POEMS AND PROSE.

An Honors thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

by

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POEMS FOR NATIVES

(a short collection)
California Girls

A tan girl and her greyhounds
are hurtling themselves
off a Santa Barbara mountain.
Her feet dangle even with her horse's chest
and forever
her elbows blade backwards
from his lean hipbones.

These are the mad ones.
Fitzgerald setting down
his Jack Daniels would have said,
"Zelda, California belles
are dancing on the world"
and once again,
the South is jumping fences
in Summer orange groves.
For His Half Sister
Drowned off Coronados

Autumn will twist off summer's head.
Times manner of dealing with young dead.
That September mumbled cool smoke.
Rings above fire, ash around moon,
Autumn on the island, summer was doomed.

how many water snakes
had been stunned for the girl

or he, on a dare
allowed a reluctant finger
between wet closed lips
of a green anemone.

the jungle, craters redder
than he remembered;
could remember her mouth

wore that kind of excitement
after morning dives for abalone.

arms flaying silence
broke the monotony of their vacation
hurried summer under storm-frayed palms.
she was violent
but he forgave her quietly
because the sea teaches some
a sublime cruelty and she,
tormented him with knowledge.
Brother/sister, familiarity
of not knowing anything
but unbearable resemblance.

Fingers like a cane spider
flurry to wake him many nights
since she left on a small ketch
in Mexican weather.

No sentiment, just a man
remembering his half sister
drowned near Coronados,
Baja.
The Swim
for Janus

For many years she dozed, smoking
mermen in shallow caves
bathing in the sun, eating with shells
regarding a shoal guarded cove
she didn't really sleep,
young indifferent liver-of-warmer days
in warm water she floated a lot.

To lead that sort of existence
becomes a fragile madness
spending one's childhood unpressed
too well cared
later, the smallest waves
resembled hungry yawns.
Indifference was a great rim around her soul
it withered the self
her bed worn like a turf.

At last she swam to
the kelp bed's edge
past the frail breakwater
past gasping fish
and broken boats
into a steamy Boschian sea.

On the horizon
a hand gestured around a rock hailing her closer.
She hesitated, contemplated the meeting,
waited as the hand grew more frantic
until at last
it sadly sank beneath the waves.
She shrank away.

For years she has dozed, smoking
her mermen in shallow caves,
her limbs trail many ways
burned like dead weeds,
her feet leave a queer imprint
on the beach.
The Fishers

a perfect arc of wind and wing
between sloped sky and rock
the tide is pulled back
for the gull's long glutony.

pincers waving
hollow crabs fall sound-bound
orange stomachs:
outline mosaic blue mussel
young turtle shells crack softly,
on the outer reef
and drunken with fishing
cormorants dangle silver cresents
into the sky.

shaded eyes burrow through open places,
from behind wild rock
pale fishers of women
walk brief smiles toward the dunes.

they haunt this place
with desire to turn
down into women's glances
surrender themselves
to white pools of teeth.
they that long to hide, hide
in the softness
of no hunger.
Leaves

leaves like hands, tears, mouths,
spin crazily down that stream.
water pulls them along;
some tangle in stagnant pools
wind into moss,
become the soft undulating green.

most follow the very top,
sun-cupping edges long
for a branch's slight grasp,
an unfolding green
summer hours.

some leaves touch water
and pulled down by anxious mouths
are never seen

others unbend to water
roll like jellyfish
or wet paper
sink slowly down to
move along the rocky bottom,
follow more particular currents
free-formed
quietly break new edges
in the deepest cracks.

gradually these fall
to rest on silt bottoms
covered over
season by season
to leave a fossil's
long signature.
The Circles of Firs

Forest ash piles under young firs,
green arms push among their fathers
akimbo in sunlight to carry new finches.
Growing higher they spur wind and
whipped high above the whispers
rock a sullen sentinel hawk above the valley.

Silver streams bracelet a summer
that winds beneath full branches,
long bodies too old to stand the fall
fall back
to brown silence.

Ferns turn vines traveling
trunks bored empty by beetles
hungry for the brown ants laboring
spores to darkness.
A squirrel stashes cone seeds
in the rusty musked floor chambers.
Winter buries them slowly.

Snow leaves mud
to harden around roots of seedlings
which reach deeply into dark mulch
press deeply and widen in blackness
so that long arms may reach
violently for the sun.
Les Petits-enfants du La Génération Perd

Time perpetuates itself on cruel blood,
Drooling the young to California coastline's
Rocky edge.

city, plains faces
look down over wing and cloud
to endless Pacific.
jets leave them and evaporate eastward.

no longer a carnival etching
it is a tightrope walk across the days.
streets follow slow hours
blinking out by stoplights

the café exposes its mouth to a new love,
hysterical between two legs
a guitar bleeds black notes
and the words not meant to save
trail backwards

stucco houses stack around
lives slowed by the needle,
famous gold burns autumn
summer's brief celebration.
they arrive like a bunch of roses
to a time-torn California coast,
souls like sick stars
brighter for a moment
than all the rest.

The beach had spread itself
deliberate as fine linen,
old seabirds slept talconed to volcanic arches,
unchanneled by the current, blue shark
lazily picked small starfish off submerged walls.

There is a private beauty in this pause,
a few days before the lemmings arrival.
A TIME SERIES
Time # 1       Girl in Forest

the morning breaks her
like a priest with his bread
before the congregation of
shadows and thin birds
that stare through a shattered
window at wild vines growing,
winding closer to her bed each day.

her shack with its
rotted floors and broken clock
is a home where no one comes
but sparrows and a mange-grey cat
who observes everything.

we don't know how long she'll stay,
survival is an easy thing
as long as it's past winter and
vines will bind her sooner
than that season, wake her
in silence, long grave tendrils
slowly sewing closed her eyes.
Time # 2 Bones

Fish, blue and silver blue
move the sea.
Behind them dolphin are beading
tallow light under
a forever and continuous
revision of order.

Later I dream of fish bones
piled on a wharf beach
bleached to a stiller fineness
than those of birds.

Occasionally a skeleton
catches on a cord or net
and is hung alone in rough brightness,
strung over pebbles on tarred pilings.

Bone tangled in nets
is not like fish bones
piled near old piers

there's a certain terror
rotting alone before a world
that has no time for decay
decaying faster than all other worlds.
wind grins down her clothes
it's almost dark. ahead
headlights grind dusk to a fine day.
she searches the road for an end.

she gets in slowly and fingers the silence
pulling it around her like a robe.
stars hang the windshield
a penlight moon between them
screens them between them
night continues pale desires
to greyer hours, the man drives
to greyer hours, the man drives
faster before the morning.

a bridge over the sea
breaks the forest
her presence promises seduction
his luck groans with the engine,
sun mortars a feminine horizon
but lights recognition too late.
Demur in patient horror
he watches as that pretty child caresses
and then strokes the wheel across the edge,
kissing him as he falls
into a thousand decapitations.
Kites

a kite high over rough water
lost, caught on a mile of string
cypress-tangled to a chalk cliff's edge
dangles above water above land.
below, the plateau spits up daisies from a rude stump
again we look out,
the kite weaves a ritual of agony.

bound to earth yet not apart
kites are dancing dying
some with more control
others with shorter tails
streaming screaming unnatural
protagonists or complacent animals
all tethered to fantasy's belly.

Bound to earth, yet not apart
spindrift over rough water,
a kite rushes between sun and mist.
Dare I? she cried, merrily
kicking off her shoes

restless water half bumped
a canoe against pebbles

no more than a
moments thought before

two white legs straddled
the rails of that

bright red canoe.
How far dare I go?

wondered this girl
as she pressed out to sea

fingering the paddle
with shy expertise, surrendering

to the outgoing tides
but not to time or taste

the moon rose before her
the land sank behind
Time # 6    A Day

Is there something in the way
madness takes one
is there something in the way
I have begun to notice
the white whiteness of the sun
the stark harshness of flesh, of bone

Straight up the chapareal
California green mountain
long bones twisted
onto bay muscle
burnt brush lashes
skin to a virgin trail
twin peaks fork
horse and rider into an air pool
beneath the granite
a mountain ripples
its old back

Can it be the tune
moonhearts stage on a three a.m.
summer morning for their world
too woo, for another world
not to see, visiting
an animal in the moon's
light whiteness
two bodies thrown above
in the sun's light straight
up the California
green mountain.
Lazarus

rain mislead to earth,
too light for passing
down trees and trucks
gathers over an old man
as if there were no
other place for such tears.

his mud-slowed walk
is a treadmill meditation,
drops race down coils
greyed by smoke. beds
no bed
to a beard crusted like
a urine-tangled fetlock.

"Lazarus is my name,
I stand gifted by the cross."
cross hisses out a last horrible tooth,
"Some of them's just lucky, me
I stand gifted by the cross,
walked fifty thousand miles, always
walk beside Jesus."
time crept between words

"No matter, 'cept my wife..."

his eyes rolled over the words

watching through me at her,

"...my wife was a wayward girl

left her to walk beside Jesus.

Do you see?"

His old breath steamed,

slaughter and rotted eggs

unborn terrible

crushed and left to die.
For the Wailers

poems fill those pages,
a paradise of self lament.
I get so tired of looking
through thin anthologies
endless regrets,
can't they ever forget
jesus was killed
two thousand years before
before

nevermore pass the Continent
without looking
down to think about
that german deceit,
it's hard to care
as the century begs
retreat, if judas
was an angel or
a thief, I don't
want to hear it anymore.

they time-thieved before
jesus, those that scream
America!
make it now
make it
make it all

buy and sell souls
for a brief earthly visit
for a brief visit
for a brief time

come to buy and sell
like judas
unlike jesus

who like buddha
was
into love.
Funeral at Ninteen Years
for Sissi and Arthur

A small flower's brief coolness;
the brush of lip to petal
premonition of warmer touches.

I once kissed you in a hurry and turned
didn't catch your breaths;
that kiss
a crushing of old mouths.

Daisy, lupin fern and rose,
I leave them in your chests and
pass the empty rows,
heavy chapel doors.

Darkness presses back
small breaths of younger flowers
now hours pass like gendarmes,
we never quite embraced.

Flowers reign this morning.
Brilliant red and purple
pools of color below the grass
contrast lightly against dark earth
darkly against white mask.
Endless Sighs:

broken into no more
than a sea-worked tangle
of limbs and hair,
a form caught between
the indifferent embrace
of kelp and water
makes a nice blockade
for burrowing crabs.

penninsula lights point
out to water a bone
a light-hinged forefinger or
streets ended by repetitions
of salt-burdened waves.

crimson pinchers drag ragged
flesh to barnacle beds
(shreds drop into smaller beaks).
behind slow wings trail sharking shadows
claws against wind wind around
the dancing shell.
few ever sidle to safety.
for these beaches never change,
it makes no difference
which, strewn under hours
of sun, repetitious tides,
brief full moonlight
driftwood rock and bone
become sand.
Apparition in a Confederate Churchyard

In a season of picnics and cotton ribboned hair and thin dresses,
in a month of small fish and slow streams,
a moss-governed Southern town rests among willows.

Few know of that mad love ascending ascending
when July waxes high clouds above locust thick heat strings stars
over fireflies in the abandoned churchyard.

A pale woman knows she will always come
to the bent iron gate which ties moonlight to passionflowers.
She hums alone etching a voice onto perfect silence.

They rise in mist hardly separate twisting upward as if to
shake the cold bone,
gostumed in pale flesh
their voices are thin breaths from the past.

Her black shawl falls,
watching the grass bend under circular paths
she remembers their faces
they extend long arms
and come to her with inaudible moans
the spiny touch of eternity

silver in tangled cold
press her to the damp earth
in the small churchyard
in red grass.

Torn from sleep a young animal screams,
the moon drops like a tear.
Shuddering into dawn the moment is repeated,
once more they are betrayed
and slaughtered too soon

in love with death
the woman turns against the sun
slowly dancing alone
in a field of bone.
Letter to Eliot

Oh T.S.

you were so primitive
trundling around in ether dreams,
leaping up up up
to the preconceived
VISION

Here our hallucinations are Leger paintings
we are past our containers,
you looked around wasted streets
denouncing horrible
Reality.
You were only peeking
under the waiting room door.
Hey Henry!
there he goooo
down the boulevard,
pursuing wormen fer a while
'til he turn
to on of them bars

out he goes now
twice as bright
that lentry worm
into the night

oh he's no hero
tho' it's sure true
he changes his clothes
in vacant booths

on his cloak's
the mighty S
delight mo' wormen...
that sly 'lil critter
the flying hiss.
untitled

I bring them down.
hamstrung or heart strung
out over unimaginable places,
nails pulling tendons
or soft incantations,
either way
I bring them down.

the sun is bright,
I've heard before and before
I was part of man's flesh
if so
remember distantly the sun
has no core.

they come smiling
both to brothel and to cloister
and so
I lie I repeat softly I cry
I bring them down.
Burkin

The nocturnal thief
trots carelessly inside a hedge's shadow
until the night is recognized.
Then his browness moves arrogently outward,
a slender smile poked skyward,
the delicate creased nostrils
sense the bedroom presence,
the slight rustle of hen warmth.
With unfaltering step
he dance~ in the bleached field.

The grounds are lulled by drowsy insects
morning birds cradle in dark branches.
Bowed in moon-sunk sleep
soft victims huddle unaware
too familiar with the night for nightmares.
Eclipsed in deliberation
the fox watches those silent dreamers
and then, steals
a pool of pale feathers from her nest
closing his dark mouth gently
around the sweetness of new death.
Crazy Jane Speaks as a Young Beauty

after meeting you with your
well thought lover's dreams
confessing that you were shy
and in love constantly,
well that impressed me.

I have decided
to go boldly in and
out of love perhaps
I'll never make it we all
have the habit of admiring our weakness,
running about with ones heart
out like an exposed tendon
could be quite untidy.

it's true
I never really lost
my innocence it just
got badly beaten
and I stowed it away
among the folds of old dramas,
I'm dragging it back
out one more time,
I am a game
child I take
the big risks
I can dance
all night.
Epitaph

Patches,
lavender
violet
yellow
laced on the earth.
Grandmother's quilt.

Certain days
touch certain people,
she's been part of that color
for several Aprils.
Insane

There is something in the way rain comes lately
There is something in the way rain falls quickly,
Dark clouds gather secretly at midnight
Bound by wind and moon-blocked light.

Their battle is brief;
Ones dreams uncontrolled
Roll with thunder
Ride torrents down faces of canyon wall.

Leashed to unfamiliar patterns
Mud streams, that scream
Of entanglement, a slight
Twist of mouth,
Dream on.

Morning soothes the room awake
The grass is dry, cries forgotten
Here and there a cloud edge
Is left on the ridges.

No other traces
No warning of return
But the fear that it won't leave at morning
That it will stay to press the clouds
From stars to earth,
That it uncontrolled will slip
Down slimy sides of cracks
With no ledge to grasp
No fingers to
Hold on.
The sun! The sun! and all that can become
And the time's right for running to the moon.  
Roethke

the sun, the sun and all that's been undone
slow days slung in amber drones   words imprismed
light splitting time a thousand ways
and the other time
spent trodding life's underside.

the moon, the moon and all that is in tune and
oh, lifes only frame would be freedom.
yet love, something like sleep in dark moss
must be, or else only somnambulent movement
around dead rooms of ones heart.

are there lovers like herons? herons
white and sullen blue that dream
in Blakean pose
slow arcs on sandy inlets
so cool-pale
in grey marsh light
that they wait
until the long earth turns to color them
flamingo before the night.
"Into the Summer"
(original title)

"Summer in the Ruins
(revised title)

a novella in progress
by: Beaumarie St. Clair

Exhausted fathers
thin the blood,
you curse the legacy
of pain;

darling of an
infected brood
you feel disaster
climb the vein

Theodore Roethke

An inquiring piece of wave buffeted six pairs of
legs and fled under a soft hiss of turning sand. A thin
girl casually straggled off her horse's neck like a
strand of mane and slowly straightened,

"Byron, Dolphins. There must be thirty of them.
They're close, almost to the kelp beds. Watch them rear".

The cove churned with the large fishes activity;
dolphins spraying, fanning, coursing schools of bonita
like greyhounds, moving North with the warm June current. Her brother stood, cleaning an abalone knife on his jeans, watched as two of the younger calves chased a taunting bass into the kelp.

"Here," he said, running the blade into its sheath, "ride this meat up to the house, I want to stay on the beach."

The girl grabbed the plastic sacks and wheeled her horse back onto the soft sand. Its hooves flashed a half a foot from the boy's chest.

"See you at the house," she laughed and galloped toward the dunes. The boy picked up a pair of scuba tanks and dropped them inside the small driftwood shack.

That morning he woke at dawn. His sister sat on the bed watching sunlight burn through peach and silver clouds.

"We're going diving in an hour," was all she'd said and left. They met on the beach at seven-thirty, already the sun heated the top of the dunes. Although they were diving for abalone the girl had brought a speargun.

Down, down they swam, past the mermaid's hair and coral fans. Down into a forest of kelp along the reef. Small fish channeled by currents curved around them, the large ones hung still as if suspended.
The girl grabbed his wrist and swam toward the white floor. He had seen a large pink abalone under a long shelf and turned to signal for her. A large golden fish swam toward him, curiously its gills fluttered like strange dragonfly wings. Garibaldi, he thought; although they were salt water creatures they looked like huge, oriental goldfish. The shy fish swam closer attracted by his floating hair. He didn't see his sister move, but suddenly the fish went streaking sideways, a spear through his stomach. Blood and entrails trailed after the dying fish. Byron felt sick. Through his fogged mask he saw the girl pull an abalone knife out of her suit and cut the rope. He hit the surface of the water and tore the snorkel out of his mouth. In a moment he looked down to see the dead thing rushed away by the currents.

The girl slowed her horse in the water, slow ripples trailing under one hand. She was curious to see if the dolphins would glimpse her and swim along side. Everything was calm; the midday sun glazed the sea to a floor an undulating mirror, even the frantic Hobie cats lay becalmed, their sails listless young bodies burning in the heat. The horse moved through dunes toward the house.
Dropping the reins on his neck and girl kicked him hard, "com'mon you." He struggled up a cliff onto a plateau sheltered by pine and cypress and stopped, hooves muffled in fine dust and dead needles. She breathed in the shadow scents glad to be rid of the light. Byron, she mused, how beautiful to have him home. He'd grown taller and more haughty then she remembered. Reining the horses to a cliff's edge she scanned the beach.

The boy lay still on top of a small dune—stretched like a starfish or a star—undeniably solitary yet wholly complete. Like some long-suffering Promethius, it was as if his body were the only presence of any consequence on that long piece of sand. She smiled and swung the horse up the second part of the trail; the path which led to the house.

The house rose from granite cliffs; a bleached Moorish castle against thick blue sky and long straight palms. It was built by a semi-crazed nephew of the Spanish king in the early thirties. Bouganvilia and dark purple morning glorys greedily embraced the white walls and coiled around black wrought iron balconies. White curtains floated out large windows and it was easy to tell all the rooms facing the sea were used.
Most of the floors, sections of walls and terraces stood out in intricately patterned tiles shipped over from North Africa.

It was a strange house, both quiet and unquiet, enclosed by huge, overrun gardens charted by some labyrinthean mind of the period. Inside, disordered art treasures made by the family or brought from Europe lay scattered about. One large hall overflowed with the Columbian art smuggled out of Central and South America thirty years before.

The house stood alone. That is to say it was the only consequential one of several houses on a two or three mile stretch of beach. It had the strength to carry off that kind of presence. Behind the house, gardens half wild but plentiful orchards of foreign and domestic fruits dominated several acres. Woods hid the house from the old coast highway, the mountains and the world beyond.

The girl tied the horse and wandered up stone steps to the front terrace. Straight out were the Channel Islands, dark stones in indigo. She mused on the dolphins, probably they'd moved out to sea.

Again she thought of her brother, strange having him back. It had been a long separation. Byron left
on a vague June morning with their father. A letter said he would be back before October; that had been two years ago. What had gone wrong was a power struggle between mother and father and father's attempt to set Byron's career at fifteen. Silence grew deep between them. Soon there were no wires, no calls. Her brother's absence had been an illness. Their love, the only thing that mattered, had been deliberately severed and she resented her parents deeply. The divorce seemed not to effect mother and she returned to her writing and collaborations with old friends from the Continent. Oh, there was an occasional card for the girl: Byron was acting, father was directing him in London, a feature in France another in the West Indies. Finally Byron had returned--an actor of seventeen--to his sister's nineteen years on the beach.

"Tanya, Tanya," the gulls were crying, quarreling overhead, she turned, her mother stood on the steps above, the wind rearranged a caftan around her tall slender form.

"Bring that fish into the kitchen before it goes bad in this heat." Tanya looked up, she'd completely forgotten the abalone.

"Ellen will be here to start preparing dinner at 4. Leave it in the refrigerator for her."

Pale, pale, she was pale, a white hood outlining
white blond hair, a well carved white Nordic face, blue eyes the color of sky beyond the thinnest clouds. Mother would never be tan; she was the crystal ice of the north, pale and cold.

"Yes Marissa," sighed the girl.

"And Tanya, please spend time with your brother," she frowned as she spoke, one hand playing with the shell chokla around her neck.

"I want him to remember this is his home, despite what his father would lead him to believe. I missed him very much. I don't want him leaving again."

She brushed back her hair and looked at the girl.

"He has much to learn, much his father cannot teach him. You and Byron are so much alike, you remind me very much of me and my brother."

Tanya thought of her uncle's strange death. Marissa's only brother, her uncle, committed suicide when he was 30. It puzzled her to think of it.

"You are both very dear to me," smiled Marissa. A light wind wrapped the robe around her long-boned ankles. She turned and went inside.

Tanya rambled into the kitchen, placed the fish in the ice-box and picked a plum off the window sill. The kitchen was one of her favorite rooms, it had real forest appeal. Ivy pushed through the shutters and
framed the windows, while the ceiling arched into a heaven of beams and knotted pine. The girl scanned the room for possibilities of amusement. Her eye caught a large canister scrawled "HOMEGROWN" in black crayon. She drew a packet of French cigarette papers from her pocket and dumping part of the contents on the deck rolled two joints. Brushing the scraps onto the floor she took a box of strawberries. Jesus, it's hot, she thought walking out on the terrace. A small, fresh water pool mirrored the heat. Setting the box down on the glass table she pulled off her shirt and lit up the joint.

"Hello".

"Oh hi, Byron, sit down." He watched her hesitantly for a moment and then came forward when she offered her cigarette.

"It's good dope. I grew it in my garden."

He smoked thoughtfully.

"We're always getting stoned together".

Tanya looked to the south end of the beach.

"Who do you think that is?"

He shook his head.

"Probably Heather and her new Hawaiian friend. She wiped the moisture from her forehead.

"I think I'll ride down and meet them. What are
you going to do?"

"I've got a script father sent me. Later I might do some sketching..."

"O.K." She watched him set up the telescope. Secretly she wanted to stay and talk.

"There's someone else," he said looking through the glass.

"Who?"

"I'm not sure."

She took the glass and focused on the riders. A lean blond boy rode behind two girls on a spirited palamino. She watched in semi-interest as the horse reared sideways at an odd piece of wood. Despite its nervous, semi-dressage pace the boy rode the animal with the easy grace of a young girl; careless, laughing, his long hair trailed down his shoulders.

Byron watched the girls. He knew nothing about the Hawaiian, but Heather interested him. He liked her face and the way she grinned up at him. She seemed to have great spirit--like a wild animal. He had seen her before, but riding up the beach she was reduced to a purer form. He thought how he might sketch her if he got the chance.

Tanya retied her bathing suit top and straightened her cut-offs.
"Later," she called, heading down the stone steps.

The horse had broken free and wandered into the garden. Rose petals made dark wounds in his powder grey coat. She pulled his head up quickly admiring the huge Arabian eyes. Like a deer they had no white. Gathering the reins in one hand she swung onto his back and galloped down the steep cliff to the sand.

Heather waved as Tanya rode up, her horse twisted sideways, chewing the bit. Tanya let her horse out of check and caught a grin from the blond boy as his horse bolted forward. In a moment all of them were out of control, running four abreast as if Phaethon guided them, madly breaking up the Sun's chariot.

Seabirds scattered with shrill complaints. After ten minutes Tanya looked to see the two girls falling behind, their horse's chests lathered, nostrils and mouths foamed white. She laced her fingers in the long mane feeling the horse stretch his neck and lengthened stride. After plowing through a piece of wave she turned and found the blond boy guiding his horse up on her right flank. Great rider, she thought with approval. Cliffs jutted by like book pages in the wind.

Coming around a long turn, huge geometric stones
crossed their path like so many building blocks. Tanya jerked her horse's head sideways to slow him and the palamino slid onto its haunches to keep from crashing into them.

"Are you alright?" she cried as his horse jerked to its feet.

"Go ahead," the boy called and they rode between the rocks single file.

The cove was completely empty. Tanya felt she rode into a different country. The place was shawled in pale yellow light except for the shadow of a forest. Across the cove's center a stream bent through skeletal tree trunks. The girl rolled off her horse and collapsed. Large gulls circled the beach, several hawks above them. Her eyes closed and she listened to her blood drown out the sea.

The boy stood in the stream while his horse drank. He was stripped to the waist. Tanya looked up with covert interest. She knew he was young, probably fifteen or sixteen, but age had nothing to do with beauty. She followed his gaze to an outer reef. A few waves curled around a sand bar. Once she'd watched him surf the biggest waves of the winter.

The boy started toward her, his yellow horse
dancing and tossing its head. He had a slow graceful walk, a perfect contrast to his animal. His walk reminded her of Byron.

"Hello," said Tanya quietly. A cormorant crashed into the sea, disappearing a moment under the power of his dive.

"Hello," he said with the faintest smile and turned away. A monarch butterfly tagged a white, more frail butterfly above. She lay back sifting sand between her fingers.

Long drawn howls preceded Heather and the other girl as they galloped into the cove. The boy shook out his hair and flung it over his shoulders.

"Hey, Tanya," Heather cried, "great run." She flung herself off her horse between Tanya and the boy.

"Do you know Jana?" she flashed a look to the sullen girl who glared at the blond boy.

"She's from Maui, near Haliaukula Crator." The girl nodded differentially to her and rode her horse over to him.

"Tribe, you want to ride with me?" she demanded. He was studying Tanya.

"Heather," Tanya said gathering her horse's reins, "I'm riding back to the house."
"O.K.," she glanced hesitantly with solemn canyon flower eyes, "just remember there's a party at Rosalind and Trevor's this weekend."

Tanya rode slowly inside the blue wash of late afternoon. Far down the beach lay Byron; his long chestnut hair blocked the sunlight and her approach. She rode in the shadows so he would not see her. He slowly sat up with a sketchbook in his lap musing over a thought or a line. Then with a violent gesture he threw away the pad and clasped his face to his knees. Tanya appraised the drawing. It was an intricately drawn bird; a phoenix-feathered dove with a boy's face. Like Tribe, she thought, or perhaps it was a self portrait. She looked more closely, no, maybe it was a girl; the creature's long hair trailed into pale wings.

Tanya reined the horse alongside her brother and he stared silently up at her, a deep scowl crossing his face. His moods, thought Tanya, especially his melancholy brought him to such depths, even she could do nothing.

"Come on," she extended her hand, "I'll ride you to the house." He reluctantly pulled himself up behind her. The horse sprang sideways at the change
in balance and they started to fall. Tanya caught the mane and drew herself upright.

"Grab my waist" she commanded, kicking the horse into a canter. She guided the horse onto the hard sand and slapped him into a gallop. Her brother's legs locked behind hers, as he let his face be buried in her hair.
Chapter II

Tanya threw her bags on the green velvet sofa and collapsed. God, it was good to be home, she thought. Then she peeled a translucent piece of skin from her deep auburn tan. With the Summer half over, she'd fled to the Colorado River for contrast to many boring days at the beach. The desert had been hot—over a hundred and twenty degrees. The simplicity of that life intrigued her; the idea of nature in that degree of dominance was challenging. But even that burned away after a few days and the boredom returned. The volcanic ranges, the dead chaparrel and pumice stone, the different shades of black and grey fused together under an infinite expanse of dust and light and became the same. On the fourth evening she'd caught a jet from Las Vegas and come home.

"I'm bloody bored," she shouted, pouring a glass of white wine for herself.

Byron leaned around the louvered doors.

"Tanya, when did you get back..."

"Just now, what's been happening?"

He shook his head and went behind the bar.

"Tanya, do you know Clifford Bercannes?"

She thought a moment.

"Yes, a writer friend of mother's. Rough, but
good looking, rather a recluse?"

"Yes," said Byron pouring some cola into a glass.

"I spent the last two days with him. He critiqued my sketches and we talked about art. I think the man's rather a genius."

"Oh," she said, leaning on the couch, "didn't he just finish a new book?" She paused taking a drink. 

"What's it about?"

"I don't really know...about the beach I guess..." Tanya slowly rolled back onto the couch.

"The beach, the beach," she intoned Betty Davis style, "the beach is a bore."

Byron swept over her and then affected a gallant's pose.

"My sweet sister...draped there you are as tragic, and I might add, as appealing as the fantastic Theda Bara."

She rolled her eyes.

"Take me, take me, dark son of the sheik."

He stared at her a second, caught between the moment's reality and the credibility of his act.

"Oh," she cried, springing up.

"He hesitated and lost her forever." She whirled past him into the mirrored hallway.

Byron leaped after his sister and stopped. She
stood frozen at the end of the hall, head thrown back and arms crossed like a pharaoh. There was no trace of her mirth before.

"Tanya?" Every part of her silently reflected down the lengths of mirror, her body darkly contrasted with the thin muslin shift she wore. He started toward her. Sun from the small high windows reflected around him in the glass. She extended her hand. Then without warning she pressed her wrist into her mouth and bit down until blood ran between her teeth. He watched in horror for a moment and then spun around and left the room.

Sunlight pressed around him in the solarium as it had in the hallway. He pulled out a rattan chair and mercurially slid into it. Tanya, he thought wearily, why was she being so cruel. He hadn’t chosen to leave her, father controlled him completely. Underneath it all she had been punishing him ever since he came home. In all truth he loved Tanya insanely. Every character he played consisted of fragments from them both.

"Byron?" Marissa glided into the room. "How was the beach?"

"Fine," he muttered staring at the garden through the gothic cut windows.
"Did you see your sister? She's back from the desert you know."

"Yes" he looked at her, "I know."

"Oh Byron", she gazed wistfully at him. "Things haven't changed for you, have they?"

He looked at a dark coral rose pressing itself to him through the glass.

"No mother, nothing's changed."

Marissa bent over him and took his hand.

"Your sister has gotten to be a belle. It makes me happy to see you two together. It reminds me of the way my brother and I spent our Summers. You and Tanya could be twins, it was the same with Britt and me."

She brushed back her straight pale hair and smiled.

"You could be twins if she weren't always...so sunned and raw natured. I'm afraid some day she and her horse will fuse together and swim away into the ocean to become some lovely sea animal."

Marissa let her hand travel along the boy's cheek, only half aware of him.

"I loved my brother more than anything," she said in a strange voice. But...no, traveling has made you change. You're more grown up."

She cupped his chin in her hands.

"You can always see change in the eyes."
Byron looked at his mother. Her beauty had always intimidated him. She was not a mother one kissed or hugged spontaneously. Her affections were regimented, like the writer's life she lead. She thrived on isolation. It must have been so hard for his father. And she, she could never let go of her brother's image. How difficult that must have been. Although they never spoke of her, he was sure she'd let a peculiar mark on his father.

Marissa rose and the softness in her eyes cleared.

"Byron, I'll be in my room. I'm transposing Clifford Bercanne's novel into a screenplay." Her look grew vague again.

"It's an incredible piece of prose, a fictional chronology and fantasy. I see something of all of us in it. Tell Ellen not to call me until dinner."

Tanya rolled on her bed faintly amused by her brother's performance. Damnit, he should play the scenes and not be such a rabbit. The bite on her wrist still bled but she couldn't feel it. I'll be as macabre as Byron, she thought. She looked around her room. Ellen had managed to repair the mess that she'd made in her hurry to leave for the river. On her desk were two vases of carnations and mauve cosmos. Flowers
were both her and her mother's weakness. The flower boxes were attended to all year round so there could always be fresh flowers throughout the house.

Tanya pulled several amber-veined columbines from a vase and went out to the balcony. The day, airless and hot, carried her mother's voice to her.

"I want to discard that scene because it just won't work on film." The woman's voice edged with anger.

Hanging between the wrought iron bars, Tanya looked for her mother. She and Clifford Bercannes stood on the front terrace reading pages out of a notebook.

"No, no," he shook his dark head, "take the scene where the boy ultimately confronts the girl with her desires, and the story loses all power."

"No" she said firmly, "the girl has much more grace, is much cleverer. I tell you it would not happen like that."

"Yes" he said patiently, "she kills him in her anger, in her madness."

"Clifford!" Marissa walked several paces and turned.

"She killed him for love. That", she bit down on her words, "changes every intention."

Tanya shook her head and went back inside. She
was long overdue for a swim. Going to the long mahogany dresser she unravelled a pale crocheted bathing suit to change into.

Ellen stood in the kitchen folding towels. Tanya pulled one off the table and went outside. Her mother's friend turned to leave. Tanya brushed her hair behind her ears and came toward him.

"Hello Clifford."
"Tanya," he grinned pleasantly to Marissa.
"Where'd she get the tan, not California?"
"No" Marissa smiled.
"Tanya," he fained admonishment, "you haven't been out to the Island again?"
"No," she made a face, "Hawaii in the middle of tourist season...no way. I did some skiing out at the river."

He nodded approval.
"Was it very hot?"
"Too hot, and...she added, "too boring."

He turned to Marissa.
"Poor child suffering lines her face and all that, anyway, Sorry I got you up. I'll call later."

"Fine Cliff," she nodded vaguely, "don't forget dinner tonight. Ellen's been shopping all morning."
"Come on," intercut Tanya, "if we take the tram down, you might be spared dinner."

The tram was housed in a small building on the cliff's edge. Tanya pushed open the iron gate.

"Don't worry" she said, holding the door for him, "it's safe and a lot less trouble than walking down thirty flights of ancient stairs. She threw the power switch and pressed the 'down' handle. The writer leaned against the far corner.

"Was this constructed with the house?"

The machinery screamed and the cart lurched forward.

"Yes" said Tanya, adjusting her position.

"You know that the Spanish count that built this place was mad...having a great deal of Borgia blood bred into his family through ambassadorial incest...well anyway.." she paused, relishing the actuality of her story.

"The count was a paranoid to the extreme and when he thought his lovers, men and women, were being unfaithful to him with his friends, he would send them down together in the tram...an accident of course.

The writer relaxed simultaneously as the cart jerked over the edge and lost his balance.

"Nice feeling," said Tanya agreeably.

He gave her a dour look and glanced up at the cable.
"Don't worry," Tanya assured him. "They check the cables every season.

The cart rocked to a halt at the bottom and Tanya jumped down on the platform.

"Oh lord, it's hot," she muttered checking her heel for splinters.

Clifford got out and started up the beach.

"Wait" she called after him, "I'll walk a way with you. I think it's more interesting to try different beaches."

Tanya caught up to him and he grinned at her as she adjusted her bathing suit bottom. Actually she wanted to study him. He was a curious man, with large green eyes and two high cheekbones that carved his entire face. Today he wore jeans and a flowing long sleeved white shirt. His unkempt dark hair curved to his shoulder but his beard was trimmed immaculately.

"I've heard you've been talking to my brother,"

she said, aiming a piece of driftwood like a gun to his head.

"Yes. I took a look at his watercolors," he said carefully, "the boy's very talented."

"Oh sure," she shrugged, "my brother the actor, 'le artiste', the star..."
"Is that sibling jealousy?"
"No" she rebutted, "I can do anything I want and I don't need to live my life out in movies."
"Well Tanya," he stopped at the edge of the water, "it's your talent to waste."
"Why say that?"
"Well" he said, dipping his hands into the water, "you're very self-willed, too indulgent I would say."
"Oh sure." She had been sketching a heron in the wet sand. Kicking seaweed over it she turned to him.
"Listen, I can have anything I want, why should I work for it? Why taint my aristocratic blood?"
"You better do something before your life gets too boring and you know perfectly well what I mean. Remember your friend Martha's solution -- she was only 20."
"Oh yeah," Tanya said abruptly starting into the water, "Do you really think you know everything about me?"

The evening was warm. Tanya and Byron lay propped against white pillows in an old swing in the garden. The damp air smelled of newly mown grass.
"What do you think of him?" Byron pressed his foot on a tree to give the swing a push.
"Oh," she thought a moment, "charming, handsome, witty and queerly moral... the usual friend of mother's.
I talked to him on the beach today. He thinks you've got talent."

"Tanya, why were you so quiet at dinner?"

"Oh, no reason, it's just when mother and Clifford get talking about last season at St. Moritz—the usual 'La Palace' antedotes—it's hard...never mind." She changed the thought she'd been thinking about her best friend's suicide last Summer, damn Clifford.

"I was somewhere else, that's all."

"I think he's really an artist."

"Really," she countered with just enough inflection to mark her boredom with the subject, "Bercannes is a depressing, prying writer with nothing really going for him."

They became silent for a moment and she lit a lavender-papered potpourri of marijuana flowers and peyote dust.

"I think you underestimate," said Byron as he inhaled the drug.

"If you think that's it, you're not being observant."

Breaking off the conversation, Tanya pretended to watch the wisteria gently rock in the vined arbor. Night slowly overcame them and they lay watching the
stars pulse to the sound of the heavily mossed fountain. Byron looked at his sister. She always wore great clothes. Tonight she wore jeans and a French lace camisole. We can never talk he thought, yet we are so incredibly close. How that same closeness lead to a tormenting loneliness and dissatisfaction annoyed him. Acting gave him the desire to speak frankly; but he couldn't to her. She would never really speak about the way she felt.

"I think it's weak," she said in a hard voice as if she'd just heard him... had she? He wondered.

"Being a writer like that," she continued, "probing into other people's life instead of living your own..."

Byron shook his head.

"If you ask me I'd say he's lived too much."

"Just because he's had a duchess, some affair with royalty..."

She let her voice trail off. Byron remembered Marissa talking about Clifford's first wife, a beautiful indiscrete tramp; their affair had been infamous all over Europe in the fifties.

"That has nothing to do with it," he disagreed.

"Well, look at him now" she injected, "where is he now...? An alcoholic." she pronounced, answering her own question.
"Do you know the man? If you did, you'd know you're being insulting and insane. I believe certain people have the right to live out their own artistic vision."

"What is he?" she asked sitting up, "Your hero?"

"Just forget it," They lapsed again into silence.

Tanya concentrated on the blackness. Her vision heightened so that she could hallucinate incredible color vignettes on the darkness. She was never sure if she created them outside her mind or if they were only inside.

Music came from the house; Mendelssohn's music for "A Midsummers Night Dream". The picture window in the study framed Marissa like an Aubrey Beardsley lithograph. More classical allusions, she thought. Everything her mother did was in total and odd perfection; the way she traveled, where she went, --Byron would end up just like her, and she, she'd burn out early, ironic and always faintly curious about love.

"Tanya," Byron took her arm, "When I go to New York for father's film in September, why don't you come? You could study acting, art, anything you like."

"Byron," she asked with opulent boredom, "why are you being so charitable to your derelict sister?"
"Don't be so arrogant, it's for your own good."

"Byron," she lay her head on his knee, to borrow from a long forgotten song, 'I'm on the crest of a wave', the best of the crest, so you be famous and keep me in the closet in your castle on the Costa del Sol."

"Tanya, please" he pleaded, "you're wasting your life..."

"It seems I've heard that somewhere else today," she said sarcastically. "Can't you leave me the way I want to be...alone."

"Tanya" he pulled her to him and pressed his face into her hair. "I love you very much!"

"Really" she screamed, pushing him away, "stop being so god damn intense!"

She jumped off the swing. The ground receded like black Chinese boxes.

"Oh, can't even stand up," she muttered dramatically. Angrily he grabbed her shoulders.

"You and I, we're the same; part of the same person, we've..."

"Fuck off," she cried, and then ran down toward the cliffs.
Chapter III

The air on the beach felt like the wind before a fire. It blew from the desert hard enough to charge the air. Damn them all, thought Tanya, digging mounds of phosphorescent sand with her feet. Far down the beach a fire flared. The wind drove electric music toward her. Extending her arms, she began to run, just to feel the total length of her body jar against the hard sand. The ultimate sensual imagery she thought. Music wound serpentine trails in the darkness. She realized it came from the low bluffs near Rosalind and Trevor's.

Tanya waded around the point. The cove was filled with fires. Silk and jewelry flashed past flames that swung long shadows of dancers up the cliffs. The band wore crimson and silver; their arms entangled in thin bracelets.

"Tanya", the voice was Rosalind's. Her wavy blond hair was backlit in smoke and flames.

"Tanya". The girl embraced her and kissed her cheek. "I hoped you would come."

"Who's the band?" asked Tanya lacing her arm through Rosalind's. She smiled.

"They're from London. They've just signed with my dad's company."
"Spoiled girl," laughed Tanya.

Rosalind smiled and put her hand to her mouth, feigning a slightly bored expression.

"I've been keeping the lead singer. He's not that well bred..." She cast a glance at the willowy blond singing with closed eyes.

"But...." The two girls started to laugh.

grinned Tanya, I can see it has the possibility of working itself out.

The music got too loud to talk and the lead singer was 'camping' on the fact he was singing to Rosalind.

"Tanya" Rosalind shouted, "you're welcome to spend the night if you see anything with potential."

Tanya looked around. Most of the half-naked girls and boys wandering around the fires she recognized from many Summers. Two sun-burnt surfers grabbed her arms and ushered her to the cliffs.

"Hey Tanya," said the taller one whom she'd recognized from surfing, "ya got some catching up to do." He shoved a bottle into her hands.

"It's Mescal...got crates of the stuff...Keep it," he gestured as she tried to hand it back, "got crates of the stuff. Just don't look for the worm." He laughed and stumbled off with his friend.
Two hands slipped over her eyes.
"Want some 'L'" asked Heather, hugging her.
"No love, not tonight. I've already been smoking some radical dust."
"Well here, try some of my mother's sleeping pills. They're for mellowing the soul."

\[\text{\^{\text{\text{"}}}Thanks,}\] Tanya acknowledged as the younger blond girl pressed them between her lips.
"I can drop them down with some excellent Mescal."
Heather laughed disapprovingly.
"That's so bad for you." Tanya shrugged.
"It's how I fill up my empty evenings."
Heather tugged impatiently on her hand.
"Com'mon we're over here." Tanya slipped her arm around her friend's waist. Secretly she approved of Heather more than any other girl but she rarely let her feelings show.

"Oh, don't tell me its the North End Beach animals," smiled Tanya, a handsome group sprawled languthways in the sand. A boy she often sailed with nodded knowingly and passed a bottle of Bordeaux wine to his girlfriend. Another stood up to greet her.

"Tanya, smoke some of this Columbian weed. You'll need it. We're skiing the cove in the morning."
Tanya frowned reluctantly and indulged. Above the music were cries of, "bite it, go for her, squeeze it."

Tanya took a hash pipe and settled against Heather and a French boy she knew was staying with Trevor for the Summer.

"Michel" she leaned into his ear, hello."

"Oh Tanya!" he was exuberant. How are you and how is your brother Byron?"

She nodded affirmatively and turned to watch a slim, tawny-haired surfer and his girlfriend pull off their shirts and dive into the still, silver water.

The French boy tugged her arm and grinned.

"I spoke to my sister today and she told me she and Byron had a rather intimate meeting on the South coast in-Oscaar.

She shook her head.

"Everyone adores that boy."

Michel brushed his dark hair aside and kissed her.