissa, had died not long before; I had been inconsolable, crying for hours in my room, alarming even my father. Whatever prompted it, I stood that time beside my grandmother, chilled by a foreboding of loss, and grief, and the loneliness of grief (because I felt I shouldn't tell anyone about my concern). I reached down and kissed her forehead lightly—a propitiation, perhaps—and she awoke, startled and a little angry. "Just because I love you," I said, retreating.

My grandmother's family had come to Texas from Kentucky, in search of the land of milk and honey that was rumored to be here. They left the hills around Greensburg to work the black gumbo near Rockwall, just east of Dallas. Maude (Granny) and her new husband, Marvin, became tenant farmers, working cotton, living in a succession of homes, and rearing two children, my mother and uncle. Marvin developed cancer of the stomach (Uncle Henry tells how he would go into the fields with nothing but a sack of Granny's soda biscuits); when he died, at 53, Maude sold the farm equipment and the mules and came to Dallas to live with her daughter and son-in-law, Allyne and Steve.

With Granny there to look after Judy and me, Mother was always able to work. My earliest memories of play include Granny in the background, hanging out clothes, sweeping the walk, wiping off our metal lawn chairs, but all the while watching Judy and me and our playmates. She was strong-willed and strict, and she was fastidious: Judy and I were always cleaning things up and putting things away ("so you can find it when you need it"). She spanked me harder than Mother did.

Granny never stopped missing Kentucky. She corresponded regularly with relatives there, filling her fountain pen with blue-black ink and writing long letters, conveying and asking for news. She received the Greensburg *Herald* for years, searching its pages for names she knew—the only reading I ever saw her do. She was able to make several trips back (once with our family...and Melissa, partway), and she always brought Judy and me souvenirs: a little cedar wishing well (my introduction to that fragrance), a paperweight from Mammoth Cave, a figurine of an old woman sweeping that she said reminded her of herself.

I've always thought I have a lot in common with my grandmother; we were special friends, I sensed, when I was growing up. It was important to me to make her proud. We had long talks while she did her chores: plucking a chicken for dinner, starching and ironing clothes, turning and airing beds. She taught me how to select just the right-sized twig for picking and cleaning teeth. She showed me how to put the back of a chair against the cabinet before climbing up; I learned from her to turn pot handles away from the front of the stove. When she made pear preserves, I sneaked licks off the long-handled wooden spoon (once or twice burning my tongue). As her eyes began to fail, she'd call me to come thread her needle. I regularly massaged her knuckles, swollen and stiff with arthritis.

When my father retired, unhappily, trouble arose between him and Granny. I was already away from home most of the time, but I knew at least that Daddy had come to resent her. Mother never told me much, in the beginning, but she did make it clear eventually that something was going to have to be done, that Granny couldn't stay there any more.

After a long period of "visiting" various relatives, Granny finally came to live in a room Mother found in a private residence, a state-subsidized arrangement that seemed to be preferable to a nursing home. I visited Granny there when I was home from college, noting the washcloth she kept drying on the windowsill and the little packages of snacks Mother had brought her sitting on top of her chest of drawers. I always found the door to her room pulled to.

One Sunday I took her to a harpsichord recital at the old Fine Arts Museum in Fair Park, but the music (all Bach, I expect) made her nervous, and we left at intermission. Jerry always teased me about taking her to such a concert, an outing so transparently made for myself. "Taking Granny to a concert" became our code phrase for any

enterprise ostensibly undertaken for another's sake but done, mainly, because one wants to.

By the time I began teaching, Granny had had to be put in a nursing home in Rockwall. I would visit her there with Mother, bringing her ice cream in Dixie cups and finding it increasingly hard to have a conversation with her. Mother's life was sad and lonely during this period: Judy and I were away, and she was either waiting on a sick husband at home or checking on her declining mother, never knowing, as she said, what she would find at either end of the journey between them.

On one of my last visits, I tried to make Granny understand that I had become a teacher—at last. I do believe she understood, but I think the news came too late to matter much. A few weeks after that, they called us to come. I stood by her bed and watched her die, holding her hand and, then, kissing her forehead. Mother and Daddy were with her, too; Judy and Paul were in Virginia, where Paul was stationed. Jerry wasn't there, but he played "My Old Kentucky Home" on the organ at her funeral.

As busy as our jobs kept us, Jerry and I found plenty of time during our first seven or eight years on Swiss Avenue to work on the house. Our parents gave us unneeded furniture, linens, and kitchen supplies. Mrs. Hunt made fancy tasked curtains for the bay windows in the breakfast room, and she made slipcovers for the dining table chairs. Daddy helped me hang a gate to the back yard, and he re-screened and painted the window screens all around the house, on both stories. Jerry and I painted indoors, working long hours enameling the decorative woodwork. We rented a sander and a polisher and re-did the hardwood floors.

Not since living in the house on Bennett, where we tore down the wallpaper in two rooms and hung burlap, had we worked together on such extensive projects. It was fun making plans and buying supplies, and we got through the tedium of the work without too many fights. My father had taught me how to paint, and Jerry's had shown him how to refinish furniture. We got along better applying ourselves to separate tasks like these, when we could talk and laugh without finding fault with the other's work, or pace.

The yard was my private domain. Jerry cared very little for the outdoors (he always said he could take care of any unwanted growth with a generous application of salt), so I fertilized and mowed our huge yards, planted trees and shrubs, flowers and a few vegetables, and watered liberally. I uncovered a beautiful flagstone patio that the yard had overtaken, and I spent a lot of time there in our aluminum lawn chairs, reading, grading papers, and listening to the stereo or to Jerry at the piano. (He was learning Ives' *Concord Sonata,* among the more traditional pieces; I was listening to Sibelius' symphonies.)

One day during our first spring on Swiss a neighbor came to the door with a puppy she'd found cowering in her shrubbery. The lady was trying to find the dog's home; she couldn't keep her, she explained, because she and her husband already had two Great Danes. Jerry and I fell in love with the dog at first sight, but we didn't want her if she belonged to someone else. We told the lady to bring her back, though, if no one claimed her. The dog was ours within the hour.

Leto was a mixed breed, spitz predominating, with long white hair, brown markings, and a gentle, sweet disposition. When she came to us, we could hold her in one hand; she grew to be a lap-full. I named her after the mother of Apollo and Artemis, the "fair-cheeked goddess" according to Homer, due to the long, delicate white fur along the sides of her muzzle. And like the goddess, who had had to wander in search of a safe place to give birth to her children, our Leto had been homeless a while too.

We housebroke her with newspapers and trained her to walk on a leash, but beyond that she seemed to require little guidance. She spent much of her time with me, lying beside my chair (or in my lap) as I read, or waiting patiently nearby while I worked in the yard or somewhere in the house. Her weekdays were shared with Jerry, when he was home, and he'd tell me often how she had cocked her ears at the sound of my car pulling in the driveway and run to the back door to greet me. Leto quickly learned my schedule, and we went to bed and got up at the same time for the eleven years she lived.

As companion animals so often do, Leto served as an excuse to get Jerry and me out of the house, enabling us to have the kinds of visits and talks we might not have otherwise, occupied and

preoccupied as we were with our chores and pastimes indoors.

Swiss Avenue, with its broad, landscaped median strip, was an ideal place to walk. Leto trotted along in front of us, her leash comfortably slack, automatically stopping when we did, so closely attuned was she to our interests and movements. People frequently stopped to admire her, particularly after she had just had a bath and her white fur was full and cotton-like: "What kind of dog is that?" "She sure is pretty," they'd say. We once encountered the pastor of a large Baptist church, Dr. Criswell, who lived a couple of doors down the street from us. He, too, commented on her fur. "Oh, yes," I disingenuously replied, "she has angel hair."

In good weather we'd take her to the Samuel-Grand Park a few miles away, where she could safely range through the lawns and gardens. We'd usually go after dinner, rambling at sunset along the perimeter of the putting range, picking up the odd golf ball and throwing it for Leto to retrieve. When it was muddy, we'd use the sidewalks that gave access to the tennis courts and the rose garden.

We began taking her to Fair Park, the grounds and Art Deco buildings where the Texas State Fair is held each year. We rarely met other people or animals there, and we could have an hour's walk in privacy. This was where we had our best talks—and our worst arguments. Sometimes, in our anger, we'd separate a while, and Leto would walk first with one and then the other, shuttling between us like a mediator. Our fights sometimes arose from the tensions and frustrations associated with our jobs; we often simply argued about the significance of a current event, the importance of a piece of music, the meaning of an idea. We cared about what the other thought, but we sometimes went to great trouble to disguise that fact—particularly I.

When it was too cold to walk, the three of us went for car rides, usually just before bedtime. The downtown post office was a frequent destination, or pretext; one of us would drive, while the other held Leto in his lap, riding shotgun with her head just outside the window, the wind combing back the fur over her eyes and along her muzzle (and the car heater running full blast). Whenever we passed a street sweeper, she tried to escape from the noise by jumping into the floorboard.

There was a little problem with Leto, however, when we had company: she kept them at bay whenever she could. Once I was preparing drinks for our guests in the kitchen, where Jerry was cooking. When I delivered the tray, I noticed that no one had helped himself to the hors d'oeuvres on the coffee table. "She won't let us move," someone confessed. And sure enough, Leto sat on guard close to the food, the word ours apparent in her eyes.

The house on Swiss was made for entertaining, with its spacious rooms and professional kitchen, and we had people over for dinner every few weeks. Houston and Jill, Phil, the pianists Douglas and Avlona, Toni (from SMU) and Paul, Gordon and Mary, and Paul and Oz (a professor of biochemistry and his wife, two of the earliest fans, and best patrons, of Jerry's music)—these, and others, were treated to the creations of whatever Jerry's latest culinary interests might be.

One of these grand meals, a Chinese banquet in fact, began rather inauspiciously. After several trips to Jung's Oriental Foods (where Leto and I would wait in the ear, or walk around the neighborhood behind the parking lot), Jerry had finally secured the exotic foods he needed—including the duck feet that Mr. Jung had saved for him especially. He spent two days in preliminary preparation. A couple of hours before the guests were due, he called me in from my housecleaning to see a large tray of appetizers he had just finished. Using daikon radishes and food coloring, he had sculpted and painted a beautiful, edible bird, garnished with other vegetables and fish and fruit. He proudly put it on top of a large can in the utility room, where we fed Leto, to get it out of his way.

And of course she found the fish. I heard Jerry's exclamation, and profanity, from the room where I was working, and I ran in in time to see Leto's snout turning up a morsel of fish where it had lain just beneath the tip of one of the gorgeous bird's wings. Since he seemed frozen in his incredulity, I quickly moved the platter out of her reach. We had to go after more daikon to repair the damage Leto had done; naturally, she went to the store with us.

As it turned out, the banquet was a big success—but almost too much of a good thing, actually. Course followed course, with cries of delight modulating into protests, until finally we all went on strike, demanding a break on patio, where Jerry soon came to get us, to call us back to our duties as diners. I washed dishes for days.

At this meal we got to know Rod, a young man just out of college who, like Jerry, had a radio show on a public access station, KCHU. Rod had heard Jerry's programs on contemporary music and had called him to talk and share this interest.

Typically, Jerry invited Rod to dinner. Thus began a friendship that would turn out to mean more than either Jerry or I could have imagined then. Rod is now the principal curator and conservator of Jerry's work, reading (with Sharon's help) Jerry's computer files and archiving the scores of audio- and videotapes Jerry left.

In his work at KCHU, his teaching at SMU, and his own concerts, Jerry continually acquired new friends and made new fans. Most of these people came to see us regularly on Swiss, and many stayed in close contact with us even after we moved to the farm in 1980. A couple became colleagues, of a sort: the dancer Sally Bowden, with whom Jerry collaborated in several concerts both in Dallas and New York, and David McManaway, whose work using found objects influenced Jerry's own creation of artifacts ("lightning rods of attention," as he called them). Jerry always stayed with Sally and Ted when he gave concerts in New York; I was able to join him there several times.

Ironically, we saw our older friends less frequently during the decade we lived on Swiss. Dinah had married Norman, and they'd begun raising a family. She was teaching math at a high school in Irving, and she was later to join the part-time English faculty at a local community college. Peggy had given up the study of music for medicine, and, as a nurse in Ft. Worth, had met and married a physician, George; they lived for a while in Majorca, then they settled in Corpus Christi.

It did happen, once, that Jerry's and my closest female friends were at the house on Swiss at the same time. Peggy had come up to attend a seminar, and Dinah had come by with her baby daughter. I introduced them, but they had remarkably little to say to one another. I remember feeling disappointed that they didn't hit it off, but I am not surprised as I reflect, now, that Jerry always had his friends and I mine—with the notable exception of Bob, whom each of us grew close to over the years, though in different ways.

After their sojourn in Austin, Bob, Carol, and Donna returned to Houston. Carol taught school, and Bob worked in data processing for an area hospital. Their marriage was in trouble— had been, for several years; it was hard for Carol to accept that fact, and she made every effort to keep them together. Bob's frustrations led to violent fits of anger, and Carol avoided facing the inevitable, with the help of marijuana, for as long as she could. They both took their responsibilities to Donna seriously, and had it not been for her, they probably would have separated long before they did.

By the end of 1972, Bob and Carol were apart permanently.

Bob began living with Rany, a fellow he had known for years as a friend of the family. They began together the slow, gradual process of coming out, each admitting to himself his homosexual nature, at last, and taking the next step of choosing to live in such a way as to express that nature. Rany very shortly inherited a small fortune from his father, and he and Bob were able to buy a house near the Montrose district of Houston where they live today. They also bought a Jeep and began taking trips to the deserts of the American West and to the tropical regions of Mexico, where Bob indulged his longstanding passion for plants and his emerging interest in photography. They camped out as they traveled, and they stopped by our house once on their way to Canada. Jerry and I gawked at all their gear.

Our own trips were far less rustic. I had traded my Austin America for a Toyota Corona station wagon, and we traveled comfortably in that (when we didn't rent a car). We visited Bob and Rany in Houston, and Peggy and George in Corpus, where they had bought a house overlooking the bay. Leto always went with us, and packing all that the three of us needed for several nights away was a challenge and a chore.

Jerry and I had become vegetarians, out of concern for animals, and we took supplies for preparing our own meals every time we traveled. We did talk about camping out, and we even bought a camp stove and used it to cook a few meals at roadside parks, but we never went as far as Bob and Rany, with their tent and water canteens and hiking boots.

I have always loved to travel, especially by car, and most of the trips Jerry and I made together were at my instigation. Jerry liked there to be a practical reason for a trip, either to see friends or make professional contacts or fulfill an engagement somewhere. Part of this was no doubt due to the parsimony that becomes a way of life when one doesn't have a regular salary to count on. Nevertheless, there was something about leaving home that always repelled Jerry, and many of our trips began with an argument about the foolishness of the outing or our plans—or about anything at all that would serve to focus his anxiety.

However rocky the departures, we invariably had a wonderful time traveling together. I collected hundreds of photographs over the years, snapshots from trips to New York, California, and destinations in between (including Houston and Corpus). Being together on the road, with the release from habit it affords and the adventures and challenges it entails, brought us closer together by renewing our friendship. We had long talks (and good fights) riding along the back roads, one of us driving and the other with Leto in his lap.

One year, on our way to California, we spent an afternoon at the Canyon de Chelly National Monument in Northeastern Arizona.

We walked along the canyon rim, gazing down to the green valley below and across at the remains of the cliff dwellings—a special interest of mine since I first read "Tom Outland's Story" in Cather's *The Professor's House.*

We had had a difficult time getting to the canyon, making a wrong turn out of New Mexico and underestimating how long it would take to cover what looked like a relatively short distance on the map. We bumped and rattled along a rough road, the lid of the Styrofoam cooler squeaking annoyingly, Leto tuning into and sharing our growing impatience, and Jerry yelling, "Slow down, God damn it!" every time I hit an especially deep pothole.

Finally we arrived, left our car in the empty parking lot, and walked to the edge of the cliff to see if the view was worth all the trouble it had been getting there. To anyone who has seen it, I don't have to say it was. Even Jerry was moved by the tranquil, isolated beauty of the scene, another world there below: self-sufficient, perfected. We took it in, walking along the marked path; I made a few pictures (the one of Leto with the far wall of the canyon in the background sits on my desk at the library), and we sat down to rest a while and watch the shadows lengthen along the canyon floor. Jerry later wrote a piece he named *De Chelly.* And I, some lucky nights, revisit the place and relive that afternoon in my dreams.

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Up until the eighth or ninth grades, I couldn't wait until it was time to buy school supplies at the end of summer, and I prepared my ring binder and spirals well in advance of the first day of classes, labeling everything with my name and homeroom, and making dividers for each class. I took great care selecting just the right pencils and pens. The most fun I had, though, was covering my textbooks with the kraft stock imprinted with the names of businesses supporting the school (the covers had to be as tight as possible).

And I had always played school, from as early as I can remember. Naturally, I was the teacher most of the time: Judy and the other children sat patiently waiting their turn—which, if it came at all, arrived just about when we were all getting tired of the game anyway. The garage made an ideal classroom, especially when I started a bicycle safety club in the neighborhood and taught the proper signals and other safety practices there.

When I finally became, officially, a teacher, I was in *my* element. Cistercian Prep is a selective day school for grades 5 through 12, with an enrollment of 200 or so boys and a faculty consisting of lay teachers and religious, a few more of the former than the latter. Juniors and seniors take several advanced placement (college-level) courses; many graduates enter Ivy League schools with almost a year's worth of credits on their transcripts.

Following the European system, each class is assigned a form master, usually a priest, who stays with the group as it advances through the eight grades (diminishing by attrition as it goes).

The faculty move from one classroom to another, each teaching several grades and, frequently, more than one subject. During my nearly 10 years there, I taught almost all the grades, three or four different ones a year, in English and upper-division literary criticism and music appreciation. The headmaster asked me to serve as the chair of the English department at the end of my first year, and my two colleagues and I developed a curriculum and selected texts that gave our students a good foundation for their later college work—as attested to by the advanced placement credits they earned and their regular visits back to the school to tell of us their success.

Since we used few prepared materials, lesson planning and paper grading were time-consuming processes. The upper-division readers consisted of the literature only; in our lectures and discussion leading, we used the inductive method to arrive at insights and appreciation. We also taught sentence diagramming, for which returning alumni always thanked us.

I enjoyed teaching the fifth and eleventh grades so much that I requested them every year. The eleven-year-olds reminded me of myself at that age, with their undisguised enthusiasm for every classroom activity, their love of reading (and of being read to), and their full engagement in the learning process. James Herriot's *All Creatures Great and Small* had just become popular, and, time permitting, I read a chapter aloud most Fridays, the animal stories sometimes moving us all to the point of tears.

After the hormone-induced turbulence of the middle years, something of that same ingenuousness seems to return when a boy is 16 or 17, and that coupled with a questioning, often rebellious disposition makes the juniors a stimulating group to teach—doubly so since the literature is American. The better my classes went, the more work I put in preparing for them; as often as I could, I tried to simulate the kinds of lectures and seminars the students would encounter in their college English courses. Most of my time, though, was spent reading and evaluating essays and holding conferences over them.

In addition to being the faculty adviser for the school newspaper, I sponsored a literary magazine for the upper grades.

I tried to involve other private schools in the area (St. Mark's for boys, Ursuline and Hockaday for girls, and Greenhill for both), but our meetings led nowhere, each school eventually developing its own product. Transportation was frequently cited as a problem, but I was also given to understand by several parents that they weren't too eager to have their sons involved that much with the other schools' students, particularly the girls from Hockaday and Greenhill.

The Cistercian parents and school board were a conservative group whose goal was (and I expect still is) to prepare their sons for college in an academically demanding environment protected from distractions and incursions from the outside. By the time the boys were in their junior year, many of them had begun to feel some uneasiness about their school and how it was grooming them for a role in society (and, often, a career in the family profession or firm). It was in their English classes that they found an outlet for their concerns, a forum for their questions and criticisms. Class discussions and compositions elicited a surprising amount of discontent, particularly from those boys whose independent natures (often accompanied by creativity) had always kept them a little on the outside. Thoreau was an oracle for many.

The exacting curriculum and its strong support by the parents and the priests effectively obviated dissent. You couldn't stay if you didn't make the grades, and you wouldn't make the grades if you didn't buckle down and study most of the time. In addition, the fact that your class remained together year after year, usually with the same form master, intensified the peer pressure to succeed, and to conform. I did see a few students over the years who were able to thrive by playing by all the rules while yet nurturing, with the help of a teacher here and there, a private capacity to imagine a more variegated, richer world.

In the beginning I saw little of the constraining narrowness of the school. I wanted us to be the best, and I wanted to be the best teacher I possibly could. To that end I visited the faculties

of the other private schools, attending their classes and inviting them to attend ours. I spent a day with my friend from Austin, Dr. Anne Freeman, who had just begun her 22-year career at St. Mark's. I followed her from class to class, as she walked aided by her cane, slowing down as the afternoon wore on; with her approach, each group of boys came to quiet attention, prepared to take her as seriously as she was them, and to work as hard as she did.

It was a real pleasure to renew my friendship with Anne, but I realized during the following weeks, as she continued to call me at school and at home, proposing even more classroom visits and teaching exchanges, that her interest in me had a personal dimension that was bound to cause unhappiness. I was so much in the closet then that I didn't even realize it. All I knew to do was make excuses and be a little cool to her. She finally stopped cal1ing.

Anne and I were to meet again, twenty years later, when my 16-year-old niece, Jamie, came to live with Jerry and me. Judy had called from Idaho in January, explaining that Jamie was unhappy at school there and asking if I would consider having her come here and go to school in Dallas. Jerry and I discussed it and agreed that we wanted to help, and I visited with Ursuline's principal and started the process of getting Jamie accepted for her junior year there.

When the principal learned that I had taught at Cistercian for so many years, she asked if I knew Anne Freeman, formerly at St. Mark's. Anne was now on Ursuline's faculty, having been "laid off" when the school found it expedient to hire a man who could teach English as well as coach an athletic team. To his credit, the St. Mark's headmaster located the Ursuline position for Anne, and he even accompanied her on her first visit to the school.

I didn't run into Anne until I went to the school for the new parents' orientation in August. I saw her from a distance, laboring down the hallway, the grace and good humor I had always associated with her still apparent, her eyes twinkling in recognition beneath a corona of red hair. She had been looking for me, she said, since the principal had told her last spring about my niece and me.

We visited at length, enjoying the cookies the Ursuline parents' club had provided. As a development from the Conrad seminar we had shared, Anne had done some editorial work for the journal *Conradiana.* Her life had been fairly uneventful, she related; the highlight of each year was the trip she made to Princeton to grade advanced placement exams for the College Board. She lived with her mother. And she was confident that, in time, she'd get used to teaching girls.

I explained the circumstances surrounding Jamie's coming to Dallas and to Ursuline, then I told her about my work at the library. Finally, I explained my reasons for leaving Cistercian, at last righting the personal wrong I had done her years ago by not being able to tell her about my homosexuality and about Jerry. Not much, as it so often turns out, had to be said—always ironic, considering the importance of saying it.

*

Jerry's mother called him from her downtown office almost every day, usually just before lunch, and frequently woke him up. He was always a late riser, working until early in the morning, wiring, composing, reading, and writing letters. Sometimes she stopped by the house on her way home from work; she'd bring Jerry something—a shirt, or a kitchen tool she'd found in one of the department stores—or she'd deliver something she had made or bought for the house. We would visit over coffee.

The Hunts were nearing retirement, and they had begun making plans to sell their Dallas home and move to Canton, a town of fewer than 3,000 people 50 miles east, with a typical Texas courthouse square surrounded by tree-lined neighborhood streets and outlying farms and ranches. With the help of a veteran's loan, they were buying two tracts of land, each about 30 acres and located three miles apart a few miles west of town. They intended to build a house on the smaller tract, and their hope for the larger one was that it would prove to be a good spot for some kind of business since it is at the intersection of two state highways.

They began making weekend trips to Canton in the early '70s, and they built a small, two-bay barn using creosoted poles and corrugated steel. As soon as they had electricity, they bought a used refrigerator and installed it in the barn.

When the weather allowed, they spent the night in the barn, alongside the tools and supplies they needed to plant an orchard of pear, peach, and plum trees and put in a vegetable garden. When Jerry and I drove out to spend Sunday afternoons with them, we'd conclude our workday with a cookout: Mrs. Hunt and Jerry grilled chicken (Leto's favorite), and we enjoyed squash, corn, and new potatoes from the garden that they wrapped in aluminum foil and cooked over the coals.

Mrs. Hunt was able to retire first, and she did most of the work involved in packing for the move. There was some delay in finishing the Canton house, so the Hunts had to rent another house in Dallas for a couple of months to have a place to store their mostly already packed things. Jerry and I helped with the temporary move, and seeing them in the tiny rent house making their way among stacks of boxes, looking always for something they needed badly but couldn't find—sometimes even including the dogs, Hermie and Sassie—made us all think of the "I Love Lucy" episode where Lucy and Ricky have to move in with Fred and Ethel until their new home in Connecticut is ready. Jerry always said that never were people better named, and he did include himself.

Mr. Hunt came by one day to show us his new Chevrolet pick-up. He would have to work on for a few years after the move, and I expect he hoped the new truck would make the hour-long commute more pleasant (in addition to putting him a little closer to actually being a farmer). His job with Pet Milk had become onerous with its increasing paperwork (that I often saw him do at home) and the growing difficulty he had dealing with city traffic. His dream was to be free of the responsibilities of his job and be able to work outside on his own place, and perhaps go into some kind of business of his own on the corner property.

Being the outgoing, sociable people they were, the Hunts soon made friends in the Canton area. With the aid of these local contacts, Mr. Hunt began acquiring more poles and steel for a second, larger barn to house the farm and ranch implements he was gradually buying, most of them used. Over a period of several weekends one summer, Jerry and I helped him raise the new barn, laying the poles in the holes he had dug using the digging attachment on his new tractor and placing the cross members in the especially cut grooves midway up the poles and at their tops.

That post-hole digger got Mr. Hunt into trouble one day. The clayey soil in one part of the land where he planned to erect a fence adhered to the corkscrew blade so badly that he finally got it stuck in the ground. He tried reversing the direction, but even that failed to free it. So, using the tractor's clutch, he tried to jerk the blade out of the ground by making quick lunges forward, and this, of course, caused the tractor to buck violently.

Mrs. Hunt happened to be on the phone at the time, talking with a friend she had made in the county home demonstration program. She looked out the window and saw what her husband was up to, and, as she told about it later, began describing to her friend with mounting alarm what looked liked his attempt to "break" the tractor as one would a horse. She was long used to his fits of anger, but, with heavy equipment now in the mix, the stakes were higher—and the stories of misadventure were ever more dramatic and entertaining. This one made its rounds through the county for years.

Working with Jerry and his father was an hilarious experience, when it wasn't frustrating—or frightening. Both high-strung by nature and used to working alone, each had difficulty understanding exactly what the other wanted to accomplish, and when he finally did understand, disagreements over how to do it invariably arose. Each man was better at giving directions than at taking them. Exasperation led to fits of temper, tossed tools, and brief sulking periods—but, before long, they were back at work as though nothing had happened.

Enlisting Mrs. Hunt's aid, we finally got the poles for the new barn steadied in their holes well enough to be able to secure the horizontal supports. And before long, the new structure, occupying almost 1,500 square feet of space, was finished. None of us had any idea at the time that Jerry and I would be living in that barn, after converting it into a comfortable, seven-room home, less than 10 years later.

Building the barn was the last big chore the

Hunts undertook. After that, they were able to spend their time in the orchard and the garden. Mr. Hunt had a tank dug, acquired a few head of cattle, and began salvaging telephone poles, glass insulators, and sleepers from a nearby abandoned railroad line. Mrs. Hunt planted shrubs and flowers around their new brick home, and she canned tomatoes, beans, and pears and made preserves and jellies. When Jerry and I came out for a visit, he stayed indoors with his mother to visit and help her with her projects; Mr. Hunt, Leto, and I, being more outdoor types, did chores around the property. One cold fall day we cut firewood on a neighbor's forested acreage. Mr. Hunt worked much as my father did, and I had no trouble understanding his directions or taking them.

I called Mother every weekday as soon as I got home from school and had taken Leto for a short walk up the street and back. I'd report on my day, she on hers; it often seemed we had little to say beyond recounting a few things we did, and I regret that for whatever reason, we weren't able to share our worries more than we did—mine increasing with each year I taught, and hers with Daddy's physical and mental decline. Years later, one of Mother's high-school friends whom I got to know and came to befriend told me she and Mother would be out shopping and Mother would say, "Marguerite, we'd better get back. My boy'll be calling." I suppose I never realized how important that daily contact with me was to her.

While Paul was overseas, Judy managed an apartment complex in the Oak Lawn area. She and I could see how fast Daddy's health was deteriorating, and she, particularly, suffered the effects of his growing petulance and childish behavior. He expected her to come to see him and Mother every Sunday, and he'd call several times during the day to remind her and to find out when to expect her. If she were later than he thought she should be, he'd sulk. Seeing him this way, so different from his former, independent self, hurt us—and doubly so, for Mother's sake.

When he wasn't able to paint houses any longer, Daddy began repairing the wooden crates fruits and vegetables were shipped in at that time. Uncle Henry was a produce buyer for Safeway, and he found this work for Daddy, arranging for the damaged crates to be delivered to the house on Ferguson Road and for the repaired ones to be picked up whenever Daddy called. This piecemeal work kept Daddy busy year-round. He worked on the patio in hot weather, using a metal conveyor a friend had brought him from Ben E. Keith's to move the crates from the garage to where he was outside; Daddy cut a special little door in the back of the garage for the conveyor to pass through. In winter, he worked in the garage, sometimes with an electric heater nearby. Mother and I would sit visiting in the living room, listening to the sporadic hammering.

Daddy was interested in my teaching, proud that I had begun a career he knew I wanted and had worked toward, and satisfied, I believe, that I was happy. Shortly after I was hired, I took Mother and Daddy to Cistercian to see the campus and to meet the headmaster ("Your son came to us and started teaching like he'd been here for years," Fr. Denis told them).

Judy and her marriage were a concern for Daddy, though. He was skeptical, at first, that a marriage between people who had known one another only a few weeks could last. He fretted that Judy had a husband in the military, with the likelihood of having to move here and there. And he was a little put off by Paul's take-charge manner, anxious that Judy wasn't speaking up for herself. But he must have seen that they loved one another, and when Daddy died in 1972, they had been married seven years.

He had become harder and harder for Mother to manage, and one day he couldn't get up. He lived two weeks in the hospital, finally dying of pneumonia. While I was teaching that Friday, they called me to come, but he died before I could get there.

I shaved him a few days before he died. He couldn't talk (he had been intubated, the draining fluid black), and I didn't say much. But I remember being in no hurry shaving him, using his own safety razor, guiding it down his cheeks, along his jaws, up his neck. His eyes held me in their gaze.

Many of the people who had worked with him came by the house and attended the funeral. It was very moving to see their demonstration of affection and respect. I wrote a short tribute for the minister to read, describing how hard and how well Daddy always worked and quoting the

William Carlos Williams poem about the importance of a red wheelbarrow.

*

Mother lived alone, now, and Judy and Paul were soon transferred to Illinois. I went over to see her most every Sunday, and I took her to movies and concerts whenever there was something she wanted to see. She came to Canton with us once, and I took her to Houston several times to visit two of my father's sisters who lived there and to enjoy shopping in different stores.

We had good walks whenever we could, and Leto often accompanied us ("your little friend," Mother called her). The Samuel-Grand Park was one of our favorite places to visit Sunday mornings; we'd buy a newspaper and sit reading it under the trees, while Leto explored the nearby bushes. I often thought how these quiet times together hearkened back to the summer afternoons when Judy and I were children and Mother spread an old quilt, reserved for the purpose, under the shade trees in our back yard during the hottest part of the day. She always brought books out; we'd read awhile, then nap, and wake up to a snack of cheese and crackers or apples, peeled and cut into wedges.

Sometimes Mother would come by during the week, bringing us a dish of baked apples or a pot of navy beans. She'd usually whistle at the door, yelling "Yoo-hoo"; I suppose she found the thought of knocking or ringing the doorbell too formal, and I'm glad she did. When she asked Jerry to play the piano, he usually would (she was luckier than most): "Deep Purple," "Autumn Leaves," and "Some of These Days" were her favorite tunes.

Her life soon came to revolve around Judy and her first grandchild, Jenny. She rode Amtrak to Chicago in July of 1973 to be with Judy and Paul when they had their first baby. A little later I drove up, with Mother's dog, Mr. Freckles, to be with them. Judy and Paul lived in a little town near Waukegan, where Paul was an Army recruiter. We enjoyed exploring Zion and being with Judy and Paul, but the baby was long overdue and my first day of school was approaching fast. Finally, we took Judy to the hospital. Mother and I waited with a group of anxious fathers; Paul was in the delivery room with Judy, aiding her in the Lamaze method of childbirth. Jenny finally came.

Mother and I had to start back, and it was a shame she couldn't have more time with the baby. But it wouldn't be too long before Paul was transferred to Dallas, and he and Judy began buying a house just down the street from Mother's but on the other side. In the years ahead, Judy and Mother became best friends, looking after Jenny and then Jamie, shopping for them, cooking and sewing, talking and laughing and reminiscing. The special bond Mother formed with Jenny endures, now 16 years after Mother's death; one of Jenny's first compositions in freshman English was "Remembering GaGa".

These were some of the best years of Mother's life.

*

Jerry had been interested in India and Buddhism since his early study of Rosicrucianism and meditation, and with our recent conversion to a vegetarian diet; he was exploring Indian cuisine. In 1975 he had a chance to visit the country, thanks to Peggy and George. They, too, had become interested in Eastern spirituality and meditation, and George was always fond of traveling (He used to write travel articles for a physicians' magazine). I don't believe Jerry would have undertaken such a trip without their practical help, and I know he took comfort in the fact that he would be traveling in a country that poses some health risk with a doctor and a nurse. As it turned out, he needed them.

3/20/75

Stephen + Leto— Arrived Bombay noon Tuesday. Am as you suspect very glad to be here. We are so tired. 20 hours of airplane is almost more than you can take. Hotel very Indian, very comfortable, wonderful ceiling electric fan. The heat is a welcome relief, it was 50 in Rome and raining. Have come back from dinner (in hotel, so-so) and a walk through area. We are next to dock, etc. I'll write you again when I've got some fancy cards and we've had a chance to sleep some and <u>get adjusted</u> to the <u>change</u>. It is Bombay, period. No

comparisons possible. There are, though, many dogs in all places. Some are healthy looking and well-fed seeming. Cows everywhere; very healthy. Miss you & puppy. Will write more later when clearer etc. etc.

Sleep now is best. L. Jerry.

3/25/75

Not really a very good traveler—after some 300 miles through the state and hours of going through Bombay I've sucked up about all I can— We are going to Sri Lanka in the morning. Possible to stay overnight in Buddhist temple 40 m(iles) into jungle in central Ceylon.

Miss you & Leto. Bringing back some things, hopefully something will fit or work out for one of us—Indian people very friendly & overall sweetness—also as I've mentioned beautiful, but...! We will start for home c. 6th April. Traveling to Shiva temples was very exhausting—had mild heat stroke—don't tell parents—wait 'til I'm back/ L. J.

3/26/75

Stephen— arrived intact—Colombo all tropical— miserable humidity & water—seemingly very much in pre-taint total commercialization—food basically poor—going to monastery for audience w/Buddhist director of studies here—will send card later if decide Madras or not—some tonish Indians in city, will see soon enough —looks pretty, like Galveston.

J. Miss Y + Leto.

Stephen—This will probably barely reach you and then I'm home—I'm not sure how fast these things are reaching you. So thought I'd take a chance & send some longer letter—so much has happened that it seems I've been gone several months. I have had heat stroke (very mild) and also some minor intestinal trouble, I'm sure from not sleeping and staying in streets—Then we traveled the road through Maharastra and it is deceptively dry and so seems not hot. India is utterly different from any place I have ever been—As to whether it changes you, I don't know, but it changes how you feel about Indians—and India. I'm not going to cause writer's cramp going on—We are now in Ceylon & it is different from Central India also—uniquely—Anyway as you can already expect I'll talk about it until you'll wish I had never seen India or heard of it.

After a couple of days [in Bombay] we, or I should say I, met some people, first older Hindus & toward the end of our stay, young Hindu men. Everything one hears about India is true one way or another—the complexity of their civilization here now is completely bewildering—there is a very special sweetness in Indians, a little childish and naive and yet in some way very sophisticated—! have found them really beautiful people but the complexities of their social structure make getting any sense at all out of their attitudes still very obscure.

Colombo is very much westernized and at the same time a primitive island culture and some incredible 2000 yr old statues to remind them that their culture is ancient and possessed Buddhism in its beginnings —A strange mixture again.

Today we met with Piyadassi Thera, an important Buddhist monk and teacher here. Finally tonight some excellent Ceylonese vegetable dishes —they keep trying to serve me Western food! The South Indian vegetables are all here, also a considerable S. Indian population So rather than go to Madras, I'll probably stay here and go to Buddhist

monastery next week.

I will have to come back to India next year—You could say I haven't stayed long enough but I don't think for this trip I can take much more than 3 weeks—I'm much more comfortable here now, & have made several friends in India so that it will be very easy—the cultural shock is very real & is aggravated by the fact that I have pushed so hard—every day was spent in streets with as many people as possible—It has been very little problem with George and Peggy—Only real problem is he is a little old for the pace and stays in hotel a lot to sleep & Peggy's lazy—They do not have my aggressive curiosity—On the other hand I'm exhausted already by the constant pushing of experiences, they are still alright—There is a good South Indian restaurant close by for Hindus in a hotel so there is good vegetarian food for me always. I miss you & Leto, despite all talk about beautiful Indians I still think always first of you. Give goodies to Leto for me. May not write again, mails take at least—4 days—it took 24 hrs flight here, it is 12,000 miles'!

love Jerry

The heatstroke may have been mild, but I learned when Jerry returned that George and Peggy had to wrap him in wet sheets. Two of the young Indian men Jerry met were homosexual, he later told me, and very much interested in the fact that Jerry and I were living more or less openly as a couple in the U.S. And the "goodies" for Leto that Jerry mentioned were Choco Drops, carob-flavored vitaminized treats, made in England, that Leto was crazy about.

As promised, Jerry returned with silk for his mother, shirts for me, and a set of stainless steel *thali* dishes that gave us and our dinner guests much pleasure over the years. Jerry learned a great deal about South Indian cooking when he was in Colombo, after he convinced a Hindu friend he'd made that he really did want to eat the home-style fare they were used to (the house cook had gotten into trouble for serving Jerry humble breadfruit).

With the aid of cookbooks he purchased there and, later, in London, Jerry acquired considerable skill as a preparer of Indian food—so much skill, in fact, that he was sometimes able to recommend cooking techniques and flavor enhancements to Indians we met in groceries and restaurants in Dallas and elsewhere. During our years on Swiss, we ate Indian meals at least half the time; after our move to Canton, we ate more Mexican food than Indian, given the difficulty of finding Indian products in the rural town. For a few years, though, I grew cluster beans, bitter gourd, and doodhi in our vegetable garden, and we did manage to keep a curry plant alive for two seasons.

Peggy and George were very much impressed by the Buddhist monk Piyadassi, and they invited him to visit them in Corpus Christi.

He came several times, leading meditation sessions that George and Peggy had arranged for him. Jerry went down during one of Piyadassi's stays and returned with hilarious stories about everyone's efforts to accommodate Piyadassi's ascetic habits. Smoking for Jerry and Peggy became a real challenge. They had to take breaks from meditation to light up offstage.

Piyadassi's eating habits forced the hardest test of Peggy and Jerry's resolve, and patience. The monk could eat only simple foods and in small quantities, and after noon he could have no solid food at all. This rather portly man awoke hungry and proceeded to eat a great number of small meals for as long as the clock allowed. Jerry and Peggy were at work in the kitchen before Piyadassi arose, and he kept them there until his daily fast began. When he'd go for a walk, Peggy and Jerry would whip out the cigarettes and forbidden foods, smoking and stuffing themselves and laughing, while watching out for Piyadassi's saffron robe to come swinging back down the driveway.

*

As I sat in my upstairs study grading papers, Leto in the armchair beside my desk, I could look across our back yard to Jerry's electronics workroom above the garage. We always needed a little space between us due to our listening

preferences, he with talk radio on in the background, I with classical music on the radio or on the turntable. We'd visit one another, one or the other of us crossing the yard with his coffee cup in hand, and Leto always announced our arrival, jumping up to scurry downstairs to greet Jerry, or running ahead of me and up the apartment stairs to let Jerry know we'd come.

Although the garage apartment had a complete kitchen, Jerry and Houston used that space for etching circuit boards; Houston, who had gone to work for his father's metal factory, installed a couple of stainless steel sinks, and he and Jerry often worked up there late into the evening, wiring, testing, talking, and drinking coffee.

Their collaboration culminated in a performance of *Quaquaversal Transmission,* a "theater work utilizing direct audio-video synthesis and performance with interactive control," for the International Congress of Experimental Sound held in London in 1972. They packed the small car Houston had with electronic gear and props and a few clothes and drove to New York, where they had planned to take a budget chartered flight to London. Jerry lost his billfold (and passport) in New Jersey, and they discovered when they called to arrange for their tickets that the charter company had ceased operation and declared bankruptcy.

Mrs. Hunt and I worked frantically at this end trying to cancel Jerry's credit cards and replace his passport. Jerry and Houston managed to book another flight. Although they were late arriving, they finally did get off, and Jerry was to talk for years about the adventure—from its ill-fated beginning to the difficulties of getting suspicious-looking electronic gear through customs and then hauling it around London.

Houston's health presented yet another problem. He was a hemophiliac, and his knees gave him a lot of trouble—exacerbated, of course, by having to help move heavy equipment. Jerry was rarely comfortable leaving things in a performance space: he always preferred keeping everything with him until he could set up, and then he wanted to stay with it all until the performance was over. I expect Houston got quite a workout helping Jerry move their gear through London, in and out of taxis and the hotel room and the concert hall. He had to inject a blood-clotting factor into his knees on a regular basis, and Jerry often described the horrified amazement he felt at watching Houston do this. This, though, was always Houston's approach to his steadily deteriorating condition; he seldom allowed it to keep him from doing what he wanted to do.

Jerry and Houston made a friend in London: Jacqueline, one of the coordinators of the Congress and a teacher in the computer science department of a university there. She was fascinated by Jerry's work and personality, and they kept up a fairly steady correspondence during the rest of Jerry's life. Shortly after his death, Jacqueline sent me copies of all of Jerry's letters to her—twenty years' worth of news and updates, outlining the major events of our lives in Jerry's telegraphic, wry style, and responding with affectionate concern to Jacqueline's accounts of the birth of her daughter, the separation from Emma's father, and the health problems that eventually required a kidney transplant.

Jacqueline was of considerable help to Jerry in making the technical arrangements for his 1973 trip to the International Edinburgh Festival, where he and David Dowe presented *Haramand Plane: parallel/regenerative,* a work commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council that used a "small control computer for deriving interrelationships" between synthesized video and audio. This trip, too, was beset by difficulties. David somehow got stranded for several hours in London; he and his wife, Ann, and Jerry missed a train connection to Cologne while on their way to a performance of the piece in Berlin and had to sit in a waiting room all night; and Ann's disappointment at seeing the "vacation" aspect of the trip be eclipsed by the need to guard the equipment—when the three of them weren't hauling it through the streets—caused her to pretty much stop speaking to Jerry for the duration of the adventure.

I met Jacqueline in 1976 when I went to London for a couple of weeks of concerts at Christmastime. We had lunch together and talked about our teaching and about books. I think she was a little surprised to see how unlike Jerry I am in mannerisms, taste, and temperament. This was often the reaction when Jerry's friends met me; my friends were similarly surprised when they

met Jerry. Perhaps such differences seem especially strange in a same-sex relationship; it's odd, though, that they should. In any case, the avant-gardist's companion regaled Jacqueline with accounts of having heard the *Kindertotenlieder* with Fischer- Dieskau in the Royal Festival Hall, the *Messiah* at the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square.

Jerry's video work with David led to several commissions in the States. From their studio beneath the bleachers of SMU's Ownby Stadium, they created *Procession*, an audio-video work shown on PBS's Video Visionaries series. The Rockefeller Foundation gave them a grant to serve as consultants for video-related electronic media programs in Texas universities. And David's associations with CBS and, later, Dallas's KERA, resulted in his directing the 13-part "Ossie and Ruby Show," with supplemental music by Jerry.

As it is for so many artists, Jerry's toughest struggle was to have the time and money to do his own work. He was fortunate, as he readily acknowledged, in meeting people who were able to give him work by using him in their own. From his early piano study with Paul van Katwijk at SMU, he met the conductor David Ahlstrom (with whom Jerry performed the Cage work). Through David, Jerry met Toni Beck, the chair of SMU's dance department; she used Jerry's music in her dance programs—including one of Dallas's first "happenings," held at the downtown Sheraton Hotel. Toni's husband, Paul Bosner, as a television producer at KERA and then for the Dallas County Community College District, hired Jerry to contribute the music to several video courses—a major source of income for Jerry all the way through the last year of his life, when he wrote the music, ironically enough, for the "Living with Health" series.

Of course people used Jerry because of his talent and skill, primarily, but they also wanted to help him and support his art. David Gibson, who did lighting for some of Toni's productions, assisted Jerry in a few performances; he made space available for one of Jerry's interactive audio-video installations in later years. The artist David McManaway created an assortment of wands and other objects for Jerry's use in performance, both live and video. The percussionist Ron Snider, in addition to lining up studio gigs for Jerry, assisted him in performance and loaned him exotic instruments. Ron and his wife, Joan, played in a posthumous performance of one of Jerry's chamber works.

Paul and Oz Srere found another way to appreciate Jerry's talent and help him further his own work. In the mid-'70s they began what was to become an almost annual event, a series of Sunday afternoon recitals, with commentary, that Jerry gave in the Sreres' Highland Park home, filling their front rooms with friends and fans who came to enjoy the mostly unfamiliar music and Jerry's entertaining descriptions of it.

In 1977 one of these recitals, "The Death of the Piano," was videotaped for showing on KERA. The 30-minute program begins with Oz and Paul setting up the folding chairs while Bill Porterfield explains what is about to happen. Jerry then walks on, talking nonstop as he makes the final adjustments to his electronic equipment; the camera catches the effect he has on the audience—how he amuses them, and stimulates them, and, now performing, enraptures them.

After these recitals, the guests were invited to the den in the back of the house for refreshments. Most of the audience would come forward, though, to visit with Jerry, to ask him something about the music he had played, to thank him, or just to partake of the energy he radiated. Sometimes the reception would last almost as long as the music had. When we'd finally say goodbye, Oz would force a thick envelope on Jerry, and he always protested; once she even had to give it to me. This was money Jerry scrupulously saved to apply toward his own work. After his death, I found several of these envelopes, with their thank-you notes from Oz and over $I,000 in $50s and $100s.

*

I always looked forward to summer vacations, having learned to do so early in life, with our annual family trips to Kilgore, or Galveston, and (once) Kentucky. Traveling somewhere distant became, by the end of the spring semester, a beacon that would lead me out of the dark mine of grading essays and exams. We planned a long trip west for the summer of 1977; Jerry's scruples about spending money frivolously were overcome

when he realized he could make a few useful contacts in Aspen and Santa Fe.

We asked Mrs. Hunt to go with us. She and Mr. Hunt, who had retired at last, were comfortably settled in the country, but Jerry's mother had grown a little bored with the routine there and welcomed a change. She had begun to take lessons in oil painting and was keen on photographing Colorado views for possible use as picture subjects.

We covered quite a bit of territory on that trip, reaching Leadville, Colorado, via Aspen, and returning through Santa Fe.

To save money and better accommodate Jerry's and my vegetarian diet, we cooked meals in our motel rooms, using the hot plate we'd brought along. Jerry and his mother stayed with Leto while I saw a Shakespeare play at the University of Colorado at Boulder and when I attended concerts in Aspen and in Santa Fe.

Mrs. Hunt enjoyed riding, looking at the scenery. We would stop quite often to give Leto a little exercise and to take pictures. By late afternoon, we'd have found our lodging for the night. I remember sitting with Jerry on the porch of a chalet-like motel in Ouray, Colorado, drinking coffee and watching the sunset, while our clothes turned in the dryer of the laundromat nearby.

We drove through Pueblo, Colorado, to see what remained of the landmarks Jerry and his mother remembered from the year the Hunts spent there shortly after the war. Mr. Hunt was a salesman and had to cover a large area around Pueblo, negotiating icy roads and snowy passes. As soon as he could, he moved his family back to Texas.

We found the hospital where his mother took Jerry when he swallowed the safety pins (closed, of course, and harmlessly passed). Mrs. Hunt remembered the nuns there with gratitude—both for their help in the emergency room and for the recipe for spaghetti sauce that they gave Mr. Hunt, who called on them regularly selling milk products.

On our way out of Pueblo, we passed the slag heap of a plant south of town. Jerry remembered how he and his parents would drive out that way sometimes to see the huge, smoldering pile, glowing in the dusk. They'd pull their car into an adjacent lot and sit awhile, no doubt indulging their son who was fascinated by the eerie, otherworldly spectacle.

Mrs. Hunt was a little uneasy leaving her husband for the three weeks we were to be gone. He worked too hard around the farm, she fretted, and he wouldn't eat right without her there to prepare balanced meals. Some heart problems had arisen; he had seen a doctor and kept nitroglycerin tablets close by. She called him several times to check on him, but he made it fine and was glad for his wife to have had the trip.

Just before that Christmas, Mrs. Hunt drove into Dallas to spend a day shopping with Jerry and to stay with us overnight. At dinner she told us she had hated to leave that morning because Mr. Hunt didn't seem to be feeling well; he'd hung about the house a little later than usual before going out to his work salvaging telephone poles. He insisted she come in as planned.

I was writing semester exams when a Canton neighbor called to tell us that Mr. Hunt was being taken by ambulance to a hospital in Athens. He had come in from work sick, but the nitroglycerin tablet he took hadn't helped. Then he called this neighbor, a retired physician, who recognized the symptoms of a heart attack and called an ambulance. We learned later that the ambulance driver had had trouble finding the farm, and by the time they got Mr. Hunt to Athens, 30 minutes away, he was dead.

Jerry and his mother started out for the hour-and-a-half drive to Athens, not knowing what to expect when they arrived. Mrs. Hunt's feeling of guilt for having left her husband was unassuageable. Jerry talked often about that drive, about how upset his mother was, and about how she couldn't believe it when she was told her husband was already gone. She came home and spent the rest of the night cleaning the house, working especially hard in the bathrooms.

After school the next day, I drove out to deliver the sheet music Jerry had asked for. Since exams were underway, I couldn't attend the funeral that was held in Mart, near Waco. One of the Hunts' longtime friends, Maydell, accompanied Jerry and his mother to the funeral home. She told me Jerry played some of Mr. Hunt's favorite songs on the organ (again, as at Granny's funeral, a public performance on an unfamiliar instrument), tears in his eyes.

Jerry stayed with his mother over a week. When he finally left, she assured him she wouldn't be afraid living alone on the farm. She had made a lot of friends, she said, who would surely check on her. And she had King, the German shepherd Mr. Hunt had brought home shortly after Hermie and Sassie died. Nevertheless, Jerry noted, she had gone from window to window closing the wooden shutters at twilight—something she had never done before.

*

A record snow fell the winter of 1978, covering iced-over tree branches and breaking them off to fall on power lines. Some areas of the city were without electricity for almost two weeks; our side of Swiss Avenue was dark for 10 days. Each morning during the unscheduled winter vacation I'd hear from one of the priests that there would again be no school. I had to be up and ready to go, just in case—but it was a pleasure, confident as I was that I would have the morning to continue reading *Anna Karenina,* Leto in the chair beside me or on the rug in front of the gas heater.

In the early afternoon, Jerry, Leto, and I would take a long walk through the snowy landscape, where streets had become indistinguishable from yards. We tied a blue wool muffler around Leto's middle, and she trotted along in front of us, her white fur blending so well with the snow that she must have looked, from a distance, like a little animated scarf. We'd pick up what supplies we could (no candles, though: they were all sold out) in the few stores that were open and return home, turning up the gas furnace and trying to prepare as best we could for the dark hours ahead.

Later that winter Jerry drove to Illinois to give a concert and fell on the icy ground, breaking his left, his writing, arm. With painkillers, he made it through the performance and the long drive home. The months of recuperation were tedious and frustrating; he wasn't able to play the piano or wire his electronics, and even cooking was a chore with his arm in a sling. For almost two years after the break, he was to complain of aching in that arm.

Jerry never had been one to endure illness patiently, and he used to say "I can take anything but pain." He lived with a toothache for several months, sometimes in such agony that we'd have to go to the all-night drugstore for a fresh tube of "El Numbo," as he called the oral analgesic.

When his mother and I finally persuaded him to go to the dentist, he was so frightened of what might happen there that he decided to have a few drinks before the appointment. It had been agreed that I would drive him to the dentist's office in the old Medical Arts Building in downtown Dallas. He finished his third or fourth "milk punch" (milk and vodka) on the way down. I had to give him a hand out of the car and into the building, but he needed no help talking, charming (and tickling) the dentist and his assistants with a nonstop monologue that ceased only when they got him in the chair and put the aspirator in his mouth.

As it turned out, he had to have root canals in two lower molars, a result, the dentist surmised, of the way Jerry ground his teeth when he practiced the piano. Although each of the several visits he had to make was preceded by a drink or two, he got to where he wasn't making them so strong. He actually came to like the dentist quite a bit, a rather plump young fellow Jerry always called "my tooth teddy though never, I hope, to his face, the milk punches notwithstanding.

*

Mrs. Hunt's circle of friends in Canton widened and deepened; she won prizes for her oil paintings, served as secretary for a women's club, started her own, informal group (the Fair and Talented—or the FAT Club, as they called it), and worked on a political campaign for the county sheriff's office.

My mother now had two granddaughters; Jamie was a year old, and there was daily visiting between Mother's and Judy's houses on Ferguson Road.

Jerry and I visited our mothers regularly, and we continued to have people over for vegetarian dinners, Indian one month, Chinese or Mexican the next. But we were fighting, more and more often, usually about the division of labor on and in the house. The newness of living in a mansion had worn off, after seven or eight years, and we were rapidly losing ground in our sometimes half-hearted efforts to maintain the place. The exterior trim needed painting again, the floors needed cleaning and polishing, and the windows hadn't been washed in years.

Our rent remained the same, but we received only minimal help from the landlord: plumbing repairs, and ineffectual roof patching. We finally solved the leaking roof problem by suspending giant sheets of plastic from the ceiling in the attic, taping them together in such a way as to create a huge funnel that emptied into a garden hose that led, through a vent, to the outside. Sometimes during especially heavy rains water would collect in a lobe of the funnel—or "tit," as we referred to it—and one of us would have to go up and "milk," pressing the water over toward the drain.

Jerry was frustrated by the fact that he could get plenty of commercial work and work for academic institutions (he had begun teaching at the University of Texas at Dallas, one or two nights a week), while what he really needed was more time and energy to devote to his own projects. He complained vociferously every time he had to leave the house to go to some job or other, being forced to leave his real work behind —on the piano, on his workbench, or on his desk.

I had begun to fear that I was burning myself out teaching. Planning lessons meant reading literature or listening to music, making notes, formulating discussion strategies, and devising tests, and I worked late every night. The weekends were dedicated to grading papers, usually essay tests or full-length compositions; I hated to give multiple-choice tests, trying to take advantage of every opportunity to give the students a chance to write. Free periods at school were devoted to student conferences: I was rarely ever able to get any paperwork done there.

On one occasion I had just one or two papers left to grade before finishing a set that I had promised a class I'd have ready that day; I fled the loud talking (it was probably a Friday) in the faculty suite to finish my work in the quiet of the headmaster's outer office. (One of my colleagues saw me there and, I have always assumed, told the others.) I routinely took a set of papers to the symphony concerts I attended Saturday nights, my red-ink pen uncapped and ready to go as soon as the house lights came up for intermission.

So neither of us felt he had a lot of time to do housekeeping chores, and each, accordingly, was more than ready to blame the other for not doing his share. Jerry saw me sitting around reading; I heard him just playing the piano. When the tension led to arguments, he exploded and I sulked. He cleaned out the utility room one day by throwing trash (and some still-usable supplies) into the back yard, shouting obscenities as he did so that I'll bet were unlike anything our neighbors, the Forts—who, Jerry soon realized, were sitting on their patio—had ever heard. (And how like Jerry that shortly after he saw them, he began carrying things back in without missing a beat, continuing the epithets but toning them down a little, conducting business as usual.)

During that fit I went off to hide just as I had over 15 years earlier when he threw his tantrum at Jas. K. Wilson's clothes store in downtown Dallas. He had brought back a pair of recently purchased trousers to be altered, and the clerk assumed they had been worn and sniffily informed Jerry that they didn't work on "soiled" clothes. Jerry hit the roof, yelling at the poor fellow and demanding to see the manager, threatening to talk his parents into closing their account—after they'd returned everything they had ever bought from the store. I was horrified at the scene and slunk down the three flights of stairs, no time to wait for the elevator.

I wound up going into the Orange Julius restaurant next door. As I sat, still shaken, drinking the beverage I didn't want and looking out the front windows, I saw Jerry rush by, still fuming (but without the pants). I continued to sit there. He soon passed by again; this time he looked in. On his third crossing, he entered the restaurant. He was angry with me for having abandoned him.

So often over the years we followed this pattern. Just as his father's often did, Jerry's temper would flare up, erupt in some violent deed, and die down. My nature, like Jerry's mother's, led me to minimize, or deny, the problem, then pout when I got my face pushed in it. Above all else, I had to demonstrate that I had not been affected. Eventually—almost always—Jerry would come round to apologize; then we could talk, and sometimes make love. His fits served to get things out into the open. We would have been worse off without them.

My plan to stave off burnout was to ask for a year's leave of absence. Fr. Denis reluctantly permitted this, expressing his regret that the

school could not afford to reward my eight years of teaching with a paid sabbatical. I had savings set aside, so money wasn't an issue (Jerry and I had long since gotten into the habit of living frugally). As soon as my plans were set, Jerry and I began to get along better, to spend more time with one another, and to talk without needing dramatic prologues to do so.

To make a clean break, I took a trip with Leto to New York.

Our destination was the Vegetarian Hotel in Woodridge, in the Catskills. We drove up through Tennessee and the Appalachians, spending three nights on the road. We stopped at rest stops and even some cemeteries to stretch our legs. When I had to leave Leto, I always tried to park the Toyota where I could keep an eye on her. She seemed to enjoy riding, sitting in the front seat beside me and often looking ahead. In slow traffic, I'd roll the window down and she'd stick her nose out, sniffing the breeze.

One night at a stop light we pulled up behind a pick-up with two workmen sitting in the back. They saw Leto beside me, and one of them yelled, "That your woman?" Jerry loved that story.

The Vegetarian Hotel was a kind of health retreat for East Coast Jews; the same crowd, now aging, spent a good part of the summer there each year, eating sensibly, doing a little Yoga-influenced exercise, and attending lectures on health and well-being under the majestic Tree of Life on the front lawn.

Lunch and dinner were social events, with an occasional night of folk dancing for entertainment. I liked the place and felt right at home, although I knew many of the guests found my being there a little odd, traveling with just a dog at my young age.

Mealtimes were especially enjoyable because of the interesting conversation at what became my regular table. I looked forward to visiting with a fellow who worked for the Educational Testing Service and his wife, and I made friends with the octogenarian who sat on my other side (her nurse would wheel her up to the table and proceed to lay out a dozen or more pills which the old lady scooped up and swallowed in one great gulp). I never left the dining room without a collection of scraps brought me by other guests to take back to Leto, who, I always assumed, waited patiently in our room.

I became particularly fond of a little lady who spoke seldom, and very quietly, but whose comments about her early life in Poland intrigued me. We visited at length one afternoon in the Adirondack chairs, Leto lying between us, just outside her building. She told me a little about her childhood, and her parents, and said that what served most effectively to keep her memories fresh was music, the Yiddish songs she learned as a girl and still sang.

Because of my obvious interest in these songs, she invited me to visit her in her room where she promised to sing for me. I took my tape recorder along and recorded a lovely, modal song about a fisherman who goes out early one morning to cast his net, while spinning a dream of someday finding his beloved. The ocean murmurs sadly; maybe it is lonely too. The fisherman returns home empty-handed. Ethel helped me transcribe the Yiddish words as we listened to the tape I made.

Leto and I would usually go exploring in the hills around Woodridge after lunch. One day in a village antiques store I found a pair of ornate wrought-iron bookends that I almost bought for Jerry (they were expensive) and always regretted not doing so. Sometimes I would bring back ice cream from the little shop in town for my octogenarian friend, Leto and I delivering it to her as she sat under a huge, white parasol in her accustomed chair.

I went to two or three of the folk dancing evenings, for the music mainly: Yiddish tunes played on an accordion. I noticed that I was always paired with the same young lady, an English teacher from New Jersey. I didn't think much about this until she came to my door after dinner one night, inviting me to accompany her to a small gathering in a friend's room—probably comprising the whole of the youthful contingent at the hotel at that time. I declined to go, explaining that I had letters to write, or a call to make, or whatever.

The day before I was to leave, one of the three or four young men who had come up from Brooklyn to work in the hotel kitchen for the summer approached me on the terrace and asked to borrow a dollar. He'd pay me back the following

day, he said. There was something unusually aggressive about his manner, but I didn't take it personally. When I was packing my car to leave the next day, I noticed this same fellow standing with his buddies and a couple of girls in a corner of the parking lot near the kitchen door. I became aware that they were looking at me and laughing. As Leto and I drove away, I heard the word—they made sure I heard the word —queer.

Our journey home took us west to Erie, then south through Kentucky, where I drove through the area around Greensburg (Granny's birthplace) that our family had visited in 1952. I was glad to get back home and eager to get started on making my year off from teaching count. I reviewed my Greek, eventually reading *Hippolytos* and *Medea.* I practiced the violin and even tried to play the first movement of Beethoven's "Spring" Sonata with Jerry. And I rented an accordion, not having even held one for over 20 years, in order to learn to play Yiddish songs.

*

During my leave of absence from the school, Jerry and I made several trips to Houston and to Corpus. Bob and Rany had moved into a two-story house not far from Rice University and had had a swimming pool put in the back yard. Peggy and George's house in Portland, right on the shore, made you feel as though you were aboard a ship: through the windows at the back of the house, only water was visible. We waded out into the bay one afternoon, Leto paddling along behind us; we went too far for her, apparently, and Peggy noticed her struggling and helped her back to shore. I have a picture that I took of the two of them that I took on our return to land. It reminds me of how much Leto always hated water. (When wet, she looked like a "drowned rat," Jerry said, with her usually flowing hair pasted alongside her body.)

Both destinations offered music. Bob had bought a new Steinway, with Jerry's help. On one of Jerry's and my trips East, he met us at the Steinway factory in Queens. Leto and I waited under a tree in the parking lot while Jerry and Bob selected an instrument. Peggy and George had acquired a Steinway too, one once used by visiting artists and since retired.

So, in Houston and Corpus both, there was always a great deal of piano playing, and a lot of talk about music. Jerry especially appreciated the contrast in action and tone those Steinways offered to his own darker and more ponderous Mason & Hamlin, but he always maintained that his piano was better to learn music on, perhaps because it made you work harder.

With the extra time, I was able to do more yard work and gardening. I planted seven kinds of hybrid tea roses in our back yard on Swiss, and, during our frequent trips to Canton, I experimented with Chinese and Indian vegetables. I also enjoyed maintaining a regular exchange of letters with Lillian, now a professor of philosophy at Auburn. We wrote about books and music (she introduced me to Elgar's *Sea Pictures)*, and she sent me a beautiful muffler she wove by hand and dyed with pecans as well as a little teddy bear she made with a laurel crown on his head, named "Feisty." One wintry day a quilt arrived, a masterpiece she made out of old ties that she had collected from her colleagues at the university.

By the next midsummer, I believed I was ready to return to teaching in the fall. The school had been very good about respecting my desire to have a year away. With one or two minor exceptions, I had had no contact with anyone there. It is true, though, that I had never really socialized with the other faculty, apart from having one of the science teachers and his wife over for dinner a time or two (and on one occasion, when we were still eating meat, Norman embarrassed us by pulling a USDA inspection tag out of the chicken stew Jerry had made—a story Jerry delighted in retelling).

Fr. Denis called in early August and invited me to the abbey for dinner and to discuss the upcoming year. During the hour just before I was to leave to meet him, Jerry and I made love on the hideaway bed in my study, in the late afternoon sunlight that was angling in through the blinds. I remember dressing and thinking of my sports coat and slacks as a kind of uniform that I was putting on again. But it would be all right, I believed, and that belief was strengthened by the intimacy Jerry and I had just shared.

I was wrong. Nothing at school was the same because I wasn't the same. For a couple of months, I went through the motions, mechanically preparing lessons and grading

papers, talking enthusiastically and ignoring a rising sense of desperation with the aid of several stiff drinks each night before dinner and just before bedtime. I slept fitfully, awoke earlier and earlier, and began finding longer and longer alternate routes to school. I startled myself by crying on the way there one morning; I wore my sunglasses into the school to conceal red eyes.

The crisis came while we were reading Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.* In teaching literature to the upper forms, I had always stressed its relevancy to daily life, to the world we live in. At my lecture I was Arthur Dimmesdale in his pulpit; I knew it and many of the boys knew it. One of the juniors had suspected I might be gay; word had gotten around that I lived with another man and had for years, and all it took was for this boy to raise the issue and start the rumor.

I am sure there had been some suspicion in the years past.

Two students whom I believed to be gay were frequent visitors in my office, although I tried not to show any favoritism. One of these boys, Mark, used to wait for me each morning at the top of the stairs. He was one of the brightest students I had ever had, and I enjoyed his ironic sense of humor. I never really felt threatened or compromised by the association with him; no one overhearing our conversations could have thought them in any way out of place.

In any case, Mark had been graduated during the year I was away. What had changed when I returned was my own sense of who I was, and this change was pushing me toward the realization that, like Dimmesdale, I was living a lie. The closer I came to that realization, the more unstable and vulnerable I became, and that vulnerability opened the blinds far enough for some of the more sensitive students to see in.

What they saw, of course, disturbed them. One of their favorite teachers had a secret that set him apart, provided an unspoken subtext to everything he said about characters and themes in literature as well as people and events in the news. This secret also threatened their developing sense of their own masculine sexuality precisely because they were so fond of me.

From time to time I heard a stage-whispered comment from the back of the classroom, a hurled barb meant to sting, to goad me into saying or doing something that would relieve the tension that had become intolerable for all of us.

And so, one Friday, I knew I was through. Nothing in particular precipitated my decision; "enough was, just enough"—as Jerry described it in a letter to Jacqueline. I went to see Fr. Denis in his office after school. I told him I couldn't go on teaching, that I was gay and that some of the boys knew it, and that I had become so disturbed emotionally that concentrating on my work had become impossible.

Fr. Denis recommended that I continue teaching. "There is no such thing as homosexuality," he said, meaning, I suppose, that one should simply deny same-sex attraction, and certainly not act on it, and conduct business as usual—the business, in this case, of digging one's own grave. If a nonreligious person may be permitted to imagine grace, I can say now that I received something like that gift that day in Fr. Denis's office when I claimed the right to be who I was, and who I am. We embraced, tearfully, and I cleaned out my office and drove away.

For the second time I returned home from work with important news for Jerry. On this occasion, though, the news was good. We took our usual after-dinner walk with Leto, moseying through the rose garden at Samuell-Grand, talking about what had happened to me—to us—and about what might be ahead. I remember becoming aware of a feeling that might be described as anticipated happiness, a sense of hopeful expectation borne out of relief. Although I knew that Jerry was worried about me and disturbed to realize how unhappy I had been (and how far apart we must have grown in some ways for him not to have known that I was), I also believed that he thought I had made the right decision. We had a wonderful, long talk. It was almost like exchanging vows.

I look at the pictures of us our friends took over the years and see in every one of them the bond between us. That I felt I had to hide this, the best part of my life, causes me intense regret. And I am amazed at how duplicitous I was, keeping the school world and my home life separate, and, for years, doing so comfortably. As soon as I left

Cistercian, I saw the damage I had done—to Jerry, to my family, and to myself.

Telling Mother was not difficult: I always suspected she knew her son was gay, and I knew it made no difference in her love for me. We both deluded ourselves by thinking it was better not discussed, and we were both relieved when I brought it out into the open. She had been concerned that I'd be alone in life, and she worried about the difficulties that my being different might cause me. Sitting on Judy's sofa that November day, I told her about my love for Jerry and my hope that it would last a lifetime. I believe I was able to reassure her that I would be happier for having left the school. Judy helped, in her gentle, non-intrusive way. We talked about a couple of relatives we believed were lesbians.

Jerry soon saw how difficult being openly gay had been for me, that it had presented problems in my life that he had never had, associating as he did with musicians, dancers, and artists. He gave me all the loving support he could during the crisis and beyond, unfailingly ready to listen and urging me to take my time in planning for the future.

Leaving the school so abruptly was disorienting: I had put a lot of myself into the job, and having that world and all the habits associated with it disappear left me confused and even a little frightened, in spite of the immense relief I felt. Several faculty members and students wrote to tell me how much they had appreciated my work and to convey their best wishes. (I never really knew, but I believe Fr. Denis told the school community that I had experienced some kind of nervous collapse.) I did feel at times as though I had let down people who had depended on me.

Just to get away for a few days, Jerry and I went to Houston. Bob suggested a day trip to Sargent, a fishing community on the Gulf southwest of Galveston, and he and Rany and I, their dogs, and Leto, drove down. I remember sitting a long time, just listening to the waves wash ashore and the sea gulls crying. And I remember beginning to feel better, more in the mood to celebrate my thirty-fifth birthday. I would like to return to that special place someday; doing so would almost be a pilgrimage.

During the next few months, I set out to gain experience living and thinking as an openly gay man. I began to realize just how deeply I had internalized homophobia when I heard myself tell the owner of a gay bookstore that I didn't live in Dallas, that I was just visiting. One day I walked into a gay bar in downtown Dallas and sat nervously drinking a beer, trying not to stare at the men in business suits who had come in for cocktails after work. The point, of course, was not to see them but to have them see me, a gay man advertising that fact. I read *With Downcast Gays: Aspects of Homosexual Self-Oppression* by Britishers Andrew Hodges and David Hutter, a mathematician and an artist. And I resolved never to conceal my identity as a gay man again, a resolution I have faithfully kept.

I spent several weeks visiting the downtown library regularly. Seeing Larry Kramer's "Faggots" prominently displayed among the new books startled me one day—and challenged me: I found I could remove it, walk to a table, and peruse it without shame. As I browsed in the Humanities and Fine Arts divisions, I overheard the librarians talking among themselves and with patrons, and I began to think I might like to work in such an environment, so seemingly open and relaxed, yet quietly purposeful, and filled with the books and records that I loved. After a couple of months of part-time work conducting telephone surveys, I got a job as a clerk with the Dallas Public Library, and I began a second career that has so far lasted more than sixteen years.

As I had for years, I went out to trim the trees and shrubs in Mother's front yard right around the time of my birthday, November 19th. Judy had baked a birthday cake for me, and I looked up from my work to see her walking up the street with it, Jenny and Jamie (not yet two) leading the way. I didn't particularly think it odd that Judy had baked the cake instead of Mother, but I realize now that Mother hadn't been feeling well for

some time and may not have been up to it.

Mother had had a bad cold early that winter, and it had left her with a nagging cough that wouldn't go away. She finally agreed to go to the doctor, and I took her to our family physician. Dr. Hancock advised her to consult a pulmonary specialist, and he recommended a bronchoscopy. This doctor told me in the waiting room that he had indeed found cancer, inoperable, in a bronchus. He referred us to an oncologist to plan radio and chemotherapy.

I will never forget the impression that surgeon made on me: he announced his discovery with a kind of zeal, a man aflame with the intellectual passion resulting from his having solved The Riddle (as Sherwin Nuland calls it in *How We Die*) that fascinates most specialists. I took his news like a slap in the face, and as soon as he rushed away, I retreated into a nearby phone booth and called Judy and Jerry, crying freely to both.

Mother didn't know for sure that she had cancer until I got her home late that afternoon. She was looking through the papers they had given her at the hospital and saw the word carcinoma. "That means cancer, doesn't it?" she asked me. I tried to equivocate, but it was no good. This was the first of several such scenes I was to be a part of, when the news that one has cancer suddenly comes and begins its work of transforming a person's life. As soon as she recovered from a severe allergic reaction she had to the codeine prescribed for her, Mother proceeded to tell family and friends, always uttering that word a little more softly than the others, as though confessing. As I listened to her, I sometimes heard myself saying "gay" in the apologetic way I used to.

We began making frequent trips to the oncologist for radiation and checkups, where the weigh-in was the critical moment. Mother had chemotherapy in pill form, and she took prednisone and an antitussive that never seemed to do much good. She was worried by her steady loss of weight (although she joked about it, saying that she could finally wear the petite sizes she had always wished she could), but the continual coughing was the worst thing she had to live with.

After a good Christmas that we all feared would be her last, I took her out to movies, plays, and concerts as often as she felt like going. Eventually we had to give up anything that would make us a part of an audience: her cough was worse and had begun to embarrass her. We made long drives into the county, then, and sometimes went visiting.

She was able to spend time each day with Judy and the girls, and she occasionally took them to town on the bus (she and Jenny and I had lunch one day, after I had started working for the library). Apart from a couple of brief hospital stays required to combat infections, she made it fairly well for six months after her diagnosis. She was able to see her third grandchild be born, in March, and rocking little Paul Michael became her supreme pleasure. Jenny and Jamie doted on her, waiting patiently for their GaGa to come down each morning to take them to the store, to read to them, just to be with them. When the weather grew warm, she'd spend time with them on a quilt she'd lay beneath the trees in the back yard. Judy and I were touched to see how generous she was with her time, just as she had always been with us.

It worried Mother that she had become a burden. Judy was down the street with three young children and no transportation (when Paul had the car with him at work), and I was at the library downtown and, by summer, attending library school a couple of nights a week and on Saturdays. She hated to ask us to take her to the doctor, a three or four hour ordeal that involved lot of waiting. As a new library employee, I was still on probation and received no time off without making it up.

Judy and I encouraged Mother to deal with her illness in whatever way she thought best. From the very beginning, her oncologist had made it clear that doing nothing about the cancer was an option. Mother decided to fight the growth and spread of tumors by radiation and chemotherapy, and for a while it did appear that she had reached a plateau:

there was no change. The chemotherapy had made her much weaker, however, and as she saw her ability to live as she wished diminished, she began to change her mind about the good of going on. She had a large cylinder of oxygen in the back bedroom (my old room), and she was spending more and more time in bed, lying beside a window that looked out into the shady back yard. When I came out to mow, I'd see her watching me as I pushed the mower back and forth across the grass. She got sick in late June and had to go to the hospital, where she shared a room with a lady with cancer of the tongue. There had been an accident, the doctor said: a portion of a tumor had become dislodged and was partially obstructing her airway. She was slowing dying of oxygen deprivation. Given her age (72) and the poor prognosis of her disease, the oncologist recommended that we not intervene (entailing surgery that would result in the need for mechanical assistance in breathing). In her subtle ways, Mother had already told Judy and me she was tired of struggling.

They began giving her morphine in the early afternoon. Until she went into a deep sleep, we took turns sitting with her, Judy and I, talking a little, but mainly just looking into her eyes and holding her hand. The night before, I was sitting by her bed doing library school homework. We had been talking, then she grew silent and appeared to rest. She startled me by turning her head toward me and saying, "You're content, aren't you?" I told her yes, that I was.

She died about six, her chest gradually growing still. The nurse led us away from her bed and into an empty room across the hall where we could cry as long and as hard as we needed to, Judy in Paul's arms, I in Jerry's. Mother had been fortunate to die an easy and good death, herself up to the end. And she died knowing her children were very greatly loved and would be all right.

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By the end of the 1970s, Jerry was composing more than he ever had. He began making records on his own Irida label, a name he borrowed from the Ceylonese art gallery that a high-school friend of ours was operating in Berlin at the time. With the purpose of releasing music by new composers (including himself), Jerry found a pressing plant in Dallas that did good work cheaply. He collected some money from the composers whom he'd invited to participate, and he made up the difference himself. I don't believe a lot of thought was given to royalties and residuals; the idea was to get the music out there, and to supply the composers with a good stock of their own records.

The first Irida disc was devoted to Jerry's own work, "for various mechanical and electronic instrument combinations and systems." Two of the words he used in naming pieces on the disc have personal associations for me: *Cantegral* is the name of a short street near downtown Dallas that we happened to see while taking Leto for a ride one evening, and *Phalba* (pronounced "foul bee") is a little town southwest of Canton that we drove through (and nearly missed) on one of our trips out to check on Mrs. Hunt. For Jerry's 37th birthday, I had Neiman-Marcus bake him a gaudy cake with the shortening-based icing that he liked and decorated with the words *Cantegral* and *Phalba* and *Lattice* (another piece) encircling a bouquet of frosting flowers. In one of my favorite pictures, he sits grinning at the camera, Leto in his lap, with that outrageous cake on the coffee table in front of him. That previous summer he had gone to Minneapolis to participate in New Music America, the largest experimental music series ever held in the U.S. Tom Johnson reviewed the concert Jerry gave in the Walker Art Center for *The Village Voice:*

> *Jerry Hunt... presented his Haramand Plane in a performance that I found profound, skillful, completely original, and utterly baffling . . . I can't get the piece out of my mind. I recall that the light was very dim, that Hunt kept walking downstage to whack a large cardboard box with a curious stick, that he rattled some unidentifiable objects in one hand for a while, that a recording of electronic sounds*

sometimes accompanied him from the loudspeakers, that there seemed to be no explanation for anything that happened, and that I was simultaneously fascinated and disturbed. I think I must have dozed off during part of the performance, but I'm not really sure. The piece already existed in some strange dream world . . . All I can say for sure is that Hunt was doing something very strong and very different from anything I have ever heard from New York composers.

(June 25-July 1, 1980)

I quote the review at some length because it is fairly typical of so many Jerry was to receive over the years: the critic is baffled yet moved, describing what Jerry did and his own reaction to it, but unable to say how the piece worked or what, exactly, it was about or why it impressed him so.

The trip to Minneapolis broadened Jerry's audience and resulted in concert engagements in the immediate future and beyond. Jerry had long since realized that his work would not be popular in Dallas—if, indeed, very much so anywhere. As he told our friend Jane Van Sickle in an interview she did for *Dallas Studio* in 1981:

The fact is that a lot of people just don't want to take music too seriously, and that's fine with me. If I'm personally discontent because I make a kind of art which just naturally is not going to attract a large, overwhelming audience, that's not the world's problem, it's mine. Anyway, people will like what they like.

But he was to discover as the decade progressed that he had a following, particularly on the East Coast, and that that following was both dedicated and growing.

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It was the West Coast, however, that was responsible for the last road trip we were to make with Leto. Jerry was invited to give concerts at the San Francisco Art Institute and at Mills College in November of 1980, and I arranged to miss a couple of weeks of library school classes and take vacation time from work to go with him. Traveling in November always seemed a good idea to us, after the fall tourist season and before bad weather.

Leto was the star of this trip. Many of my memories of it are of getting her in places where dogs weren't usually allowed, and of our walks, and of riding through scenic areas with her there in the front seat of our rented Buick Skylark, her nose sometimes out the window.

Jerry and I preferred to stay in independently-owned motels whenever we could: not only were they cheaper, they were more picturesque. During the '70s and '80s, many of these establishments were managed by foreigners who were reluctant to see animals on their premises and in their rooms, perhaps because these people had not yet realized how much a part of the American family dogs are. It was my job to enter the motel office and make the arrangements while Jerry waited in the car with Leto sitting beside him, her head clearly visible (and probably turned toward where I'd gone).

I would lovingly describe Leto's gentle ways and offer to leave a pet deposit, and I never once failed to get her in, often in spite of the "No Dogs Allowed" sign above the registration desk. The motel clerk would look out at her, waiting patiently in the car, and decide it would be worth the risk. What the clerk didn't know was that Jerry was talking sweetly to her the whole time and petting her assiduously to keep her from barking and howling in her puzzlement over where I had gone.

In Berkeley, where we stayed at the Golden Bear Motel, we managed to get special permission to walk Leto on the terrace of the Lawrence Hall of Science high in the hills. She wandered through the University of California's botanical gardens with us, and she and I spent a morning on campus, occasionally making forays into the buildings in search of water fountains.

Leto's biggest coup came the night we went to dinner at the Pasand Madras Cuisine restaurant on Shattuck Avenue. We parked on a side street just outside the restaurant's windows, intending to go in and order a couple of thai *dinners to take out.* The Indian maitre d' protested that it would be difficult to prepare so many dishes to go, and we explained our situation—that we didn't want to leave Leto waiting in the car while we ate a long, leisurely meal. "Why don't you just bring her in?" he asked, in his heavily British accent. "It's a free country here, isn't it?"

We took our time enjoying the delicious food, every now and then slipping Leto a morsel of pakora or vegetable samosa, a piece of puri, and, finally, half a gulab jamun. She was quite content to be with us, lying on her leash at our feet, concealed from view under the huge table. When we had finished eating, we walked toward the door with Leto trotting along behind us. The other diners turned their heads in amazement to see a dog in the restaurant, but the faces I saw expressed startled delight, not outrage. In his San Francisco radio interview the next day, Jerry told the story—and gave the restaurant a generous plug.

She did suffer a kind of comeuppance, though, when we went to visit Jim Pomeroy in his San Francisco studio-home. Jim's dog, Sorghum, was a large, protective German shepherd who apparently felt that Leto had overstepped the territorial line when she jumped onto the couch where Jerry and I were sitting. Sorghum rushed forward and bit Leto—on her side, I think—but her teeth didn't penetrate the skin, thanks to Leto's heavy coat. It was an affront for Leto, however; she had never had any trouble with another dog, including all those we encountered on our walks in parks everywhere and even Mrs. Hunt's own fiercely protective shepherd. She became, for a while, a little less self-assertive.

When Jerry went out to make preparations for his concerts and to see people (including David Ahlstrom, who was now a choral director in the Bay Area), Leto and I stayed in the Golden Bear.

We had made ourselves quite at home there, with food stored in the cooler for preparation on the hot plate later and the clothes that I had washed in the bathroom sink drying on hangers that had been hung on every available hinge, handle, or knob. Leto and I enjoyed walking through the quiet residential neighborhood just behind the motel. As we meandered, I studied for the make-up exams I would have to take when I got home and returned to library school.

After the spectacular drive down the coast on Route 1, we spent a couple of nights in Hollywood where Jerry was interviewed on L.A.'s Pacifica station. On the morning of our last day, Jerry met a young man at the pay phone of the motel who posed a bit of a problem for us. As were many people Jerry met, the fellow was fascinated by Jerry's friendly, somewhat eccentric personality, and he may also have detected a certain vulnerability that he believed would make Jerry an easy mark. He clearly had more time than money, and was prepared, I learned when Leto and I joined Jerry, to tag along with us, whatever our destination. I let them out, with some uneasiness, at a music store where Jerry had an appointment to see a new synthesizer; Leto and I visited shops and bookstores on a busy street close by (I'd tie her leash to parking meter poles while I dashed in).

When I went back for Jerry, he told me that he wasn't quite ready to leave the store, that another salesman with more knowledge of the synthesizer had just arrived, and that he wanted another hour with him. Our new acquaintance, though, had had enough technical talk and said that he'd wait with Leto and me in the car.

I decided something had to be done about this boy. "We've come to a parting of the ways," I said, summoning what I could recall of the disciplinary tone I used to use in teaching. "I'll take you anywhere you want to go, as long as it's not too far." After a moment's confusion, he came up with a friend's address, and I drove him there.

Jerry told this story, the story of how I'd

"rescued" him, many times through the years. I have no doubt that Jerry would have rid himself of this hanger-on eventually, but it might have taken him a long time to do it, and there just might have been an unpleasant confrontation.

Jerry's quality of expecting the best of people did endear him to many, but it also sometimes put him at risk. The closest call he ever received came a dozen years later when he had gone, near sundown, to a local arts group board meeting in a downtown Dallas office building. He was stopped on the street by a couple of boys who demanded his billfold. He told them he was sorry, but that he didn't have any money. "Maybe this'll make you change your mind," one of them said as he pulled a gun out of his jacket. As Jerry told it, he looked the boy right in the eye and said, "No, I'm sorry, I really don't have any," then he turned and walked away, overhearing the other fellow say, "Come on, let's get outta here." By the time Jerry got to the meeting, he was shaking with fear at the thought of what had just happened.

All the people who ever heard this story were, of course, horrified at what Jerry had done, but most of them were not surprised, by either his foolhardiness in resisting the attempted mugging or his success at having brought it off. Whether they described it as charisma or strong will or clarity of focus, they acknowledged that Jerry had something about him that could overpower people—the same quality in a slightly different form that could hold people mesmerized during his performances. When the risks were high enough, when his life or his work was on the line, this quality surfaced, and he got his way.