

T H E D I A R Y O F

JAMES SCHUYLER



EDITED BY NATHAN KERNAN

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For Joe Brainard (1988)

The Diary of James Schuyler (edited by

Nathan Kernan, 1997)



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JAMES SCHUYLER

EDITED BY NATHAN KERNAN

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Cover portrait of James Schuyler by Darragh Park.



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For Joe Brainard

(1942–1994)

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Introduction

“— to be purely a thought!”

For readers of his poetry, the idea of the *Diary* of James Schuyler might almost seem like too much of a good thing. The diaristic quality of his poetry has been noted by almost everyone who has written about it, from Howard Moss to Wayne Koestenbaum, Helen Vendler to Edmund White, and can already be inferred from the titles listed in Schuyler's *Collected Poems*, fifteen of which consist of or include specific dates, such as “May 24th or So,” or “Today *July 26, 1965*,” while a further 33 poems are titled with either a season, a month, a day, or a time of day: “February,” “In Earliest Morning,” “A Name Day,” “August Night.”

Many Schuyler poems record a sequence of days so that they become, in effect, little diaries: “A few days,” “The Morning of the Poem,” “Dining Out with Frank and Doug,” “A Vermont Diary” and “The Cenotaph.” But most often, a Schuyler poem seems to have been written at one sitting; the day itself is often the subject, or as David Bergman has pointed out,¹ the object of a poem (“I think/ I will write you a letter,/ June day. Dear June Fifth,...”; “Silver day/ how shall I polish you?”). Schuyler's poems often draw our attention to the idea of Day as the infinitely varied yet unchanging, inexorable unit of passing time: “The day lives us and in exchange/ We it” (“Hymn to Life”). The sense of passing time pervades Schuyler's work from the first words of his first published poem, “Salute” (“Past is past,”) to the last poem in the last book of new poems published in his lifetime: “A few days/ are all we have.

¹David Bergman, “Material Ecstasy: The Poetry of James Schuyler,” published in *Mouth of the Dragon*, Vol. 2, No. 5, October, 1980.

So count them as they pass. They pass too quickly...

Schuyler's love of historical diaries, particularly nineteenth century English ones, is reflected in his poems and in his own *Diary*. "My writing, my poetry, is enormously influenced by my reading," Schuyler said in an interview with Carl Little,² adding,

I'm really much more of a reader than a writer. I particularly like diaries, for instance, Francis Kilvert's diary, in three volumes, I've read many, many times. It's extremely visual. I'm always reading in Thoreau's diaries, and my favorite book is the diaries of George Templeton Strong.

Some of Schuyler's other favorite diarists were James Woodforde, Gilbert White, Dorothy Wordsworth, and Virginia Woolf. What makes their diaries live, and what Schuyler valued in them, in addition to beautiful language, has nothing to do with analytical thinking or insight into topical issues of the past—though these may be present—but are the mundane, chance details of daily life: the same kinds of closely observed details that we find in Schuyler's own *Diary* and in his poetry.

Schuyler also loved memoirs. It was a memoir, Logan Pearsall Smith's *Unforgotten Years*, that first awakened him to the realization that he too must become a writer: reading the book as a teenager, Schuyler looked up from his backyard tent and saw the landscape "shimmer." Schuyler quotes at length in his *Diary* from Harry Daley's memoir, *This Small Cloud*, from Iris Origo's *War in Val d'Orcia* and from Boris Pasternak's *Safe Conduct*; he extolls Charles Darwin's memoirs for their "simplicity" and "reticence of intimacy." Although Schuyler never wrote his own memoirs, one of the characteristics of the *Diary*, as of Schuyler's poetry, is the way memories seem to rise abruptly out of the fabric of whatever else is going on, like Proust's "involuntary memories."

Another rather nineteenth-century sort of book which Schuyler enjoyed and which undoubtedly influenced his own writing was the commonplace book. Perhaps the best-known modern example of the genre is Auden's *A Certain World*, published in 1970, which

²Carl Little, "An Interview with James Schuyler," published in *Agni*, No. 37, 1993; first published in *Talisman*, No. 9, Fall, 1992.

Schuyler must have known; he also enjoyed Iris Origo's *The Vagabond Path*. Schuyler made his own miniature commonplace book, as it were, when he assembled a group of quotations and remembered remarks to make "The Fauré Ballade." The many excerpts from his reading that appear throughout the *Diary* give this book, too, something of the character of a commonplace book, and exemplify the collage technique that is so much a part of Schuyler's aesthetic. "I like an art where disparate elements form an entity," Schuyler wrote,³ and so they do in his *Diary*, and in his long multi-valent poems like "The Morning of the Poem," as much as in collage poems of purely "found" material, like "Walter Scott."

Stylistically, Schuyler's *Diary* is of a piece with Schuyler's poems, and reading the *Diary* we feel as though we are in the medium of his poetry: in the presence of something that is about to be poetry, yet isn't, quite, or, looking again, perhaps is. It is rather like visiting the reconstruction of Brancusi's studio in Paris, where completed works, works in progress, raw materials, bases, tools, stove, furniture, found objects all seem somehow equal, all of it "Brancusi."

Part of the difference between the *Diary* and the poems lies in the difference between prose and poetry, which for Schuyler might be a matter of degree, of the intensity of concentration, as the following exchange with Mark Hillringhouse suggests:⁴

MH: Do you feel the same about writing prose as compared to writing poetry?

JS: In a way, although writing prose is a more relaxed affair.

MH: More relaxed?

JS: Yes, it's less intense.

MH: Do you feel freer when writing prose?

JS: I feel free when I write, but poetry and prose are like two different states of mind.

MH: So you do separate them?

JS: Yes.

³Letter to a Miss Batie, March 25, 1959.

⁴"James Schuyler: An Interview By Mark Hillringhouse," published in *The American Poetry Review*, March/April, 1985.

Sometimes Schuyler found that what began as prose, in the *Diary*, turned into poetry. Writing to Tom Carey in 1988 of the poem “This soft October” he says, “It really started out to be a diary entry, but the words fell into a rhythm (they always do, what the heck), so I wrote a poem.” In a statement to Carl Little in 1986, in answer to the question, “Do you work from journals?” Schuyler says, “No, not at all. I’ve kept journals but I don’t work from them.” “So how does the poem appear for the first time?” Little asks. “Everything happens as I write.”

There are a number of details: phrases, images, recollections, that occur in both the *Diary* and the poems, but these are usually more in the nature of leitmotifs of Schuyler’s sensibility—they may crop up in letters and in art criticism too—than cases of the *Diary* being used as material for the poems, or vice-versa. There are, inevitably, exceptions to this. The *Diary* entry for January 1, 1968 contains a paragraph about reading Charles Darwin’s *Diary*, some of which was incorporated into “Empathy and New Year”; and the *Diary* entry for July 8, 1969, became the opening of the poem “Light Blue Above.” In the interview with Carl Little, Schuyler recalled the genesis of that poem:

Once in Maine, I was out walking, and I thought of the words, “Oh air,” and I said, “I’ve got to get back and turn this into a poem somehow.” And I went back and wrote a poem called “Light Blue Above,” which is about air. I think I knew that when I thought of the words, “Oh air,” that I might write a poem on that subject about my feelings about air, but there wasn’t any plot or anything. I very much like the idea of things coming out of the unconscious.

In “Light Blue Above” a distinction is made typographically between the body of the poem and the part that was first a *Diary* entry. The latter is written as a block of prose up to the words “Oh air” and functions as a preamble, separate from yet intrinsically part of the poem which seems to grow out of it in short stanzas.

The line between poem and *Diary* becomes very blurred when we realize that Schuyler published a section of his *Diary* as a long poem, “A Vermont Diary,” in *The Crystal Lithium*, and that “A

Vermont Diary” itself, like “Light Blue Above,” is written in both prose and verse. If a Schuyler poem can be a diary, a diary can also be a poem.

On July 6, 1968, James Schuyler wrote to Joe Brainard from Great Spruce Head Island, Maine, where he was living with Fairfield and Anne Porter and their family:

Since I've been here I've mostly written one poem... and some of my diary, though not much. I think I told you that people never get into it—perhaps because I'm secretly afraid others might keep Roremish diaries and put things about me in them, and if I don't, they won't—like knocking on wood.

When Schuyler implied that his *Diary* was not “Roremish” he was referring, of course, to the composer Ned Rorem's gossipy *Paris Diary* and *New York Diary*. Certainly there is not much that could be called gossip in Schuyler's *Diary*, nor really any searching character- or self-analysis, and if his statement that “people never get into it” isn't literally true, most of the *Diary* is descriptive: of weather, of “nature”—this especially in the early part of the *Diary* when Schuyler is in Maine and on Long Island—and of small daily events. Nothing “happens” in Schuyler's *Diary*; “It is like a novel whose persons are seasons and places,” as Schuyler wrote of Alfred Leslie's paintings in 1957. What there is of other people is often not so much about them as about what they say: fragments of conversation that Schuyler reports because he enjoys the way something is expressed (a preoccupation he shares with the nineteenth century English diarist Francis Kilvert), as when he writes of Fairfield Porter saying, “A dozen pair of your socks are vying with the hawkweed.”

In another letter to Brainard, Schuyler, describing his efforts at photography, wrote, half-seriously, “Perhaps there isn't much more to poetry than point and snap.” Whatever one may think of the remark as it applies to poetry, one cannot help but find that it does somewhat apply to Schuyler's *Diary*. For if poetry (sometimes) requires “framing” almost in the sense in which the word is used by a photographer looking through a viewfinder (“I had all but finished framing a poem about David Protetch,” Schuyler

writes on November 9, 1988), the *Diary's* viewpoint, by comparison, is un-“framed,” and in that sense more like a series of snapshots (one thinks of the photographic “diaries” of Jack Pierson, say) or like video, a process of “reading” which, unlike photography, requires no subsequent development but is created, whole and complete and flowing, in “real time”: “Now, this moment/ flows out of me/ down the pen and/ writes” (“Linen”).

“I don’t think I have a philosophical cast of mind. I’m more of an observer,” Schuyler said to Mark Hillringhouse in 1985. Indeed, poetry, as Eileen Myles writes, is “an observing/ profession,” and our sense of Schuyler as an observer is a primary one and an aspect of his art which is predominant in the *Diary*. He told Raymond Foye in 1989,⁵ “You know what my diaries are like: they’re mostly about looking out the window,” a remark which calls to mind lines from Schuyler’s poem, “Mike,” lines which Douglas Crase puts at the heart of Schuyler’s poetics:⁶ “Look out/ the win-/ dow/ cluck:/ it’s real,/ it’s there/ it’s life.”

Schuyler felt that much of his poetry was as much “concerned with looking at things and trying to transcribe them as painting is,”⁷ and the description, or as he says, significantly, transcription, of things perceived is important to all of Schuyler’s work: the precise color of a shadow, the shrimp-like shape of a cloud, the “high-shouldered look” of a Portland rose. Schuyler’s work has often been linked with that of figurative painters to whom he was personally close: Jane Freilicher, Alex Katz, Darragh Park, Robert Dash and especially Fairfield Porter. Schuyler himself was very clear about it: “I tried to write poems that were like his [Porter’s] paintings”.⁸ Yet, just as Schuyler very often gives us a description or makes a comparison only to take it away or contradict it later—

⁵“Schuyler in Conversation with Raymond Foye,” published in *XXIst Century*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1991/1992.

⁶ Douglas Crase, “Plainsong,” published in *The Nation*, Vol. 241, No. 16, November 16, 1985.

⁷ Jean W. Ross, “CA Interviews the Author,” published in *Contemporary Authors*, Vol. 101, 1981.

⁸Mark Hillringhouse interview, op. cit.

“Smoke streaks, no,/ cloud strokes” (“Growing Dark”); “We Are Leaves,” “I’m glad/ we are not/ leaves” (“We Are Leaves”); “the east/ glows/ rose. No/ willow” (“Spring”)—what interested him in visual art may have had less to do with the idea of creating a likeness than with the impossibility of doing so, and relates to ideas of spontaneity and discovery he associated with abstract-expressionist painting, collage, and, in a specific sense, photography.

“One important reason for making drawings, I imagine, is not to draw a likeness of what one sees but to find out what it is one sees,” Schuyler wrote in a letter to the painter John Button, May 4, [1956]. And in 1959 he wrote, “Often a poem ‘happens’ to the writer in exactly the same way that it ‘happens’ to someone who reads it.”⁹ If for Schuyler writing was more a process of discovering than premeditated recording, this was an attitude derived in part from the abstract-expressionist ethos, and shared, also, by many figurative painters of the 50s and 60s. When Joan Mitchell, speaking of her working methods, says, “I want to make myself available to myself,” or when Jane Freilicher (as quoted by Schuyler in the interview with Carl Little) says, “In a sense, the painting is a means of explaining my intentions to myself,” they are both talking in slightly different ways about something akin to Schuyler’s way of letting the poem “happen to” him.

Schuyler’s remark that he was “more of a reader than a writer” is true, then, in the largest sense. His writing, his transcribing, is simultaneous with and inseparable from his “reading” of what is around him and becomes part of the process of thought. In the poem “Unlike Joubert” Schuyler recalls “succeeding where Joubert/ failed: to think nothing; but on/ second thought, failing.” Of course, we are aware of thought—or its hypothetical absence—only through thought itself, so perhaps the closest we can come to thinking “nothing” might be to think “everything”: not so much thinking our thoughts as letting them think us, just as for Schuyler, “The day lives us”: “—to be purely a thought!” (“Eyes at the Window”). In the way it transcribes almost without mediation the weather, his infatuations, TV shows, chance conversations,

⁹Letter to Miss Batie, op. cit.

memories, excerpts from his reading, Schuyler's *Diary* seems to "happen to" the reader almost as it did to the poet. In the process, "hearing is itself," as he writes on February 22, 1971 after listening to the song of a cardinal, "suddenly a kind of singing."

— · —

The Diary of James Schuyler was presented to me by his Executor, Darragh Park, as a thick sheaf of xeroxed, mostly typewritten pages, the originals of which are among the James Schuyler Papers in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego. Most of the pages appeared to have been typed by Schuyler, with a new page for every new day's entry. A few entries seemed to have been retyped by someone else, and in those cases, sometimes the original "autograph" typed sheet was also present. There were a very few handwritten pages; two or three handwritten sheets were undated and might be considered "notes" more than *Diary* entries; nonetheless I have included them here.

There were two other sources for this book in addition to the material provided directly by the Schuyler Estate. In 1982 Geoffrey Young's press, *The Figures*, published a selection from Schuyler's *Diary* called *Early in '71*. Young still had Schuyler's original typescript, which he very kindly lent me so that I could compare it to the printed version. The other source was the Schuyler Papers in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at UCSD. There I found not only the originals of the xeroxed sheets the Estate had given me, but also notebooks and a few loose sheets with additional *Diary* entries, mostly handwritten, some of which I added to the book.

Anything written down as verse in the Estate's original manuscript, except for poems which have already been published in the *Collected Poems*, has been included here (just as "A Vermont Diary," as Schuyler published it in *The Crystal Lithium* is a combination of verse and prose). On the other hand, I have generally avoided adding poems from the notebooks or other papers in San Diego. I did include the "skinny" poems at the end of the little 1971 notebook, including the study for "Beautiful Funerals," because that group of entries, all written in the hospital, seemed of a piece.

As far as editing in the sense of “taking out,” I have done very little, and almost all of what the Estate gave me has been included here. I do not claim that this necessarily represents the version of his *Diary* that Schuyler himself would have published had he lived to do so. In a letter to Darragh Park, enclosing sections of the 1984-85 *Diary*, he mentions that he doesn’t look forward to

editing down and selecting (no, she never revises anything, ever and never: it—everything—flows out of the non-electric “hot and hot” (C. Dickens): well, I do seem always to refer to Daniel (sigh) as darling Daniel and guess who as Lovely Tom (that is when I don’t dub him Phoebus-Apollo: I mean he’s good looking but). Then I’m going to cut all references to illness, doctor visits etc....

I have not tried to second-guess what Schuyler might have wanted removed for one reason or another. On being asked what he thinks is “the best thing” about his work in an interview with Jean W. Ross for *Contemporary Authors*, Schuyler said, “My work seems to be especially musical, and, as I said, very visual. I think that I tend to let it all hang out, if that’s not too vulgar an expression.” The “let it all hang out” mixture of the slight next to the profoundly beautiful is one of the greatneses of Schuyler’s work and I did not want to tamper with it.

Notwithstanding the above, there was one section unambiguously marked by Schuyler “Not for publication,” a directive I respected. I also took out one other entry and two or three short phrases about other people which might have caused unnecessary embarrassment.

Schuyler was not a stylist in matters of spelling or punctuation—except when he was. Where he has made a slip in spelling or typing or dating and then remarked upon it, I have kept the original error. Schuyler intended to spell words correctly and usually he did. Where he didn’t, particularly in proper names, I have tried “silently” to correct him. In a few places where it seemed possible that a word was deliberately misspelled for effect, I have given Schuyler the benefit of the doubt and left it. He kept punctuation to a minimum and aimed first for clarity; I have added one or two commas. A failure to close parentheses was typical for Schuyler—

he makes a point of it in the poem “Seeking” and elsewhere—so where I did add a closing parenthesis for the sake of clarity I have noted it. His use of colons and dashes is part of his style and I have kept that.

I decided to make the style of dating the entries as consistent as possible—month, date, year—something Schuyler was not always concerned with, though, again, where he made an error in the date and remarked upon it I have left it as it was. For a poet who titled many poems and one book with specific dates, Schuyler was oddly imprecise about getting dates exactly right in his *Diary*—dismissive even: “Think of the people who do the counting: would you want your son to marry one?” he writes on January 3, 1968. Wherever he adds the day of the week to the date I have kept it (even though it may sometimes be inconsistent with the date), but I have not added days of the week elsewhere.

Portions of the *Diary* have been published before. A group of *Diary* entries from the years 1967 to 1971 was rearranged—“col-laged”—by Schuyler as though from a single year and published as “For Joe Brainard,” first in Trevor Winkfield’s magazine *Juillard*, and then in *The Home Book*, also edited by Winkfield and published by Z Press in 1977. All of those entries are again printed here, but restored to their proper years, except for the first: “January 1 The air is like a Crist-O-Mint,” which I did not find in typescript and therefore could not assign to a year.

In 1972 Schuyler and his friend the painter Robert Dash collaborated on a portfolio of lithographs entitled *Garden*. The six lithographs were each accompanied by a line from Schuyler’s *Diary*. I have noted these lines where they occur in the text, except for one which is untraced (“When does a mist become a fog?”), and, again, “The air is like a Crist-O-Mint,” which I have only found in “For Joe Brainard.”

Early in '71, published by The Figures in 1982, has been mentioned. It includes the entries from January 1 through April 5, 1971, and also the entry for May 29, 1971.

In 1988, on the occasion of Schuyler’s reading there, the Dia Center for the Arts published *For Joe Brainard*, a selection of entries from January 1, 1968 to December 13, 1969.

Another group of *Diary* entries, from January 14 to September 6, 1989, edited by Raymond Foye, appeared in the short-lived magazine *XXIst Century* in 1991.

The Yale Review published a selection from the 1988 Diaries as "First Light" in 1991 (Volume 79, number 4).

A selection of *Diary* entries from the mid-1980s, edited by Darragh Park, was published in *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, April/May, 1993.

Most recently, Tibor de Nagy Editions has revived its distinguished tradition of publishing contemporary poetry with *Two Journals*, selections from Schuyler's 1985 *Diary* paired with a "diary" of drawings made over the same period by his friend Darragh Park. It was this project, or a more ambitious version of it, that led Schuyler back to keeping his *Diary* in 1984.

A section of the *Diary*, from November 1 to November 7, 1970, was published as a long poem, "A Vermont Diary," in *The Crystal Lithium* in 1972, and is in print in Schuyler's *Collected Poems*. Those entries are not reprinted here.

My dedication of this book to our mutual friend Joe Brainard recognizes a precedent set by Schuyler and an association he seemed to make between his *Diaries* and the artist: twice when he published portions of the *Diary* in his lifetime Schuyler dedicated them to Brainard, in fact called the works "For Joe Brainard."

Nathan Kernan

New York City, September 23, 1996

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The following published interviews with Schuyler have been immeasurably helpful:

"CA Interviews the Author" by Jean W. Ross, published in *Contemporary Authors*, Vol. 101, 1981

"James Schuyler: An Interview By Mark Hillringhouse," published in *The American Poetry Review*, March/April, 1985

"An Interview with James Schuyler," by Robert Thompson, published in *The Denver Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Spring, 1992

"An Interview with James Schuyler," by Carl Little, published in *Agni*, No. 37, 1993; first published in *Talisman*, No. 9, Fall, 1992

"Schuyler in Conversation with Raymond Foye," published in *XXIst Century*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1991–1992

"James Schuyler Interview" (audio tape, recorded April, 1989), Presenter: Adam Phillips; Producer: Rachel Yorke, Track Record

In addition, I am tremendously grateful to Peter Schjeldahl for letting me borrow and transcribe tapes of his unpublished 1977 interviews with Schuyler.

The excerpt from W.H. Auden's letter to Chester Kallman is used by permission, copyright © 1996 The Estate of W.H. Auden.

The manuscript of James Schuyler's *Diary* is in the James Schuyler Papers [mss 78], Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD. I am extremely grateful to the Library and its staff, particularly Lynda A. Claassen, Director, and Bradley Westbrook,

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The

D • I • A • R • Y

of

James Schuyler

The Diary of James Schuyler

After the single brief entry for 1967, James Schuyler's Diary begins on January 1, 1968, when the poet was forty-four years old. For the past six and a half years he had been living with Fairfield and Anne Porter and their two daughters, Katherine (Katie) and Elizabeth (Lizzie) in Southampton, Long Island, and at their summer house on Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. The three Porter sons, John, Laurence and Jerry, had by then left home. The oldest child, John, known as Johnny, who was born with a developmental disability akin to autism, lived on a farm in Vermont and came to his family for regular visits several times a year.

Schuyler had come to stay with the Porters in June, 1961 to recuperate from a mental breakdown and hospitalization at Grace New Haven Hospital. "Jimmy came for a visit and stayed eleven years," as Anne Porter said.

September 11, 1967

“Patty, why do I always look like a criminal?”¹

sideways tree

“The best way to look at a star is to look a little to one side of it.”²

and here I am at my typewriter, banging away about the silence.

January 1, 1968

Snow, enough wind to rattle the shutters, cold, rather bitterly so. A few minutes ago there were bright blue shadows—Prussian blue, I think—and the forsythia, which in dull winter weather has a rich hibernating glow, looked like a lifeless snarl of hair from someone’s comb. But in the time it took to fetch a cup of Java (how funny: I meant to write “coffee”) all the bright blue shadows went and the forsythia is a golden reddish brown smudge. The MacCarthy house through my north window isn’t white it’s pink, but a yellow pink.

I can hear Johnny [Porter] shoveling the drive, and see him now and then in a bright red Balaclava that he puts on anyhow, like a hat in a Pisanello.³

¹“Patty” is Patricia Padgett; the speaker is her husband, Ron Padgett. (See Appendix of Names for these and subsequent names of persons.) That summer Schuyler and the Padgetts had been visiting Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard in Vermont, and in early September, Schuyler took the Padgetts to Great Spruce Head Island.

²This observation, which Ron Padgett had read in a book on astronomy, also finds its way into Schuyler’s poem, “Just before fall.” Padgett’s poem, “To a Schuyler,” consists mostly of similar fragmentary remarks Schuyler himself made during the same visit, such as, “The hill that tree is starring.”

³Antonio Pisano, called Il Pisanello (1395–c.1455), Italian painter and sculptor of relief medallions.

Began the New Year reading Darwin's *Autobiography and Letters* (Francis Darwin)⁴—so modest, and so delighted with his accomplishments. A little dumb, perhaps, (“The sight of a naked savage in his native land is an event which can never be forgotten.”) but only in the gloriously innocent way of a man whose concerns are on the largest and most detailed scale. He often sounds so surprised that *he* turned out to be *him*. The autobiographical part has the advantage of having been written for his family—simplicity and only the reticence of intimacy. He seems to have no scores to settle whatever. I can't think of a book with which I would rather have begun the New Year.⁵

January 2, 1968

One of the boys next door is riding the pony in the field—together they look stubby and quick, a briskly short-stepping chunkiness.

A house down the street—the silly “restored” one—has a spruce (or some kind of fir) with Christmas lights on it. In the pale gloom of an early January evening it jars, strident and gloomy looking. Unseasonal color—the ruddiness of brown shingles is more the kind of warmth that's wanted now.

Not a very good day (though a beautiful one). I'm cross with myself for wasting so much time at Bob Keene's,⁶ and because the December 14 *TLS* with John Sparrow's article about the Warren Report has vanished in the mail, the Doubleday check will “take a few more days,” and other trivialities. Well, maybe if I get those poems to Mark Strand sent I'll save some part of a day I haven't

⁴ *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin and Selected Letters*, edited by his son, Francis Darwin. New York: Dover Publications, 1958. (First published in 1892.)

⁵ “Got coffee and started/ reading Darwin: so modest/ so innocent, so pleased at/ the surprise that *he*/ should grow up to be *him*. How/ grand to begin a new/ year with a new writer/ you really love.” “Empathy and New Year.”

⁶ Bob Keene's bookstore and gallery at 38 Main Street in Southampton was a meeting place for poets and artists.

yet quite rued. If a blackbird shook some snow down on me, I'd want to shoot it.⁷

January 3, 1968

"Up all night, Asleep all day" or so I hope I will. But the end of an insomnia bout is no time to write about it. It's 7:30, and after a cold moon-bright night—the snow neither blue nor green but moon color—it's warm enough to snow. A flurry, no doubt.

Am sending poems to Mark Strand for perhaps the anthology John [Ashbery] says he's doing for Athenaeum:

"Master of the Golden Glow"

"Buried at Springs"

"Milk," about which I have doubts—as Kenneth [Koch] would say, what does it *mean*? Of course it's sexual, but not merely phallic, and it's something else too. I think it sounds happy, which is reason enough to send it. But I haven't yet really quite decided about the last line:

Tremblingly, milk is coming into its own.

Tremblingly? *the* milk? (no—fancy Dan stuff). into its own *again*? The line seems to need that "again" and so I go on leaving it out. I won't be bossed around and yelled at by a bunch of sounds.⁸

⁷John Sparrow (1906–1992), English literary critic and barrister. His books include *After the Assassination: A Positive Appraisal of the Warren Report* (1967) and *Visible Words: A Study of Inscriptions in Books as Works of Art* (1969).

"The way a crow/ Shook down on me/ The dust of snow/ From a hemlock tree// Has given my heart/ A change of mood/ And saved some part/ Of a day I had rued." Robert Frost, "Dust of Snow."

⁸The line was published as "Trembling, milk is coming into its own."

“Months,” should I call it, “Late in August?” Is
“Months” a possible title for the book?⁹ No. Knock
it off.

“Industrial Archaeology” (more manner than matter)

“3/23/66”

“Poem ‘How about...’”

“Crocus Night”

“Yorkville”

“Now and then”

We will see.¹⁰ In the letter—the covering letter—I wished him a Hanny New Year, and then saw I’d dated it January 3, 1967. Not so bad as last year when I wrote Ron a letter in the spring dated 1966, which made him “rise up in the air.”¹¹ What I should have done is send him a postcard “What makes you so sure it isn’t 1966? Think of the people who do the counting: would you want your son to marry one of them?” A year is rather a long time to take thinking of a come-back. Not so bad as the time Janice [Koch] saw me writing down an engagement in a pocket diary with a date at least two years old. “*That’s* scary.” I tried to explain that it was more an address book.

Some years I never got around to buying a new one; last year it took a couple of months to transfer the addresses; this year I bought it in November and transferred all the birthdays and addresses on New Year’s Day. Yes, things are looking up.

Why should I suddenly think of a glass fire engine with candies in it?

⁹ *Freely Espousing*, Schuyler’s first commercially published book of poetry, would be brought out by Paris Review Editions/Doubleday in 1969. No poem of either title was included in the book.

¹⁰ The anthology edited by Mark Strand, *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1969) included one poem of Schuyler’s, “Buried at Springs.”

¹¹ Padgett’s letter, dated May 26, 1967, begins: “Dear Jimmy, As I just glanced down at your letter to see if it was written on May 24th, I was taken several inches off the floor by noting that it was not only not written on May 24, but in 1966. So much for that.” *May 24th or So* was Schuyler’s second book of poetry, published by Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1966.

January 4, 1968

More snow, with wet showing through it.

I think Barbara Guest and Perdita Schaffner are downstairs “paying a call.” And I think I’ll stay right here—unless officially informed—and go on trying to make something out of “on a quilt on the pass.” Most people don’t know how much *time* even a very short poem takes, even one just dashed down—trying to get it right. And the rest of us forget.¹²

I sent Ron a postcard made out of phrases from *The Penguin Russian Course*. One of the recurring sentences to introduce new declensions is, “He killed, is killing, will kill, the dog.” What an animal to pick. I’d rather movie-Russian:

“Comrade Ivanov, what are you doing here?”

Tuesday night, January 14, 1968

I wonder why I’m afraid of going to sleep—or—of not going to sleep? Sometimes I like the process and the relaxed constructing.

The whole big freeze has gone by, which always thrills me—record lows! Joe B[rainard] said, going up 6th Avenue from Cornelia and West 4th, “This is the kind of weather I always *think* I like best,” with his head huddled into his endless scarf.

I came back¹³ on Wednesday—more cold—on Thursday the check from Doubleday came. (Or rather from the agent—they

¹² Up until about the mid-1970s, Schuyler would sometimes revise his poems extensively, while in later years he mostly wrote without much revision, other than to “go over the poem and take words out, to tighten it up,” as he told Carl Little in 1986. “I’m mystified by why people have to revise,” Schuyler said in an interview with *Contemporary Authors* in 1980. “Some people really labor for hours and hours, and I can’t see any difference between version one and version one hundred.”

¹³ Schuyler had been visiting Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard in Calais, Vermont and returned to Southampton via New York City.

always take only ten per cent, but I wish now that Lynn¹⁴ had held out for a thousand; how welcome \$900 would be! In light of my book bills (\$200) and hopes of going to Jamaica)—

John came out for the weekend, and we went on with the novel,¹⁵ better today than yesterday: he wants to end it and so do I, but differently. I mean, not different endings for the book—I think he's impatient giving it the last (to me) important attentions. But he did re-edit the Paris chapter and agreed, so we cut the Chateau scrap and extended the dinner at Claire and Nadia's.

Writing that makes me feel I'm disclosing my bossy side—so why not? John was right to push me on with it, making me write at night (which I'm doing right now)—and —

I've been too touchy lately, and sharp with Liz. It's something I needn't analyze but just stop. She's at a most interesting point—filled with curiosity, anxiety about Bruno, impudence, and about to become a woman. Our friendship depends on me at this point, so I'd best mend some fences, in a word be nicer.¹⁶

February 10, 1968

Snow before daybreak. The postponed predicted blizzard choked off by cold. Now at noon it's windy and bright, not an interesting snowscape, a kind of gusty glare, the sort of day when the way things look is an illustration of how the day feels.¹⁷ Even in the house there are trails of cold air, changing like smoke. One current

¹⁴ Lynn Nesbit, then of Marvin Josephson Associates, was Schuyler's agent at the time. The check from Doubleday, Schuyler's advance for *Freely Espousing*, was for \$750, less 10% commission.

¹⁵ John Ashbery and Schuyler were writing their collaborative novel, *A Nest of Ninnies*, which they worked on intermittently from 1952 until its publication in 1969.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Porter was then almost 12 years old. Bruno was the Porter family's golden retriever.

¹⁷ "An illustration of how the day feels" is one of six lines Robert Dash chose from Schuyler's *Diaries* to use in their collaborative portfolio, *Garden* (1972). Each line was accompanied by a lithograph by Dash.

seems rushing up between the keys of this typewriter, and my fingers feel a little stiff.

Still, bright blue, white, and the scatter of leaves clinging to the privet have an almost coppery sparkle. And the shadows aren't at all blue—that of an elm to the south lies as sharp on the thin blown-away snow as though cut out of gray paper with scissors.

Fairfield says he likes Michael Brownstein's poems: "And I think I even *get* almost all of them—and the part I don't you probably aren't supposed to get anyway. There's something very nice about them" and pause to think "inarticulateness, I guess."

Since I can't catch up—most of all, on the ten days in East Aurora¹⁸—I won't try.

April 24, 1968

The horses next door are rolling on the ground like dogs. So it must be spring. An overcast day with the ocean making a dull distant freight train roar—a funny out of the past suggestive noise—prairies at night, or trying and not succeeding to sleep on a shut-up cottage porch somewhere by Lac St. Jean ('45? '46?)¹⁹ or "the terrible boxcars rolling East."²⁰

From here I can see just one daffodil, standing in its dark spears by the flat stone (really, concrete) which is a lid for the cesspool. And a grackle (maybe) flies down out of the buttered sunshine—to you, the forsythia—and lands beside it. Then a whole lot more land on the grass and go marching about —

The depths of the forsythia are brown as pancakes. But the

¹⁸ East Aurora, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, where Schuyler grew up and where his mother and his half-brother and his family still lived.

¹⁹ Schuyler and his lover Bill Aalto probably visited Lac St. Jean, Quebec, during a trip they took to Canada in the summer of 1945. They also stopped in Montreal and Quebec City. In the summer of 1946 they visited Boston.

²⁰ The phrase refers to boxcars that carried Jews to concentration camps in eastern Europe during the Holocaust.

prettiest is the weak bush under the elm and a copper beech. A transparent lemon mist—"transpicuous" light.

Last Friday riding out with John on the 4:19 I watched for and missed whichever station (Westhampton? Or a couple of stops before) has a lot of forsythia but just one bush that is a clear acid sulphur yellow, the best.

April 30, 1968

from the LI train:
Front Street Bakery
Back Street Steak House

[undated, possibly 1968]²¹

Watching in wonder
The shoeshine man put in
new laces and deftly
and firmly tie the bow just so
the silver whoopee of reindeer moss
my foot
and the veins in it and the nails need
cutting not just yet
today it looks like a tree ear
in the woods among the baulks
of sunshine

baulks of
sunshine

²¹ This handwritten, undated entry is placed here because it seems to be written on the same legal paper Schuyler used for the other handwritten, but dated, entry that follows.

June 5, 1968

The dog rests his chin on a sill
and sits and watches...
his coat is metal [*word illegible*] and elaborated
as the hair of Venetian whores
who sit, big-footed also, and
stare and wait.
Buds of rose swell in the
good spring —
early warm, if dry, then wet,
 then sun
and the shining cut-seeming calyxes (sepals?) curl
 back
and a (fat) worm, harmless
 and plump as a
 prick

Drapes on a thread from
 black edged hole
its feeding left. A wound such as
 a bullet leaves
In a story you can hear this
 morning on the air.

June 21, 1968

Lunch at Bob Dash's.²²

After we looked at the garden—the vegetable patch very elegant—and I prised a cup of coffee out of him, he lit a cigarette (one of my Camels since he hates his own lung savers) and said,

²² Robert Dash's garden, Madoo, in Sagaponack, Long Island, where he has lived since 1966, is now a not-for-profit foundation.

apropos the late Elizabeth Enright,²³ “Yes, we put Bitsy in the ground last Friday.”

I wish he didn’t make me so ill-at-ease—I never feel sure I’ll get away until I have. Oh well here I am, the sun is setting through a gray scrim, the light falls on my fingers and I’m going to go read the *Times* and have a drink.

June 26, 1968

Great Spruce Head Island.²⁴ Though just, the Island, is more like it (which Eliot²⁵ wanted to call his book *Summer Island*— editorial objections!²⁶ and how much better his own title is than the one used.)

Delicately and thoroughly overcast, cool above and the water with a rosy cast, and the more distant island a blue with a low hum to it. That small chip is Margaret Fairleigh’s (sp?)²⁷ house on Eagle,

²³ Elizabeth Enright (1909-1968), short story and children’s book author. Enright is best known for her Melendy family series of children’s books. *Doublefields*, a book of stories for adults, was published in 1966. She was a friend and neighbor of Robert Dash on Long Island.

²⁴ Great Spruce Head Island, in Penobscot Bay off the coast of Maine, was purchased by Fairfield Porter’s father, an architect, in 1912. Fairfield Porter and his brothers and sister grew up spending summers there and continued to visit it with their own families almost every year. Fairfield and Anne Porter eventually lived in the “big house,” designed by Fairfield Porter’s father and built in 1912; Fairfield’s three brothers and his sister built houses on the island in the 1930s and 40s.

²⁵ Eliot Porter’s book, *Summer Island—Penobscot County* (1966), is a photographic study of Great Spruce Head Island.

²⁶ Schuyler may be ruefully remembering his experiences with Harcourt Brace, when they published his novel *Alfred and Guinevere* in 1958: “Getting *Alfred and Guinevere* published was a kind of a nightmare, with niggling little criticisms about, like, whether I should call a skillet a spider, and would the vitamin C in orange juice oxydize, and this went on and on.... I said, ‘I’m never going to have anything to do with commercial publishing again.’” From an interview with Carl Little, October, 1986, published in *Talisman*, No. 9, Fall, 1992; and in *Agni*, No. 37, 1993.

²⁷ Margaret Fairleigh was an acquaintance of the Porters on a neighboring island. The query is Schuyler’s.

which has “a tooth brush and wash basin outside the door and shells and beach glass inside.” The spruce give the islands the profile of a totally worn out tooth brush (“One thing,” Dr. Stern concluded some orthodontic advice, “don’t fall in love with your toothbrush.”)

The unmowed grass below the house going toward the edge is speckled with hawkweed, shut and partly open, yellow with a blackish edge below, and a few of the orangey red kind, one bunch of daisies, and single ones here and there, and worked through the greens and gray-browns a mist made out of clover, pinks (really pink and also white ones) and cranesbill—all in the “undesirable” bright mauve-magenta range. The hawkweed goes in patterns like a milky wave, and there is the silver of its fluffy seed head. And at the edge itself flowers and grass and juniper against water down below which is smooth yet seen to move. Looking just there at the edge one’s sight seems to grow sharper or more sensitive like adjusting a microscope until one acquires its rhythm and can see more than at first seems at all to be there.

At breakfast there were goldfinches flying about in their bobbing way, and one sat for a long time on a grass stalk, eating the seed, perched to one side and improbably overweight (it seemed) for its support. Now the cliff swallows under the eaves make a small babble and others skim back and forth beyond the window, or rather, the windows cut off curves from their flight lines: one just dropped straight down the casement and near the bottom turned off to the left leaving half an urn shape, now another clips off a low wedge, like a doorstep.

And last night, to go to sleep in the incredible silence!

June 27, 1968

Differences from yesterday: the overcast sky is streaked with yellow, Isle au Haut is bluer, and, though only the most feathery of the grasses sway, the surface of the water is crinkled and running.

The voices of Ebby and Elaine [Porter], working on the

Surprise—a lobster boat, and the swallows chirp. Just now, when I was photographing the pattern of the flowers down below, they decided I was a threat and one came zooming at me repeatedly—too likeable to photograph.

Bruno, after a Rapunzel-like winter, is in the finest fettle. He tries to catch swallows, runs down to the water, sticks his head in, and runs off, he loses Liz and tries to summon her by barking, he comes in and gets water, flops on the kitchen floor and passes out, gets up and rushes out again. Last night he came into the living room where the big fire was just started and acted out the classic scene, the Hound on the Hearth Rug.²⁸ He is the most amiable dog, though perhaps not a genius. But since, as the world goes, genius seems in greater supply than amiability...

Liz runs wild in blue dungarees and a blue Manhattanville sweatshirt and doesn't want to brush her hair. She woke up in the night with an earache and required a hot water bottle. All the same, she was up before seven and went with Bruno to the south meadow before breakfast.

Here, I can see what Buckminster Fuller²⁹ means about feeling the curve of the earth. In fact, the horizon is quite cock-eyed.

Friday, July 12, 1968

“A dozen pair of your socks are vying with the hawkweed,” F. said at breakfast, apropos the laundry I left out over night.

The early morning sea, so calm, so silken, not fierce and brilliant but not dulled, a softness, too fine to call a skin, as though lightly dusted.

²⁸ “The red dog comes in out of the rain to enact the chromo, *The Hound on the Hearth.*” From “The Cenotaph.”

²⁹ Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983), visionary engineer and inventor of the geodesic dome, owned and summered on the neighboring Bear Island, as Schuyler mentions in “The Morning of the Poem.” He also makes an appearance as a character in “Within the Dome,” a poem written collaboratively by Schuyler and Ron Padgett during their visit to the island in September, 1967.

July 31, 1968

The other day was so hot and clear that one cloud and just one hung over the South Woods as though all the moisture in the air had been drawn up and compacted into it, burning, scorched, metallically shaded.

August 5, 1968

Blue, with a few sharp streaks of white. The water is making its knitting noise, Lizzie and Katherine³⁰ are talking on the floor in front of the fireplace, where they slept on quilts after Bruno woke them up at 6 and they in turn woke me. Kenneth is in the kitchen asking Anne for advice and favors. Fairfield is painting a *new* view from his porch looking east, an intimate one of a little, wild enclosure (that which is enclosed being, of course, nothing.)

Last evening it rained before supper, followed by wonderful effects of mist and sun. A bolt of mist unrolled in the air above the Kittiwake³¹ and the other boats in the harbor. Fog came up off the water low, thick, lapping (not licking, but lapped over) the beaches of the bars and islands like densely frosted turf. And seen through the trees, the nearest blowdown to the house seemed filled with boiling gold, a milky turbulence from which unflickeringly streamed an essence of flame pink and orange, a radiance diluted and stabilized. It lay on the lichened trunks of the spruce and warmed away their woods chill.

Went for a long walk with Kenneth yesterday noon and swam at Skokey (sp?) Beach,³² lying naked in the cold water that was a

³⁰ Katherine Koch. She and her parents, Kenneth and Janice Koch, were visiting the Porters that summer.

³¹ The "Kittiwake" was John Porter's yacht, "very like his father's 'Hippocampus' only smaller," according to Anne Porter.

³² Skokie Beach was named after Skokie, Illinois, near Winnetka where Fairfield Porter was born and brought up.

little warm on top and looking at the pebbles and snails and tiny shrimp-like creatures. Hot sun, cool air and no clothes: a recipe from the “classic cuisine.”

August 25, 1968

Fog.

September 24, 1968

The common trumpet vine has vigor. There is little else to be said for it.

I feel vaguely disloyal, *campsis radicans*.

October 7, 1968

I was going to go into the city today, but when I woke up to rain—the first rainy morning in weeks and weeks—I put it off until tomorrow, when Fairfield is going in too. This meant calling Kenward,³³ which was uncomfortable, since I’d felt I was imposing or inconveniencing him in some way that wasn’t clear to me—oh well, why be paranoid about it, and what bothered me perhaps was calling Westhampton Beach and hearing in the background the good-time sounds of Joe [Brainard], Bill Berkson, and Anne [Waldman] and Lewis Warsh and feeling left out. What a “pore little feller” I make myself out to be sometimes.

A room of one’s own is nice, and so is a whole lot of them, which I rather wish I had in New York. One here, one there, and then there’s Maine...

³³ Kenward Elmslie. Schuyler often stayed with Elmslie when he came into New York City. At the time, Elmslie also had a house in Westhampton.

The blacktop drive is gray with wet and the reddish brown leaves the rain and wind are bringing down are scattered on it. “Star-scattered” if we saw the stars the size of pork chops...

October, 1968

THE MEN KIDS (on a wall at Jamaica)³⁴

The unending search for middle C
fields of fuzz/
the futile cotton of the milkweed—
(which is a good deal more like silk)

November 15, 1968

The hateful street with the handsome houses.

December 1968

browsers-record bins

“Coming for Xmas—*The Killing of Sister George*—the story of 3 consenting adults”³⁵

³⁴ Jamaica, Queens. Transfer station on the Long Island Railroad when travelling between New York City and the Hamptons.

³⁵ The movie, “The Killing of Sister George” (1968) was based on the play by Frank Marcus and directed by Robert Aldrich. It starred Beryl Reid and Susannah York as a pair of lesbian lovers.

December 21, 1968

The sun comes out and tree trunks are paley bright against a stormy sky on the shortest day of the year. Which is only noticed in the afternoon. Something flashes in one huge spruce—not a bird, a flag beyond it moved by a winter breeze. Woke up in the dark and saw the clock said six—pleased to have slept through till then, and to have woken up then, I got up and went down and put on a kettle for coffee. The kitchen clock said two. I thought it had stopped. But no, my clock had stopped the night before. So instead of coffee I had lamb chops and went back to bed and slept until five. Strange business.

Laurence and Betsy and Leon [Porter] left yesterday morning for Baltimore. Leon is wonderful: he looks like “Baby Stuart”³⁷ (Anne’s phrase), he feeds himself apple sauce with a spoon not so very messily, but can’t drink out of a cup by himself. He walks around like a little drunk, always about to tip over. He hates closed doors but likes to close them. When a record stops he suddenly sings a nameless little tune. His words are See, and Cup (or rather, Cu’) and Light, and such. He mimics the inflection rather than the sound, and answered “Thank you” with “*See-see*” so it sounded very like it. He likes to sit in laps and put things in or on things on the table. A peppermill into a bowl, or a pawn on top of a rook. He laughs when he picks up a spoon and pretends to feed

³⁶ Stefano della Bella (1610-1664), Italian engraver. An exhibition of his work was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from November 15 through December 29, 1968.

³⁷ “...Leon, who is very cute, and looks very much like the Van Dyke of what Anne calls Baby Stuart.” Letter from Schuyler to John Ashbery, December 18, 1968. Anne Porter recalls that, “When I was growing up a portrait of a (sitting) baby in a bonnet was somewhere in the house—(one of those sepia jobs, so it must have been a classic, but I don’t know who it was by. I was told it was of Baby Stuart.)”

one—rather a risky business if it's a fork he picks up. When I identified the outer cover of a milk bottle top as "Cap" he laughed and put it on his head. He likes to point at things and have them named (he points and says "See?"). It's like having a foreign friend, to whom one can say only, "Milk," "Bot-tle," "Bowl," "Light," "Spo-o-on." The friendship is almost non-verbal and understood.

December 23, 1968

—"and possibly local slippery conditions"—the weather woman, 1 a.m. 12/23/68

January 2, 1969

A maple against the light has the dark thin substance of a shadow.

I bought myself a pink luster cup and saucer before Christmas. It's on my desk and the light that falls into it—which is not direct sunlight—makes the pattern of skimpy swags of vaguely willowish leaves show through the very white porcelain. The outside is decorated only with three widely spaced sprigs, and a fine band near the foot. "What are you going to *do* with it?" Kenneth might ask. Well, I'm not going to use it to drink out of, that's for sure. I like it as much, almost as much, as my other cup with the blue transfer, COME AWAY POMPEY.³⁸

How well the grime on the windows shows up in this winter light.

³⁸ "The sunlight falls partly/ in a cup: it has a blue/ transfer of two boys, a/ dog and a duck and says,/ 'Come Away Pompey.'" From "Shimmer."

May, 1969

In the bookstore: "I can't decide if I want to know five things really well or a 100 half-assed."

June 9, 1969

In the night cats began to caterwaul. Someone went out of the house and said, "Shh! Shh! Shh!" So the cats stopped, or went elsewhere. [I thought I wouldn't get back to sleep but]³⁹ very late it began to rain, lightly, at first like the small rustle that sprinkles out of a sudden, new fog. So I put out the light with considerable content and went slowly, and after quite a while, to sleep.

In the early light the privet hedge outside my north window looks pitted like bronze that has been in the earth a long time.

Sometimes I mean to keep track ("Make a list")⁴⁰ of what I read, the books anyway. What for? To amuse me when I've forgotten. Last night I finished Arthur Randell's *Fenland Railwayman*,⁴¹ of which it might be possible to say it contains not one memorable word, and therefore has a pleasant clarity, like a clear glass of water. Of course there is no such book: "During a long dry spell we often ran out of water, so a supply was sent to us from Wisbech in old engine tenders which were put opposite the railway cottages so that the water could be run through canvas pipes into our cisterns. The water was not very clean—it sometimes had a dead bird in it or little, wriggling creatures—but as our cisterns already housed a

³⁹ Brackets added to typescript in Schuyler's hand.

⁴⁰ "I should keep a reading diary of all the books and mags I read, but what/ would be the use? I can't remember what I read..." "A few days." "Make a list" was a frequent refrain in the Porter household. Anne Porter writes, "If I asked F to pick up something when he was going out (like bread) & then said Oh yes and some butter, he would say (a little bit wearily) 'Make a list.'"

⁴¹ *Fenland Railwayman* by Arthur Randell, edited by Enid Porter. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.

few worms and snails we took no notice. Each house had a charcoal filter and once the water had passed through this it was as clear as gin.” And there is the clarity, a superior one.

June 16, 1969

“It’s my lunch time and your breakfast time.”⁴²

Great Spruce Head

Thursday, June 26, 1969

After three days of cold gray misty drizzle the sun came out and the temperature rose. It isn’t so much color one cares about, as light, the sparkle off leaves, or a choke cherry that against the light seemed in its bright darks to have a light concealed within it; or nesting in it.

I walked up to “twin-flower corner”⁴³ where I have never seen them before in such abundance. So small, so perfect in their variety, such strength in their delicacy.

⁴² “I hear applause from the kitchen below, which means I think that Jimmy Schuyler got up for breakfast.” Fairfield Porter, in a letter to Lucien Day, July 23, 1962.

⁴³ “...that far-off island in Penobscot Bay,/ mossy walks and Twin Flower/ Corner...” “The Morning of the Poem.” Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*) is a low shrub of the honeysuckle family with fragrant, usually pink, flowers in pairs; Twinflower Corner is a favorite destination for walks on Great Spruce Head Island.

Summer, 1969

How to begin?
And now I have.

2

The sun was about to set. So it did—no fuss, no feathers, just plop.

July 8, 1969

Light blue above, darker below, lightly roughened by the stirring air and with smooth tracks on it. There goes Reynald Hardie's⁴⁴ lobster boat, taking a colorful load of pleasure seeking shoppers to Camden.

O Air!⁴⁵

July 10, 1969

Maybe if I washed and shaved I'd feel more like writing.

Some things to omit, or
Some things to leave out, or
Some things mentioned too often:

Food. Flowers. Colors.

Food flowers on birthday cakes in pastel shades.

⁴⁴ Reynald Hardie was the young son of Wolcott Hardie, the caretaker at Great Spruce Head Island.

⁴⁵ This diary entry, virtually unchanged, became the opening of the poem "Light Blue Above," published in *The Crystal Lithium*.

Which equals a bakery shop window on Third Avenue in the 80s⁴⁶ during the war, dinner with Bill [Aalto] at the D & H Diner: knockwurst &: .85.

Extraordinary how anything far enough past can come to seem like a happy time.

Well, it wasn't an altogether unhappy time, and, like the receding memory of pain...

Two very different talents: Ron Padgett and Michael Brownstein.

a difference:

“there is no comparison
between two fine things.”⁴⁷

later

today, the color of a teaspoon⁴⁸

July 11, 1969

On the window hang misshapen drops of rain which the wind mashes and drags.

July 12, 1969

Humid and cool (cold feet in red wool socks) fog pressing down on the South Woods like a migraine headache, birds jabbering listlessly.

⁴⁶ There are two typescripts of this entry, one of which omits the words “in the 80s,” referring to the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

⁴⁷ This remark anticipates by two years the publication of Ron Padgett and Michael Brownstein's *Sufferin' Succotash / Kiss My Ass* (Adventures in Poetry, 1971): actually two separate short works (*Sufferin' Succotash* by Padgett and *Kiss My Ass* by Brownstein) both illustrated by Joe Brainard, bound back to back as one book.

⁴⁸ “July 10 Today, the color of a teaspoon” is one of the lines used by Schuyler and Robert Dash in their collaboration, *Garden*.

July 14, 1969

After three gray days, fog, storms, rain—gracious and other—another gray morning, but with blue rifts. Or riffs. And a hard to look at thin place behind which the sun is pelting down warmth. The air is too thick but it feels so good after days of cold toes in damp sneakers sensation.

The horizon is blue, a deep, fixed blue, that of a star sapphire, and the hilly islands and mountains that compose it are jagged: the edge of a torn piece of paper. And for the space of a breath sunlight falls on my fingers and these keys.

A beautiful sentence: “To the student of manorial rolls by far the most interesting franchise is the ‘court leet or view of frank-pledge,’ because it is very common, because it has great importance in the history of society, because its origin is extremely obscure: so obscure that we may be rash in speaking about it; still a little may be ventured.”

F.W. Maitland, “Leet and Tourn” *Historical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1957 (first published 1888).

July 21, 1969

So there’s a man in the moon after all.⁴⁹

Unusually low tides. Beyond the bar, the spruce make a dark wet moss-green on the water, and the boats at their moorings seem ready to keel over—well, keel onto their flanks, like elephants resting—if a little more of their support ebbs away. After heat wave days, when grass and leaves had a violent sparkle, a welcome change to pinkgray, bluegray, yellowgray, greengray and a violet which has not yet come to rest.

Edward and Audrey Porter left this morning in the John Walton, the Strauses’ lobster boat which looks, on the bay, as small and chunky as a bathtub toy.

⁴⁹ Neil Armstrong walked on the surface of the moon on July 20, 1969.

The other day at last I saw as well as heard a whitethroat sparrow. He, or she, or it, was quite near and the giant sound seemed all around it, and it took a moment to be sure that little fluffy ball was its source. A little like the exquisite thread of sound that came out of short, vast Lina Pagliughi.⁵⁰ More like the short skinny boy in the barrack at Key West⁵¹ with the enormous cock behind which he would come from the shower with an air of disclaimer and acceptance. The hooting and teasing he got was not without good-natured pride: after all, it lived in our barrack. And overhead, day and night, the big fans revolved.

I can tell as I type that my fingernails need cutting—Ellajane Bishop⁵² ran sobbing out of her typing class because the teacher ordered her to clip her talons.

July 24, 1969

The fog burned off but there are still bits of mist drifting around in the distance like dust kitties.

At the dock Eliot photographing and Steve [Porter] helping him. They were pointing something that looked like a cannon at some frayed fog in the channel between Dirigo and Barred⁵³ and

⁵⁰ Lina Pagliughi (1907-1980), Italian soprano. She was known for her “pure, sweet tone” and “smooth, flexible technique,” yet “her unimpressive stage presence was a hinderance to her theatrical career.” (*New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Volume 3. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992). In the 1930s and 40s Pagliughi performed frequently in Rome, Naples and Florence, and Schuyler probably saw her when he was living in Italy from 1947 to 1949. Virtually all of the Schuyler/Ashbery correspondence is addressed and signed with joke names, and Ashbery’s letter to Schuyler of January 31, 1969 is headed, “Dear Lina Pagliughi.”

⁵¹ Schuyler was stationed at the Naval Sonar School in Key West in 1943.

⁵² Ellajane Bishop was a student at Bethany College from 1940 to 1944 and took a typing course there during the academic year 1941–42. Schuyler took the same course in the following Summer term of 1942.

⁵³ Dirigo and Barred are two islands near Great Spruce Head Island in Penobscot Bay.

exuded concentrated waves of Go Away. So I slunk back, the hopeless amateur, feeling that instead of the Leica of my dreams I should turn in my Minolta for a Brownie and tell everybody to line up and face the sun.⁵⁴

Fairfield, winding to a close with his big living room picture,⁵⁵ said, "After you paint some pictures on a wall then you have to paint the wall under the pictures."

Lizzie and Anne are picking raspberries, the Kittiwake is away taking David and Jean and cute Annie [Porter] to Sunset⁵⁶ and somewhere—ultimately, Athens Ga.—, the mailboat hasn't come yet, I guess Bruno is picking raspberries too, the sun shines on my left cheek, I guess I'll go out in it, or go take a time exposure of Fairfield's painting, I hear a boat, I hope it's the mailboat and that it's bringing a letter from John [Ashbery].

Great Spruce Head Island

July 25, 1969

Just now: me: If this were my house I'd be tempted to do something about the grout or whatever that stuff is between the fireplace bricks.

F: Why?

—White is such an ugly color.

—Don't you like rooms with white walls?

—*Sometimes.*

⁵⁴ That Schuyler, in fact, took his photography seriously is borne out by his many contact sheets and negatives on file in the Schuyler Papers in San Diego; most of Schuyler's photographs were taken on Great Spruce Head Island. After seeing some negatives enlarged to good result, Schuyler wrote to Joe Brainard (in July 1969), "There really isn't anything to photography except point and snap (I'm not sure that's true)... On the other hand, perhaps there isn't much more to poetry than point and snap."

⁵⁵ Probably "Interior with a Dress Pattern," 1969. See the entry for July 30, 1969.

⁵⁶ Sunset is the town on Deer Isle "where the mail boat comes from and goes to, because the mail boat captain lives there." (Anne Porter).

Dinner last night at Aline and Eliot's (a window toward the west [and garden,]⁵⁷ full of light green light like a salad)—Aline makes such pretty settings for her aesthetic and virile men—flowers and hooked rugs, posters, paintings, a lithograph of a steamboat and postcards (Vuillard, the Pont Aven school), the tiny pantry freshly painted a strong blue. Pot roast—yum—home made wild raspberry ice cream—beyond yums.

Anne: Katie [Porter] says that lots of nuns are crazy about Uncle Eliot.

Eliot passed around one of the “you have changed my life” letters he gets, this one, like many of the others, calling his first book “In Wilderness...” rather than “In Wildness...”⁵⁸ He doesn't seem to mind. But Stephen does.

at dinner:

Aline: Stephen says that all the hippies like this guru because he's so square.

Sullen Stephen: I said that?

Aline: Well, yes, you did.

Stephen: I said they like him because he's straight and a square.

Later:

Aline: I can't wait to get back and see how my pot plant is doing. John Chamberlain⁵⁹ gave me the seeds. Eliot wanted me to throw it out.

Eliot: I hope it's dead.

Marcie (Martha Porter, Stephen's wife): Harvesting it is such a bore—it has to bleed, and you have to hang it up by the roots...

⁵⁷ Brackets added to the typescript in Schuyler's hand.

⁵⁸ Eliot Porter's book of photographs, *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World*, with a text from Thoreau, was published in 1962.

⁵⁹ John Chamberlain (b. 1927), sculptor. Chamberlain lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the 60s, and was a friend of Eliot and Aline Porter's.

Anne: Is that the only way you can kill it?

And Eliot talked about the ice age, and how quickly it came, so that mastodons were quickfrozen and in the 19th century steaks were cut off them and taken to St Petersburg for the Czar to eat.

Today: Cool, clear, a light wind, blue and the swallows coasting about.

July 26, 1969

Windy, and the waves all running sideways.

Today is St. Anne's Day and Leon Porter's birthday.

Good mail—letters from John [Ashbery] and Joe [Brainard] and books from England.⁶⁰

July 27, 1969

Three lists—the books I brought to Maine—the books I got in Maine—the books I wish I had brought to Maine.

Cool and gray, gray and cool, like a steel blotter.

Aline Porter skies: "the kind of hooked rugs I made were all white, with the pattern shown by cutting some of the loops (like pile). They were around for years and then one day I just got rid of them. What a relief!"

—there's an *adorable* bird in that tree, going Tweee Tweee Tweee—

⁶⁰ For several decades and until his death, Schuyler had an account with Landsman's Bookshop, "Specialist Postal Bookshop for Farmers and Gardeners," in Herefordshire, England.

Great Spruce Head Island

July 30, 1969

Fog continues. Humidity in my hair, my knee, my ears, my sinuses, my clothes. More gracious rain for which we return ungracious thanks. Bruno taken to the garden while we pick peas gets tied up and sits and barks reproachfully. Lizzie is in the kitchen wrangling with her mother about nothing at all. I'm as cross as two sticks—also about nothing at all. Maybe Maine doesn't have an ideal year round climate. Wonder how much E'by paid, or is paying for his houses, the stone house in Pennsylvania and the one they just got in Nova Scotia? Only Fairfield goes irresistibly on absorbed in his painting: "I think I learned a lot from that de Hooch-Balthus picture." Of the living room, a real marvel of quiet beauties.⁶¹

Not a day worth memorializing.

First week of August, 1969

New York

Art thoughts away from New York
where presumably there is none

Snelson—⁶²

⁶¹ This must be "Interior with a Dress Pattern" (1969), which included elements that Porter considered reminiscent of paintings by Pieter de Hooch (1629-1684) and Balthus (Balthasar Klossowski, b. 1908). On December 30, 1955, Porter wrote to Kenneth Koch, "Balthus...is my current chief hero in painting." Writing to Rackstraw Downes on April 28, 1970 about "Interior with a Dress Pattern," Porter says, "I was thinking of a de Hooch in the Wallace Collection when I painted it." (Quoted by John T. Spike in *Fairfield Porter An American Classic*). The de Hooch painting is "A Boy Bringing Pomegranates."

⁶² Kenneth Snelson (b. 1927), sculptor. "Fair Leda" (1968), a work made of stainless steel tubes and wire, is illustrated in the Nelson Rockefeller Collection catalogue against a lush background of trees.

the rage to put minimal sculptures into a park, thus destroying—or embellishing—its beautiful minimality.

F.P. about photo of Tony Smiths⁶³ in Nelson R Collection catalogue—“I think that’s the right landscape to display them in—one with clipped hedges.”⁶⁴

Art thought,
from aboard an island

August 1, 1969

I just read “Shrine Exit”⁶⁵ to Fairfield.

Me: That’s the end.

Pause

F: You seem to have put in bits of this summer and last summer.

Me: I always do.
longer pause.

⁶³ Tony Smith (1912–1980), sculptor. His monumental black abstractions recall his early training as an architect.

⁶⁴ *Twentieth-Century Art from the Nelson Rockefeller Collection*, the catalogue for an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, from May 26 through September 1, 1969. Tony Smith’s “Wandering Rocks,” 1967, a work consisting of five separate elements, was photographed for the catalogue on the grounds of the Rockefeller estate at Pocantico Hills.

⁶⁵ This unpublished poem exists in several versions and under two titles (the other is “Ducal Days”) in the James Schuyler Papers at the University of California, San Diego. Schuyler sent a version of the poem to John Ashbery, who replied in a letter dated July 24, [1969], “I love ‘Ducal Days.’ It seems to be a unique landmark in your oeuvre, and to carry with it the whiff of goodies to come—rare savors of ambergris, pitchblende, dung, verbena, licorice whips and Carr’s Water Biscuits. Its diffuseness is less anchored to an underlying organ-point than some of your diffuse works, yet it is fully operational.” However, in a letter dated June 11, 1971 to Trevor Winkfield, who had seen a version of the poem in progress and wanted to publish it in his magazine *Juillard*, Schuyler refers to “... just another stinker like ‘Shrine Exit,’ which is in a very deep drawer indeed.”

F: The connecting comes out more and more clearly when you read it—comes out more immediately.

more pause.

Me (slowly leaving): Can you tell me if you like it?

F: I can't tell yet. It disappears as it goes along.⁶⁶

Too windy today but who cares so long as the sun shines.

August 4, 1969
Great Spruce Head Island

Gray as the insides of a buckwheat pancake.

Yesterday: "It's one of those peekaboo fogs."

"I could do with a little more peek and a little less boo."

The day before I disremembers. No, it was clear until supper time, then fogged up. Thursday went early (7 a.m.) by Kittiwake to Camden, the Eliot and Stephen Porters leaving for the summer. Lizzie came too, to shop for KOKO's⁶⁷ visit and their camping out.

Full moon dead low tide, heavy fog, the bay calm. The beauty of a faintly seen rowboat at a mooring, afloat in clouded white—the patina'd silver of an old mirror, almost—without a seam between water or sky; without sky or water; bright, pale, impenetrable, soft silence. Extraordinary silence to the eye which cancels out the diesel. And a fine show of Porter seamanship, Eliot, Stephen and Trudy as lookouts, John at the helm. Eliot heard the birds off port and "surf on an island with trees" to starboard. The fathometer said 55 feet, so, a ledge there and here, Lime Island which we slowly slipped along, barely seeing it as pale-on-pale and

⁶⁶ Porter's comment is not unlike a description of his own work that he made in a letter to John Button (undated but probably 1950s): "My paintings are more 'unfinished' than ever, because I unfinish them as I paint." (N.Y.P.L., Berg Collection).

⁶⁷ Katherine Koch's childhood nickname.

cut the engine to drift over the bar, great devil's aprons⁶⁸ streaming right at the surface sharp and sudden and unexpected as though you rolled back the sod and saw all that teeming life. When we got to Camden blue appeared.

A nerve wracking run round shopping—groceries, drug store, village shop, the bookstore—Lillian Berliawsky's⁶⁹—*The Book of 100 Homes*, 1906—a Hearst book of small houses, 1915—an old Everyman of *Letters From an American Farmer*⁷⁰ (why does one always find *that*—the book you don't quite want—and not Cobbett⁷¹ or Arthur Young?)⁷² and some Norse Heroics for Liz, also Everyman. I want to get from her Constance Spry's *Garden Notebook*,⁷³ Wm. Robinson's *Alpine Flower Garden*⁷⁴ (doesn't sound

⁶⁸ "...fluent below/ me the giant seaweed called devil's-apron..." "The Morning of the Poem." Devil's apron is "a species of *Laminaria* and other olive-brown sea-weeds with a large dilated lamina." *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁶⁹ Lillian Berliawsky's bookstore, called ABCD, is still in business in Camden, Maine. Berliawsky, who was the sister-in-law of the artist Louise Nevelson, ran the store for over 30 years until she died at the age of 80 in 1992.

⁷⁰ *Letters From an American Farmer* by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a collection of essays describing rural life in America, was first published in London in 1782.

⁷¹ William Cobbett (1763-1835), English political journalist, farmer and author whose best-known book is *Rural Rides* (1830).

⁷² Arthur Young (1741-1820), English writer on agriculture and travel. His best-known work, *Travels in France* (1792), was preceded by *The Farmer's Tour through the East of England* (1771) and *A Tour in Ireland* (1780), among other books.

⁷³ Constance Spry (1886-1960), English writer on gardens and a society florist in London. According to her obituary in the *New York Times*, "She became the talk of London's Mayfair district (...) in the Nineteen Thirties when she decorated drawing rooms there with cabbage leaves and vegetable stalks." Spry was awarded the Order of the British Empire for her flower arrangements for Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953. *Constance Spry's Garden Notebook* was published in 1950. Other books are *Come Into the Garden, Cook* (1942), *Winter and Spring Flowers* (1951), *Favorite Flowers* (1959).

⁷⁴ William Robinson (1858-1935), English gardener and writer on gardens. His anti-formalist ideas influenced generations of gardeners and landscape designers, including Frederick Law Olmstead and Gertrude Jekyll. He was the author of *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens*, published by John Murray in 1870, *The Wild Garden* (1870), *The English Flower Garden* (1883) and other books.

right—more likely called *The Alpine Garden*) and maybe some Jeffrys⁷⁵ or however he spelled it.

So what've I been reading since I got here—Canon Young, *Poet and Landscape*,⁷⁶ some in his collected poems and in Tu Fu⁷⁷ and the other Chinese poems book (discouraging translation); about half of Maitland's *Historical Essays*;⁷⁸ masses and masses of the old *Countrymans*;⁷⁹ about sixty pages of *I Promessi Sposi*⁸⁰ in

⁷⁵ (John) Richard Jeffries (1848-1887), novelist and journalist whose writings “celebrated the countryside of southern England in a remarkably detailed but unsentimental way.” (*Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*). His books include, *Bevis, the Story of a Boy* (1882), *The Story of my Heart* (1883)—both autobiographical—and *Hodge and His Masters* (1880). Schuyler owned a copy of the latter when he lived with Porters in Southampton,—a source of general amusement, as Ron Padgett remembers, since the Porters' cat was named Hodge (after Samuel Johnson's cat.) *Hodge and His Masters* is mentioned in Schuyler's poem “Going.”

⁷⁶ Andrew Young (1885-1971), poet and Anglican clergyman; appointed canon of Chichester Cathedral in 1948. *The Poet in the Landscape* (1962), a favorite book of Schuyler's, is a “series of portraits of English pastoral poets as seen in their own rural settings.” “Few naturalists knew as much as he did about wild flowers and their habitats,” according to Leonard Clark's Introduction to *Andrew Young Complete Poems*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1974.

⁷⁷ Tu Fu (712-770), Chinese poet of the T'ang Dynasty. In an interview with Mark Hillringhouse Schuyler says, “I was heavily influenced by Arthur Waley's translations from the Chinese, and also the translations I read of Tu Fu in particular.”

⁷⁸ F(rederic) W(illiam) Maitland (1850-1906), English historian of the law. His *History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* is a standard authority on the subject. See the entry for July 14, 1969 where Schuyler quotes from *Historical Essays*. Maitland is also quoted in “The Fauré Ballade.”

⁷⁹ A British periodical, founded in 1927, whose articles on nature and gardening Schuyler enjoyed. The group of poems, “The Fireproof Floors of Witley Court,” first published by the Janus Press in 1976 and which Schuyler originally wrote to be set to music by Paul Bowles, are collages composed of excerpts from old issues of *The Countryman*.

⁸⁰ *I Promessi Sposi* By Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), the great Italian novel. In 1972 it was retranslated as *The Betrothed* by Bruce Penman (Penguin Books, 1972) who wrote in his Introduction, “If Dickens had written only one novel, and there had been no Fielding or Thackeray; if his novel had foreshadowed the theme of a successful national liberation movement and had had a profound, lasting and beneficial effect on the English language; then we would have a book that would stand out in our literature in the same way that *The Betrothed* does in Italy.”

Colquhoun's translation, or as much as I could stand—the dialect is insufferably literary and unlikely, however accurate; still, I may finish it—it stays in the mind when the words have evaporated; finished vol. 4 and all but finished vol. 5 of Parson Woodforde;⁸¹ and every world—I meant word but let it stand—of *Earth/House/ Hold*.⁸²

August 6, 1969
Great Spruce Head Island

The sun came out
The sun came out
The sun came out
and it stayed out pretty well, considering.

August 7, 1969

At breakfast we see a white sail slip out from behind Little Barred⁸³ into the clear clear bright morning in which one strongly modeled small cloud sits over Peak Island. Like Lermontov's⁸⁴ title, "Little Red Sail," but white and sedate in the calm.

Sometimes looking up at lunch at the open casement where Fairfield hangs his trunks, the words, "Little Blue Bathing Drawers" trot through my mind.

⁸¹ James Woodeforde (1740-1803), rural English clergyman and prolific diarist. His Diary, which was begun in 1758 and continued until his death, records the minutiae of daily life, with particular attention to food and drink.

⁸² *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (1968) is a book of essays and journals by the poet Gary Snyder (b. 1930).

⁸³ Little Barred is one of the Barred Islands, near Great Spruce Head Island in Penobscot Bay.

⁸⁴ Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841), Russian poet and novelist.

Last night, playing Dramatic Switchboard⁸⁵ after dinner, Liz's title was, "Faces in the Rain." I like that.

Later. Koko has perfected a musical laugh, and now Liz is perfecting one like it.

(Janice [Koch]'s birthday is August 10th)

August 8, 1969

Wind and thick mist, blue straight up.

Recalled:

at the kennels: "Don't ever hit him with a rolled up newspaper or every time he hears some paper he'll fringe."

in a letter: "...made a delicious meatloaf. He put some wheat germs in it."

at the beach: "Nancy pointed out Herb Roberts to me."

and deciding not to go to her uncle's lecture, Liz said, "I'll let Dad give me the ghist of it."

What a difference in a letter; or, how tiresomely self-conscious standardized spelling and all the rest of it make us.

⁸⁵ "Dramatic Switchboard" was a parlor game the Porter family sometimes played, especially in Maine. It was apparently a sort of verbal *cadavre exquis* in which each participant would write the name of a character and a line of dialogue on a sheet of paper and pass it to the next player, who was allowed to see only the line immediately preceding his own contribution. The resulting "play" might then be titled and read aloud. The process is somewhat similar to the collaborative writing that Schuyler and other poets were doing at the time.

Chilly saranwrap and aluminum foil days with beads of moisture condensing on them.

August 10, 1969 (indeed)

Got up at 4:30. It's after lunch and my eyes are closing as inevitably as a bank. Went for a walk with F. in what became a light rain, to the south meadow by the road, around the shore into the cove and then I cut into the woods where I was slightly lost for a few minutes. Amazing how quickly one's sense of direction turns out no use at all. Then we swam, briefly, in the cold water on which rain made circles. Brought back some blue blue bead, or bear's tongue (*clintonia borealis*)—a wonderful dead true blue with dull steely lights on it.⁸⁶

—the other day:

Fairfield: there aren't any gila monsters in Maine, Lizzie.

Liz: I *said* are those guillemots, Dad.

Liz and Koko are off on the long-projected camp-out. I don't envy them—it's raw today, and after the sun gave a brief bleary-eyed peer it went in again—but I wouldn't envy them anyway, not if it was the best day of the summer and this the earthly paradise.⁸⁷

Well, if it was the earthly paradise, I might feel a little differently.

⁸⁶ From a letter to Joe Brainard, August 20, 1969: "I was thrilled a while back when you told me you'd found those blue berries in the woods (not 'blueberries' the kind you eat, but the ones you picked to maybe paint.) It's one of my all-time Tops. In fact six stems of them are gracing my desk at the moment—and believe me, it could do with a little gracing. They're called 'blue bead,' and sometimes 'bear's tongue,' from the shape of the leaf. Bears must have very funny tongues."

⁸⁷ "Liz and Koko are *said* to be camping out on the other side of the island. Fairfield took them & their 300 pounds of equipment around there yesterday & set up a tent for them. But they appeared this noon, rather wan and announced they had spent all yesterday afternoon and evening trying to start a fire. All wood on the island is sopping sponge wet... Shortly I'm to go off and give a lesson in firebuilding—who knows? maybe even build a fire... It will probably be fun—especially if I can get the fire to burn." From a letter to Joe Brainard, August 11, 1969.

A heavy thunder storm night before last, the bay seen in blue flashes, the color of a freeway at night, and like a strobe light in a discotheque. I put out the light and lit a candle, inconvenient and at first I couldn't see the print, but then found I had unconsciously adjusted to it, holding the book in an unaccustomed way so that it caught the light. The girls moved in from their sleeping porch, and later Anne, hearing someone, got up and found Koko wandering around saying, "Where *am* I?"

August 14, 1969

Brian (Bryan?) Godale was just here for two days with his mother Phyllis and her boy-friend Jack.⁸⁸ He's about five. Brian: "What a big room! It's very messy isn't it." Anne: "*Very* messy." Brian, about kosher salt—"It's too sweet and too big."

We're on the edge of a storm, Trudy tells us—yesterday black clouds slid over threateningly then passed on. Now it's already happened again this morning, and only 10:30.

August 20, 1969

There is something endearing about a young spruce cone, one that is just ripening, like a baby tortoise.

Looking at the sky last night and the moon in the first fresh dark, just a few stars, bright with their cold flares, I [suddenly]⁸⁹ had a little crumpled thought, "Oh well, the moon. It's just another place like California."

[As though a sky-sailor had brought me back a souvenir, a lump of moon mud.]⁸⁹ One's imagination drags its feet as we are inexorably hauled into the future.

⁸⁸ Phyllis (Wright) Godale was the oldest child of Dr. Kenneth Wright, a neighbor of the Porters in Southampton.

⁸⁹ Brackets added to the typescript in Schuyler's hand.

August 21, 1969

It's the time of year when a red flower turns out to be a rose hep, or a leaf.

The sun is throwing rhinestones at the bay
and I, a Leopardian⁹⁰ glance. How would you
translate *fango*?⁹¹ Some days not even sunshine
helps. Or [helps but]⁹² not enough. Why not go see?
(try)
why not go try and see?

August 22, 1969

Yesterday impatiently used up the one roll of color film and today—flawless rock crystal—is when I want it. And wasted my time impatiently waiting for the light to be right so I could take the things I'd mentally reserved for color film. Not completely wasted (to know that waits on development and contacts) but better as in

⁹⁰ Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), Italian poet often cited by Schuyler as an influence and inspiration. "Imagine being the most musical poet in the most musical language! I think he achieved what he did partly by the extraordinary control he had over the language, and by rejecting a great deal of the musicality of Italian. I translated "To Sylvia" and "The Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia." (Interview with Carl Little, 1986). In the poem, "O Sleepless Night," Schuyler claims to have memorized "almost every word Leopardi ever wrote..."

⁹¹ In his conversation with Carl Little, Schuyler goes on, "Even in a close English translation, a word may have several meanings, all of which Leopardi is using. Like the end of a sonnet, 'O il mondo è fango.' Well, 'fango' is dirt, is filth, is mud. You can't translate it as mud, but if you translate it as filth, which isn't that bad, you're saying too much in a way. There isn't anything in English quite like 'fango.'" Schuyler is referring to Leopardi's "A se stesso," "To himself," a poem of 16 lines of free verse. The phrase, "e fango è il mondo," which Iris Origo translates as, "Earth's but a clod," ends the 10th line.

⁹² Brackets added in Schuyler's hand.

most things to swing with the scene and take what you see right now and avoid the somewhat stultifying effect of pre-cooked bon-mots. It left me with an aesthetic hangover—as though I were a mill to which all must be grist—no aimless unseeing walks, no lounging among rocks and juniper ... a habit of looking is OK, and so is one of—not forgetting—vegetating? not exactly—more like Bruno, who puts his muzzle on the low windowsill with a sigh and sits for a long time. “You dogs, I’ll have a frisk with you,” said Dr. Johnson.⁹³

August 22, 1969

from “Diary of a Fruit Farmer,” *The Countryman*, Summer, 1938

Mar. 30. My birthday and the only gift an “attack” by E.V.L. in “Punch” on my fondness for the mole. And why may I not admit an affection for moles? When I say I like people, my liking is purely for the individual. When I say I like moles, my liking is for the little fellows themselves. The horrid works of mole and man are quite a different matter. Even so, a molehill or two compared with the frightful upheavals and erections that man is guilty of are trifles: a single harrowing will level the mole-hilled field and the fine soil will spread fertility in the harrow’s train. Besides, just look at a mole, so beautifully made and designed. So cleverly clad in exquisite fur to repel the dust and dirt of his passage. So strong in his

⁹³ The line comes from James Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*, when Johnson’s friends Topham Beauclerk and Bennet Langton, after a late night, decide to “knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble... When [Johnson] discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great good humor agreed to their proposal: ‘What, is it you, you dogs! I’ll have a frisk with you.’ He was soon drest, and they sallied forth together into Covent Garden, where the greengrocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country.” (*Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, London: Oxford University Press, 1922).

own domain. So weak and helpless out of it. Who, knowing him, could fail to love him and forgive his quite unintentional damage to the tennis court? And such a little chap. Fancy if he were as big as a hippopotamus! The mole is on the increase because his skin is in less demand these days than that of the rabbit (pardon, modom—lapin!); how can moles be profitably trapped at twopence apiece? The truth is that the mole is the victim of an insatiable appetite; food he must have or in a few hours he will die. No hibernation for him. When the soil is warm and damp the worms he seeks are near soil level and his burrows need little excavation; a dry spell, and he has to range far and drive deeper, and then come the mole hills. Eric Kennington, who was a companion of my art school days, once showed me a picture he had painted in Belgium. It was a snow scene and the foreground was curiously patterned with black markings. I suggested that he had painted it in March when the snow had followed a warm spell. “How did you know that?” he asked. I told him by the fact that the mole hills had been made after the snow had fallen. He himself did not know that they were mole hills, so they got no credit for the pattern that he had appreciated.

—unsigned (Bunyard?)

August 23, 1969

Warm getting on for hot, calm and clear. Only in the furthest distance a faint haze shows that there is more water in the air than yesterday. The unrippled tracks on the water reflect the light so much more whitely, like a photograph from space—that’s land and that’s the Amur and its tributaries.

Early this morning the bay was like metal rubbed by hand to a silken finish. And yesterday at the cove ripples in a reflection

caused light green lines (like paint strokes—deliberate) to lie on dark green water.⁹⁴

When I type, the coffee mug, the Fresca bottle, the *Clintonia borealis*, the ashtray and the cigarette smoke do a little dance like Toto's in "L'Oro di Napoli."⁹⁵

O for a bite of the true, the Neapolitan pizza
and the red wine that fizzed like soda pop
yet tasted good...⁹⁶

Irritating and enchanting city...⁹⁷

August 26, 1969

On the water a few glass chips flicking on and off—and all the green knocked out and stones with the color soaked up out of them by heat and shine. And tomorrow we leave.

—Sunday evening (August 24) a sunset among Tiepolo⁹⁸

⁹⁴ In comparing light on water to "paint strokes," Schuyler reverses a conceit he used more than once in his art reviews, particularly when discussing abstract paintings. In one review, a Resnick is "like a liquid reflection of an even sky," (*Art News*, March, 1957); in another, a Frankenthaler is "like a river reflecting clouds and evening," (*Art News*, May, 1960.)

⁹⁵ Toto (Antonio de Curtis Gagliardi Ducas Comnuno di Bisanzio), (1898-1967), Italian actor and comedian. "L'Oro di Napoli," (1954) directed by Vittorio de Sica, is made up of a series of episodes taking place in Naples, in one of which Sophia Loren appears in one of her first important roles. Toto plays a "pazzariello," or "little lunatic," a kind of quaintly dressed town crier unique to Naples. William Weaver describes Toto's "dance" in the film as "more like a way of walking."

⁹⁶ These lines are a parody of the second stanza of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale": "O, for a beaker full of the warm South,/ Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,/ With beaded bubbles winking at the brim," (etc.)

⁹⁷ Schuyler used to visit Naples in 1948 and 1949, when he was living in W.H. Auden's house on the nearby island of Ischia.

⁹⁸ Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), Venetian painter; like Schuyler, a poet of skies. Schuyler would have seen many of his luminous ceiling frescoes in Venice in 1954.

clouds, blue and silver-white just brushed by gilt. In the southeast the last of a breaking up gray violet mackerel sky caught a rosy orange-violet on its edges with extraordinary chiaroscuro print effect.⁹⁹

We gather
together
our books
and our bags
and go not
forgetting
my camera
and typewriter
my this
and my that

[undated]

Malcolm Elwin: *Victorian Wallflowers*:¹⁰⁰

“... the grizzled opium-eater...” (de Quincy¹⁰¹ in his old age)
Ainsworth:¹⁰² “Like Dickens, he had the vaguest notion of a

⁹⁹ The chiaroscuro print is a term used to describe woodcuts of the 16th and 17th century printed in two or more colors, in which strong contrasts between colors and less than perfect registration often give a glow to the edges of forms. Writing about chiaroscuro woodcuts in *Art News* (Summer, 1956) Schuyler says, “...the glimpse they give of a landscape striped by the shadows of Michelangelo and Raphael, does not obscure their own esthetic merit. They are like old books of letters and recollections: if the information they give us is curious and worth having, it is all the same their pungent, plain-speaking style that brings them to us.”

¹⁰⁰ Malcolm Elwin (1903-1973), literary historian. *Victorian Wallflowers* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934) is a collection of essays on forgotten Victorian writers. This reference is from the chapter, “Christopher North.”

¹⁰¹ Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859), author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, (1821).

¹⁰² William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882), prolific English novelist profiled by Malcolm Elwin in *Victorian Wallflowers*.

plot; he strung together incident after incident and imported fresh personalities as his story progressed, till, at the end, he was sometimes concerned with a set of characters scarcely connected with those figuring in the beginning.”

[undated]

Beat the eggwhites —
not the bowl

waft / Carthage

Calais, September 2, 1969¹⁰³

Old postcard¹⁰⁴

The weather is so hot we can hardly live. How is it there?
Two weeks of school are gone & I not realized it. I hope
your mama & all the folks are well. I have not been to
Boston yet to get your pen. Will go when it's cooler. Love to
all from May

Sept. 24 1909

(to: Miss Matie Chamberlain/ Outlook Farm/ Canaan
Vermont)

Even her friends call her marzipan turd.

¹⁰³ Schuyler was visiting Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard at Elmslie's summer home in Calais, Vermont.

¹⁰⁴ Schuyler, Elmslie, Brainard and others of their friends shared a love for old postcards. Elmslie, in particular, became a serious postcard collector and his musical, "Postcards on Parade" (1993; music by Steven Taylor) is set among gatherings of postcard collectors.

September 5, 1969

Out in the sun in a deck chair on the grass. So is Joe. We are both writing. Joe writes outdoors all the time—he is the color of a mahogany newel post—but I won't be out here for long. This anti-glare paper helps though. To make it more bearable. But the flies don't. As Kenward said, at the approach of frost all nature seems to be trying frantically to make out. When I was taking a photograph yesterday a couple of flies tried to do it in my ear. I proved inhospitable.

Flowers today are more glare and other sorts of shadows.

Nature needs (likes) a lawn in it.

A gray shed with three windows and on the other side three more windows and through all six windows I can see the walled vegetable garden. "The walled garden!" Coziness & privacy, hot stillness and edible leafy smells.

[undated]

Come on the leaves, like cloudy white honey with thin blue places where it stretched and tore.

[undated]

It's your unnegative I like so much—& putting it that way is as positive as I seem to get —.

Calais
September 6, 1969

Some sunny days, it's great to try
to see the world
through Frank O'Hara's eyes

20/20
All the way

[undated]

cruel park

[undated]

NOVA PILBEAM¹⁰⁵

flaxolinda

September 8, 1969

Did you know that...

the people of Hunza live to a ripe and slender age largely on a
diet of apricots?

that the famous English poet Robert Southey wrote "Goldi-
locks and the Three Bears"?

¹⁰⁵ Nova Pilbeam (b. Margery Pilbeam 1919), English actress. "The ethereal Nova Pilbeam," as John Ashbery called her in a letter to Schuyler, June 22, 1956, appeared in many British films in the 1930s and early 1940s, including Hitchcock's "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1934). A letter from Ashbery to Schuyler dated July 1, 1970 is signed "Nova Pilbeam."

[undated]

the time of day when the only light on in a house is in a kitchen.

[undated]

the time of year when a woman reaches out a window to help a man on a ladder hang a storm window.

[undated]

am I
where was I?
up above Greenwich Avenue
looking down Jane Street
into the sunset
out of which walks
Joe Brainard

[undated]

Joe's art parable—painting each brick when he could have painted the drop red & put in the mortar.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ "I remember a back-drop of a brick wall I painted for a play. I painted each red brick in by hand. Afterwards it occurred to me that I could have just painted the whole thing red and put in the white lines." Joe Brainard, *I Remember*, Penguin Books, 1995 (originally published by Angel Hair Books, 1970). Schuyler had read the manuscript of Joe Brainard's masterpiece and wrote him on October 7, 1969, "I think about 'I Remember' all the time ... It's a great work that will last & last—in other words, it is literature."

[undated]

Be a flower, a bathtub
smog, blanks of morning light

September 15, 1969
Calais Vermont

Hot wind, clear but becoming sullen. Joe left a week ago and the sunbathing weather went with him.

Yesterday with Kenward to Tunbridge fair—"The 97th Annual Tunbridge World's Fair" small and squalid. Mighty undecorative country people—many of them grotesque in fact, but good natured.¹⁰⁷ A business-like boy patiently making spun maple candy, and beautiful apples exhibited by no. 7—a Transparent of an exquisite white, a faint green to it, like patty-pan squash, and an evanescent coral glow. But white. And the elongated strawberry apple. I bought 18 wooden blocks for 80 cents—

Stopped at South Tunbridge at an antique shop, kept by a nice old man: "I'm a gabber." In the attic a 1st World War army cot looking strong and useful. "Slept on one of those myself down in the pigpen in Dallas Texas. Slept pretty comfortable too. It was the smell I couldn't stand." He has cataracts and is going to have one taken off at the Veterans' Hospital next week. A beautiful old house, 200 acres, now for sale. In the little garden a big slab of suet [for the birds]¹⁰⁸ (2 sorts of woodpecker came while I was there) elegant white cosmos, brown pansies, and dark red ones, two tomato

¹⁰⁷ "Now and Then," which Schuyler also wrote while staying with Kenward Elmslie in Vermont, describes "one man with one fierce eye and where the other should be/ an ill-knit cicatrix/ men who don't make much aren't much/ for spending what they do/ on glass eyes, tooth-straightening devices ('a mouth/ like the back of a switchboard'), nose jobs, dewatering operations/ a country look prevails..."

¹⁰⁸ Brackets added in Schuyler's hand.

plants roughly but effectively tied up, and pepper plant with big green peppers among the leaves. And at a corner a cucumber vine growing up a net. “I’m going to ask you to write out the salesslip, figure out the tax and add it up.” We each did. Nice to be trusted. At the end of the shed six foot delphinium gone to seed, blue, he said. I asked if I might take some seed (but only after I started to help myself). “Sure. Take all you want. I’ve got a bag here someplace...” He owned the second tractor in Tunbridge. “When was that?” “Oh, let’s see. That was back just before the 2nd World War. 1940.” Universal Handy Dating Device.

The other day in a store at Cabot—“You want an old fashioned hayin’ het. I hev’n’t got an old fashioned hayin’ het.”

And Ralph Weeks: “Old Harold¹⁰⁹ says, ‘You know what she’s buddying you up for don’t you?’” His wife Elsie:¹¹⁰ “I guess you’re sorry you have to leave.” Nice for openers. And, “I’ve lived all my life down on the highway. I couldn’t stand it up here.” “I meant to bring Ken a jar of my choke cherry jelly. But I forgot it.” She makes rhubarb jelly, too. I said, “That’s something it would be nice for Kenward to have up here, a rhubarb patch.” “I haven’t got a rhubarb patch,” she was a bit fussed, “friends give it to me.”

The other day to Newport¹¹¹—sudden strange translation near the border to a Canadian ugliness and thin light.

¹⁰⁹ Ralph Weeks was Kenward Elmslie’s part-time caretaker, and Harold Clough was his assistant and partner. Together they built an addition to Elmslie’s house for Joe Brainard’s studio.

¹¹⁰ Elsie Weeks, Ralph Weeks’s wife, opened Elmslie’s house for him in the spring and did occasional cleaning.

¹¹¹ Newport, Vermont, very near the Canadian border. Having grown up in and near Buffalo, New York, whose famously harsh weather comes down across Lake Erie from Canada, Schuyler was fascinated by the idea of a different kind of air and atmosphere existing across the Canadian border. A 1945 postcard to Chester Kallman written from Montreal speaks of “That light in the North isn’t Aurora Borealis, it’s Montreal...” and in the poem, “Light from Canada,” “our light is scoured and Nova/Scotian...” In a letter dated September 12, 1988, Schuyler writes Anne Dunn, then in New Brunswick, “Many thanks for the wonderful weather, day after day of it, and all stamped, MADE IN CANADA.”

Friday morning, October 10, 1969

A light first frost last night and at 7 the grass was crystallized crunch. The sun came up slowly, mist revolved on the pond and the light hit the western slope and lit up the rhapsodic and enflamed trees. “October’s bright blue weather”¹¹² day after day of it—incredible.

November 15, 1969

The first day of winter, or if you want to get technical [about it],¹¹³ the first wintry day. On Jane Street the leaves on a skinny sycamore it won’t let drop shiver under a mollusc sky. Maxi coats come into their own and under them feet dart in and out—but more the size of rats than mice.^{113A} Close the dark blue curtains (“chance of a snow flurry or two”), hoard heat, hear a tired rhumba wind up the stairwell with the lank persistence of a kudzu vine, drink Schweppes Bitter orange and wish you hadn’t, feel kind of good, and write to Lewis Warsh, a Birthday Twin.

Last night on Seventh Avenue, a car with megaphones—“Pray tomorrow. Pray for our Hippies. Pray that our Hippies will return to us, to our great society. Pray for our great President...” Outside the Village Voice at Sheridan Square, a dozen or so uniformed cops standing around and as I passed on the other side of the Avenue all bent down and each picked up a shiny black bag, then moved together to the curb and stood there waiting. What for? Intent of purpose.

¹¹² Title of (and line from) a poem by Helen Hunt Jackson (1831-1885). Schuyler borrowed the line again in his poem “October 5, 1981”: “It’s/ October, my favorite month, and where/ is ‘October’s bright blue weather?’”

¹¹³ Brackets added in Schuyler’s hand.

^{113A} Alluding to the English Cavalier poet Sir John Suckling’s lines: “Her feet beneath her petticoat/ Like little mice stole in and out” (“A Ballad Upon a Wedding”).

November 20, 1969
Greenwich Avenue¹¹⁴

Artificial peaches of a late November afternoon and a towering dark wall with one small lighted window like an oblong moon.

Late afternoon, early evening, and the sunset roars into place: silently as an electric engine gliding into the Central Station, a dark glass cave —

[undated]¹¹⁵

A little visit to the grave of Elbert Hubbard¹¹⁶

Rebecca Hawley's mother:

was awakened by her husband masturbating so she divorced him. On what charge, or plea or whatever, I wonder. She went on to happiness as a housemother at Smith.

When told that Jackie-who's mother had died in her sleep after eating a Sunday dinner of spaghetti she said, "I've always said it: never take a nap after a heavy meal, go for a walk instead."

¹¹⁴ Kenward Elmslie's New York City home, where Schuyler often stayed when he came into the city.

¹¹⁵ This undated entry seems to have been written during a visit to East Aurora. Since it was found among entries for 1969, and since Schuyler visited his mother in East Aurora for Thanksgiving, 1969 (which fell on November 27) it has been put here.

¹¹⁶ Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915), American philosophical writer who in 1893 founded a community of craftsmen, the Roycrofters, in East Aurora, New York, the town where Schuyler grew up. The Roycroft Workshops continued making what is known as Mission furniture, metalwork and leatherwork until 1938. Although Schuyler felt Hubbard's ideas were "A lot of bullshit, ... there was a certain romance in my life from living in a place associated with him, and where there still were these very handsome buildings which he had caused to be built." (From Peter Schjeldahl's 1977 interview with Schuyler, unpublished).

November 29, 1969

Amherst¹¹⁷

Morning. There's half a moon a quarter ways up the clear faded sky. In the shadows the fallen leaves are pale with frost and those in the light look toasted. Inside the woods, behind the wild white scratches of the bare branches, there is a dark warm green of a single pine; a homely, inviting glow.

December 13, 1969

Lizzie and Peggy Grosse¹¹⁸ are downstairs making Christmas decorations, the Beatles are singing "I'd like to be/ under the sea..." and at just about noon the sun makes the tree trunks stand out through a light haze of branches. Some wind, just above freezing, the yard is puffy and disheveled.

December 27, 1969

Before light

Hateful Christmas—"Season of greed and sullen cheerlessness"¹¹⁹—Or rather, hateful feelings that come at Christmas—another matter.

¹¹⁷ Fairfield Porter accepted a teaching position at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts for the academic year of 1969-1970, taking his family and Schuyler with him. During this time Ron and Pat Padgett lived in the Porters' house in Southampton.

¹¹⁸ Peggy Grosse was a next door neighbor of the Porters in Amherst and a close friend and schoolmate of Lizzie Porter's during that year.

¹¹⁹ A parody of the first line of Keats's ode "To Autumn": "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness..." See the entry for July 30, 1985.

Came back¹²⁰ from New York on the 24th, left at 11—the 4 1/2 hour trip took 6 hours, partly my fault for not making the 10 A.M. express. After Springfield, glittering evidence of an ice storm, the birches in the woods bent right to the ground. The man sitting next to me—good-natured & a bit simple perhaps—thrust a copy of “Saga” magazine on me, insisting a talk-tough article by Al Capp¹²¹ about campus unrest was “real good.” I read about how someone fell in a pit instead.

Yesterday it snowed, hard & heavy. Now it’s raining and sleet-ing—through the kitchen door I can see water running down the icicles on the edge of the porch roof.

My nephew John [Ridenour], after I gave him a watch, wrote me: “I feel real proud & treasure it highly.”

When John left Kenward’s the other night, drunk & stoned, I said “Let me get you your wraps—and perhaps give you a few as well.” Seemed pretty funny at the time.

December, 1969

“—swept the placenta aside, reached in and pulled you out.”

church of the Holy Innocents
Shoppers Mass
Sat at 4

The apples are getting more and more like Tiresias’ dugs.¹²²

¹²⁰ To Amherst.

¹²¹ Al Capp (born Alfred Gerald Caplin; 1909-1979), cartoon strip artist. He developed the “L’il Abner” comic strip in 1934 which ran until 1977.

¹²² The allusion here is to *The Waste Land*: “I, Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs...” Tiresias is the old, blind soothsayer who foretells Oedipus’s fate in Sophocles’s “Oedipus” plays.

January 31, 1970

Sunny and clear, pale and empty as a photograph, a pause in the winter.¹²³

March 21, 1970

Not, can I believe the evidence of my senses? but can I believe that of my unconscious? or even understand it.

Easter [March 29], 1970

Snow and bad temper.

May, 1970

Overheard walking west on 12th Street, one woman to another—
“He made me laugh so hard I nearly drowned.”

ask about Proust¹²⁴

Cotton *Winter*¹²⁵

¹²³ “Sunny and clear, pale and empty as a photograph” was another one of the lines used by Schuyler and Dash in *Garden*.

¹²⁴ Marcel Proust (1871-1922), French novelist. His great work, *Remembrance of Things Past*, grows out of the narrator’s chance or “involuntary” memories. Schuyler first read the novel in the mid-50s, judging from references to it in his correspondence from that time with Fairfield Porter, John Ashbery and others.

¹²⁵ Charles Cotton (1630-1687), English poet. His long poem, “Winter,” was praised by Wordsworth as “an admirable composition” and “a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy.” Cotton was also the author of the Second Part of his friend Izaak Walton’s *The Compleat Angler*.

Walton *Lives*¹²⁶
Compleat Angler

D. Wordsworth Journals¹²⁷
2 vols

[*word illegible*]

May 3, 1970
Amherst, Mass.

5:15 in the morning and all the crows begin at once, like trucks stalled in traffic, punctuated by the high irascible “beep” of something smaller.

Yesterday, at the corner of Woodside and Walnut, the cherry, higher than a house, which has been in full naked bloom, had begun to go over, the soft spoiled brown among the flowers compensated for by its luminous pink shadow of sifted petals, and the pleasure of seeing them singly and steadily fall.

May 13, 1970

Ron to Wayne:¹²⁸ “See this word? L-O-inn D-O-inn...”

¹²⁶ Izaak Walton (1593-1683), English writer. His discursive meditation on fishing, *The Compleat Angler, or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation*, was first published in 1653. Walton also wrote concise biographies of John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Hooker, Sir Henry Wotton and Bishop Sanderson which were later collected as *Walton's Lives*.

¹²⁷ Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855), journal writer, and the sister of William Wordsworth. Her Journals were written to be shared with her brother, with whom she lived, and were not published until well after her death.

¹²⁸ Wayne Padgett. Schuyler was visiting the Padgetts who were living in the Porters' Southampton house.

May 18, 1970

Wayne making up a Pogo comic: "I can't play with you you bum
I've got a boo-boo."

Later.

Patty: Why don't you go play in the sandbox.

Wayne: I can't.

I did.

I will not.

(When I was on a different visit—in February?)

Wayne drawing: "It's a ghost and he walked and walked and
nobody answered."

May 30, 1970

Amherst

The green morocco binding of the spring, emblazoned with blind
stamping.

June, 1970

Calais, Vermont

My brother¹²⁹ when five: Me no know me no care
Tonto lost his underwear
and I'm a poet
And I know it—

¹²⁹ Fredric Ridenour. There was a ten year difference in age between Schuyler and his half-brother.

June 10, 1970

A week ago today I gave up cigarette inhaling for cigar sucking.
(at the Cigar Smokers Congress I arise & commence, “Fellow
Cocksuckers...”)

June 10, 1970

Calais

In May the day before I left Amherst I cut a bunch of just opening lilac & two weeks later when I was leaving Southampton I cut another first bunch and when I got back to Amherst (from NYC) on May 28th the lilacs were over. But riding up here they turned from brown scratchiness to a few spoiled trusses whose brownness vanished as the road wound up until here in early June they were at their height—a Persian word so native to New England.¹³⁰

June 10, 1970

Birds

in a cage of
silence mounted on the
rollers of a waterfall

say or sing their one
or two words they've

¹³⁰ The Persian origin of the word “lilac” was noted by Schuyler in several poems. “A Gray Thought” (part of “A Vermont Diary” in *The Crystal Lithium*) mentions “Brassy tarnished leaves of lilacs/ holding on half-heartedly and long/ after most turned and fell to make/ a scatter rug, warmly, brightly brown./ Odd, that the tattered heart-shapes/ on a Persian shrub should stay...”; and “Hymn to Life”: “... the tender lilac. Persia, we/ Have much to thank you for, besides the word lapis lazuli.”

learned “MOM” and

“CAT” and oh my
oh my oh
my

July 3, 1970

A cold night, rain in the morning changing to warm rain and now fog moving in like blindness.

August 12, 1970

Before dawn, the lights begin to come up, as though the world were being tuned.

Before dawn, distinguishable as when someone’s snoring catches and stops in a dead not unalarming silence, then resumes as a yawn which in another inhalation is again a snore—a seal snout poked briefly through the gleamingly opaque surface of sleep—there is a light which casts not shadow, hardly a light at all, more a brighter darkness —

—and soon —

a raw misty morning in which the color of before dawn persists and the wind shakes each thing so you see not woods or clumps but how each thing is single and must face up alone to this unrelentingness: “face up”? to stand in the wind and be shaken.

August 12, 1970

To wake up from an afternoon nap and find that the harsh tumult of clouds ripped apart over wind grooved water has become this subtlety, as though out of the biggest box of colored chalks someone has chosen to make greys, the clearest greens, blue-greens, violets, lightly foamed and striped with a pale pearly peach over water that holds a thin ochre strip of bar—stone and gravel—and is itself a bright but dulling metal, a new shade of steel. The south woods open their blackened green to show a softness of birch at the heart and the weathered bones of dead spruce.

August 12, 1970

Fairfield, eating breakfast in his running shorts: “I feel like a remark of Whitehead’s,¹³¹ that a man who has just exercised and had a shower *can’t* have a bad conscience.”

August 13, 1970

Great Spruce Head Island

One of those low-overhead days.

—and the sumacs kindle their flames.

¹³¹ Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), British philosopher and mathematician. At different times, both Fairfield and Anne Porter studied philosophy with him at Harvard. Douglas Crase, in his essay, “James Schuyler: The Poetry of Just Rightness,” makes the point that Whitehead’s belief that an artist’s understanding is of specific things rather than generalities was an abiding influence on Porter, and thus indirectly on Schuyler.

August 15, 1970

John A. at the Island in August: "I don't believe in cause and effect."

F: "But you're taken with coincidences."

John: "Coincidences never cease to fill me with amazement."

5:30 and the creeping forefront of the fog wipes out the further view and a gull goes by above it brightly modeled by the afternoon sun.

August 17, 1970

The rain falls in rods, pinning everything in place.

August 17, 1970

"...Polly she was a kind o' cousin o' my mother's, and allers glad to see me. Fact was, I was putty handy round house; and she used to save up her broken things and sich till I come round in the fall; and then I'd mend 'em up, and put the clock right, and split her up a lot o' kindlings, and board up the cellar-windows, and kind o' make her sort o' comfortable,—she bein' a lone body, and no man round."

Stowe:¹³² *Sam Lawson's Oldtown Fireside Stories*, pg 29–30

From my sheep thus drawing into shelter, gave rise to an opinion I formed, and which has been confirmed by long

¹³² Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), American novelist, best known, of course, for her first novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851). Stowe's later books drew on childhood memories and New England local color. *Sam Lawson's Oldtown Fireside Stories* was published by Houghton Mifflin and Company in 1881.

reflection, that much may yet be done to protect the larger flocks from being overblown and lost on the bleak moors, in great snow-storms. Were long avenues made by double rows of whin hedges, planted parallel to each other at about six feet asunder, and continued in the form of two sides of a square, with the whins of each side drawn together, and to grow interplatted at the tops, so as to form an arched kind of roof, the sheep would, on instinctively (sic) seeing the coming storm, immediately avail themselves of such asylums, and particularly in the lambing season. In the corner of the angle of this square, the shepherd might have his hovel, thatched with heather and ling, and his beds for himself and his dogs, made of the same materials; and the whole of this "bield" might be rendered so snug as greatly to defy the severity of the winter's drifting blasts and wreaths of snow.

*Memoir of Thomas Bewick,*¹³³ pg 11

August 18, 1970

It's a brisk & breezy morning, clear but pale and in the sky there are some bits and pieces of cloud which seem to have bounced up there from the bay, supernumerary waves.

August 19, 1970

It seems as though each day tries to find new ways of being bluer than the last. Over the south woods there is a hand's length of cloud, a stretched out plumpness tarnished with shadow, whose reflection in the harbor breaks up into elongated paths (at right

¹³³ Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), English engraver, credited with reviving the technique of wood engraving. "His *Memoir* contains absorbing descriptions of his Northumberland childhood..." (*Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*).

angle to the line of cloud) faintly gilded. And nearby the water keeps smoothing out its near perfection. And in the sun everything smells like fresh ironing.

August 20, 1970

Deliciously overcast, the kind of day in August that makes you think of a day in autumn which is like a day in winter, everything simplified by all that is gathering in the north, fierce and lethal.

August 21, 1970

A few sound[s] are embedded in the fog—a gull mewling, different far off fog horns—like unset polished stones laid out in cotton wool.

Summer 1970

(letter to Joe B)¹³⁴

Your first letter sounded rather nervy and depressed which in a way was nice, since I felt the same way too. Cigs, I guess. No doubt the unconscious doesn't distinguish about who it is that's depriving it—and resent[s] it possibly more from oneself than from a stranger. But your second letter sounds more you, which is even better. I like your drawing of the Mahatma's worldly

¹³⁴ This fragment, apparently torn from a larger page and lacking salutation or closing, was among Schuyler's *Diary* pages. It was not part of any of the letters from Schuyler that Joe Brainard saved.

possessions:¹³⁵ I suppose if he had been born in a colder climate he would have owned more things. I don't think getting rid of things (I mean for myself) means much one way or another—feeling better by not having them is like feeling morally better after a hot bath: it is only a feeling. It always slightly bugs me, for instance, when kids make a big thing out of not owning a car so they travel by hitching rides or fly in airplanes, so they own their means of travel, but socially rather than individually.¹³⁶

August 23, 1970

Rain runs down the window and the view shivers.

August 25, 1970

The wind is making a noise like a tennis racquet, the water is roughly rippled and the waves—if that isn't too big a word for them—stay in one place, just flashing their fingers at you. Now the wind means business and sounds determined. It takes the window in its mouth and gives it a good hard shake. To which the birch scrub responds by bending way over, once, from the ankles.

Boats and houses made out of wood
Invention of the kitchen match
And a butterfly bounding madly

¹³⁵ Presumably a drawing based on the photograph that appears on the second page of Brainard's *Bolinas Journal*, Big Sky Books, 1971. The photograph is captioned "Gandhi's worldly possessions at the time of his death" and shows two pairs of sandals, glasses, a book, a spittoon, a nailfile, a watch, a bowl, a spoon. Brainard, who several times in his life gave away all of his possessions, has written underneath it, "*PACKING INSPIRATION (AND LIVING INSPIRATION).*"

¹³⁶ Schuyler himself did not drive.

August 26, 1970

On the surface of the bay the sun counts change, quick and expert, and with dignified stealth the water pockets its tribute.

August 29, 1970

Early afternoon and already so many changes in the day. Early there was a glare haze that subdued sky and water to a photographic silver and smeared the islands flatly. Which grew pale and bright, with soft yellow and softer pink rubbed into it; or rather, refracted in it. At noon at the cove looking up from the water on which were sinuous curves of pollen and wrack the deep blue sustained one pocket size cloud, a shred of perfect whiteness. At lunch it turned into a hot still day, with all the shadows dried and sucked up under the leaves. Then across the screened blue at the west end of the porch there slid a flat bottomed cloud gray with travel. I went out to bring things in and all the rain there was fell on me it seemed: about five drops.

Now it is a day invisible in its ordinariness: everything waits: the boats, passive as cattle, for the tide to finish running out; the Queen Anne's lace tips at patient angles for its pollinators; a small white butterfly goes by in wild erratic step trying to dance Giselle; and the stones wait for the glacier, or are resting up from the last visit, which was not so long ago. There are the scratches.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Compare this entry to "Gulls": "Queen Anne's Lace/ tip platters at perilous angles//...Rocks/ go back to sleep..."

The question of William Wordsworth

Mary Moorman—*William Wordsworth*, vol I¹³⁸

His spirit had not been crushed but strengthened by the intensity of the emotion it had undergone, and when many years afterwards he returned to the spot under contrasting circumstances in company with Mary Hutchinson, in the days of their early love, the contrast only made the memory of his trance more precious, and each experience enhanced the other. pg 12-13

What sort of girl was Annette Vallon that she could arouse such a storm of passion in William Wordsworth? pg 179

Again, did Wordsworth attend the dinner at White's Hotel on November 18th, which the English Jacobins held to celebrate the victories of the Republican armies? pg 206

That Wordsworth could be taken for a possible murderer is probably an indication that by this time, after perhaps a fortnight of wandering across country, in all weathers and with little money, he looked more like a common tramp than a gentleman on holiday. pg 238

And from what was he flying but from the torment of his own thoughts and memories? Such a mood of restless craving is surely no uncommon one with all those who have ever loved the world of Nature and suffered in the world of man. pg 233

¹³⁸ *William Wordsworth: A Biography* by Mary Moorman. London: Oxford University Press, 1957, reprinted 1965.

August 30, 1970

A scrim of cloud bisects the sky on a diagonal into a nautical flag and under the white hangs one curled up tinted cloud like a shelled shrimp, a “deveined” one, of course. We can’t have shrimp shit in the sky.

I can hear people looking at F.’s new pictures on the porch:

—“Oh! that’s *very* characteristic!” And last week at Nancy Straus’s someone said, “The Riveras?”¹³⁹ Oh the early ones, they were *strong*.”¹⁴⁰

September 1, 1970

A wonderful freshness, the air billowing like sheets on a line, and the light with a clarity that opens up the huddled masses of the spruce and you can see their bristling individuality.

¹³⁹ Diego Rivera (1886–1957), Mexican painter and muralist. Rivera was a Communist and is best known for his murals with explicit political content, which were an important influence on American painting in the 1930s and 40s. Fairfield Porter, who was involved in Socialist politics in the 30s and painted a (lost) political mural, preferred Orozco to Rivera, calling the latter “confused and negative” in his 1935 article, “Murals for Workers”.

¹⁴⁰ The adjective “strong” is ubiquitous in contemporary art writing, but its banality was apparently fresh to Schuyler in 1970. “Strong” does not appear in Thomas Hess’s editorial, “Art-words Chronolexicon” in the October 1958 *Art News*, for example, where “key” art-writing shibboleths are listed by decade (ending with the 1940s). Schuyler’s own art writing, which has been collected and edited by Simon Pettet for a forthcoming book, is essentially free of jargon and cliché.

The art historian Dave Hickey writes, “Insofar as I have been able to determine, the word ‘strength’ as it is used in contemporary criticism is a straightforward euphemism for the medieval concept of ‘virtue,’ a gender-sensitive term of approbation denoting virility and power in men and chastity and composure in women.” (From “Prom Night in Flatland,” published in *The Invisible Dragon*. Los Angeles: Art issues. Press, 1995).

September 3, 1970

Still a week to go and we already have had our first travel fight—not about travel, from travel nerves. And that at breakfast, which gave my eggs a further scramble. Like all travel fights, it was largely a piece of murk. Suffice it to say it began with a mere mention of mackerel guts, went on to frozen swordfish steak—powie!

After windy days, a morning basking calmly in the sun. The mailboat is at the dock, I can hear Trudy enunciate “Fairfield,” an outboard motorboat comes from Bear Island with a steady buzz and containing two dark lumps propelled by a thread of wake. The boat and its wake are the reverse of trawling with a spinner.

September 4, 1970

Rain in the night, after dawn the gusts of a gale that made up in bad temper for what it lacked in briskness, now, a thick still fog, raw yet warm, dripping clammily. Nice to burn trash in, the tall unguttering flames above the incinerator drum drive back the wolf-pack of the fog.

Katie and Ruth Morales¹⁴¹ got here on the mailboat. Katie with a bad back and Ruth, after the sixteen hour trip, crying “Never again!” and, “Don’t talk about it! I’m trying to forget.”

September 6, 1970

Louring clouds, and a light and livid green above Isle au Haut, which is an implacable blue, sharp and irregular as the much honed blade of an old knife. And through two rents, one smiling,

¹⁴¹ Ruth Morales was a classmate and friend of Katie Porter’s at Manhattanville College.

the other densely dark, glows the freezing and eternal summer of space.

Labor Day
September 7, 1970

Sheltered from the north wind, we see it only in the motion of the water which comes round the island in waves that run from east to west and break in a small steady surf on the tidal rocks. If one were arriving here today the touch of cold in air and sky would be a promise of the coming fall, its light that changes from unblinking gold to a thin and angry gray, lashed with black, in which leaves are drawn out outside into a steady quivering horizontal until, torn free, they spin off.

Now and then the sun comes out in light washes, like the edge of a rising tide.

September 18, 1970

Read until the branches were webbed with dawn; now at the end of the afternoon we and they stand or slowly reel in saturations of humidity—the unbonus of seaside Long Island living. Everything thinly coated with pain, the milder sort of head and joint ache.

September 19, 1970

Whatever one thinks of this or of that, it's hard not to like church bells, mixed in with early cars—not too near—and the busy jabber of birds. At 6:30, the front door was partly open and through it, the

sensitive and bold spatulas of horse chestnut leaves, dark against the walk, wet from last night's rain and pink with morning. As though looking down from the little height of the porch there was sky.

Yesterday ran into Larry Rivers on Main Street. He said about Fairfield having gone to Knoedler¹⁴² that he likes it when someone goes gradually up instead of gradually down. "Fairfield was right all along—about his life-style, about art: people think *I'm* obstinate. Compared to him I'm a rubber wall." (Wall, not ball.) And something I can't quite remember how he put, about how people (artists) who take a particular stand—take up a program—become publicists of someone else's idea.

Very dramatic on the "gradually UP" and the "gradually DOWN," like an elevator starter.¹⁴³

September 20, 1970

Here comes Pam¹⁴⁴ leading Duke the horse on which sits Lizzie, dignified with fright.

September light, loveliest and most loveable of all. Edges and outlines everywhere get a gilding, a glass with gold in it, rehearsal

¹⁴² Since 1952, Porter had shown with the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, where his work had been recommended to the director, John Bernard Myers, by Jane Freilicher and Larry Rivers, and, independently, by Willem de Kooning. After Porter's April 1970 show, de Nagy and Myers parted ways and Porter, unable to choose between them (as John T. Spike reports) went to Knoedler & Company, one of the oldest and largest galleries for American art. The director there was Schuyler's friend Donald Droll. But internal problems at Knoedler led to numerous delays and Porter left that gallery to join Hirschl & Adler Galleries in 1972, never having shown at Knoedler.

¹⁴³ This sentence was added to the typescript in Schuyler's hand, with an arrow pointing up after the word "UP" and another, pointing down, after the word "DOWN".

¹⁴⁴ Pam Diefenbach, the youngest daughter of the doctor who lived next door to the Porters in Southampton. The Diefenbachs kept horses, a pony and a pig.

for the ripeness in October. The top of the privet hedge, grown shaggy since its last brutalizing trim (Mr. Antoletti, always my torture),¹⁴⁵ has along its top a stiffened fringe of leaves a yellow they will never, in nature, be.

[*newspaper clipping:*]¹⁴⁶

SUCCEED

Reginald L. Cook, Middlebury, Vt., has identified the passage by Thoreau queried by E.P.R. on Aug. 9. In an entry in his "Journal," March 21, 1853, Thoreau wrote as follows:

"Whatever your sex or position, life is a battle in which you are to show your pluck, and woe be to the coward. Whether passed on a bed of sickness or a tented field, it is ever the same fair play and admits no foolish distinction. Despair and postponement are cowardice and defeat. Men were born to succeed [sic], not to fail."

Charlotte Cooper, Suffern, N.Y., and Jeffrey H. Michel, Hanover, N.H., also identified these lines.

September 22, 1970

Each leaf on the great sycamore or is it plane tree? no one knows—thousands and thousands and each a trembling shadow against the light they flicker—an unwritten work for orchestra, humming, whispering, darting: but only as water rushing in a stream seems

¹⁴⁵ Mr. Antoletti was a yard man employed by the Porters; the "torture" for Schuyler was probably the noise of his hedge clippers. As John Ashbery has noticed, Schuyler's remark echoes Ronald Firbank's famous quip on running into Aldous Huxley, "Aldous—always my *torture*."

¹⁴⁶ Schuyler taped the clipping onto his typescript, as he sometimes also used to tape them to his letters.

constant. All that movement, to make a shimmer. A day fresh and without a cloud, and yet in it somehow the first faint elusive haze of fall.

Wednesday, September 23 (?) 1970

An afternoon spent cutting down the thick branches and trunks of Mme Alfred Carrière¹⁴⁷—so the house can be painted.

October 2, 1970

The mowers were here today and over the grass are sprinkled chopped up brown leaves. On the trees though they have not begun to turn, and are only a little sere, the horse chestnuts especially.

(Wayne: “Go back to Hampherst!”)¹⁴⁸

October 3, 1970

The light passes through a west window, brightening the pewter of its murk, and falls on the wallpaper which is reflected back on the glass, a sharp yet wavy (as glass is) square of California wild

¹⁴⁷ A variety of rose, most likely planted by Schuyler, in the yard of the Southampton house: “Mme. Alfred Carrière, white, with a faintest/ blush of pink, and which will bloom even on a/ north wall. I used to shave and gaze down into her...” (“Horse-Chestnut Trees and Roses”). Other references to beautifully named roses occur in “A Name Day,” and throughout Schuyler’s work. But, “After learning all their names—Rose/ de Rescht, Cornelia, Pax—it is important to forget them.” (“Hymn to Life.”)

¹⁴⁸ Wayne Padgett was then going on four. In October 1970 the Padgetts were visiting the Porters (and Schuyler) in Southampton, in the house where they had lived the previous year.

flowers¹⁴⁹ against shadowy greens of a late afternoon, an early evening in October.

Tomorrow my mother¹⁵⁰ will be 79, and now I'll go call her up.

October 4, 1970

Clouds shaped out of white and drama and what skies! Cobalt; sea-faded; a vivid, faint, blue green that tastes like salty lips. The whole room seems to quiver, physically tremble, from the play of light-in-leaves.

October 10, 1970

All over the grass there are yellowing elm leaves (from upstairs they look brown, or just dull) and walking on and among them you see how no pattern is ever as good as randomness.

October 11, 1970

Not many of the trees in sight do much in the autumn color line: elms, beech, sycamore, horse chestnut, turn brown and shed. Or just shed. The hedges: privet, forsythia, mock orange, much the same. And though later there will be flashiness from the maples, the seasonal look is that of upholstered furniture at one of those auctions where "everything must go."

In New York last week I saw a monkey on a leash wearing

¹⁴⁹ The guest room in the "ell" of the Porters' house—"my south-facing room with California/ wildflower paper..." Schuyler wrote in "O Sleepless Night"—was papered in a pattern called California Flowers.

¹⁵⁰ Margaret Daisy Connor Schuyler Ridenour.

diapers; heard the woman from the newspaper store (a biddy of Waterford crystal like purity) say over and over as an interjection, “Don’t tell *me*, I know,” and on West 11th Street across from the hospital, on a day when the temperature was over 90, a hansom cab was drawn up before a red brick house, and both made to seem covered with melting snow, an end of winter look. A lot of technicians were hard at work creating this convincing, somehow disagreeable, illusion.

October 22, 1970

A day with a dull glaze over it and which comes in two colors, gray and bronzed-green, with leaden blue lights.

The house is being painted, and the spots of white paint on the rose leaves seen from the living room have, at a first look, exactly the sparkle of drops of water—rain or dew. Exactly like the touches of white Constable dabbed over his landscape with sparkling air in mind.

No doubt all that can be said has been said about the pleasure of the few random late roses, but—few things give me more pleasure than two loose yet starchy cups of Mabel Morrison pointing straight up with the “highshouldered look” of a Portland rose, an uncreamy white with somewhere an evocation of red—red, not pink. Silk and steel.¹⁵¹

October 23, 1970

Rain in the night falling steadily and medium heavily as the windows slowly became that special blue (seen under yellow lamp-light) between six and seven and, indeed, over by eleven. Now, an even overcast which makes five in the afternoon indistinguishable

¹⁵¹ “Mabel Morrison, lifting her blowsy white blooms/ to the living-room windows.” (“Horse-Chestnut Trees and Roses”)

from any other hour of the day. The fall progresses, in a messy and trivial way, some leaves, some wet, a little color, too damp, too dull, the sort of fall, or rather the part of fall one vaguely feels obliged to like because it isn't cold yet. Not me. (signed) Discontented.

[*The diary entries and poems published as "A Vermont Diary" in The Crystal Lithium would come here. They were written November 1 through November 7, 1970, while Schuyler was visiting Kenward Elmslie in Calais, Vermont.*]

(scribbled in the car, driving back from Calais
to NYC, November 8, 1970)

Waitsville to Irasburg and over the Appalachian Gap on a morning as blue as a dish.

Yellow trees in a dull silver wood—riding through New York State.

Slaughterhouse Meat
Childless Love
Jazz Baby
Roscoe

November 13, 1970
Greenwich Avenue

Many moist days—nor is the end in sight.

November 16, 1970

After a week of rain, late this afternoon the sun shone out under pigeon colored clouds and turned the elm twigs red, the last leaves on the plane tree glowed like dark red glass and the house, freshly painted white, became the color of the sun.

November 20, 1970

The sun comes out and the sky stays gray.

When I sleep lightly sometimes a refrain of one or two words starts up and runs under my dreaming. This morning it was, kitchen middens, kitchen middens... One morning in Vermont, Pitt-Rivers, Pitt-Rivers, Pitt-Rivers...

November 20, 1970

a man standing in a rowboat, fishing.

a grove of golden larch

the smooth gray-blue in one spot is slightly modeled into clouds by a hidden sun.

Dwarf scrub oak in the cinders hold on to their leaves like rubbish.

Islip. Not a stop that God forgot—but I did.

Erikson: *Life of Gandhi, Luther*¹⁵²

¹⁵² Erik H. Erikson (b. 1902), psychologist and historian. He is the author of *Gandhi's Truth on the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (1969) and *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (1962), and other books in which he psychoanalyzes historical figures.

November 22, 1970
(on the train to Buffalo)

Riding up the almost empty avenue from John's new apartment¹⁵³ the cab driver suddenly hollered, "Great! See the guy with the comb? He's combing his moustache so I tell him, 'It looks great.'"

Walking with John yesterday, as the afternoon became evening, to get keys & other shopping, the extraordinary *excess* of experience.

The buildings that compose the "housing development" across from John's are space[d] out on diagonals, rather than in a checkerboard grid. By a happy accident, those on 25th Street nearest to his house (a 4 story townhouse, a brick "brownstone") are seen from the middle of his living room to left and right, almost at the extremes of the visible field, slanting inward like the wings of a stage set. In the depths of the view there are more neither here-nor-there brick high rises; but the ample space they seem to enclose will almost always suggest air & openness—so wanted in a city—a space of light in a north facing view. This morning it was the late clinging leaves on the plane trees which, as the wind fluttered, caused the morning & its light to pulse. I was going to say, "young plane trees" but they are older than I think, and that they were moved there at the size they are is no doubt a fine instance of nurseryman's art.

And suddenly here is the sky quenching Hudson and beyond it, pleated & frailly colored by leafless trees, the Palisades.

The American affliction—the sports event on somebody else's transistor radio. buzzing[?] & snarling sounds[?]¹⁵⁴ suddenly stretch away in what not so long ago seemed a pleasurable half empty car. (It would be the Canisius something team—so they're going all the way to Buffalo too.)

¹⁵³ John Ashbery was living with Aladar Marberger at 456 West 25th Street.

¹⁵⁴ These two words are unclear in this hastily handwritten entry.

and now the bad tempered mama with two whining little girls
—(Monique & Rochelle)

picture-shudder-esque Albany

November 29, 1970

Dinner in Vestal NY, next to the Vestal Fire Dept.

Somewhere in the underbrush, a fox farted.

On the L.I.R.R

December 2, 1970

So clear, so warm, with that elusive smokiness that seems to focus the light, making an easier transition between where it falls and shadows.

At Freeport only the tops of the weeds are sere on an embankment which faces a store called, Friendly Frost.

He shot her a glance but it ricocheted.

December 3, 1970

Some days, like this one, not cold but cool, not so sunny but far from cloudy, are at once a kind of respite from all the other sorts of weather we might have had and yet not so special as to be called unseasonably anything. They refuse to be noticed, even in their ending, all things seen are so merged in a kind of undramatic softness—a gray beech against a gray house are taken into the night in which a slim moon is already high, and has been, for a long time—



Margaret Connor, ca. 1920, James Schuyler's mother.



Marcus James Schuyler, ca. 1920, James Schuyler's father.



James Schuyler, 1927.



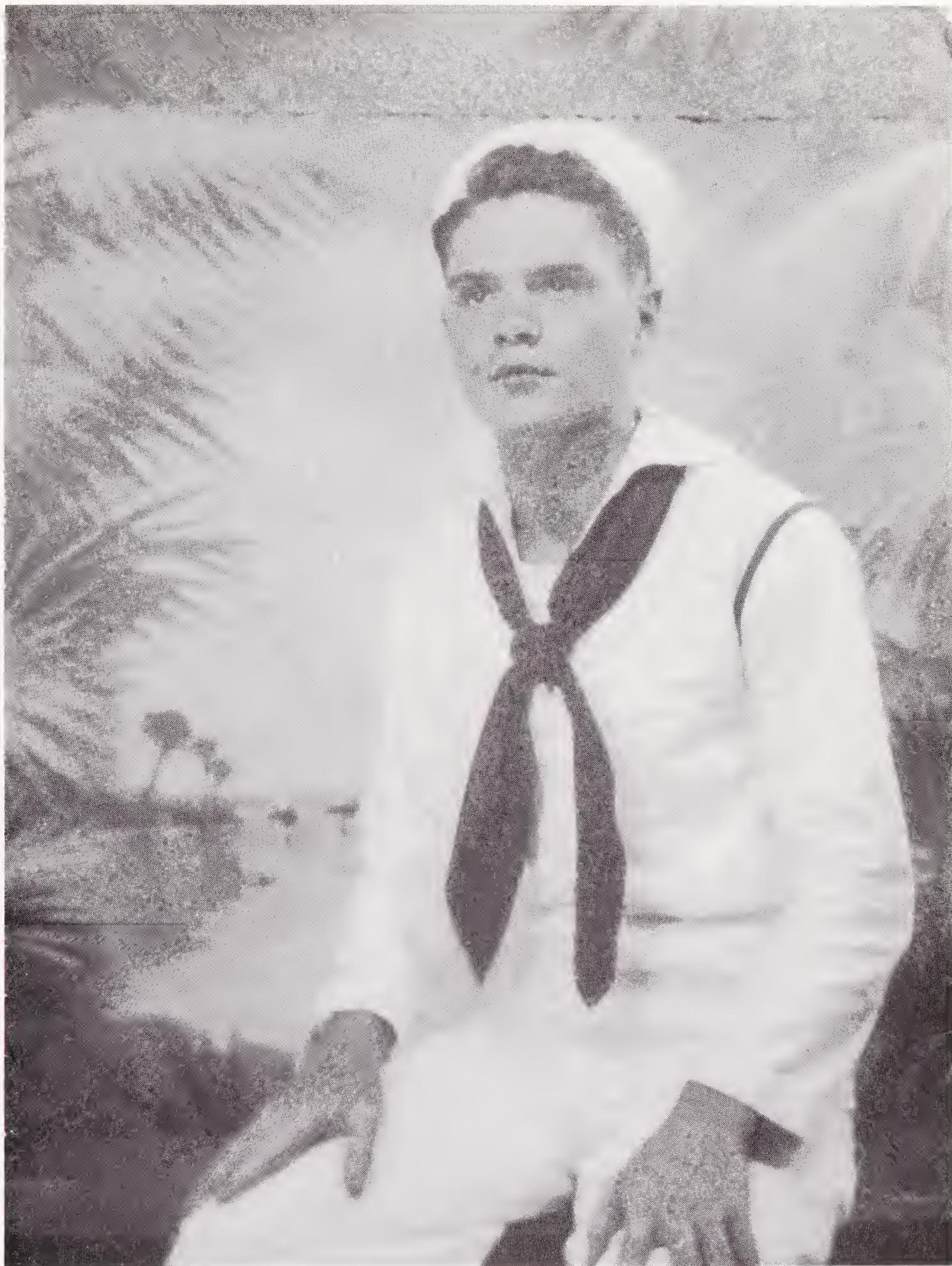
James Schuyler, ca. 1928.



James Schuyler with his mother, Washington, DC, ca. 1929.



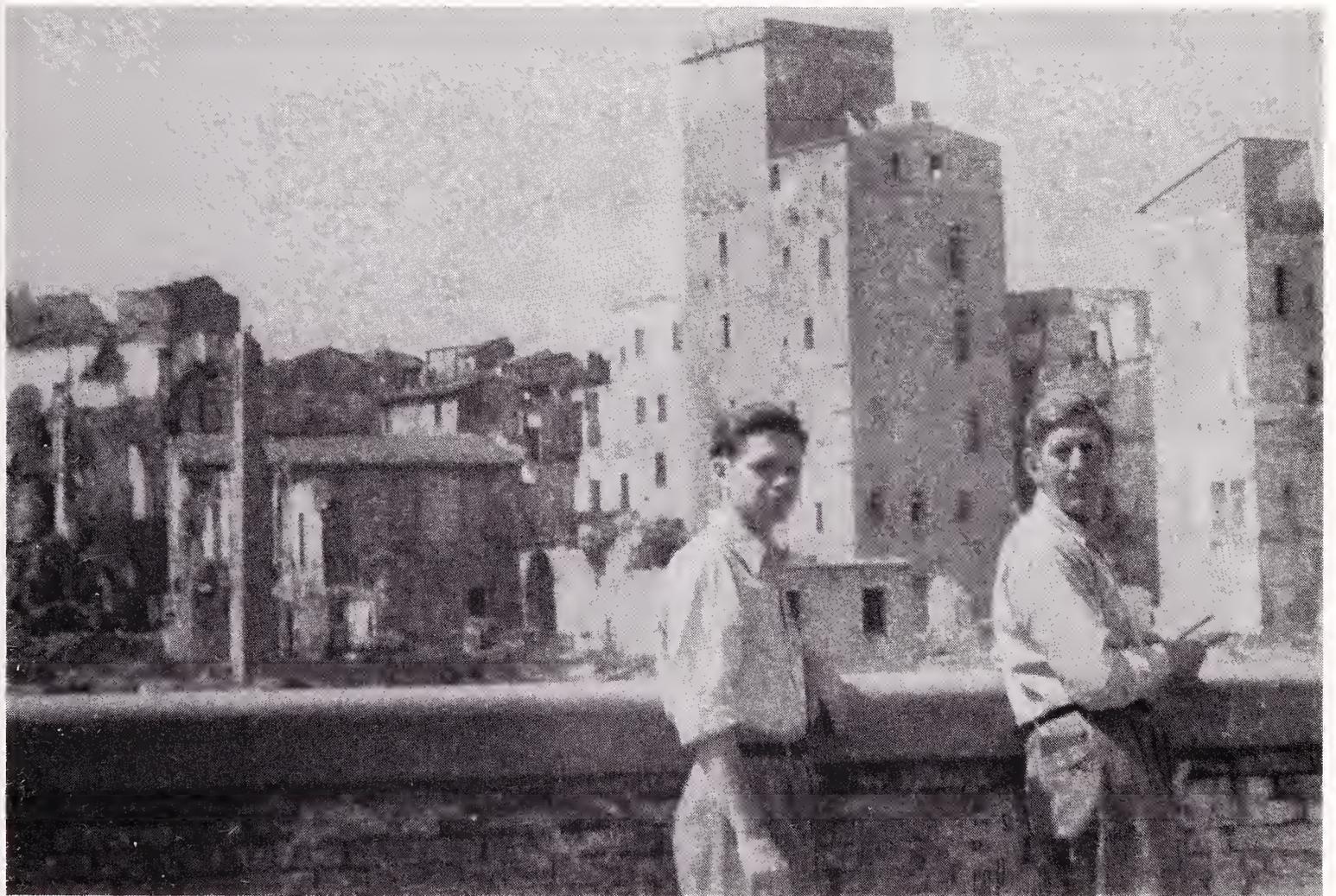
James Schuyler, ca. 1940. Photograph by Sipprell.



James Schuyler, Key West, 1943.



James Schuyler, Florence, Italy, 1948. "Taken outside the entrance to my house in Florence, by Chester [Kallman]. My shirt is hanging out because I had just climbed up Erta Canina. 'I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it.' (Rev. 3:8)." (Schuyler's inscription on back of photo.)



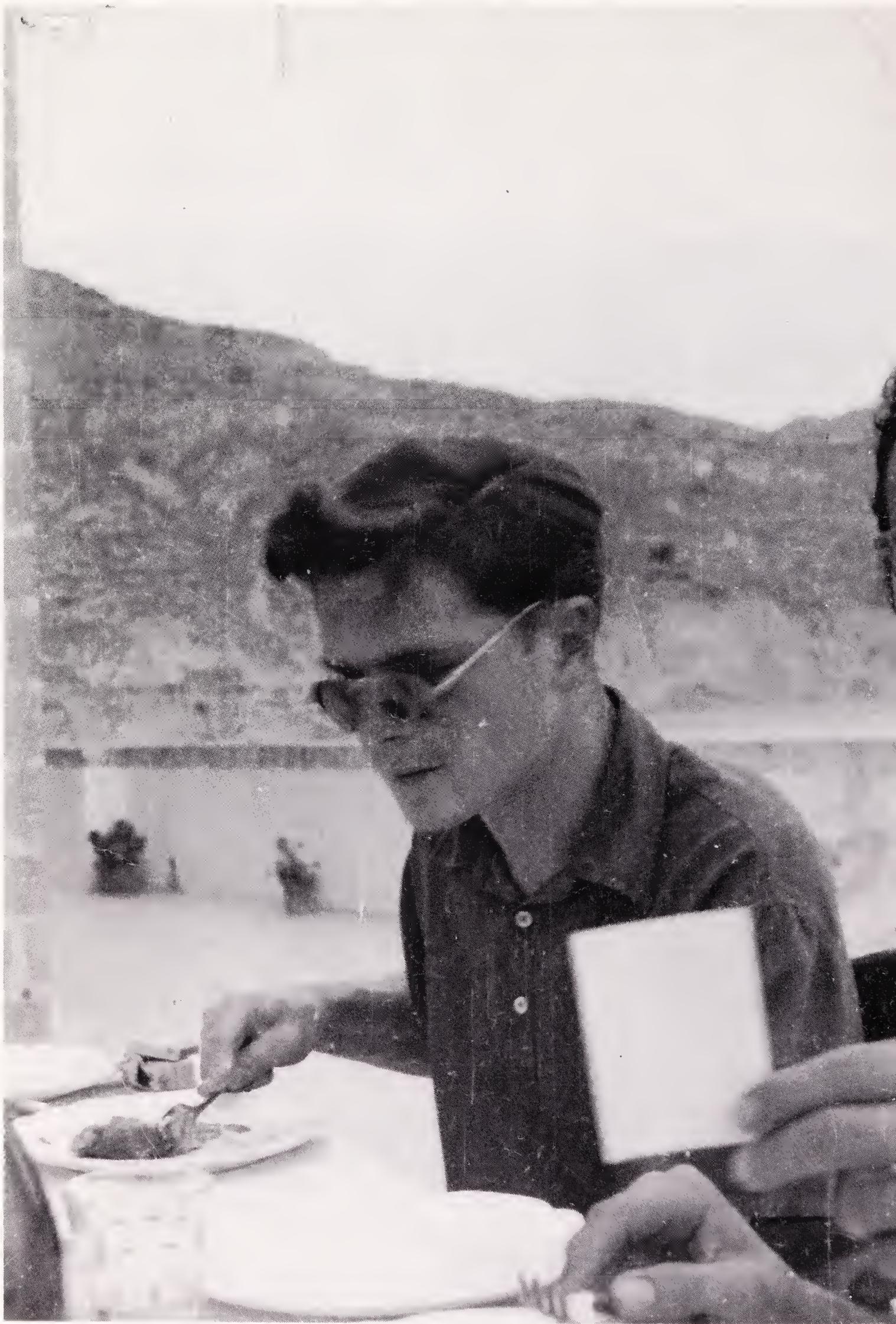
“With Wystan [W.H. Auden], by the Arno at high noon (which accounts for our squints). The buildings across the river were destroyed during the war...”
(Schuyler’s inscription on photo.)



Chester Kallman and James Schuyler, Ischia, 1948-49.



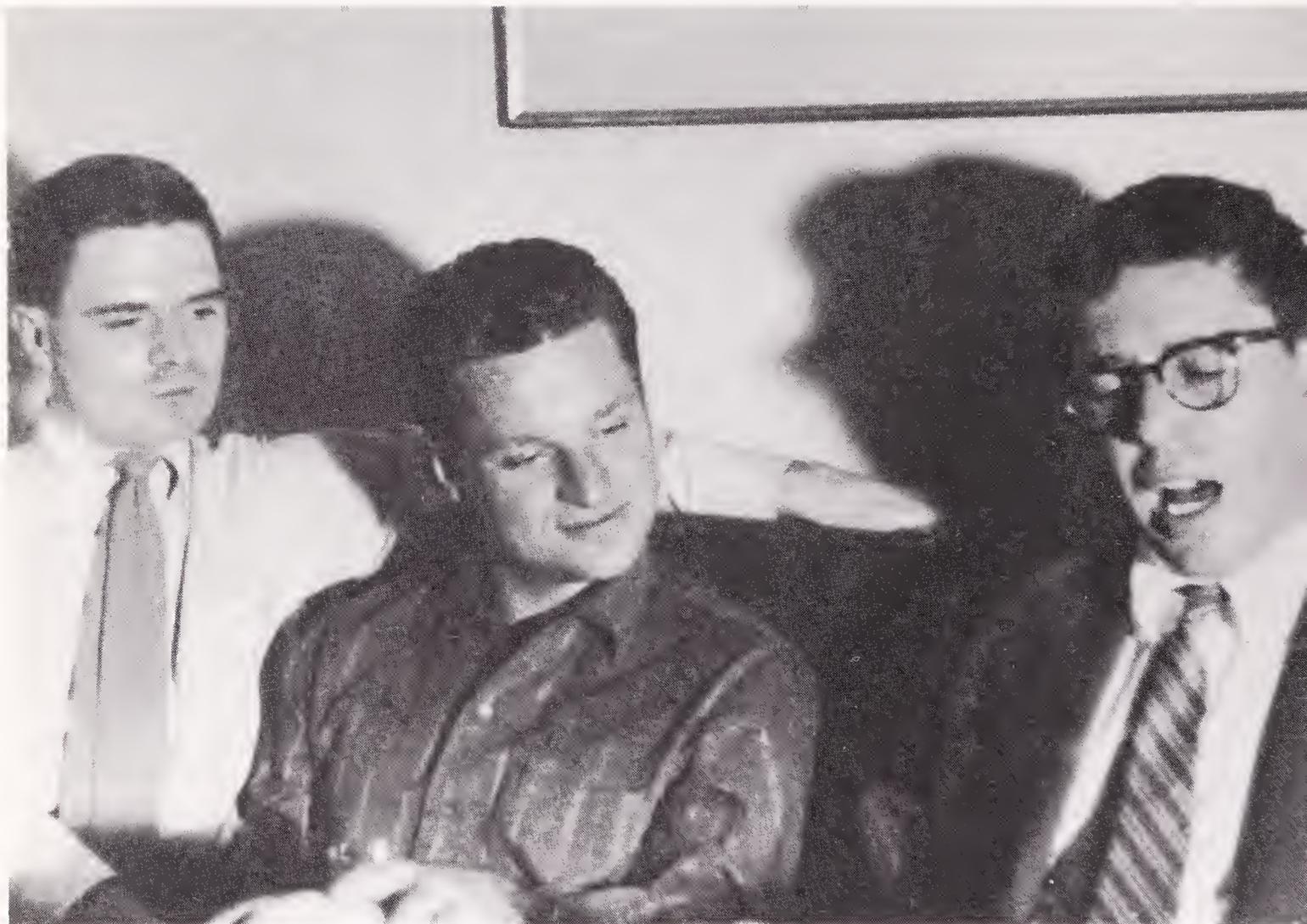
James Schuyler with Chester Kallman, Ischia, 1948-49.



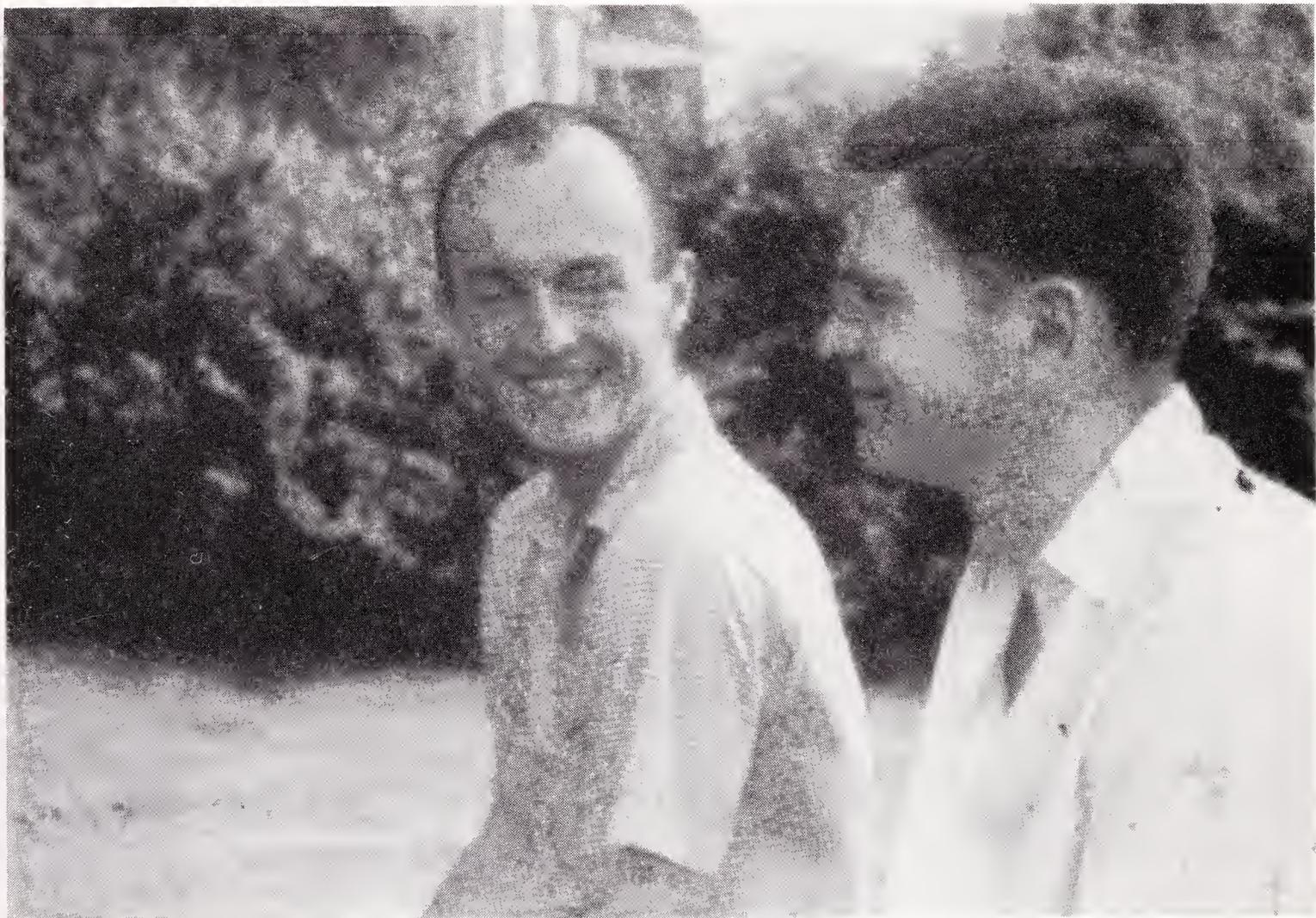
James Schuyler, Ischia, 1948-49. Photograph by Charles Heilemann.



James Schuyler in front of the entrance to the Periscope-Holliday bookstore (New York City), ca. 1956.



James Schuyler, John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch, August, 1956.



Frank O'Hara and James Schuyler in the backyard of Fairfield and Anne Porter's house in Southampton, Summer, 1956. Photograph by John Button.



James Schuyler in 1956. Photograph by John Button.

all going into the night as readily and unthinkingly as someone who comes back from a walk on the beach goes into his house. And shuts the door.

December 7, 1970

Clear as only air is clear, bright as only December sunlight can be bright, wintry, crisp and sparkling.

Going into Herbert's Market yesterday evening I said, "It's cold out there," and the butcher with the loud laugh said, "Nah, it's healthy."

December 20, 1970

NYC

Winter sunshine and a stomach ache.

December 24, 1970

It's snowing—flakes fat as feathers fall, I thought, lying in bed a while ago. There's a lot of twisting, turning, gusts and indecisions, all about to settle when they rise up like an alarmed flock from a field—how odd, that they seem never to bump into each other. It doesn't whiten up the yard very fast, though it shows in the *rosa rugosa* clump, whose prickles catch and hold the flakes so it shows down the yard as frosted.

December 26, 1970

There has been some sort of snowfall about every day this week, but each has mostly melted. This morning there was another fast one, a regular whirligig at 11 and now at one the sun is out, the sky is baby blue with a few pale dilettantish clouds, and the forsythia—which against the light is a red-brown shadow—is doubly trimmed with snow and shadow, as though the shadow shape were as much a function of the wind as is that of the snow.

The jacket
of the yard
is faced
with satin
blue on white

December 27, 1970

Clear as a glass bell with just one small white candy left in it that tastes of anise.

December 29, 1970

Last night, at Bob [Dash]’s, a red sunset over the frozen potato fields and against it dull blue little scraps of clouds, like bits of what clings to the inside of a scraped out mixing bowl.

January 1, 1971

It began snowing before daylight, kept on all day, and now it is almost dark, just light enough to make out that it’s still falling,

shreds on shreds of deep purplish-blue, intensified by the yellow lamp on my desk.

January 2, 1971

Southampton

Seven-thirty in the morning, and the sun makes golden pink patches on the shadowy white snow. And as I try to find a way to express the clarity, the softness, the visual quiet of the morning sky, there comes a clatter and a crash of plastic dishes from the laundry below this room and I go to break up a cat fight. I am prejudiced against Hodge, the aggressor, rather than his sister Danny Rex, the provoker, not because of favoring the underdog cat, but because of the grating voice he inherited from some Siamese ancestor, no doubt by way of his father, who was certainly Tuxie, the black and white killer cat who used to live next door. Right this moment the white snow is in fact as blue as the sky, which is very pale, the difference only that between transparent watercolor and opaque watercolor. And the privet hedge lights up like a once gilt iron grill, with bits of fluff and dust and here and there a rag caught in it. Others in the house are up, for there goes Bruno dashing madly around in the snow, and now barks to be let in. Others too are up: in an interval of a tall spruce a flag flaps its red and white striped wings.

January 4, 1971

Now and then with a short rumble some snow slides off the roof—alpine feelings.

January 11, 1971

A cloudless, snowless day, though on the north side of a hedge there is a thin streak of icy snow, left from the clearing of a driveway. The shadow has a winter thinness and in it this remnant of the New Year snowstorm is the color of skim milk. And on our left, friends, we note how even at this distance the green humps of the wallflowers look like heads of lettuce that got frozen on the way to market.

January 12, 1971

One thin cloud in the south like a scratch, and the reddish-violet of the highest elm twigs.

January 20, 1971

Across the street this morning, when the sun came up in the Hams' yard, there were bars of cloud across it of the same molten glassy gold, only cooler and less hard to look at. A few minutes later and sun and clouds were as white as liquid platinum. In the south a few rosy scraps of cloud were of the same gentle softness as the sky, so close, as though rose and blue were two aspects of the same color. Now, a little before five in the afternoon—or is it five in the evening?—clouds of a peachy orange thickly shaded with violet and gray stream out of the sunset. Another night of bitter cold (down near zero) comes crunching up the icy drive.

January 21, 1971

10 degrees at 6 a.m., *pace* the weather operator. Now, nearer to seven, the world is all one livid blue and a waning moon turns an ice bright face toward where the sun is about to rise—as though in the unlikely hope of drawing up warmth from it.

Sunday, January 24, 1971

Colder than freezing, a little windy, a lackluster but not unlikable day.

January 26, 1971

Winter rain.
What. a. drag.

January 28, 1971

Cold, colder and let's hope coldest. There is just enough wind sifted snow to not quite cover the grass, like a killing frost, which for a lot of things it may well be, without the insulation of a thick snow cover. One jet trail is across the sky as though up, or out, there too the cold were beginning to colonize.

February 1, 1971
Greenwich Avenue

At the corner of Jane Street and Greenwich Avenue, on the slum Renaissance side, not the 1930 casement windows side, the sidewalk looks coated with frost from rock salt (which melted the ice as the ice melted it) and gives a not delusive image of how the morning feels. “It’s pretty cold out,” Joe said when I called and asked if he wanted to go to the Met. this afternoon (and see 18th century Italian drawings).¹⁵⁵ We’ll see.

Interminable dinner at the Costa Brava last night, the food nothing choice to say the least but the chairs are tormenting masterpieces: giant studs that catch you in the back and the apron carved into sharp wood teeth for the calves. “It’s the Mediterranean look” John said. We were seven—Kenward, Joe, John, Aladar,¹⁵⁶ Barbara Schwartz¹⁵⁷ and Bob Rupard¹⁵⁸—or about three too many for comfort in a restaurant. (Only because it makes everything take so long). Bob R. said to K., “And how much did this marvelous bauble cost?” referring to a coral necklace he just got in Morocco. “A fortune,” said K., who hates to be asked the price of things. But politeness constrained him to add that it was hard to know, since it was in foreign money.

look up in S. Smith about neighbors whose conversation is meteorological near the beginning of vol. 2, Combe Florey letter.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ “Drawings from New York Collections III: The Eighteenth Century in Italy,” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from January 30 through March 21, 1971.

¹⁵⁶ Aladar Marberger. See the entry for January 14, 1988.

¹⁵⁷ Barbara Schwartz, a sculptor. She was a college friend of Aladar Marberger’s at Carnegie Mellon University.

¹⁵⁸ Bob Rupard was a friend of Aladar Marberger’s.

¹⁵⁹ Sydney Smith (1771-1845), English essayist and clergyman. Smith was one of the founders of *The Edinburgh Review*, and rector of Combe Florey in Somerset. The letter Schuyler refers to, addressed to Lady Grey, was written on July 13, 1829, soon after Smith had moved to Combe Florey. Smith describes the village, adding, “My

February 4, 1971
Greenwich Avenue

A week of such weather, the wind and the inescapable cold, which indoors was only moderated: the electric baseboard heaters are insufficient for their areas when the temperature is 13 at noon, and the power was cut—and so on and so on. The odd shapes of people in their heavy clothes, all swaddled and thick around their naturally warm middles and walking as though to huddle their feet up into the wooliness. And girls and women who persist with mini-skirts and coats that leave them all but bare-legged (thin tights) from crotch to ankle—their faces blue and angry: angry with the cold, angrier still for being laughed at. The air is still with the sound of trucks and subway trains each heard individually like a piece of music with the tempo marking “inspecific, uncoordinated,” and there is an aimless overcast: no snow, no rain, and certainly no sun. The colors of painted and unpainted brick and stucco and concrete quietly blossom in this kind of all-over shade.

February 8, 1971

A day like the skin of someone who has undergone a long course of mercury treatment, as had the professor of psychology at Bethany College.¹⁶⁰ Thirty years ago, count them thirty! A day away, a century away: I feel no older, but it surprises me to think that the people I knew then are not only alive, but no older than myself.

neighbors look very much like other people's neighbors; their remarks are generally of a meteorological nature.” *The Letters of Sydney Smith*, edited by Novell C. Smith, London: Oxford University Press, 1953 (Volume II).

¹⁶⁰ Schuyler attended Bethany College in West Virginia from 1941 to 1943.

February 15, 1971

A light, unsunny day.

Dinner last night at the Derby Steak House with: Kenward, John and Aladar, John Wells (whom I increasingly like), and Larry Fagin. Why can't I ever remember for sure and for certain whether it's Fagin or Fagan? Then K, JW and I came back to [Greenwich Avenue], had three quick joints and listened to the abridged "Turandot," the last side of "Mahagonny" (Is here no boy to shake by hands...) then I shuffled off to bed and *Pack My Bag* and twelve hours sleep.¹⁶¹

It's almost five in the afternoon; it's almost five in the evening and ...

It's Fagin.

February 19, 1971

At Bob Keene's bookshop I hear him explaining the Apocrypha: "It's part of the Bible only it's left out of most of them: people don't use it."

It is possible to write without underscoring, and yet in speech nothing is used more frequently.

¹⁶¹ "The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny" (1930), opera by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. The libretto was translated into English by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman in 1960. The line, "No boy that's glad to shake your hand" is from "The Benares Song," sung by Jenny in Act Three.

Pack My Bag: A Self Portrait, (1940): autobiography of English novelist Henry Green (born Henry Yorke; 1905-1973).

February 20, 1971

Southampton

It's above freezing but well below comfort and the thin off-and-on rain falls like the scratches on a movie in a third rate movie house. In all the view only one elm seems able to rise above it all, its elegant contortions flat and dark against the bright flatness of a dark sky. It rises, flows out and its twigs float in a way that is like one of those fresh water springs that occur in salt water and are experienced other than visually.

February 21, 1971

This morning there was a different look to things, buildings and trees sitting and standing around not as though they thought it were spring, but, as though one day it might be.

February 22, 1971

Creepily misty morning, dank, dark, disheveled and rather ominous, like a destroyer just gone into dry dock. But how beautiful it was at the first light to hear the repetitious song of a cardinal—my pleasure in it is more than just that I can recognize it: it is not unlike that which someone who doesn't "know" music takes in the songs he does know. Simple and right from the heart to the heart—or perhaps from the throat to the ear is enough, but in that way in which hearing is itself suddenly a kind of singing.¹⁶²

¹⁶² In the poem, "A cardinal," published in "Last Poems" in Schuyler's *Collected Poems*, Schuyler associates the cardinal's song with his memories of Fairfield Porter. See the entry for November 14, 1989.

February 25, 1971

To East Hampton with Bob Dash last night to see Buñuel's "Tristana," a poorish work in which the lead was wonderfully sustained by the setting, a provincial Spanish city and one of those clean, gloomy Mediterranean apartments full of tile, glass doors and a pretentious nothingness kind of furniture, the leavings of bad taste treated like heirlooms of beauty or at least meaning. I wonder what city it was? Toledo, perhaps, or Avila. Its picturesqueness just there, as it would be if you were born and lived and died there. That the heritage was in some way valued was put across in a few quick scenes—especially one in a court where the heroine says, "Of all these columns, which do you like best?" Only the café seemed at all warmed by life. And the casting was nicely uninsistent, with only the uncle an actorish sort of an actor, which suited him; except for the heroine, Deneuve,¹⁶³ who as a young girl seemed exactly the same thirtyish Parisienne she was in "Belle de Jour," her eyes looking red around the rims and her features growing sharp and no acting to redeem it. What a shame, to see these movie beauties lose what they have and not get to use what they have left. But the Galdos¹⁶⁴ novel would not make a good movie anyway—what a sense of development by chapters and 19th century "psychological" insight! It may read dramatically but it doesn't dramatize. What remains were the views, in and out, of tiled or stony sterility—and never a view for its own sake.

February 24, 1971

A sunny, blurry morning with the snow that fell in the night—scarcely more than a hoar frost—vanishing like damp in the wake of a flatiron.

¹⁶³ Catherine Deneuve (b. 1943 as Catherine Dorléac), French film actress. Buñuel's "Belle de Jour" was released in 1966.

¹⁶⁴ Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920), Spanish novelist. He has been called Spain's greatest novelist after Cervantes.

February 28, 1971

Bright and breezy, chilly for spring but it isn't spring so it's warm for winter. Now and then the wind rises to the noise called Whoo, which is about as close to it as Miaow is to what a cat says. To the south everything has a linear look: hedges scratched in by an etcher's needle, the lawn pocked and bitten by acid, and here and there, only a little, the soft shadowy burr of a mezzotint—the side of what was once a small barn and is now a large garage. The small touches of heightened color in this muted view are today almost washed away by sparkling cold sunshine—the moss and lichen green on tree trunks is pale as the mold on a just ripe cheese; the white trim on the house next door seems scarcely to return more light than the warm gray of the shingles; the copper flashing at the base of the chimney—or where it breaks from the roof—does not entrap the eye with its own unique green as it does on the dark days; and the barn red of the house beyond it is not so glowing, it adds only an agreeable weight to a scene which seems to exist only as a setting for the broken up rhythm of a basketball being bounced and the sharp indistinguishable words cried out by the boys playing with it.

March 2, 1971

Overcast, and the circle of the horizon forged out of carbon steel.

March 4, 1971

Terrific wind yesterday and today, one shutter rapping on the west wall all night and all day and outside now gray shreds and rags of clouds hustled along under the nimbus, dirtier under dirty—dirt stained, that is, as in rinsed out scouring cloths. The speed of the wind is seen more in the length of the stroke a branch makes than

in the quickness with which it moves—how strong the wind must be that that tree moves at all!

March 5, 1971

7 a.m.

As beautiful a morning as ever was, as though the two days wind had blown something away and left—not spring, by any means: a kind of russet flash in this swept clean clarity. The plane tree looks as though it's shedding its flakes and scabs of bark in the interest of a new nakedness, its upper trunk like a sinewy throat. Only the clipped privet, in which a few twig-colored leaves still lurk, has a dusty, priggish look. Only at this hour of the morning does the sun shine into the garage and pick out the bright, artificial lacquer blue of Lizzie's bike.

March 10, 1971

It must be hard to be March, one of those adolescent months people patiently wait for the year to outgrow.¹⁶⁵

March 14, 1971

Some things in my view: a blacktop drive (palest gray), a privet hedge, a spruce at least twice the height of the small house behind it, which is white, with a redbrick chimney—a garage whose door is always open and shows a red Volkswagen and, if I move my

¹⁶⁵ March has also been personified by Schuyler as “a granny/ a child doesn't/ like to kiss...” (“So Good,” in *Hymn to Life*); and as “March with her steel bead pocket-book...” (“The Crystal Lithium.”)

head to the right a little, the tailgate of a cream colored Ford: also, a girl's bike and a ladder hung on the wall. Over the garage door there is a basketball hoop, orange, mounted on a whitish back-board marked by rust; at a corner of the garage is what looks like a stone and is now, but which was once a bag, or a half bag, of cement. Brown leaves, brown grass, brown twigs. Everything that is white looking dingy, like this morning sky, and everything that is dark, like the black asphalt shingles, reflecting and lightening itself, as though with an admixture of white or silver paint. And I have left out the maples, which are what I see most of, a bird that went by, and an electric cable, going back to the houses behind the barn, which is now Fairfield's studio.

March 26, 1971

Dead March colors, lightly glazed with gray. It's the month when finally one most notices the leaflessness of trees and shrubs—even though the mud is graced by crocuses, snowdrops and glory of the snow. It seems odd to think that it was not really so long ago that no one would have mistaken white crocuses in a hedge for old Kleenex—not that I wish I had lived then. White though isn't really a good color for earliest spring, not in this climate (in August, however). I think I like best the sharp clear yellows, and regret the *alyssum saxatile* Eddie Kruk¹⁶⁶ “weeded” away.

April 5, 1971

Just back from the Sheridan Square cigar store, where a spaced-out young man was laying it on the line for unwary customers—the man just ahead of me got, “Ten billion years older than the oldest living maggot on earth.” My sentence was a little lighter: “Take the

¹⁶⁶ Eddie Kruk was a gardener the Porters used to hire in Southampton.

garbage with you.” Walking up Seventh Avenue and passing Tony Holland, who was looking very well, staircase wit made me wish I’d said, “Baby, I *am* the garbage—” but for that kind of repartee, a bodyguard is no bad idea.

Late last Friday night—or more like 4 or 5 on Saturday morning I again met B. J. _____.¹⁶⁷ We stayed together until early Sunday afternoon. It was a long time to have waited—six years, maybe? Waited is not quite the word; but it is not totally wrong either.

Monday after Easter, [April 12,] 1971
*Pultneyville NY*¹⁶⁸

“Get a small notebook—
write down in it what you want—”¹⁶⁹

One forgets that a habit is rarely formed alone, by oneself: “Since earliest childhood,” the old man said, “I have been a secret drinker.” Even, say, masturbation implies a social context.

April 27, 1971

Some days, I feel an almost irresistible urge to write.

¹⁶⁷ This meeting, in the Everard Baths the night of April 3, 1971, is alluded to at the end of “The Crystal Lithium”: “a room in this or that cheap dump/ Where the ceiling light burns night and day and we stare at or into each/ Other’s eyes in hope the other reads there what he reads...”

¹⁶⁸ Schuyler was visiting John Ashbery at his mother’s home.

¹⁶⁹ When he was travelling, or in the hospital, or looking at art for a review, Schuyler often wrote in small spiral-bound notebooks that fit in his pocket, a format well suited to the short lines of his “skinny” poems. “Lean encyclopaedists inscribe an Iliad/ There’s a weltanschauung of the penny pad.” (Wallace Stevens).

Saturday, May 8, 1971

Greenwich Avenue

Rain slants down from right to left—the young whatever they are trees—ginkos, I fear—in Jane Street can take it, in fact, need it. They sing a grateful little song, called, “Bullshit.”

May 12, 1971

F.P.—about city litho (finished, but uncorrected)¹⁷⁰—“It’s like looking in a mirror and seeing everything you HATE about yourself.”

K.G.E[lmslie]: “I know what you mean.”

May 14, 1971¹⁷¹
after J.B. show¹⁷²

ysler Bldg so. So went in G.C. Arcade for Astro Flash flashed cost SHIT took piss in can ne can next Oyster Bar armed by

¹⁷⁰ John T. Spike in *Fairfield Porter An American Original* relates that Porter first seriously took up lithography in the winter of 1970-71, working at the Bank Street Atelier. On May 27, 1971, in a letter to Lucien Day, quoted by Spike, Porter wrote: “It [his fifth lithograph] was a view looking up Sixth Avenue from Bleecker Street at noon. I finally made two versions, one with the sky at the bottom purplish, and one with it gray green, fading into blue.”

¹⁷¹ Except for “after J.B. show” and the date, which are handwritten at the bottom of the page, this entry was apparently typed on a machine with its line spacer improperly set, so lines of type touch or overlap. Schuyler also typed right to the edge of the page, making a dense block of type and sometimes cutting off words in the middle. Elsewhere he abbreviates, which also contributes to the breathless evocation of “two nites running.”

¹⁷² Joe Brainard’s one man show at Fischbach Gallery.

indifference (own & other: 1 elderly gent) to Pub. Lib. bought map
Russia (Liz pin up) puzzle map USA (niece) across 42 St. 2 stops
for postcards: Empire state dusk shots & Liberty, big green & mean
to import mag shop TATLER (curse: no COUNTRY LIFE) THE
FIELD also PRIVATE EYE across B'way & 7th Ave to arcade
took 4 for 25c mug shots me trying to comb sweat thickened [?fat]
hair catch real cheesy pallor of two nites running back to 7th
cabbed it to 13th checked out too pale wisteria same my type pallor
& to house call Joe B & tell him what it meant to wait and see it
with him, and, "he said, "Tell him how much I liked them."
Giggle from Joe who mostly says "I liked you're I mean it I *really*
liked it." So spell it out for him, what he said, which liked best, and
who he met there: Isherwood & Bachardy;¹⁷³ Marberger; had
gallery to selves for time; the Joe LeS[ueur] and Alan Martel.¹⁷⁴ Joe
tells abt circus & great lion tamer. We make date for t'morrow
maybe go Library study & stat tatto designs. Call JA abt t'm'orrow
nite: dinner with John & Susan Koethe chez A who says how
much he likes him, means it. Bell rings Lee Crab Crabtree wants
play piano few minutes great love it when he does & he is right
now I CANNOT BELIEVE IT playing "and the simple secret of it
all..." POW now go call Ron & tell abt van

May 15, 1971

Dear [Heloise; *crossed out*] Mary Lincoln—in desperate need help,
seek advice: How can I clean a penguin? He is stuffed and very
dusty. Should I rinse him in a bucket of sea water? Fear stuffing
might get water-logged, or eye-wiring rust and eyes fall out. Kindly
reply at earliest convenience. Yrs

Desperate

¹⁷³ Don Bachardy (misspelled "Bacardi by Schuyler here).

¹⁷⁴ Alan Martel was a lover of Joe LeSueur's.

PS How tell if penguin is a he-penguin or she-penguin? I mean just by looking at it—of no interest if involves fumbling in the feathers.

May 15, 1971

Early, and a man in a short-sleeved shirt is hosing off the sidewalk in front of his building. It will be a warm day on Jane Street.

May 16, 1971

Afterthought of a convinced agnostical atheist: “if God is Martha Macon’s¹⁷⁵ friend, *then*, I am prepared to reconsider. If he is not, I wouldn’t want him for a friend. Not even if he stepped down and put on a very small h, as in, he.”

May 18, 1971

Martha Macon
on phone

“...if God is my friend...” Her dying husband has been bleeding at the nose for 24 hours. “...the clots...”

¹⁷⁵ Martha Macon, Kenward Elmslie’s part-time domestic.

Friday A.M., May 24 (?), 1971

Tues. A.M. 12:45 (to be precise)

Me (opening door): I'm sorry I was such a prick on the phone just now.

Lee: (enters swiftly and heads toward mystery bag) Oh I know you were a prick (picks up bag) you cross you[r] T's to the right. Guess my tropical fish are dead by now anyway. (exit: cheery goodnights).

What had I said on the phone? This: "No, Lee, I was not asleep—but please do NOT call up at this time of night. (If you're nearby come & pick up whatever it is" etc.)

I rather less liked his cheery opener, 2 days after you left: "Well, I see Kenward isn't *keeping you* in flowers." I had, as it happened, moved them up a flight: yellow chrysanthemums in the fireplace, massed peonies on the piano (big "throwaway" gesture in the right light), marvelous orange and red tulips in orange end-of-day ware vase, spotlighted: a message to Bob (he, John and David [Kermani] had come to dinner the night before: David and Bob took to each other; at dinner doting David said, "Tell them about your ego trip, John." Did he ever—"They loved me in Amherst!" 8,000 names, none of them known to Bob—ah well) a message which he caught, and let me know about in his own way—"Follies"¹⁷⁶ was singing its heart out—smoke drifted—and Bob smiled and pointed, very one at a time, at each flower clump. Yes, I am rather quite fond of Mr. Robert Joseph J_____, wherever he is right this minute—Frankfurt—Paris (I think)—London—kinda hope he's enjoying himself. After all, June 5th or 6th isn't so far away—only a year or two.

Sigh. Languish. Grin. Oh, Lee Crabtree. He doesn't bug me—*but he could*. I still love it when he tickles the ivories, and I'm glad he came around a number of times—and beautiful music came up the stairs.

¹⁷⁶ "Follies" is a musical with words and music by Stephen Sondheim. The score won a Tony Award in 1971.

[undated]

“You tell me he can’t last so why should you butcher him up? Those doctors, they just want to experiment.”

[undated]

“A good writer—a good slick writer—in six weeks could make 100,000 dollars in a minute.”

May 29, 1971

When I left at the end of March, only snowdrops and crocuses were in bloom. Now, leaves, leaves, spring salad greens, and lilacs, the marvelous ones I see from this window, a tree of lilacs, taller than the low two story house, and over the forsythia—whose blooming I altogether missed this year—white dogwood; and the wine-dark of a copper beech. The sky is soft and foggy, creams and grays, and the sun, well, it is there, behind it all, now visible and now less so. A bird sings. The washing machine—full of my dirty city socks and underwear—changes cycle. Anne comes in from the garage with a bag of groceries. My pictures and postcards are as I left them—roses on flocked gray, the dog, the first color photo ever taken, Ron’s drawing,¹⁷⁷ the oak leaf from Bill de Kooning’s yard,¹⁷⁸ Sandy Berrigan’s red heart, Alma 1971 (Harry Mathews),

¹⁷⁷ At this time, Ron Padgett occasionally used to do pen and ink drawings, “just for fun,” which he would sometimes then use to write letters on.

¹⁷⁸ This leaf was the inspiration for “Poem,” (“How about an oak leaf...”). Schuyler kept the leaf to the end of his life; in his room in the Chelsea Hotel it was attached to his mirror. It is with his papers in the Schuyler Archive at the University of California at San Diego.

George Schneeman's orange and silver glass of orange juice and sliced orange, Fairfield's pastel of Jane [Freilicher] in the living room in Maine; and, a Kodachrome of Bob, against rocks, looking nice and slitty-eyed in a turtleneck sweater. A picture of Bermuda.

[undated]

God's love, O live air
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee isled,
Fold home, fast fold thy child.

page 97¹⁷⁹

[undated]

Sentences.

Delacroix in English

“An evil woman from Hay was dressing a grave (Jane Phillips)”

Maitland¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ The last lines of “The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe” by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889).

¹⁸⁰ This entry appears to be an early note for “The Fauré Ballade,” published in *Hymn to Life*. The poem, which Schuyler described to Joe Brainard in a letter of June 11, 1971, as “a list-collage-quotes poem(?)” was published in the final issue of Trevor Winkfield’s magazine *Juillard* in 1972. It includes quotations from Delacroix’s *Journal*, a quotation from the historian F.W. Maitland, and the mysterious “evil woman from Hay” sentence, which is taken from the *Diary* of the Rev. Francis Kilvert, the entry for April 16, 1870. Kilvert is describing the rural Welsh custom of decorating graves with flowers for Easter morning.

Sunday, May 30, 1971

Came back yesterday—not even a postcard. Well well. He was tired, & no doubt is very busy (at work, and with playmates.) No point in tormenting oneself over a postcard, not with all these letters to write, not with all the entertaining playmates of my own who are beginning to litter the Hamptons—“Hello, Bob? Bob Dash? Are you busy? You’re not? Dying to see me? Terrific —”
FROST

June 3, 1971

Ah, sweet misery of life—how you taste! sweet-n'-sour piccalilli amply dumped on fudge ripple.

Monday, June 27, 1971

What’s in a name? Everything. It is the difference between “freedom” and “promiscuity.”

Tuesday, June 28, 1971

Edwin Denby is nobody’s sweetheart—except Rudy Burckhardt’s.

You would have to have Edwin “fall in love with you”—the mandarin manners, the dancer’s walk, the beautiful penis, the censoriousness, the sudden put-down and rug-yank, the hysterics—the *self-indulgent, self created* hysterics: “the crunch of anguish,” my ass: I was there, after all: did he want me to “make love to him” or not? and I mean, suck his beautiful dick; the middle-of-the-night horror scribble on a torn off margin of newspaper something like, “not

me, but something in me may make me kill you—” that’s love? Who needs it! or wants it. “—something in me—” and how. Is Rudy his friend, his one-time lover, or his muse? He is his friend and only love. (No matter “how well Bob Cornell “behaved—and there is a strong, and good person” for you). Meddlesome, sadistic, masochistic, preachy (“I assume one knows what is to feel shame”)¹⁸¹ Edwin Denby: so charming, with F O’H, the most elegant of men, the neglected poet (he wants it that way), the greatest critic—the very *poet* of the dance—the mime, the actor, the lover of life (and, at times, hater of same): he is a great artist, he is in fact, unique in the quality of his greatness, or rather in its nature. “Edwin Denby: he’s dynamite!” But watch out! it’s like having an x-ray fall in love with you. No wonder his friends treat him with awe, reverence and understanding. Frank knew: Edwin tried to make a false competitiveness out of Joe LeS—Frank—Edwin (mewling kitten noises). Frank called him up and told it like it is. Edwin didn’t “see Frank” as we did (very human, much frailty & [?sass]); Frank did not behave that way with him.

But Rudy. Yes, Rudy is his family, his friend, the one who entertains him most and is most entertained by him, the love of his life, his one & only. What a great man Rudy Burckhardt is.

¹⁸¹ The confusing punctuation and syntax of this passage have been left as written, except for the addition of the closing parenthesis here.

[Schuyler planned to spend the summer of 1971 at 49 South Main Street with Ron, Pat and five-year-old Wayne Padgett, who were taking care of the Porters' house while they were in Maine. Over the July 4th weekend, however, Schuyler began to act strangely and, it seemed, threateningly toward Wayne Padgett, to whom he was ordinarily kind and avuncular. Ron Padgett called on nearby friends Kenneth Koch and Joe Hazan, and with their help and that of Dr. Mary Johnson, who lived next door, and the police, Schuyler was eventually persuaded to go to the hospital in Southampton. From there he was transferred to the Suffolk County Psychiatric Hospital in Islip, Long Island.

The entries dated July 7 through July 9 are from a small spiral-bound notebook Schuyler kept while he was at Islip. The notebook is among the James Schuyler Papers in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego.]

July 7, 1971

So far: shaved {this
 breakfast {side
 clean-up {"in ward"
 blood test
 pissed in paper carton: full: "Beautiful!" said the
male nurse, casually hefting its weight.

Now to shower —

From which I was hailed for utter X-ray boredom—now in commissary and—Saints love us!—it's only 10:30 ay em —

July 7, 1971

lock
twice right to 8
left one whole turn past 8 to 22
then right to 16

July 8, 1971

p.s. a combination lock—just what I didn't want—so good Bob Dash ed off and got me a bicycle lock. Which was not what I wanted, but, alas needed.

July 8, 1971

I have graduated to the top floor and dear knows what witching hour of the night this is—"In the dark night of the soul it is always 3 a.m." Scott Fitzgerald scribbled¹⁸²—Well, yes, Scott, though St. John of the Cross¹⁸³ did not mean precisely what I take it you meant: the Glooms. *Au contraire*. It is then that the Lover goes forth—or is [it] the Beloved who goes forth to meet the Lover? The soul enraptured with the love of Heaven—an almost physical, a carnal Love. But it is not the love of the flesh, it is the love of Soul—St. John offered all his sensuality up (or so it seems to me) to his maker, the Adored, the Adorer, the Adoring, and it was meet. Nor was Wylan not mistaken when he said to Cyril Connolly¹⁸⁴—right in my hearing—"One cannot write about either end of the somatic scale: fucking and mystical love." (Rephrased by

¹⁸² This reference also appears in the poem "O Sleepless Night" (*A Few Days*): "the Dark Night of the Soul"/ about which F. Scott Fitzgerald/ was mistaken..."

¹⁸³ Saint John of the Cross (1542–1591), Spanish poet and mystic, perhaps best known for his poem, "Noche oscura" or "The Dark Night of the Soul".

In "November," an unpublished poem from 1960, Schuyler wrote, "St. John of the Cross,/ the saint it is easy to imagine the patron/ of poets: and if I am wrong, I am sorry/ and grateful, recalling, a war ago,/ walking down Third Avenue in New York/ with a thin book of his poems while trains roared."

¹⁸⁴ Cyril Connolly (1903-1974), English critic and, from 1939 to 1950, the editor of the influential literary journal *Horizon*.

memory—"somatic scale" is definitely dear "Miss Master.")¹⁸⁵
"Not St. John of the Cross?!?" Firbanked¹⁸⁶ C.C.—he has his
points and likes to make them. Wystan got on his St. Hugh of
Lincoln¹⁸⁷ Look ("Something's gotta go: be [?offed]") "It won't
do."

Maybe not for
you, baby.
St Juan de la
Croce
Your name is
writ in lights
As is San Juan
de Luz in
Stella Lights.

[undated]

1) White

I leave that there: never mind what I thought I was about to
write: and stays: or pause

¹⁸⁵ "Miss Master" was Chester Kallman's camp nickname for W.H. Auden. Kallman gave camp names not only to his friends but also to his father, Dr. Edward Kallman ("Miss Father"), and his future step-mother, Dorothy Farnan ("Miss Mistress"). Chester Kallman and Schuyler were known as "Fiordiligli" and "Dorabella," after the two sisters in Mozart's opera, "Cosi fan tutte," as Schuyler relates in "A few days." He adds, "If anybody called me by my camp name/ nowadays I'd sock them—I like to think."

¹⁸⁶ The English novelist Ronald Firbank (1886–1926) occasionally composed sentences or lines of dialogue entirely of punctuation marks.

¹⁸⁷ Saint Hugh of Lincoln (c.1135–1200). There was a Saint Wystan, but Auden, who in the latter half of his life was a member of the Anglican Church, was no doubt pleased to have been named also after this inspiring saint, whom Ruskin called "The most beautiful sacerdotal figure known to me in history."

July 9, 1971

in Dark Glasses”¹⁸⁸

(I am zonked
but happy —)

O bleeding heart

ah dumbbell—
change the setting.
change the setting. It’s
the shag end of an *après*
concert. She is seated
upon a table, one foot
on the floor, one adangle.
She is wearing a mink —
or let it be sable —
coat. She is talking with
Montgomery Clift.
Now she is swinging
it—a new number —
winds, maybe, by
Lorenz Hart¹⁸⁹ (O
bleeding heart.)

“Dignity
in Dark Glasses”
[*three words illegible*]

¹⁸⁸ Elements of the following entry are incorporated into the poem “Beautiful Funerals” (*Hymn to Life*) in which the woman is identified as the jazz singer Libby Holman (1906–1971).

¹⁸⁹ Lorenz Hart (1895–1942), lyricist. In partnership with the composer Richard Rodgers he wrote witty lyrics for the hit musicals “Boys from Syracuse” (1938) and “Pal Joey” (1940).

a few minutes
later, natch &
might as well
put away the[?]
stop watch &
the egg timer.

July 9, 1971

Good Morning, and
I have scarcely
noticed you,
pearlized and promising
heat, a mist risen
from dessicating
leaves. Good
Lord, send rain:
sweet Jesus forgive,
if needed, my
impudent¹⁹⁰ heart;
Holy Spirit, bind
us lightly.

July 9, 1971

to clean
ears [?], all
smiles
are sun
ny

¹⁹⁰ This word could also be "imprudent."

just woke up from heaven zonk—less than an hour. So yum good.

July 9, 1971

(COPY) (Written in other notebook)

Brain Washed Homage

Brains awash
in words with
words: no pun
what is a word
worth? Ask
I.A. Richards¹⁹¹
Who is, was
right, great:
we must wash
not mouths our
words clear and
clean to

communicate

to speak, to pass
the word

commune

atone, a [*word illegible*]

connect

hook up, buy dope

relate

¹⁹¹ Ivor Armstrong Richards (1893–1979), English literary critic who taught at Harvard from 1931 to 1963. “In *Science and Poetry* (1926) he presented an almost clinical view of poetry as a kind of mental hygiene which reconciles conflicting impulses in the mind,” according to *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. “His life’s work was dedicated to clarity of communication.”

to tell, to be at
ease
with one another
as though to
love, to like
were not
enough to know
not what I
mean, just,
but also how
will it sound,
what will it
say to you:
hello, out or
over there
your eyes
on print on
a page: Is
this a page?
It—i.e. this
poem—may
be writ in
ink on silk

July 9, 1971

O Santos-Dumont¹⁹²
guard my flying
lover

amen.

¹⁹² Alberto Santos-Dumont (1898–1932), Brazilian aviator.

[No diaries survive from the decade between the summers of 1971 and 1981. It was a difficult period for Schuyler. In August, 1971, he suffered another nervous breakdown while visiting Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard in Vermont and was hospitalized there for about a month. In October, 1973 he finally moved out of the Porters' house to live in a small dark apartment at 250 East 35th Street, and at about the same time, his relationship with Bob J_____ came to an end. In October, 1975, while Schuyler was in Bloomingdale psychiatric hospital in Westchester County, Fairfield Porter died suddenly of a heart attack. In 1976, Schuyler moved into a rooming house on West 20th Street where, in April, 1977, he was seriously injured in a fire which he had accidentally started by smoking in bed. During the next two years, between frequent hospital stays, he lived in a nursing home at Broadway and 74th Street, and for several months in the Allerton Hotel on West 22nd Street. He finally settled in the Chelsea Hotel in May, 1979.]

Yet in spite of the turmoil in his personal life, Schuyler published four books in the seventies: The Crystal Lithium (1972), Hymn to Life (1974), The Home Book (1977), and What's For Dinner? (1978). In addition, The Morning of the Poem, written between 1974 and 1978, was published in 1980 and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1981.

During this period there were times when it was hard for friends to recognize the Schuyler they had known in the 50s and 60s in the person he seemed to have become: ill-kempt, depressed, difficult. Some of his old friends, who had been through crisis after crisis, became "burned out" and kept their distance or gradually drifted away. Others, including John Ashbery, Morris Golde, Anne Dunn and Ruth Kligman, remained close, however, and newer friends, including Darragh Park, Eileen Myles, Helena Hughes, Frank Polach and Douglas Crase entered his life. Two couples whose friendship during this time gave Schuyler some sense of the family life he missed after leaving the Porters were Charles and Paula North, and George and Katie Schneeman.

After the fire in the rooming house and the squalor of the Allerton Hotel, Schuyler's friends realized that he needed someone to look after him on a daily basis. Beginning in the spring of 1979 the Frank O'Hara Foundation, headed by Morris Golde, arranged for Eileen Myles, a young poet, to come in every morning to give him his pills, make breakfast and keep him company for a few hours. When Myles gave up the job in the fall

of 1979, it was taken over by Tom Carey, who shared it with another young poet, Helena Hughes.

Tom Carey, then 28, was an aspiring actor, rock musician and poet, and Schuyler fell obsessively in love with him. It was a love that was not returned on a romantic or physical level, and by March, 1980 the situation had become so uncomfortable for Carey that he stopped working for Schuyler. They remained friends, however, and Tom Carey gradually became the stabilizing center of Schuyler's emotional life.

Helena Hughes remained Schuyler's indispensable assistant for about six years, coming in most mornings with his medication, accompanying him to doctors, and helping him in countless ways. Schuyler drew a subsistence income from three different trusts that had been established by friends for his benefit, but enormous hospital bills made his finances precarious. During these years Helena Hughes was active in applying for various Federal, State and private grants to help meet Schuyler's medical and daily living expenses. In addition to holding his life together on a practical level, she was a close friend and sometime poetic collaborator.]

August 31, 1981

A blue-gray light on the office building across the street changes to stone color: it grows light but the sun doesn't seem to rise today: as Fairfield used to say, "There is a cloud that extends from Richmond to Bangor..."¹⁹³

Sunday, September 6, 1981

Another gray day, but not gray, gray, gray: another not-great Labor Day weekend. I should care, I ain't goin' no-where.

¹⁹³ The poem "Gray Day" in *A Few Days* begins, "'There is a cloud,' / Fairfield used to say, / 'that stretches from / Richmond to Bangor: / its center is Southampton.'" A variation appears in an earlier poem, "'Earth's Holocaust'": "a bedroom, stretching from Portland / to Richmond..."

Dreamt that Tom was coming back to work at the Museum,¹⁹⁴ but not until the day after New Year's. The manager, a woman (in waking life, the librarian at the library in Southampton) said Tom wanted a brown shirt for Christmas and she went out to get him one, but returned, unsuccessful, from Altman's or de Pinna's or some such. I said I didn't think solid dark brown shirts were much in style anymore, and probably impossible to find. I asked if she thought he would like a shirt like the one I was wearing, white, with a thin brown stripe? Then I decided I would buy him oxford cloth shirts at Brooks Brothers, one of each of the colors they come in: white, blue, yellow, pink, ecru, stone. Then I got my money out and counted it. Somehow a twenty dollar bill, a ten, a five and some singles added up to nearly two hundred dollars!

Often, in dreams lately, I take my money out and count it. Usually it is less than I expected, just once, it was more. And once when I was counting twenties someone said, "That's not a twenty dollar bill, that's a nineteen dollar bill." And so it was.

New York's most wanted criminal¹⁹⁵ is said to be coming back from California today. Or so his brother says. How can I be dying to see someone who has treated me so badly? But I do: The Babe.

¹⁹⁴ The Museum of Modern Art, where Schuyler worked from 1957 to 1961, first at the front desk, later in the International Program.

¹⁹⁵ Tom Carey. In 1980, just after the period when he worked as Schuyler's assistant, Tom Carey became addicted to heroin. When he began to revisit Schuyler as a friend—and they were writing their collaborative novel, *Small Crimes*—he gradually started stealing letters and books from Schuyler which he sold to buy drugs. In the summer of 1981, while Carey was in California beginning the process of recovery from his addiction, Schuyler and Helena Hughes discovered what had been going on. Eventually, Hughes managed to get most of the letters back and Carey was forgiven.

[In 1983 Schuyler was diagnosed with diabetes. With the help of his new doctor, Daniel Newman, Schuyler began trying to keep his weight and his blood-sugar down, and to pay attention to his health in general. The disease had already damaged his circulation, however, and on May 21, 1984, Dr. Geun-Eun Kim performed an arterial bypass on Schuyler's right leg. It was unsuccessful and the operation had to be revised ten days later with a teflon graft. This time the operation was a success and Schuyler's leg was saved. (The procedure was innovative and Dr. Kim's account of it was published in a medical journal, to Schuyler's bemusement). In August, 1984, Schuyler had two toes amputated.]

Schuyler took up his Diary again in the fall of 1984 when he and Darragh Park decided to keep, and eventually publish, a loosely collaborative diary of words and pictures.]

Sunday, October 14, 1984

Came back last evening with Tom from a three-day visit to Darragh at his little house in Bridgehampton. October's bright blue weather¹⁹⁶ was gray and turbulent, the changing and falling leaves tempest tost: hurricane Josephine was stalled 300 miles off shore, sending in big seas. Darragh introduced me to the Pepperidge tree, or Nyssa, of a lovely winey red.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday: the longest continuous time I've spent with Tom, in five years! Lovely.

For the past seven months I have had some sort of palsy in my right foot and been in continuous pain. I have also been to the hospital twice: four operations, arterial by-pass and the amputation of two gangrenous toes. But that's all I've got to say about that. Better times are bound to come. I have diabetes to thank for all this.

Tom is writing a play.¹⁹⁷ I hope we can get back to work on the

¹⁹⁶ See the Entry for October 10, 1969.

¹⁹⁷ Tom Carey's play, "The Paul Clown Show," was read at The Poetry Project at Saint Mark's Church in 1985, and at Dixon Place in 1987. Schuyler attended the 1987 reading.

novel (*Small Crimes*)¹⁹⁸ we started. I want to finish it.

Darragh gave me a large parlor linden he grew from a cutting. I can see it will dominate my life.

Monday, October 15, 1984

Coming back from Hy Weitzen's this noon I got in the cab and said, "Beautiful day!" "Look," the driver said, "just tell me where you want to go." "The Hotel Chelsea on West 23rd between 7th and 8th Avenues," I said, somewhat chagrined. So we rolled down Lexington, past Caswell-Massey which smells so good and past East 27th Street where Chester Kallman¹⁹⁹ used to live—me too, for that matter. Why am I alive when so many of my friends are dead? Why not?

Today Dr. W. Tomorrow Dr. Kim,²⁰⁰ the Korean surgeon. Wednesday Dr. Daniel (The Cutest) Newman, my diabetes and weight loss doctor. Too many doctors: or could that be why I'm still alive? Hmmm?

The visit to Darragh and Bridgehampton awakened a great longing for country living: I like the city, but I like to see things growing, to see blue and tumbling skies, walk on the winter shore: the whole bag of tricks.

Oh Fairfield, Fairfield, of all of them, why did *you* have to die?

¹⁹⁸ An excerpt from this otherwise unpublished work was published in *Little Caesar*, number 11, 1980.

¹⁹⁹ Schuyler and Charles Heilemann lived in Kallman's apartment at 129 East 27th Street for several months, beginning in September 1949.

²⁰⁰ Dr. Geun-Eun Kim (b. 1941), the surgeon who operated on Schuyler's leg in May, 1984. Schuyler was referred to Dr. Kim by Dr. Daniel Newman and by Judy Gallion, Dr. Kim's scrub nurse, who was the girlfriend of Schuyler's friend, the poet John Godfrey.

Tuesday, October 16, 1984

I can usually get a cab quite soon outside the hotel and, en route to Dr. Kim's office on East 38th Street, one appeared almost as soon as I went out. It pulled up a way beyond me, but as I reached the door the driver stepped on the gas and sped away! Odd, to be rejected by a cab driver on a closer inspection. Perhaps it was the way I hobbled in bedroom slippers (for my heel) and my bandaged foot—or that I so very much need a haircut: but surely long hair is no big deal nowadays? One would like to know why—and then I waited nearly half an hour before another empty came.

In Madison Square only one tree had a yellowing branch: so different from the country last week.

Dr. Kim was more forthcoming than usual and thinks my heel may be all healed by the time I see him next, in three weeks. He's being very patient about being paid!

Yesterday about five, just after Helena left, the phone rang: "This is Hilda:" I was on the point of saying, "You have the wrong number," when I realized that it was my sister-in-law, with whom I had not spoken since she called to tell me of Mother's death some years ago!²⁰¹ Word has finally reached East Aurora that a local boy won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1981! The East Aurora Historical Society wants, wants, wants... "So I'm dumping it in your lap," said Hilde. I said they could find out all they need to know in *Who's Who*, my books are for sale through bookshops and I will send a photograph (courtesy of Chris Cox). My nephew John is six feet four and married to "a very earthy girl—I mean down to earth," his younger brother Michael (my pet) is a skilled carpenter, and the youngest Peggy is a junior at Canisius, having rejected Syracuse as "too loose," and intends to go into international banking. So I suppose I must go there sometime—though this was *not* urged upon me!

²⁰¹ By slightly Anglicizing the pronunciation of her first name, Hilde Ridenour made it sound temporarily unfamiliar to Schuyler. Her earlier telephone call bringing the news of Schuyler's mother's death, in March, 1981, concludes the poem, "A few days:" "Then one day/ the telephone:/ it's Hilde:/ 'Mother passed on/ in her sleep/ last night...'"

Didn't see Tom last night. Nuts. But he says his play is very funny...

Wednesday evening, October 17, 1984

One of the managers of Joe Allen's, the theater district restaurant where Tom waits table, died yesterday of AIDS. He had known for some time that something was seriously the matter but went to see no one about it—not that anything could have been done for him if he had. Tom rather in a funk about it, as are the others who work there.

Meantime poor nice Larry Stanton works out the same evil destiny at New York Hospital: pneumonia and something to do with his liver but presided over by the evil genius of single men: AIDS.

Saw Daniel [Newman] this afternoon and told him how glad I was I'd stopped going to the baths ten years ago. "I suppose you realize," he said, "that I'm gay." Well, yes: that was why I went to him in the first place. "But I've never been promiscuous." What's putting so many of his friends and patients in a turmoil is that the incubation period may be up to four years, so even if you "reform" you still won't know if you're safe for a long, long time...

Tom is seeing Daniel tomorrow: he once broke his arm, and now his elbow is acting "funny" and he thinks the pin may have come out.

And I gained weight: very bad! Gotta lose it, gotta lose it.

And such a warm and gorgeous day!

Monday, October 22, 1984

Larry Stanton, ravaged by pneumonia, died in New York Hospital last Thursday, latest of the AIDS victims. There is a memorial service today at the Presbyterian church on lower Fifth Avenue.

Poor painter: the tubes are, indeed, twisted and dry.

It's over a week since we came back from Bridgehampton, and in that time I've seen Tom for precisely one hour! Won't do. The pin had not come out of his elbow—"Just hysteria," he says.

Why am I so blue? Oh, I have my reasons.

Thursday, October 25, 1984

Tom quit smoking on Sunday and he's going through hell. Much worse than when he went cold turkey on smack. I saw him yesterday afternoon for a bit—he won't use the nicotine gum Dr. N. prescribed: just like a Christian Scientist²⁰² when it comes to drugs and pills.

Well, Tom Baby, keep holding the thought.

Helena will be back today from Temple dedication²⁰³ doings in New England, and visiting Harold Talbott in Marion. And Oriane²⁰⁴ and Darragh are back in residence on West 22nd Street... And my foot hurts.

²⁰² Schuyler's mother, who had been brought up as a Presbyterian, became a Christian Scientist after she married Schuyler's step-father. "She became a practitioner, which is their equivalent of a doctor, and was very serious about it," Schuyler said in an interview in 1986, adding, "I hated it." When he and Joe Brainard were both quitting smoking in 1970, Schuyler wrote to Brainard, "I don't [think] either [of us] is in much danger [of backsliding], for the slightly sinister reason that, because of our churchified upbringing, we rather enjoy giving things up..." (August 30, 1970).

²⁰³ Helena Hughes was and is a practicing Buddhist.

²⁰⁴ Darragh Park's dog; a lurcher: half whippet, half border collie. Schuyler wrote the poem "Oriane" for her, and as part of a collaboration with Darragh Park, inscribed the poem on Park's painting of the dog.

Wednesday, October 31, 1984

A frisson that that may be the last time I will ever type that date: brought on, no doubt, by the morning news that Indira Gandhi is dead, shot eight times by her bodyguard. I just told Charlie Martin²⁰⁵ I wouldn't be in public life, not for nuthin'.

On a lighter note: Tom and some of the other chaps [...] are going to get dolled up in drag and go to Claire's, around the corner on 7th Avenue, for dinner. I called him up and said, "Tom, about the dress: no. What you do is wear your grandfather Paul [Fix]'s tux, and the evening shirt and tie from Brooks Brothers, and go as Adrian [Milton]'s date."

"Adrian's not invited," Tom said smugly. Now how do you mold a gent out of material as intractable as that?

Hallowe'en memory: the time I tipped over someone's bird-bath and it shattered!

Friday, November 2, 1984

A week from today is my sixty-first birthday. When I told Hy Weitzen that I had turned fifty the previous week, he said, "Congratulations! You made it!" When I told him the next year I had turned fifty-one, he said, "Don't talk about it."

Tom is making me unhappy, but I don't think he's doing it on purpose. (Jim is making Jim unhappy, very much on purpose.)

²⁰⁵ Charlie Martin, a friend of Helena Hughes's who helped Schuyler in many ways, and installed the air-conditioner which Schuyler came to depend on in the New York City summers.

Saturday, November 3, 1984

Gray day, gray as the cat Hodge. And again just three hours sleep: can't stand it, and have no choice.

Jimmy McCourt came to see me yesterday afternoon: such a nice man. I like him very much. We talked about his friend, the great opera singer de los Angeles,²⁰⁶ and about Tom. We agree in predicting a great future in the theater for him, and about how talented he is, and how handsome. I said, "Tom has the kind of good looks that go on and on." "I certainly hope so!" Jimmy said, seeing a long line of hit plays, written by him and starring Tom. And I'm not jealous: I want Tom to have it all.

And suddenly at 7:30 in the morning out comes the sun! Bless you, sweetheart—which may mean Tom, or may mean the sun, or both.

Monday, November 5, 1984

7:30 of a very rainy morning—"Over an inch and a half of rain has fallen on the metropolitan area...there are no trains from Canarsie." And the Sixty-fifth Street transfer across the park, which I so often use on a Monday morning going to Hy's, is closed by flooding. How we live by radio and tv!

Yesterday was Helena's birthday (thirty-three). I gave her the poem I'd written for her.²⁰⁷ It made her laugh but she said she couldn't hang it on the wall (I discussed her new diaphragm that has a spring in it and shot across the room when she was trying to insert it.) "Why not? It's your wall." "But suppose my parents came to visit?" "Then take the poem down." Such problems.

²⁰⁶ Victoria de los Angeles (b. 1923), Spanish soprano. James McCourt is writing her biography.

²⁰⁷ "The time comes round..." The poem is dated October 28, 1984 and is unpublished.

I like my room when rain beads the wrought iron railing of my balcony.

How well I slept! Two nights in a row! What a surprise. If only the Dalmane sleeping pill I take didn't obliterate my dreams. Though I know that toward waking up time I dreamt about the Dalai Lama. He was very old, which he isn't, and very wise, which I suppose he is.

Tonight I'm seeing Tom. Goody.

November 6, 1984
Election Day

Tom came by last night after his class, looking unbelievably handsome. He read a chapter of *Thank You, Jeeves*²⁰⁸ to me in his equally beautiful, resonant voice. What a sweetie! We're going together to St. Mark's²⁰⁹ on the 28th to hear Jimmy McCourt and Jimmy Merrill read.

I have to go off shortly to let Dr. Kim look at my heel where the ulceration was removed and explain to him where the non-existent money is coming from! It keeps occurring to me that if the archives²¹⁰ had been sold last winter I wouldn't be in this hellish financial situation. Would I, dear?

Dr. Kim, here comes nothing...

²⁰⁸ A novel by P.G. Wodehouse (1881–1975).

²⁰⁹ The Poetry Project at the Saint Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery.

²¹⁰ In 1989, most of James Schuyler's papers and manuscripts, catalogued by Raymond Foye, were sold to the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego. The remaining papers were purchased by the Library in 1992, after Schuyler's death, though negotiations had begun while he was living.

November 7, 1984

So, Ron and Nancy are headed back to the White House. Not what one would wish (our greatest actor is now our greatest president), but who can take seriously the thought of Woodenhead Mondale in the job? As for the ineffable Geraldine and her crook husband... forget it. In her step-down speech she made herself out to have done more for women than Joan of Arc!

Dr. Kim yesterday was a Korean Pussycat. I said, "Doctor, I'm so sorry about this disaster with the money." He giggled and said, "What Doctor Newman say?" He giggled some more. "In beginning they say one thing, in end they say different. Well, we must take care of you." But where is the money to come from? The much bank-accounted are not being all that forthcoming. Helena wants me to go through bankruptcy, which it may come to. But first we must pay off all the debt we can. What the hell, they saved my life!

The heel is healing nicely, thank you very much.

"That man who is not king of the world on his birthday is truly miserable," (or something like that—Groddeck):²¹¹ two days to go to sixty-one, which doesn't seem as old as sixty did. Tom calls me, "The old coot," but not very often. He tried to change "coot" to "curmudgeon," but I wouldn't have that.

²¹¹ Walter Georg Groddeck (1866–1934), German psychologist who held that all physical illness could be traced to psychosomatic causes. Groddeck's *The Book of the It* was a tremendous influence on W.H. Auden from the time that he was first introduced to it in Berlin in 1928.

In December, 1948, when Schuyler was living on Ischia and suffering from hemorrhoids, Auden wrote Chester Kallman, "By the same mail as yours arrived a letter from Jimmy. Poor darling! He should go to a medium and call up Groddeck in person." (N.Y.P.L., Berg Collection)

November 8, 1984

Why are the works of John O'Hara²¹² so lightly ignored by the higher criticism? Everyone knows how good he could be (and how silly): "Imagine Kissing Pete" is right up there with *The Great Gatsby* and "A Lost Lady." He should have lived another ten years to accomplish his task—though a book like *The Lockwood Concern* makes one wonder about that. I never come to Quogue station on the LIRR without a thought for the old gay-hater and his big Irish tool, with which he did his typing. How sexy and over-weening he looked, photographed in his little foreign run-about!

The Chelsea sure lays on the heat on a frosty November morning! And mysteriously there is no way to turn off or otherwise control the radiator. So I must open the French door to the balcony for a chilling interval. But I shouldn't complain: all over the city people are calling the no heat hot-line. So count your blessings and I do.

One of which was a birthday card from little Ambrose Bye,²¹³ with a poem written with his mother Anne, an abstract watercolor and a photograph of the great fellow himself. And I'm equally grateful for one from Liz Porter, who thinks my birthday is November 6th. Her mother's birthday is about now, but when?

When I woke up I thought I was going to hop out of bed and write an ode to bisexuality, which was quite clear to me, but all that remains is the ending: "and remember that/ cunt is where it's at."

²¹² John O'Hara (1905–1970), American novelist and short-story writer. Before he became a poet, Schuyler's ambition was to write stories in the manner of John Cheever or John O'Hara.

²¹³ Ambrose Eyre Bye (b. 1980) is the son of poets Anne Waldman and Reed Bye. He is the subject of Waldman's *First Baby Poems* (1982) and contributed words to her vast collage poem, *Iovis* (1993).

November 9, 1984

“James Marcus Schuyler, born Chicago, Ill., November 9th, 1923, to Margaret (Daisy) Connor Schuyler and Marcus James Schuyler...” Dear dead people, I honor you on this, my natal day.

The phone has taken to ringing too early: people named “Serge” bearing gifts from far Nepal for Helena. Today, Lawyer Ennis, my Elmslie Trust trustee, about my Medicare application. “I won’t tell them that. I’ll tell [them] you are a lifetime recipient of the income of a trust which pays between \$5,000 and \$7,500 a year. Are you diabetic? So am I. My brother had his leg cut off at the knee. Now I’m going to Australia for three weeks.” “Have a good trip.” Nice man, though you could not say we’re all that close.

The trouble with these phone interruptions is they destroy the creative flow: yesterday I had all but finished framing a poem about David Protetch²¹⁴ and when I got off the phone the words had vanished utterly! Maybe “David” will still be written in other words, but ones perhaps just as worthy. But not today: too sad a story to tell on my birthday.

Yesterday I left my publisher and next week (knock wood) am going to another. The details are too tiresome and nit-picking to be recorded in detail, enough to say I’m happy about it. My best birthday present. Monster, farewell! JG, how we doing?²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Schuyler never wrote a poem about Protetch, though his sudden death from diabetes is referred to in “The Morning of the Poem:” (“...when I went to my doctor for my last/ Injection I walked in on his wake...”).

²¹⁵ Writing to Joe Brainard on November 13, 1985, Schuyler was “Especially pleased that you like so much the long poem [“A few days”]—not liking it was the big hang up for Michael di Capua at Farrar Straus (who published *The Morning of the Poem*), hence my return to Random House and the welcoming arms of Jonathan Galassi (kiss kiss).” Random House had published *The Crystal Lithium* (1971) and *Hymn to Life* (1973). In the late 1970s, Schuyler approached Farrar, Straus & Giroux and asked if they would consider publishing his next book. Michael di Capua, who had long admired Schuyler’s work, responded with a signed contract to publish what would become *The Morning of the Poem* (1980). On being presented with the manuscript of *A Few Days*, however, di Capua felt that the poem “A few days” compared

Saturday, November 10, 1984

A very nice birthday yesterday. Helena arrived early with a huge bag from which emerged a great big goose feather pillow such as I've long desired. It makes scrumptious sleeping—well being in bed, if not sleeping. Then late in the afternoon Jimmy McCourt appeared with one dark red rose, just right for my bud vase. The phone rang and it was Trevor Winkfield, rang again and it was George Schneeman. Then suddenly arrived dearest Frank Polach with heavily scented freesias. He felt he was intruding and didn't want to stay but we made him. As though such a fellow could ever be anything but welcome. They left and I changed from my night shirt to going out clothes and tapped my foot too impatient to read until Darragh came to go down to the restaurant with me, bearing shirts from Brooks Brothers! Handsome, and badly needed. I gave him Anne Porter's beautiful poem "For My Son Johnny"²¹⁶ and he arranged the parlor linden so less of its pot shows behind the (dirty) yellow armchair. Then a trauma getting a cab: two kind ladies also bound for Soho let us share their cab. At G. Lombardi's (said to be actor Donald Sutherland's favorite NY restaurant) *my* Tom was waiting with Eau Sauvage for me, of which I reek this minute. Then, when we were at the table, Helena came. No drinks: just Perrier! "Where is the life that late I led?" For me clams and saltimboca alla Romana—very good and such a change from my diet of Lean Cuisine!

Everyone said how much younger I look with my hair cut short again. Why don't people tell one these things? Why not say, "Jimmy, long hair makes you look older." Forget it. I was entertaining and sociable when I suddenly felt a flash of anxiety! Briefly

unfavorably with "The Morning of the Poem," and he advised Schuyler not to publish the book. Schuyler went back to Random House, where Jonathan Galassi became his editor, and Random House published *A Few Days* in 1985. When Galassi moved to Farrar Straus, Schuyler went with him and *Selected Poems* (1988) and *Collected Poems* (1993) were both published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

²¹⁶ Anne Porter's poem was written after her son's death and is in her book, *An Altogether Different Language*, Zoland Books, 1994.

alarming: with a life like mine any little thing out of the routine can seem like a symptom of something scary on its way. But it wasn't. Then home and sleeplessness, having taken a long nap in the afternoon, redeemed by some moderately entertaining TV. At four in the morning I got up and wrote a poem about the unbearable pain the x-ray caused me during my second bypass operation.²¹⁷ Then rest, if not sleep.

But I forgot: my oh so welcome birthday call from John (Ashbery), who was at his mother's upstate in Pultneyville, from whose bedroom windows you can look across the street and see Lake Ontario. It made me feel much better about the way things stand between us. Now I want.....my Tom! And if not Tom, why not Daniel? Could God in his goodness have made him a gerontophile? I doubt it. As Joe E. Brown says at the end of "Some Like it Hot," "Nobody's perfect."

November 10, 1984

John Ashbery: "Jimmy's in bed reading a yellow-back novel." East 49th St. 1957

Turn backward, turn backward
O Time in your flight ...²¹⁸

²¹⁷ The poem, "After the operation...", dated November 10, 1984, is unpublished. In it Schuyler explains that, "I'm a great believer in/ total anesthesia but my/ surgeon wanted to be able/ to talk to me so I/ only had it from the/ waist down..."

²¹⁸ John Ashbery does not remember the occasion, which must have been while he and Schuyler were sharing the apartment at 326 East 49th Street in 1957-58. Ashbery has pointed out, however, that the couplet is a loose translation from Lamartine's poem "Le Lac": "O temps, suspends ton vol! et vous, heures propices,/ Suspendez votre cours!" The first line of this poem is quoted in *A Nest of Ninnies*, when Mrs. Bridgewater, speaking of her lapsed French, says, "I can't remember anything except, 'Ainsi, toujours poussés vers de nouveaux rivages.'" "Le Lac" is referred to again later in the novel when two of the characters plan to visit "the lake about which Lamartine wrote his poem."

November 13, 1984

Well, Daniel finally took me off the ineffective Dalmane (whose trade name should be “Sleep No More”) and put me on I’m not sure what—a two-tone capsule: (but aren’t we all?) which did work. I don’t feel like a million bucks but I also do not feel like creamed shit. Dalmane doesn’t work because it isn’t a controlled substance: you can have all you want, no harm done.* How can something that’s not bad for you do any good? *I know*. Nuff said.

Tom came by and read Wodehouse to me. Very up: “I have a new addiction: sugar. I eat a tapioca and two coffees with three spoons of sugar and I’m singing and dancing (and I suppose laughing and scratching), the life of the party.” “Think of the money you would have saved if you’d been on sugar all those years instead of speed.” “Right!” I keep hearing about sugar rushes: never had one in my life, though I have had (I hate to confess it) sugar.

After two pain free days my foot is acting up—though not like days of recent yore. What’s this about no memory of pain, as after childbirth. More bullshit, bullshit, bullshit. You remember all right, you just don’t want to think about it. Why I remember every Caesarean section—how many? twelve, twenty?—and never a drop of anaesthetic! Just a shot of Jack Daniels.

G’bye folks. (These were the last words he ever wrote).

*Wrong. It is “a controlled substance.”

Wednesday, November 14, 1984

Another of Maxine [Groffsky]’s oh so welcome morning phone calls. She got the manuscript (*A Few Days*) back from Michael [di Capua]. Jonathan Galassi (at Random House, my old publisher) has read the manuscript: he loves it: he has always loved my poetry but never dreamt he might get to publish it. Now the ms. has to be

“approved” (who by, I can’t imagine: Jason Epstein,²¹⁹ perhaps) then we talk contract. Item one: I have the say about the jacket and who does it: and who could that be but the gifted Mr. Park. “Don’t you think, Maxine that after the Pulitzer?” “Oh of course!” Goody Goody gumdrops.

Ever since we came back from Bridgehampton the pain in my right foot (neuritis) has steadily abated. Last night it struck up its tune again: nothing like last spring, when I used to lie on the bed and sob, about what it was like when I last came out of the hospital. Pretty much a white night: just what I wanted and needed. Piss.

I win the argument with Tom (asked Hy Weitzen yesterday). Sugar does not, cannot, nor does it wish to cause diabetes. The old idea was malfunction of one of the glands (the pituitary?), now it’s something to do with an immune system: God knows what. Then we talked about platelets, and the two doctors who came in and asked, “Is there any history of leukemia in your family?” “Not: to: my: knowledge...”

Monday, November 20, [sic] 1984²²⁰

A white night. Hell and damnation. And they promise me snow flurries at dawn: it’s right next to dawn and where are my snow flurries? Which are not what I want: I want a blizzard.

And Jimmy McCourt is coming over this afternoon. I find him completely delightful: full of pep and anecdotes and operatic and book world gossip. Fun. His shrink said, “Michael is a paranoid schizophrenic in regression—but he won’t hurt you.”

It’s getting light at 6:30: I thought it didn’t get light until 7. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

²¹⁹ Jason Epstein (b. 1928), the Vice President and Editorial Director of Random House, did have final say about publishing the book.

²²⁰ November 20 was a Tuesday.

Saturday, November 24, 1984

Things get a little too exciting here: I put on the radio when I woke up (at 7), as I always do and caught the end of the news. A fire in the historic Hotel Chelsea at 2 a.m., starting on the 7th floor and coming down to the 6th, where I live! I slept right through it all, and doubtless the great alarm went off: I'm totally deaf in my left ear, and if I'm asleep on my right side—as I always am—I don't hear a thing, not even the telephone right beside me. The gas is shut off, no elevators running, and with my bum foot I really can't climb six flights of stairs... never mind: this too will pass? But what [about] getting to Hy's on Monday? And Dr. Kim on Tuesday? And darling Daniel on Wednesday?

Why is Tom always in the tub when I want to talk to him? The longer I know him the more I love him: five years and a little bit more.

Saturday, November 30, [sic] 1984²²¹

I almost wrote, "Hallowe'en," which only put me out a month in my calculations.

"No word from Tom: has love no voice? Can love not keep a spring time vow in ci-tees? Or fades it like a russ cut for a rich deesplay?"²²² But I did have a word from Tom, yesterday morning,

²²¹ November 30 was a Friday.

²²² "No word from Tom. Has Love no voice, can Love not keep/ A Maytime vow in cities? Fades it as the rose/ Cut for a rich display?..." are lines sung by Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's opera, "The Rake's Progress." The libretto is by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman; these (and most of Anne's) lines are Kallman's, while most of Tom's are Auden's, "an exact, and possibly deliberate, reversal of their roles in real life," according to Auden's biographer, Humphrey Carpenter. On September 3, 1960, Schuyler wrote Kallman inviting him to contribute to the first issue of *Locus Solus*, which Schuyler was editing: "I'd like very much to represent you by the scena from the Rake's Progress, *Has love no voice*, to finish of act." Kallman's reply is

so there, yah yah: Tom, who is so, as Darragh said, golden.

Three weeks to the shortest day of the year: four to Christmas, five to New Year. Then we're over the hump and down in the slough of February and March, into which I shall drag my slow length along...²²³

Tuesday, December 4, 1984

What a great night's sleep! I feel great—but my foot hurts. Oh well.

Hy Weitzen pulled me out of the doldrums yesterday: I'm to learn more factually about diabetes and confront my nemesis. I suppose knowledge will help. I only wish there were fewer obituaries in the *Times* for "a diabetic related condition" of people who always seem to be in their sixties! When my mother lived to be ninety I thought I might have a shot at it: but it doesn't look that way, no it doesn't. But dying is no big deal. Who knows? Maybe I'm wrong and there is a God and I'll meet darling Fairfield again.

Since he quit smoking Tom has gained fifteen pounds and become very short-tempered: Tom, the most equable of men. Well, it will gradually wear off.

Thursday, December 6, 1984

Yesterday, my postponed visit to Daniel: Dr. Daniel White Newman. "Was your mother's maiden name White?" "Why, yes, it was!" Great delight expressed at my idle but insightful remark. There were a lot of Whites, but no males, "Then I came along," to

unknown and no work of his appeared in *Locus Solus*. Schuyler attended the first New York production of the opera with Chester Kallman and John Ashbery in 1953.

²²³ "A needless Alexandrine ends the song,/ That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along." From Alexander Pope's "An Essay on Criticism."

the pleasure of all beholders. The day before he had gone to the barber when he was pissed off about something and snapped, “Cut it!” and off came every glorious curl! Thank God they will grow back—but not a wise move on the part of a man who seems in search of a mate! To cut off one of his greatest charms. I gained two pounds—not nearly so much as I feared, so I didn’t get yelled at (always the threat: on him it could look good). And I took a check “in full” for the hospital visits: \$5,500 plus. His face did light up, as I anticipated. Now he may take a little winter vacation: he’s entitled. One thing I did like about the hospital was having Daniel dart in, all smiles and curls, every morning: quite made the day.

Wednesday, December 19, 1984

A week ago today I was out of it—it seems I went down into the lobby and out into the street “unsuitably dressed”—naked? in my undershorts?—and set the cat among the pigeons. Helena got me to Dr. Newman’s, where I fell down some steps, and blacked out, only coming to realize I was once again in Beekman Hospital! Old home week. One thing about a black out: it spares one the infinite ennui of “admitting,” and the pain of a spine tap, and the “just lie still please” of x-rays. Daniel diagnoses what he names a “micro-stroke,” confirmed by Dr. Foo, the only one who can really read the scan. There is evidence of something physical having taken place in the brain, and Daniel thinks I might have had a full-dress stroke except for the anti-coagulant medication I’ve been on since my by-pass last spring. Dr. Foo came around and put me through my paces: “Spell chair backwards” (which he pronounces “cheer”). The first time I couldn’t, then I could. “Very good. You much better.” And so I am. I feel as though I had had a catharsis. And so I have.

Darragh thought Dr. Foo was my joke name for Dr. Kim! Sent the latter \$1000: one down and so many to go.

Thursday, December 20, 1984

Strange, not to have someone come barging in in the dark of the morning saying, "I just want to draw a little blood, Mr. Shooler."

How well I slept, how well I slept, how well I slept: how well I feel, how well I feel, how well I feel!

Darragh came by yesterday noon, to bring me Virginia Woolf's²²⁴ *Diary*, Volume 5, for Christmas and to pinch out the growing points on my parlor linden, except on the twin leaders. He says mine is doing much better than his...

Saturday, January 5, 1985

Nearly the end of the first week of 1985 and all I've written is my name in a book! But what a name, and in what a book.

Last night the giant flowered amaryllis (one of my Xmas presents to myself, along with Eau Sauvage and a white poinsettia) somehow fell over and lost a giant blossom: it looks all the better for it! I quite like its simplicity.

Snow on the ground, but not heavy.

Tom, dear Tom is coming by: :::::

Thursday, January 10, 1985

Sleep, sleep, sleep: great sleep. Tonight I want more—but I doubt that I'll get it. Well a day.

I think Tom has his phone off the hook—little beast. And so, and so...

²²⁴ The five volumes of Virginia Woolf's *Diaries*, edited by Anne Olivier Bell and A. McNeillie, were published from 1977 to 1984 and were favorite books of Schuyler's which he reread often.

Monday, January 14, 1985

Winter seems to go on and on—and here it is, only a little more than three weeks into it! And I used to love cold and snow so much. Perhaps everything seems better in the country.

Tom is coming over this afternoon (perhaps)—what with the play he's in²²⁵ and his working, I see him hardly at all. If he's ever in a Broadway hit, as he no doubt will be one day, I'll go bananas. But if he's in a hit, I suppose he wouldn't have to go on working at Joe Allen's. That might be a gain?

Now to get ready for Hy Weitzen—shave, shower, wash my hair. Surprise, I already have! So I can spend a couple of hours with the depressing last volume of Virginia's diary. Such a waste! Poor lovely lady.²²⁶

Tuesday, January 15, 1985

Martin Luther King's birthday. The day he was shot it really seemed like one too many. I had a fantasy in bed when I woke up just now of coming out strong in my next book against assassins...

Spitting a little snow, but not cold enough for it to do anything but melt.

The most beautiful of men, Mr. Thomas Paul Carey, was here yesterday. But he has other playmates with whom he spends more time than he does with me, which makes this old galoot cross. So be it, be cross. Snarl.

²²⁵ "We Shall Not All Sleep," a production of the Theater for the New City.

²²⁶ Woolf, who suffered from mental illness intermittently throughout her life, committed suicide by filling her pockets with stones and walking into the river Ouse. In his poem "Virginia Woolf," Schuyler imagines speaking to her before "that fatal walk: 'I know you're/ sick, but you'll be well/ again: trust me: I've been there.'"

Thursday, January 17, 1985

Let it come down! The fluffy stuff, I mean: our friend Mr. Snow. I love it: not quite enough to go out in it, as I once would have rushed to do, but it's nice to see it drawing its eiderdown along the top of the balcony railing. But poor Helena has to hike over from the bank at 5th Avenue and 20th.

Saw Daniel Newman yesterday. He lectured me on not getting frostbite in my feet! "Daniel, only street people get frostbite." "You could get it waiting for a cab." "In *these* socks?" Now I won't see him for a month.

And that fine young fellow Tom Carey came by, but the bad boy is going to his folks in L.A. for ten days! I hate it and he hasn't even left yet.

And tomorrow my nice young assistant Bill de Noylles (sp?) is coming to work for me. I like him very much, though not, I hasten to add, like I do Tom!

Saturday, January 19, 1985

More snow, small flakes, falling criss-cross on themselves. And tonight it's supposed to hit zero! "Supposed" means that was the prediction on the 11 o'clock news last night by Channel 4's Al Roker.

A Clint Eastwood Americana type comedy (I guess) about boxing and the mob. Let's face it: the great Clint is no comic genius, and why at his age do they keep featuring him with his shirt off? On the other hand, an actor named William Smith (I think) is quite a hunk: a delectable hunk.

But I meant to say in my weather report, the east French window is up to its usual winter tricks. At the coldest part of a really cold night, something freezes and contracts, and the window pops open. One night this week the temperature hit 14, and when I woke up, about 7:30, it was 14 indoors as well as out! Last year I

remember propping a chair against it. Time to start that anew, I guess. Mostly, this place is heavily overheated indeed, and I have to open the window.

John Ashbery got the Bollingen Prize. I've never begrudged John one jot (or tittle) of his success and honors: he deserves them all and I applaud. But once, just once, I'd like to get one of these prizes first—then I'd like it to be instantly given to John. But I don't think there are any left, except the Nobel, and who's worrying about that? Still, the Nobel is a nice hunk of cash.

Monday, January 21, 1985

The days lengthen: now light begins before seven. And at seven it's one degree below zero. Cold enough. But I always say how much I like cold. It's not really the cold I like so much, it's the pretty snow—and that we don't have.

Thursday, February 7, 1985

The pink and white tyranny of a sunny, well-snowed upon February morning. At least we don't hear the dreaded words, "sleet, changing to freezing rain." Just pink sunlight, blue sky, whitest of white snow.

Back, three days ago, from another week at Beekman Hospital. Pneumonia this time: "If anybody asks you," Daniel Newman said, "You just had plain pneumonia, not any other kind." I didn't get it at first, but somebody down there is always trying to foist an AIDS diagnosis on me: at least two guys put in my chart that I had the very much wrong kind of pneumonia: the kind that lately killed America's leading female impersonator, "Mr. Lynne Carter."²²⁷

²²⁷ Lynne Carter (1924–1985), billed as "Mr. Lynne Carter." In 1971, he became the first female impersonator to star in a concert at Carnegie Hall.

But that hospital: I don't even want to hear its name, much less go near it!

Helena had had the flu all week, so Bill de Noyelles has been working for me. What a find that boy is! He's prompt and capable, and a pleasure to have around.

Monday, February 11, 1985

My life would be much simpler if I didn't love Tom so much. I'm thinking of simplifying things with a whack of the axe.

Now off to Hy Weitzen's: Wednesday, Daniel's: the round.

Tuesday, February 12, 1985

I wonder why I'm not deeply unhappy. The worst seems to be happening: a rift between Tom and me. Perhaps I don't really believe it will happen: perhaps I hope Tom's trip to California will somehow smooth things over. I do know I'll hate it if it does happen! "Heaven help this heart of mind:" and bless my darling boy.

Wednesday, February 13, 1985

(My eyesight gets worse and worse.)

Tom bopped by yesterday morning after the gym (he works out at the Y across the street from me). Everything seems Jake and my fears, as usual, seem groundless. He looked so beautiful!—my handsome friend. But on Sunday he's going to California for ten days: Marilyn, Dobe, Ollie, Bug, Melinda, Taddy, Marty Gish...²²⁸

²²⁸ Respectively Marilyn (Fix) Carey, Harry Carey, Jr., Olive (Golden) Carey, Patricia Olive Carey, Melinda (Carey) Menoni, Frances (Ludlum) Fix Rowley, and Martin Lee Gish (b. 1951), Tom Carey's best friend through high-school, and a friend still.

Will I miss him! Are you kidding? Off to see Daniel today.

Thursday, February 14, 1985

St. Valentine's Day

Saw Daniel yesterday, who's not very happy. He doesn't want to take another vacation by himself: "I've taken so many trips alone. If I had a lover we could go lie on a beach and drink Piña Coladas..." Poor Daniel, that so handsome a man should have to go hungry. But finding a lover in the age of AIDS is not so easy.

Monday, February 18, 1985

Presidents' Day

Tom flew off to California—but I just wrote a poem about it²²⁹—yesterday. Life seems strangely empty. Why strangely? How else would it seem when all you love and hold dear goes away? The lad of twenty-eight I knew is now a man of almost thirty-four! And I have a nice birthday present lined up for him. So he'd better—go on being himself.

A twinge of jealousy yesterday of Helena and Darragh going off to "Eugene Onegin" while I stayed home and watched Elizabeth Taylor in "Butterfield Eight." But then, I've seen "Eugene Onegin," so there.

Wednesday, February 20, 1985

After a good night's sleep—uhm, stretch!

Not thinking about much except Tom, so very far away. I see

²²⁹ "Presidents' Day, '85" (unpublished).

him in profile at the open window of a car, driving up the coast to Santa Barbara to visit his Grandmother Ollie and, nearby, his sister Bug. I wonder which side of the family had the looks? His mother's, probably—the former Miss Fix. Funny how the old men die but the old ladies carry on.

Friday, February 22, 1985

His birthday, and the day after Wystan Auden's. It was always nice that there was a holiday the day after Wystan's annual birthday party: a clear space in which to nurse one's hangover! The great no drinking bonus: no more hangovers. How they used to wreck my life.

No Tom, no diary, no fun. But a week from today he'll be here, the rascal. Oh Babe!

Monday, February 25, 1985

Monday: Tuesday: Wednesday: Tomday! Bingo.

Wednesday, February 27, 1985

A cold silver morning, but on the whole February has been pretty nice: bright days as warm as 70, no overcoats, hard on ski-ing. But we have March to stumble through.

Tomorrow the dear little fellow—really, he's quite big—comes back from LA. So far not one letter, not one postcard. Pig lady, pig lady, pig lady...

And tomorrow Helena goes off on a two week retreat (she's a Buddhist, of the Tibetan persuasion). Harold Talbott is going off to

Spain and is lending her his house in Marion on Cape Cod. I'm glad for her. Her religion is what means most in her life. I know it will be wonderful.

And I, what am I doing? Going up to the Metropolitan to see the Caravaggios and works by i Caravaggisti.²³⁰ So there.

We must buy coffee! We must buy light bulbs! And soon.

February 28, 1985

T Day: but at 7:30 in the morning, where is the little rascal? In the air? in a limo, on his way to Third Street? Still in Sherman Oaks, eating waffles? At 3:30 in the morning? Not bloody likely. Oh well, I'll hear in good time, somehow or other...

A sweet card from him yesterday, that said, "I love you love you love you." And I love him love him love him.

February, that mangled month, grinds to a halt in a shower of sunshine.

March 1, 1985

Helena goes and Tom comes back—late yesterday afternoon. I haven't seen him, but I will this morning after he works out at the gym. Ollie is fine but his father is in a state: "I'll tell you about it when I see you." A fine broth of a boy (soon to be a thirty-four year old boy.)

Funny sleeping pill that sometimes lets me sleep so well, as witness last night. But why nightmares riddled with anxiety? I thought I had outgrown that.

²³⁰ "The Age of Caravaggio," an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from February 5 through April 14, 1985.

Monday, March 4, 1985

Tom, the Babe, came to see me. Beautiful. He put on weight when he quit smoking three months or so ago, but now he's lost most of it: no goozle under his chin: though there was seen to be a thickening of his waist when his sweatshirt rode up. Tom thinks it's funny that I always want to see his navel; but it's a lovely navel. And he's given up sugar: no three spoons in his coffee, no six cokes a day. He's given up junk, booze, cigarettes, and now, sugar. What next? Me? But he says he's coming to see me today.

Bill is doing well with Helena away. Nothing much is going on...

Tuesday, March 5, 1985

At six AM the heavy gray burns a heavier blue. Rain, water drops clinging to the balcony.

Saturday, March 16, 1985

St. Patrick's Eve

Back yesterday from a week at Beekman Downtown hospital. This time, aspirin poisoning—I overdosed. So now I'm cut to one tablet a day, for ever and ever.

Tom came to see me in the hospital last Monday, and again yesterday morning. What a good boy! I do love him.

And that nice Jimmy McCourt has put me into *Kaye Wayfaring in "Avenged"*; well not me, quotes from "Hymn to Life."²³¹ Just where I'd like it to be. Such a talented lad.

And I feel good.

²³¹ The book ends with the opera singer, Mawrdew Czegowchwz, sight-reading a (fictional) musical setting of "Hymn to Life."

Monday, March 18, 1985

My boy came by yesterday, handsomest man in three counties. And so blond! He still hasn't taken off all the extra weight he put on when he quit smoking, but it will gradually come off. [...] It's odd, but most of what went on seems to have settled in his thighs. They must go back to normal: I love those thighs.

Helena is back from her retreat, with bad news about her apartment sharer. Charlie Martin was beaten nearly to death a week ago on East 10th Street between B and C. He was concussed, and doesn't remember anything about the attack. As usual, he won't go near a doctor or let Helena do anything for him. What an odd ball.

In the middle of reading Alice Notley's play,²³² which he's going to be in, Tom burst into tears, thinking about his fucked up Dad. His trip home wasn't very happy, I'm afraid, except of course for seeing his sister Bug and his grandmother Ollie. Tom's first memory is of nearly drowning in Gregory Peck's²³³ swimming pool. Ollie fished him out. No wonder he loves her! What a Hollywood baby to have that for a first memory! And even better, he knows that he was conceived at the actress Eve Arden's²³⁴—Our Miss Brooks. Be a star Tom, be a star.

²³² "Anne's White Glove," by Alice Notley was commissioned by Ada Katz for The Eye and Ear Theater and produced at La Mama, with sets by Jane Dixon. The play is autobiographical and evokes Notley's response to the death of her husband, the poet Ted Berrigan. Tom Carey played Berrigan's ghost, an emotionally trying role since he had been a close friend of Berrigan's.

²³³ The actor Gregory Peck (b. 1916) and his wife were friends of Tom Carey's parents.

²³⁴ Eve Arden (born Eunice Quedens; 1907[?]-1990), film and television actress, is best known for her role as "Our Miss Brooks" in the radio and television series of that name, and was nominated for an Academy Award as supporting actress in "Mildred Pierce" in 1945. She was a friend of both of Tom Carey's grandmothers.

Tuesday, March 19, 1985

I dreamed I was trying to reassure John A. about the danger of riding the subway. His main concern was about lead-based paint flaking off and getting into his food. I told him I understood the subway had been freshly painted, but he wasn't buying that. Then I said I didn't think they used lead-based paint anymore: but he wasn't buying that either. All in all, I didn't do too well.

And now I'm having dinner with John tomorrow night—for the first time in how long? I do love “the little nose picker,” as Frank used to call him.

And now off to see Hy Weitzen and try to make sense of my aspirin OD.

Wednesday, March 20, 1985

I don't really feel like writing here today, but I can't let the first day of spring pass unsaluted: welcome, Spring!

Friday, March 22, 1985

“A Cold Spring” is what we're having: we're honoring Elizabeth Bishop's memory.²³⁵

Once again I'm getting pissed off with Tom: he isn't seeing me often enough, not to mention calling me often enough. Of course, it isn't really his fault (altogether), since he's in Alice's play, and when he isn't working he's rehearsing. This too will pass.

A very pleasant get together with John A., Darragh and Joe

²³⁵ Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979), American poet whose work Schuyler greatly admired. *A Cold Spring*, is the title of Elizabeth Bishop's second book of poems, published in 1955, and of the first poem in the book.

Brainard on Wednesday night. John's gorgeous new apartment is only \$675 a month! Views to Jersey. We ate at a tiny restaurant around the corner at 21st and 8th Avenue called (I think), Onini's. Good, though not so good as Lombardi's: but a hell of a lot handier than Spring and Mulberry. Of the foursome I, though the oldest, was the least gray: I like that: a year ago I expected to be snow white by now. And what did the assembled beauty queens talk about? AIDS, of course.

Monday, July 22, 1985

Well, this has been [a] lapse!
And I know why.
But you don't.

Back Sunday night from a three day weekend at Darragh's little farmhouse. I thought it would be much cooler there than in the city, but when we got off the train at 12:01 on Friday it must have been ninety. But not at D.'s, who is near the shore. And in the evening a breeze came up so sleep was fine.

Tom sunbathed at the beach, Darragh painted and I wrote (3 poems, the first in aeons) and read that very funny book, *The Diary of a Nobody*.²³⁶

D. is a vegetarian, which always suggests lackluster food to me: on the contrary: he's a great cook and each meal was a triumph over the last. We won't mention the mango ice cream, a no-no for

²³⁶ "Tom and Darragh and Oriane and I..." (unpublished); dated July 19, 1985) and "In the Nut Tree's Shade" (unpublished; dated July 21, 1985) are two poems written over that weekend.

The Diary of a Nobody, a novel by George and Weedon Grossmith, first appeared as a serial in *Punch* and in book form in 1892. In a letter of December 16, 1968[?], John Ashbery mentions "...*The Diary of a Nobody* which I love—Michel Thurlotte asked if we had been influenced by it in 'Nest'." Ashbery remembers that Schuyler had already read *The Diary of a Nobody* by the time they began *A Nest of Ninnies*.

me, which was delicious. Then the first really fresh raspberries of the season! my favorite of all food.

A visit to the studio, where not much was on view: mostly a study for a double portrait (a commission) with chow. I liked it, a very interesting composition.

I greatly admire Darragh's paintings, but if I made a criticism it would be for less carefully composing and more succulence in the brushwork, such as one sees in Manet (the bunch of asparagus.) And this applies, sometimes, to color. D's favorite painting is Vermeer's "Woman in a Red Hat": I'd like to see more of that in his own pictures. But this isn't meant as "heavy" criticism: I love the pictures as they are.

Me: "Darragh, may I ask how you happened to become a vegetarian?" D: "You may and you have." But I didn't understand this time, either...

Tom got sunburned on his back, and I applied after tan: "I guess that's as near as I'll get to ever having sex with him," as I told Hy Weitzen. The fact that we love each other is ample...

For the Long Island Railroad the trip back was a miracle: the train came two minutes after we reached the station: we had parlor car seats: the air conditioning worked: the train was express from Westhampton (cutting out nearly an hour of travel time); the connection was waiting at Jamaica; we didn't sit for hours in the tunnel (always my torture), and Tom got the first cab he hailed.

Tom was looking more than usually like Phoebus Apollo. At 34 he is twice as handsome as at 28, when I met him. I think he'll be one of those men who, like Cary Grant, only get better. I wish I were going to be here to see him at 80.

July 22, 1985 2

The other night, consumed with ennui, for the first time in my life I watched a baseball game from start to finish: the All-Stars game from Minneapolis. I like the way the players are always groping themselves (do they all have jock itch?) and slapping each other on

the butt. But my pash, Gary Carter, the catcher for the Mets, had an inflamed knee and couldn't play. But there were plenty of other hunks, although Goose Gossage, I'm afraid, "is not fair to outward view."²³⁷

Oh. There is a famous Florentine portrait of a man with a diseased nose—swollen and pitted—with his little son or grandson.²³⁸ On the train coming back last night for the first time I saw a man who suffered from that condition, so much so that it was painful to look at him. Deformity doesn't usually bother me, but this, I'm sorry to say, really got to me. One would imagine plastic surgery could do something about it. But how would I know? I pitied him.

Tuesday, July 23, 1985

Tuesday, bloody Tuesday. Now why do I say that? And what business of yours is it how I feel about Tuesday? Hmmm?

Just wrote a poem with a title I like, "Horse-Chestnut Trees, Roses, and Hate." In honor of the beast who bought and raped 49 South, Fairfield's Southampton house.²³⁹

²³⁷ Goose Gossage (b. 1951), a relief pitcher for the New York Yankees, and later with the San Diego Padres. He wore a shaggy blond Fu Manchu moustache.

"She is not fair to outward view/ As many maidens be,/ Her loveliness I never knew/ Until she smiled on me..." Hartley Coleridge, "Song."

²³⁸ "Portrait of an Old Man with a Young Boy" by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–1494), which is in the Louvre, is famous partly because Marcel Proust found in it a resemblance to his acquaintance the Marquis de Lau, which he then transposed, in *Swann's Way*, into a resemblance that Swann discovers between "the coloring of a Ghirlandaio," and "the nose of M. de Palancy."

²³⁹ Schuyler wrote to Joe Brainard on July 29, 1985, "I called on Anne Porter... And I was put into a tantrum by the way the new owner of Fairfield's house has cut down trees and uprooted my roses and put in the tackiest suburban 'foundation planting' one could imagine. It inspired me to write a poem called 'Horse Chestnut Trees, Roses and Hate,' in which I put a curse on him. I expect him to keel over any day now." The poem was published in *The New Yorker* (June 8, 1987) as "Horse-Chestnut Trees and Roses." See the entry for September 28, 1985, and note.

It's getting light out, gray-blue-gray. And the parlor linden Darragh gave me now o'er tops the French windows. It has an alarming amount of leaf-drop; but Darragh assures me that's the nature of the beast.

I know why it's bloody Tuesday: no giant lime tree, no butter nut tree, no pond, no Tom, no Darragh...

I wonder if I feel like whacking off? Guess not, but still, I'm a dirty old man. Now that's something I never do when I go visiting. And I hate to move my bowels anywhere but my very own john. But piss: I can piss anywhere, and often do.

My secret shame: that I wet the bed (*not* every night) until I fell in love with Paul Sipprell²⁴⁰ at 16, when I stopped, period: give or take a couple of drunken accidents; but those don't count.

And on that savory note, folks, I'll take my leave.

Wednesday, July 24, 1985

The big thing about today is that it is Darragh's birthday: many happy returns, finest of fellows! Remember, today you're king of the world.

As for me, I'm in love with my air conditioner this hot and muggy summer. It's just like Maine in here, the kind of summer day we all wore sweaters and had a big log fire at night.

Nothing new, except that yesterday I was dunned three times: AT&T, Beekman Hospital, and Dr. Foo. I feel badly about the latter, who is both a sweetie and a great doctor. I told one and all, "In September..." And what then? Bankruptcy, here I come.

And yet I'm feeling really very happy. Must be spending three days with Tom.

²⁴⁰ There is a long section in "The Morning of the Poem" about Paul Sipprell, "The very first, Paul, the one in high school..."

Thursday, July 25, 1985

The sun goes in, the sun comes out, and hurricane Bob has been down-graded to a tropical storm. Will it come here? I hope so.

On Monday Nancy Crampton²⁴¹ is coming to photograph me. I wish I felt more personable. Perhaps I'll go out and negligently lean on the balcony balustrade...

I wonder, I wonder: I wonder whether I'll carry through what I have it in mind to do?

Saturday, July 27, 1985

Thunder and lightning in the night. I never thought I'd come to enjoy a good rollicking thunder storm, but I do. Safe inside, that is. I no longer put my head under the pillow!

Talked to Helena yesterday at her parents' home in County Wexford. I get a great charge out of trans-oceanic telephoning: perhaps the feeling Cyrus Field²⁴² had when the transatlantic cable first did its stuff.

Now off to see Daniel, who will give me merry hell for having put on weight, when I promised to lose it. Oh the horrors of "Lean Cuisine."

July 28, 1985

I don't understand the motions of the sun: I thought it never shone into north-facing rooms, but every morning, soon after rising, it

²⁴¹ Nancy Crampton is a photographer working on an ongoing series of photographs of writers.

²⁴² Cyrus Field (1819–1892), American industrialist and inventor who laid the first transatlantic cable.

illuminates the recesses of my two French windows. But mostly I live, as I read in Diego Giacometti's²⁴³ obituary, "in a town into which the sun did not shine three months of the year."

How often I wake up feeling that I'd like to write a poem, but no words of my own come into my mind: those that do are Vaughan's:

They are all gone into the world of light
And I alone sit lingering here
Their very memory is clear and bright
And my sad thought doth clear

And I wonder how accurate that is?²⁴⁴ Me memory for poetry is zilch.

Yesterday is a day I'm not going to think about, much less discuss. Enough to say, I was as cross as two sticks.

Is it possible my favorite poem is Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight"? It may be true, and if it isn't, so what?

July 29, 1985

Yesterday I said I wanted to write a poem but couldn't. Later I took a nap (that great institution), woke up and wrote one, lay

²⁴³ Diego Giacometti (1902–1985), Swiss-French artisan and furniture designer. Michael Brenson's obituary of Giacometti in the *New York Times*, July 17, 1985, mentions the Bergell Valley in the Italian-speaking section of Switzerland where Diego Giacometti and his brother, the sculptor Alberto Giacometti, grew up: "For three months each year, Stampa, the hamlet that was the Giacomettis' home, was without sun."

²⁴⁴ Henry Vaughan (1621 or 1622–1695), English poet; twin brother of the alchemist Thomas Vaughan. Schuyler quotes the first stanza of an untitled poem (or "hymn") from Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1650; enlarged 1655). Schuyler omits punctuation, modernizes the spelling of "ling'ring," substitutes the word "clear" for "fair" in the third line, and changes "thoughts" to "thought" in the fourth line.

down to read and got up another. I suspect both of being stinkers and have no inclination to look at them right now. And yet, there are those pleasant, if rare, occasions when what had seemed designed by a Higher Power for the ash can turns out to be not so far below the norm as all that. It never hurts to keep one's hand in, and there have to be rifts before you start loading them with gold. Or is the word ore?²⁴⁵

I'm still pissed off, but for different reasons—or for the old reasons plus new ones. Forget it. I wish I could.

I wish I had one hundred brand new books to read.

July 30, 1985

Sweet Catullus's all but island, olive silvery Sirmio...²⁴⁶

When he felt like it, Wystan could set the cat among the pigeons: I remember a review in which Desmond MacCarthy foamed because W had said—in print—that Tennyson was the most musical of English poets, and the stupidest.²⁴⁷

I love Tennyson, and he is indeed most marvelously musical, but sometimes it seems a little Cecile Chaminade.²⁴⁸ Surely WS

²⁴⁵ "You I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and 'load every rift' of your subject with ore," wrote John Keats in a letter to Shelley, August 16, 1820, criticizing the latter's verse drama, "The Cenci."

²⁴⁶ This is the last line of Tennyson's "Frater Ave Atque Vale," one of the poems that W. H. Auden included in *A Selection from the Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, published in 1944.

²⁴⁷ Desmond MacCarthy (1877–1952), English literary and dramatic critic, associated with the Bloomsbury group. He was knighted in 1951.

In his introduction to *A Selection from the Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, Auden wrote, "[Tennyson] had a large, loose-limbed body, a swarthy complexion, a high, narrow forehead, and huge bricklayer's hands; in youth he looked like a gypsy; in age like a dirty old monk; he had the finest ear, perhaps, of any English poet; he was also undoubtedly the stupidest..."

²⁴⁸ Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944), French pianist and composer of salon music.

would not have stooped to guff about “the murmuring of immemorial elms”—or however it goes—elms which turned out not to be so immemorial after all.²⁴⁹

For music, I prefer the vintage Keats bottled: “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness...”²⁵⁰ Bright star! Indeed.

“Does Fairfield Porter still walk down Madison Avenue wearing white sneakers and talking to himself?”

Fairfield: “I can never believe that Larry Rivers does anything except for some sadistic reason of his own.”

And Larry’s first wife,²⁵¹ who tried to flush a perfume bottle down the toilet.

And all I can remember Guy Burgess telling me is that Jack London is America’s greatest writer.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ From a portion of “The Princess,” often published separately as “Come Down, O Maid”: “...The moan of doves in immemorial elms,/ And murmuring of innumerable bees.”

Dutch elm disease has killed many of the majestic old elm trees in the northeast United States. In “Beaded Balustrade,” (*A Few Days*) Schuyler, remembering Southampton, writes, “There, where/ I dream of, the elms are gone (Dutch/ elm blight)...”

²⁵⁰ This is the first line of Keats’s poem “To Autumn.” “The Ode to Autumn is a special favorite of mine,” wrote Schuyler in a letter to Fairfield Porter on June 30, 1955. “Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—” is the first line of Keats’s “Last Sonnet.”

²⁵¹ Augusta Burger. She and Rivers were married in 1944.

²⁵² Guy (Francis de Moncy) Burgess (1910–1963), British Foreign Office official and, with Donald Maclean, Harold Philby and Anthony Blunt, part of a ring of Soviet spies who had been recruited at Cambridge University. Burgess met W.H. Auden in early 1951 when Burgess was working in Washington, and it is possible Schuyler met him through Auden. When Burgess defected to the Soviet Union in May, 1951, it was first thought he might be en route to visit Auden on Ischia.

Jack London (1876–1916), American novelist, author of over twenty books, many of them set in the Klondike, many of them with socialist themes.

January 31, 1985
(or perhaps it's July!)

A white night. And during it I thought of so many things: all gone, gone with the snows of year after next.

Nancy Crampton came and photographed me yesterday. Charming and a deal less the heavy professional than Mary Ellen Mark²⁵³—a remark which is merely a fact, not an expression of dislike for MEM.

Unfortunately, she speaks in a tone that makes Anne Porter sound like Ezio Pinza:²⁵⁴ so being in one of my deaf phases I did a good deal of smiling and nodding at what I hoped were the right moments. I did a lot of standing in the door to the balcony, until my leg began to hurt then I sat in poses on that spread on the “other” bed, in front of the painting of Bill Berkson with dick²⁵⁵ until my back began to ache. I guess she likes an uncluttered look: she took down picture after picture, book after book, the lamp, the phone, until she started for the fragile sheet on which my poem “Salute” is written in Chinese. I said, “No,” so we got on with it. Finally I realized there was no reason why I shouldn't say “My attention span has run out,” so I said, “My attention span is about to run out.” She said, “This is the last frame,” and that was that.

While she was packing up I called Tom who said, “Are you through?” “Yes. Miss Crampton is packing up.” “Stop calling her Miss Crampton. Call her Nancy.” I wanted to say, “I can't call her Nancy because that's what I call you, Nancy,” but under the circumstances I couldn't.

I expected to talk to Daniel yesterday about the blood test he

²⁵³ Mary Ellen Mark (b. 1940), documentary and portrait photographer.

²⁵⁴ Ezio Pinza (1892–1957), opera singer, who also starred in the Broadway musical “South Pacific” in 1949. He makes an appearance in one of Schuyler's “Last Poems,” “Over the hills”: “Pinza/ looked up at Sallie/ and sang,/ ‘Some enchanted evening...’”

²⁵⁵ Schuyler owned a nude portrait of Bill Berkson by George Schneeman.

took on Saturday. But when I got through to Betty he had left and the test was not back from the lab. So I won't know until today some time after one—and no doubt there lies the explanation for my white night.

Saturday, August 3, 1985

I was filled with delight last night—how disgusting, a rhyme—when I realized that anyone who ever wants to write my biography will have his/her work cut out for her/him, since virtually no documentation or juvenilia exist. There is The Birth Certificate, The First Grade Report Card (F in all subjects: I was a late bloomer),²⁵⁶ The Passport,²⁵⁷ and? No diplomas, no degrees,²⁵⁸ maybe some postcards and a letter or two... then I had three stories published in *Accent*²⁵⁹ along with Frank's "Three-Penny Opera,"²⁶⁰ the poem behind my poem, "Salute" (it's the

²⁵⁶ Schuyler's first grade report card, from the John Adams School in Washington D.C. is preserved in the James Schuyler Papers in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego. Over three marking periods of the winter semester of 1930–31 his grade in Reading advanced from F to D; in Oral English, from B to A; in Writing, from D to C; and in "Hand Work," from B to A. His "self reliance" was found in need of improvement in the first marking period, but had apparently improved in the second and third. Schuyler was promoted to the second grade on January 30, 1931.

²⁵⁷ Passports dated 1953, 1975 and 1980 are in the Schuyler Papers in San Diego. Schuyler did not go abroad after his 1954–55 trip to Europe with Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, although he spoke seriously of going to visit Anne Dunn Moynihan in the south of France in 1975 and in 1989.

²⁵⁸ Schuyler attended Bethany College in West Virginia for two years (1941–1943) but did not earn a degree.

²⁵⁹ *Accent*—*A Quarterly of New Literature*, Summer, 1951. Schuyler's stories are titled "A Memory Haunts Me," "The Mouse Party," and "The Forty-First and Youngest Brother." They have not been reprinted.

²⁶⁰ "I had those three short stories published in *Accent*, and when it came out, and after I had finished reading my own things over and over, I read the other things, and I was very excited by a poem called 'The Three Penny Opera' by someone

matter of where the line turns), met John Ashbery, Jane Freilicher, Fairfield Porter, Edwin Denby, Rudy Burckhardt (through his sister, Helen), and other geniuses and the rest is history ...

There is a hilarious piece in this week's *New Yorker* called "Yo, Poe". It concerns Sylvester Stallone's wish to play the *real* Poe who was not a kinky alcoholic—but the big stuff was Whitney Balliett's (*why* can't I spell that name?) piece on Peggy Lee,²⁶¹ who is in town, around the corner, singing tonight, and I won't be there: you better believe I'm pissed off. But I am going to own and play her latest LP very, very soon. Goody. "The Sorcerer's Helper"²⁶² begins to pall.

Virgil T[homson] to Sauguet,²⁶³ issuing from a NY jazz club: "*Elle n'est-pas artiste*," in definitive tones. They had been listening to Lady Day.²⁶⁴

Edwin Denby told me that.

called Frank O'Hara." (Carl Little, "An Interview with James Schuyler"). Schuyler met O'Hara soon afterwards, and wrote "Salute," his first published poem, in Bloomingdale Hospital in the fall of 1951.

²⁶¹ Whitney Balliett (b. 1926), a writer for *The New Yorker* since 1951, has written fourteen books on jazz. Peggy Lee (b. 1920), the popular singer and songwriter, has written or helped write over 500 songs.

²⁶² "l'Apprenti sorcier," a musical composition by Paul Dukas (1865–1935) ubiquitous on classical radio stations and usually translated as "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

²⁶³ Henri Sauguet (born Henri Poupard) (1901–1989), French composer; one of the many contemporary composers commissioned to write works for Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale.

²⁶⁴ Billie Holiday (1915–1959), American jazz singer, and very much an artist.

Sunday, August 5, 1985

Brook Benton's²⁶⁵ "Do Your Own Thing" is just the music I want right now, and the three Teddy Wilson²⁶⁶ discs with Mildred Bailey²⁶⁷ (who once spoke to me at Café Society Uptown:²⁶⁸ "Take it easy, Sonny," she said as I stumbled slightly on the stair (the can was upstairs) and swept down in a brown evening suit studded with brass nail heads and sang "Oh Mama Won't You Scrap Your Fat," and the boys stood up and joined her: it was a lively number and then things got a lot better)—nor will my day be ruined when Bill [de Noyelles] brings the latest Peggy Lee. Goody.

I watched "The Fabulous Dorsey Brothers" only because they were playing themselves: imagine my surprise when the words "with Helen O'Connell, Ziggy Elman, Bunny Berigan" and other wizards: and Art Tatum.²⁶⁹ Art Tatum! It was true the plot of the

²⁶⁵ Brook Benton (born Benjamin Peay; 1931–1988), pop singer and songwriter. Benton had four songs in the top 20 in 1959. His signature tune, "A Rainy Night in Georgia," was recorded in 1970.

²⁶⁶ Teddy Wilson (b. 1912), jazz pianist. In the early 40s, Wilson's sextet played regularly at Café Society Uptown and Downtown. In "A few days," Schuyler calls him "The Alicia de Larrocha of the hot piano." In "Shaker," written on August 3, 1985, Schuyler compares the way "each/ note is so clear" in Wilson's playing to Shaker "pegs to hang/ chairs on."

²⁶⁷ Mildred Bailey (1907–1951), jazz singer. This recollection is also told in the poem "Let's All Hear It For Mildred Bailey!"

²⁶⁸ Café Society Uptown and Café Society Downtown were jazz clubs in New York from 1938 to 1947. According to Whitney Balliett, they were, "the best night clubs New York has ever known. They were also revolutionary, for it was [Barney] Josephson's intent to present integrated entertainment to integrated audiences in the pleasantest possible surroundings." (Whitney Balliett, *New York Notes*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1977). In a letter to Tom Carey (October 7, 1988) Schuyler wrote: "I always enjoyed myself a lot more at CSU than Downtown, where the entertainment was apt to be by people like the folk singer Josh White with odious songs like "I Gave My Love a Cherry," sung very, very slowly, so the meaning got across, Eddie Hayward playing "Begin the Beguine" with a boogie beat..."

²⁶⁹ "The Fabulous Dorseys," was made in 1947 with trombonist Tommy Dorsey (1905–1956) and his brother Jimmy Dorsey (1904–1957), a saxophone and clarinet player, as two quarreling bandleaders who are eventually reunited. The others

movie is about how to prevent the audience from hearing any music: mostly it succeeded: then Poster: Art Tatum: eventually, Art Tatum, and it was beautiful: then authentic musicians stood [and] jammed. It was worth it.

Sunday, August 18, 1985

titles:

Pious Ejaculations

Inscrutable Wisdom Stone

The Master of the Controlled Accident

and others

While I was visiting my home-away-from-home for a brief stay²⁷⁰—what Tom calls, “It’s a retreat but it’s not a religious retreat,” only mine was and so was his so what’s he talking about?²⁷¹—the parlor linden accomplished its appointed task: behind its spurious complaint of leaf-drop lay the disclosure of what Williams called the alphabet of the trees which now fills without hiding my west French window.²⁷² A piece of

named are all famous jazz performers. In a review in the January, 1959 *Art News*, Schuyler praised Gandy Brodie’s paintings for “interspersing jazz notes of color as lightly as Art Tatum used to play.”

²⁷⁰ Schuyler may be referring to Saint Vincent’s Hospital. Helena Hughes had gone to Ireland to visit her family for several weeks at the end of July, leaving Bill de Noyelles in charge of Schuyler. On about August 5, de Noyelles started to notice that Schuyler was acting strangely, was beginning to have a nervous breakdown in fact. Immediately on Helena Hughes’s return, Schuyler went to the hospital. Evidently, he was out of St. Vincent’s by August 18, although on August 23 (or 22nd; see below) he writes of being “welcomed back”: possibly from the hospital.

²⁷¹ On August 5, Tom Carey, who was beginning to explore the possibility of a religious life, went on his first religious retreat, to an Episcopalian convent in Brewster, N.Y.

²⁷² The reference is to William Carlos Williams’s poem “Botticellian Trees”: “The alphabet of/ the trees// is fading in the/ song of the leaves...”

wildness to live with: from what improbable jungle?

At the hour when sunlight steals in and coats the recessed paneling with glow, its leaves are transpicuous: big, light green, its branches rising from the base in an expanding errancy. Beyond and through: the urban clarity of rusticated stone and six-light windows, the Victorian fancy of chrysanthemums crudely reduced to iron: the balustrade of “My” balcony.²⁷³

Thursday, August 23, 1985 [sic]²⁷⁴

The utter improbability of me sitting here typing my equally unlikely diary (I am keeping it with malice aforethought: i.e. I would like to make some money out of my writing for a change: oh well, winning an extra thousand for a long poem in a non-long poem contest. *The Paris Review*?²⁷⁵ Isn't that where something good always happens? As usual I have locked myself inside a paren. Must bust loose: not always the best idea in life or anywhere else). Where was I?

Let's not talk about that. Yesterday I was welcomed back in the most charming way possible. As I entered the lobby it appeared strangely empty. In the distance I saw Mr. Bard,²⁷⁶ the manager of this elegant hotel, leaning on the desk. He was not chatting with

²⁷³ The Esthetic Style iron balustrade of the Chelsea Hotel is mentioned by Schuyler in several poems, including “Beaded Balustrade,” “The morning,” “Three Gardens” and “A few days.”

²⁷⁴ August 23 was a Friday. The dating of many entries from August 23 to September 27 is problematic, with missing or wrong information and inner inconsistencies. Such dates have been left as Schuyler wrote them, marked with [sic].

²⁷⁵ In 1985 Schuyler's poem “A few days” won the Bernard F. Connors Prize, an award given annually by *The Paris Review* for a long poem. The prize is \$1000 and publication of the poem in *The Paris Review*.

²⁷⁶ Stanley Bard (b. 1934), Managing Director of the Chelsea Hotel. His father, David Bard, bought the hotel with two partners in 1939. Stanley Bard has worked in the hotel since 1957.

Jerry,²⁷⁷ who was also looking toward me and smiling his smile: what Ronald Firbank called the smile extending.²⁷⁸ I waved: Mr. Bard waved back. Various happy welcome backs were exchanged: all of which I have forgotten—how could I? Wasn't Tom with me, carrying everything except the two Banana Smoothies which I was not about to let anybody else get near, except Helena who kindly left me the greater part of the second which was a damn good thing since that was all [the] dinner I was likely to have: there are four month-old eggs which I fully intend to soft boil and devour the second this interminable ramble comes to an end: right now when I say that Mr. Bard stepped forward and with a smile held the door of the elevator. (To say it was un-necessary merely means you the reader have been in our elevator.)²⁷⁹ I so hungry: farewell!

Wednesday, September 1985 [sic]

Yestereve the sunset shone briefly—a long while it seemed—causing an effect on loft-style stately building across the way: a glow that reminded me of what happens in Venice when buckets of rain, including hail, fall upon Istrian stone: an inner pinkness that goes on and on and on until...²⁸⁰

The Mystery plant (gift of George Schneeman in entertaining Schneeman flower pot) is doing nicely as is the sprig of ivy. The

²⁷⁷ Jerry Weinstein, front desk manager of the Chelsea Hotel.

²⁷⁸ “‘Just hark to the crowds!’ the Prince evasively said. And never too weary to receive an ovation, he skipped across the room towards the nearest window, where he began blowing kisses to the throng.

“‘Give them the Smile Extending, darling,’ his mother beseeched.” (*The Flower Beneath the Foot*). Schuyler also borrowed this phrase in “Beautiful Funerals,” where, “John/ Latouche hands out/ his smile extending.”

²⁷⁹ The elevator doors in the Chelsea Hotel take a very long time to close.

²⁸⁰ “The Istrian stone with the silver-pink cast to it of Georg Arends that/ After a rainstorm enflames itself: no: that’s the bricks (Istrian/ Stone and bricks contrasted) that become petals of roses, blossoming/ Stone...” (“The Morning of the Poem”).

nearly dead from neglect and non-watering (“I have watered the plants”: like hell you did) parlor linden that Darragh grew from a cutting is recovering nicely. It shed so many leaves that its skeleton shows plainly and attractively “the alphabet of the trees.” It stands on one of the speakers and needs turning. Why not now? Yes, now, while Ida Cox²⁸¹ is singing: “Don’t let your whisky drive away your only friend.”

Sunday, September 15, 1985

Yesterday, the golden morning I will never forget: after the cab I sat on the steps and waited. There was ivy all around: ground-cover. In New York City we are grateful for a little groundcover. Down the street you come, not strolling: I admire folks who arrive on time without a lot of clock watching. (Naturally I have lost or misplaced my just repaired glasses)... where was I? The big news is the weight 195 and it’s going down. No bloodwork, no, “just a little prick:” whose prick are we talking about, anyway? Mine or yours or all pricks in general? Then something better than a hug: perhaps a slight wetness in the eye. Exit at a moderate pace and pause to pick one stem of ivy: does ivy have stems? It rests in the Vermont gray pitcher looking well and happy and slowly to form roots: I will plant it and the house will know why I picked ivy and back to the wonderful world of pricey taxis. I would so much rather stroll home, digging the architecture: always something to look at, eh Jim. Yes. Ivy.

What a golden day, despite several non-surprises. I especially enjoyed the visit from the house plumber just when I didn’t need him. At least the kitchen sink is going to be fixed; how nice. Now a quick refreshing stand under almost cold water. After all there is a drought.

Those shattering lines, perhaps the most shattering in English:

²⁸¹ Ida (Prather) Cox (1896–1967), blues singer. Her first recording was “Any Woman’s Blues” in 1923.

Cover her face:
She dièd young...

(one should accent the second syllable in the interest of prolonging the torture of the scene) are spoken by the Cardinal as he contemplates the Duchess, murdered because she craved “green apricks” and everybody knows what *that* means.²⁸² The Cardinal should be seen in profile, making a Bresson-like²⁸³ gesture so that enough time passes for the audience to feel enough time goes by for a little reading of Proust’s *The Captive*: in which Marcel contemplates the beloved and sorts out his thoughts, slowly. (Marcel is and is not a self portrait). The center of a work so complex, so full of pride and mystery that the next party comes rather like a seventh inning stretch. As for the Duchess of Malfi, I would rather not think about “enter chorus of madmen, acting silly.”²⁸⁴

The Cardinal’s gesture—he moves slowly, in great robes—is pointing down at the dead Duchess’s face, and says with dignity and slowly pronounces the lines that are an epitaph that is the promise of a well-kept curse:

Cover her face:
Mine eyes dazzle:
She dièd young...

²⁸² These lines, from John Webster’s “The Duchess of Malfi,” are spoken by the Cardinal’s brother, Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria. In the tragedy, the Cardinal and Ferdinand scheme to inherit the property of their widowed sister, the Duchess of Malfi, who has secretly married her steward. The Duchess’s servant, actually in the employ of her brothers, offers her fresh “apricocks” (apricots), a craving for which was apparently thought to be a sign of pregnancy.

²⁸³ Robert Bresson (b. 1907), French filmmaker. From a letter to Joe Brainard, June 4, 1971: “I loved... Bresson’s ‘Une Femme Douce’ (‘A Gentle Soul’—) A favorite shot: feet in shoes on oriental rug; feet go away; you go on looking at rug—like one here, right now, in living room—a long time, in color.”

²⁸⁴ The stage direction in the Penguin Library edition is simply, “Enter Madmen.” The Duchess of Malfi’s brother, Ferdinand, sends a group of madmen to live with her, “To bring her to despair.” They dance, “with music answerable therunto.”

Auden collaborated with Brecht²⁸⁵ on a Broadway version of “The Duchess of Malfi” starring Elizabeth Bergner²⁸⁶ and Canada Lee²⁸⁷ in white-face. As a breakthrough I prefer Cosy Cole²⁸⁸ on drums in “Carmen Jones.” What a charming show, and Pène Du Bois²⁸⁹ costumes!

More madmen, more prancing around.

Monday, September 16, 1985

A morning spent dozing, now soon off to Hy’s with Bill de Noyelles. Helena is in Maine, for a brief visit to Rudy and Yvonne Burckhardt.²⁹⁰ She will be back Thursday, about 3 pm, having

²⁸⁵ Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), German dramatist and director. Auden’s work on this production is mentioned in Schuyler’s poem, “Wystan Auden.” Auden and Brecht, though respectful of each other’s work in general, did not get on as collaborators. Moreover, the text which was finally used on Broadway in 1946, “was so different from the text Brecht had worked on that he withdrew his name... Despite incidental music by Benjamin Britten, the production proved a complete failure.” (*W. H. Auden: A Biography* by Humphrey Carpenter).

²⁸⁶ Elisabeth Bergner (1898–1986), Austrian actress. Bergner made her reputation in productions directed by Max Reinhardt. She emigrated to England in 1933 and regularly appeared on Broadway and in films until the late 1940s. It was she who originally asked Brecht to revive “The Duchess of Malfi” as a vehicle for her.

²⁸⁷ Canada Lee (born Leonard Lionel Cornelius Canegata; 1907–1952), actor. A former bandleader, pugilist and jockey, he gained overnight fame as an actor when he played the role of Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright’s “Native Son” in 1941. He also played the lead in the film “Cry the Beloved Country” in 1952.

²⁸⁸ Cosy Cole (1906 or 1909–1981), jazz drummer. He played with Cab Calloway’s Orchestra from 1938 to 1942 and with Louis Armstrong from 1949 to 1953. In the 1960s he had his own band.

²⁸⁹ “Carmen Jones,” Oscar Hammerstein Jr.’s adaptation of Bizet’s “Carmen,” set in a contemporary munitions plant with an all-black cast, was the hit of the Broadway season of 1943. Raoul Pène du Bois (1914–1985), the set and costume designer for “Carmen Jones,” designed each act in a different primary color.

²⁹⁰ Yvonne Jacquette.

visited the bank and bearing a sum of money for me; and I suppose herself.

Of course it is silly (anent previous entry) to pronounce “died” as though of two syllables—the lines are dramatic enough without undue emphasis.

Sure wish I could learn how to spell rythm. What a stunner.

[undated]

I wonder what day it is.

Yesterday all hell broke loose. Forget it.²⁹¹

Helena came back from Maine, air sick from a bumpy ride. She told me many Maine-Burckhardt stories. She was taken to see Edwin’s grave in the woods where his ashes lie: an unmarked stone of no great size. Period. That elegance, that genius, that strange lover: and, aged eighty—why spell it out? He wrote his own epitaph when he looked at a photograph of the beautiful and great Nijinsky²⁹² standing, one arm encircling his head, eyes closed: to Edwin it was,

“Mysterious as breathing in sleep...”²⁹³

Dear heart, rest well.

²⁹¹ Edwin Denby, depressed over his failing health, committed suicide at Rudy Burckhardt’s summer home in Maine in 1983. According to Helena Hughes, Schuyler became emotionally upset when she returned from her visit there and told him about it.

²⁹² Vaslav Nijinsky (1890–1950), ballet dancer and choreographer. A member of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in the early part of this century, his career was cut short by a complete mental breakdown.

²⁹³ Schuyler had used this line in “The Fauré Ballade.” It is from Denby’s essay, “Notes on Nijinsky Photographs,” first printed in *Dance Index*, March, 1943 and collected in *Looking at the Dance*, Horizon Press, 1968: “I am also very moved by the uplifted, half-unclenched hands in the Jeux picture, as mysterious as breathing in sleep.”

Tuesday, September 17, [1985]

All I know is it's Tuesday, the month is very likely September, and I can find out the date later. It's too damn early, the sky is beginning to go gray, the pornograph is playing *that* Duke Ellington again, the one with Louis Armstrong: maybe some day I will tire of "Mood Indigo"²⁹⁴ and today could be the day. How about Janis²⁹⁵ singing "sit there and count your fingers" (all right: yes, I have three: how many you got mister? Hey I wanta buy some: gimme five bucks). Forget it. I have plenty of Duke waxings in reserve, followed by the works of Fauré, except the infinitely tedious Requiem.²⁹⁶ Perhaps a nice Bach sonata for unaccompanied cello as rendered by Pierre Fournier on his occarina? No no not today. "Let Me Off in Harlem" is definitely *it*; right now.²⁹⁷

I suppose Darragh is still asleep in his luxurious mansion. Big lazy-bones: he's asking for it: and will get it, if I have my way. No no no: not that way, this way. Uhmhm.

The life of a vegetarian is so simple it approached starkness until I learnt of the Cheese Store, where they indeed sell

²⁹⁴ "Mood Indigo," recorded by the Duke Ellington band (under the pseudonym of the Harlem Foot Warmers) in 1930, was the first Duke Ellington instrumental to become a popular hit song. Ellington wrote the main theme; his clarinetist, Barney Bigard, collaborated on the melody for the verse. In his poem, "Mood Indigo," Schuyler calls the music, "the first song I fell in/ love to..." and mentions its "unforgettable dragging rhythm."

²⁹⁵ Janis Joplin (1943–1970) American blues and rock singer (also known as Pearl). The time when Schuyler listened to her recordings most intently was in the early 1970s when he was in love with Bob J——. The first of his Bob J——. love poems in the "Loving You" section of *The Crystal Lithium* is "Janis Joplin's Dead:/ Long Live Pearl."

²⁹⁶ Schuyler's feeling for the chamber music of Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) is evoked in several poems, including "Fauré's Second Piano Quartet."

²⁹⁷ Pierre Fournier (1906–1986), French cellist. "I love all music/ except Bach—I do like the sonatas/ for unaccompanied cello: how/ many are there? Six,/ I'm pretty sure. Divine Pierre Fournier!" ("O Sleepless Night")

"Drop Me Off in Harlem" was written by Duke Ellington with Nick and Charles Kenny and first recorded by the Ellington band in 1933.

Gourmandise (I prefer cherry or plum but bought a wedge of walnut on strict understanding I would gobble up said fattening delight in jig time so I could return today and for an unlikely two bucks I...why did I open a parenthesis which I flatly refuse to close? Refusing flatly consists of disrobing, reclining and...

Good grief: "Mood Indigo." Must snatch off and play Duke Ellington hits! Or perhaps Blossom Dearie²⁹⁸ right after I shampoo with non-existent shampoo, dump with all too existent dump material, etc.

Here I beat hasty retreat to John. Heavens to Betsy more "Mood Indigo." This must end and soon but not just yet "In. My. Mood. Indigo....."

Tuesday, September 18, 1985 [sic]

I said to Helena yesterday as we left Hy's sometime after noon, "This is a perfect day!" So it was: warm verging on hot, clear and scintillating and the cabs empty and welcoming, just when and where you need them. All the personal abrasions sorted out. Perfection of late September entering that finest of months, October.

It didn't hurt at all that a 10 a.m. call disclosed (eventually) that I am to receive, Oct. 31st at the Morgan Library, \$25,000.²⁹⁹ No quarrel with that. Helena will go with me and Jonathan Galassi will be there. What seemed yesterday like icing on the cake, today appears like a temporary solving of all my endless money problems: debts to doctors, wages to pay, etc. October is just the month I would like to return to Venice. But November might have sufficed (if not Venice then perhaps my eternally abiding Rome): but health prevents that problem from even arising...

Now I have to face up to saying something nice about Edwin

²⁹⁸ Blossom Dearie (b. 1926), popular cabaret singer and pianist.

²⁹⁹ Schuyler was one of 10 recipients of the first Whiting Writers' Awards. The award was presented at a ceremony at the Morgan Library on October 31, 1985. Schuyler was accompanied by Eileen Myles.

Denby's *Collected*, now to be re-issued in a stately form by Random House (farewell, Full Court Press)³⁰⁰ (... Oh well, Edwin, you indeed were, in a sense "A beast with a human face"³⁰¹ but you were also a true poet, what you most wanted to be)...

As for today, it's early, the sun is coming out now and then, it will be warm but not too hot... and who were the first I shared my good news with? Of course Helena, Hy Weitzen, Tom, Daniel Newman, Jimmy McCourt and Vincent [Virga]. One knows one's friends.

Thursday, September 19, 1985

A sunny day and Peggy Lee is singing and I wonder how dramatic today will be and quite possibly no drama at all. Not great sleep but some, always better than none.

Finances bug me: need clock from around corner (\$15.00), need glasses with new frames (\$45.00) anticipate Monday and Tuesday, cabs to Hy Weitzen and Dr. Newman (more or less \$20). I suppose I can always give up food and live on air like an orchid. Oh. Well.

I like my new style poems very much—uncertain success of this morning's effort, a salute to Brook Benton.³⁰² But I usually feel like that right after giving birth....

³⁰⁰ Edwin Denby's *Collected Poems* was published by Full Court Press in 1975. It was the first book published by the press, whose editors were Anne Waldman, Joan Simon and Ron Padgett. *The Complete Poems*, edited and with an introduction by Ron Padgett, was published by Random House in 1986. James Schuyler contributed a blurb for the jacket, in which he wrote, "There is here a startling simplicity concealing a complexity of thought, a harsh rigour, of, say, a Hopkins, delighting the common reader, a reader ready to address himself to truly great verse..."

³⁰¹ When Schuyler returned from Italy in September, 1949, he first stayed in Chester Kallman's apartment on East 27th Street. "There was a very delightful elderly Jewish lady who lived under Chester who, when he played his records too loud, would come up and say, 'You're a beast with a human face! You're a *beast!*'" (Interview with Peter Schjeldahl, 1977).

³⁰² This poem is unidentified, or may have been destroyed. Brook Benton: see the entry for August 5, 1985, and Note.

“You’re interested in your foot: I’m interested in your diabetes.”

September 25, 1985

In other words air like that of my favorite month, October, comes in the window and the day has not yet begun, in the dawn sense and WNCN is as usual featuring something ignoble on my least favorite instrument the classical guitar. A pause for a forbidden possibly lethal cigarette. Uhm. Good. Sure wish I could blow smoke rings. (Collapses and dies at typewriter right leg having turned blue as resident gaily predicted at Beekman Hospital of the entrancing views.)

Hooray the Wall Street Journal Report soon to be followed by the news. Let’s give a listen. Yes, death toll Mexico reaches 3,500 more to come; meanwhile ruins being carefully demolished hope of possibly spare lives survivors;³⁰³ recall last night’s TV news in which fatuously grinning first lady presents—not gives, presents—check for one million gift of entire nation: how about cancelling Star Wars and nerve gas and giving whatever is needed no matter what the cost? Hurricane Gloria packing winds of 150 mph heads for East Coast. Goody. I *like* hurricanes: may I shelter at your pad, Doc. Cookie Bandit Strikes. Gives kiss exchange roll of dimes.

Yesterday picked another stem of ivy after mad battle with same in the rain after leaving Daniel’s. Latter, to my utmost joy, accepts my dedication of *Selected Poems*³⁰⁴ to him! Later speaks of “honor”: he feels honored! How about his daily visits to this one during endless convalesce[nce], his “toucher” ways, the ringlets, etc. More about that later.

Meantime, back in the office, looks up anti-pain pill. Discover has enough potential damage of strychnine. Book suggests weekly

³⁰³ At 7:19 a.m. on September 19, 1985, a devastating earthquake struck Mexico City. Measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale, it killed as many as 10,000 people and flattened 400 buildings.

³⁰⁴ *Selected Poems*, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 1988, bears the dedication, “For Daniel Newman.”

blood work: Good God, can I afford to see him weekly? Wild surmises quelled by agreement to meet every three weeks for two years beginning some Saturday soon. Well Dr. Delight here I come! “Here’s Clay-elle D’Alferes...”³⁰⁵ How spell? Am divinely happy. I confront death with indifference.

Thursday, September 27, 1985 [sic]

Good Heavens! The piece I couldn’t name that just ended of course turns out to be the Diabelli Variations—as John said, “With a theme like that, how could Beethoven fail?” Indeed: a nothing little waltz-like tune by the overweening Diabelli, a work I particularly love, and, as usual, since there are no words to it I can’t name it. This happens with anything: of course I can name, less than instantly, *the* Bizet symphony, not because Balanchine created a great ballet to its tunes (he made it for the Paris Opera where I first saw it with Bill [Aalto] in ’47: called then “Palais de Cristal” with measly little crystal clusters by Leonore Fini:³⁰⁶ I haven’t forgotten everything) no I recognize it because WNCN has drummed it into my head maddeningly, along with “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” Ravel’s “Bolero,” a little item called “The Entrance of the Queen of Sheba,” Schubert’s Unfinished, and so on. No wonder I prefer playing my LPs. Where was I? Forget it.

It’s still very dark: go to sleep too early, wake up too early. I don’t mind, so long as the dawn in all its beauty is soon to arrive.

More Beethoven. Well, if you really feel like more Brook Benton, why not put him on? Oh I don’t know...

Another interesting talk yesterday with Jonathan Leake:³⁰⁷ it spooks me that I knew his father Paul, that his father and I once kissed rather passionately at Wystan Auden’s: nothing came of it

³⁰⁵ Clayelle Dalferes, a radio announcer on WNCN in the late 1980s.

³⁰⁶ Leonore Fini (1908–1996), Surrealist artist and theatrical designer. “Le Palais de Cristal,” choreographed by Balanchine for the Paris Opéra Ballet, premiered at the Opéra de Paris on July 28, 1947.

³⁰⁷ Jonathan Leake worked for a time as Schuyler’s assistant.

beyond an invitation to lunch with Paul at the UN which I declined. And now I'm sorry I never knew better a fascinating man who spoke eight languages, when in his cups recited Homer in Greek, etc. That he was elegantly dressed is all I remember: that, and a little more ...

Hurricane Gloria Day—Maybe
September [27] 1985

An alarmist Charlie Martin aroused an alarmed Helena so they both appeared here circa 3 AM and entered—without having phoned or even knocked—she bearing necessary medicines and two quarts of milk, period. Hurricane Gloria at the moment is stalling around North Carolina and proceeding possibly hereward at an exciting 25 MPH. However, the World Trade Center will be closed today (it is now about 4:30 a.m.) in fear that the whole damn thing may sway. It sways all the way to total collapse I won't mind—provided nobody gets hurt, of course. That I feel rather tired, even more so than usual, is easily understood, by me at least.

A contributing factor was the arrival yesterday of the proof of Darragh's jacket painting³⁰⁸ (and if the proof of the jacket is just arriving now, when "in the fall" is the book coming out? I wonder) which is lovely: a Hamptons scene of greenery and water and plenty of purple loosestrife: Darragh sure can pick up fast on the right image in my poetry. The joy of success was offset by the title etc. being too large and set in loathsome italic. Speaking to Darragh (on the long distance phone: what else?) discovered he is quite angry because he had been promised that the title etc. would not be set in italic, but straight up and down and smaller. I feel strongly enough to have changed my mind about the jacket of my *Selected Poems*: and have asked Darragh to design the whole thing, both of us having as much control as possible over every aspect including

³⁰⁸ For *A Few Days*, 1985.

type face, this being spelled out in our contract... need I say more? No the man with the iron whim has spoken.

Well, it's after 7 in the mornin' and I am no longer cross. According to Clayelle Dalferes (on WNCN) there will be torrential downpours shortly, everybody is advised to keep off the streets, etc. Thus probably putting quietus to Tom's plan to see me this morning—life is cruel and lovely and I'm about to write to Daniel.

Saturday, September 28, 1985

The day after the non-advent—here, in Manhattan, at least—of Hurricane Gloria. I recall the days of Edna,³⁰⁹ hence Bill Aalto's camp name, Big Edna. Endless warnings and dire promises on the radio. My favorite was: A flower pot can become a lethal weapon in a hurricane. The same is true if said pot is effectively thrown.³¹⁰ I went out to the deli and found the "torrential downpour" was more like rain and wind.

Tried to call Darragh several times, both in Bridgehampton and in town, but he, answering machine and no doubt Oriane had taken refuge I know not where. A good idea, since the eye of the hurricane came ashore near where he lives in Suffolk County.

I am as cross as two sticks, and uncertain why. Desire no doubt to have love object respond to my unspoken desire in a way that is never going to happen. Damn. More fruitless yearning.

Help! Just looked at the pre-author's proof from *The New Yorker*

³⁰⁹ Despite predictions that it would hit the city full force, Hurricane Gloria brought only a heavy rainstorm to Manhattan. Hurricane Edna struck New York and New England in September, 1954, five years after Schuyler and Aalto had broken up and long after Aalto's camp nickname had been bestowed. Aalto's violence was extreme and unpredictable. He once chased Schuyler around the kitchen table on Ischia with a carving knife.

³¹⁰ Schuyler could be referring both to Bill Aalto's volatile temper and to an incident of domestic violence from his childhood, which Schuyler mentions in an unpublished poem, "East Aurora": "Pointed the hose through the kitchen window at her, so she threw the pot of geraniums at him."

of “Horse Chestnut Trees” and find the “odious vandal” line was left in on the copy I sent Howard Moss.³¹¹ Must write him not now but now. Hope he sees things my way ... otherwise ...³¹²

Monday, September 30, 1985

And very early in the night of the day it is: a phone call quite a while after I took my not all that effectual sleeping pill woke me up, but good. I didn't want the phone call, I made an arrangement I also particularly didn't want to make. Perhaps I do not confront life with the manliness, the virility I like to think I do: nowadays, at any rate.

One thing is clear: I confront the fact of my own inevitable death with indifference. Either what I believe is true—the whole New Testament, and I have only read that in parts, particularly the gospel according to St. John—but that doesn't matter. How much I have learned from knowing the prayers of the rosary, more or less memorizing the text of the Requiem, so beautiful, and right now I cannot remember the name of the great Italian poet who probably wrote it: attending mass with a missal and most of all going one morning with Anne to Our Lady of Poland.³¹³ Such simplicity moves me more deeply than I can or need say. God bless you, Anne Elizabeth Channing Porter for all you have done for every one you love and for so many perhaps strangers!

³¹¹ Howard Moss was the poetry editor at *The New Yorker*.

³¹² See the entry for July 23, 1985. The poem as published in *The New Yorker* on June 8, 1987, did include the original last line, “odious hateful vandal.” As finally published in Schuyler's *Collected Poems* the line is omitted.

³¹³ Our Lady of Poland is a small Roman Catholic church near the railroad station in Southampton. “The windows of Our Lady of Poland, / rich and big in a small church / glowing in dead elm leaf and ocean smell evenings,” Schuyler wrote in an unpublished poem, “November.”

Thursday, October 3, 1985

To say that I am distressed by the death of that excellent actor, Rock Hudson!³¹⁴ Dying prematurely of that horrendous ailment, AIDS, and with dignity and surrounded by his staff, his immediate family they were. I heard it on Live at Five on Channel 4, the whole hideous “and direct from in front of Rock Hudson’s home in...” “Get that camera out of here you son of a bitch! What kind of people are you?” Not human, that’s for sure. So I turned it off (enough is as good as a feast) and wept by myself. Unconsoled? When so fine a man dies the question of personal consolation does not arise.

Now I like to think of him staying in his friend Elizabeth Taylor’s apartment when he was last here in New York. I like to remember him in “Lili” with Julie Andrews, running around in a non-seduction scene in long undershorts, vintage World War I. And yet, what is there about comedies grounded in hideous wars that sometimes turns me off?

Now I must (or must not) address myself to the problem that Random House is no way about to reissue two of my books with beautiful covers by Fairfield.³¹⁵ We will see. All I know is that when Fairfield picked me up at the hospital in New Haven on the first day of summer in 1961 he said, “I’ll never let you down, Jimmy.” He never did and I am not about to let him down, no, it matters not that my dearest friend has been dead for ten years: a debt is a debt and must be paid.

³¹⁴ Rock Hudson (born Roy Scherer, Jr.; 1925–1985) made worldwide headlines in July, 1985 when he acknowledged that he had AIDS and revealed his homosexuality.

³¹⁵ *The Crystal Lithium* (1972) and *Hymn to Life* (1974) were both published with covers by Fairfield Porter. The original watercolor for *Hymn to Life* hung on Schuyler’s wall in the Chelsea Hotel.

Friday, October 4, 1985

Perhaps I'll have something vaguely worth writing here—right now something ineffable of Berlioz—can it be the good old march to the scaffold?³¹⁶ Indeed it is: tramp tramp—is on the swoon tube. Soon to make way for Ida Cox. What I like about early morning listening is the distance of the news and the rain-soaked weather report. More later, should occasion warrant.

Sunday, October 6, 1985

I completely blew my stack a little while ago and caused Tom and Helena to scoot out of “my home.” Am I sorry? I would hate more than anything in life to lose the love of Tom, the person I love more than anyone in my entire life: so good, so beautiful, so talented in so many ways! To say I regret my temper outburst which may very well cost me his friendship... well, terrible things happen in life. That is no news to me.

A charming dinner with J.J. Mitchell and Darragh last night at Onini's. J.J. and Tom see a cousinly look-alikeness between J.J. and Darragh that eludes these eyes.

But I'm too distressed to go on.

Monday, October 7, 1985

A good night's sleep to my considerable surprise after yesterday's temper outburst. Perhaps I don't regret it after all, particularly after recounting it all, with details as to why I feel as I do, to Darragh,

³¹⁶ Hector Berlioz's “Symphonie fantastique” op. 14, is subtitled “Episode de la vie d'un artiste”; its fourth movement, “March au supplice,” represents the artist's opium dream that he is being led to execution for the murder of his beloved.

who simply commented when I finished that he was glad I said what I did. Well, yes, except I would go to the ends of the earth not to offend, even distress, Tom, my Tom, whom I do indeed “love the most of anyone in the world.” That doesn’t mean I’m about to put up with having his attention distracted, on his regular after-Church Sunday visits, by lower East Side chat. No way. Come here, Tom, I want one of your wall-corroding kisses. In fact, I don’t want anything physical from Tom: just his beautiful presence and full attention while I read him this poem, “Our Father.”³¹⁷

49 degrees out! And it’s early October! I’m going out in it and up to Hy’s!

Reading my own books³¹⁸ (which I never do, not wanting whatever I’m writing now to be contaminated by ancient thoughts) I’m surprised by the—well, say it—high level, the sheer quality. There’s no reason to be: a lot of thought and affection went not only into writing the damn poems, but also their, uh, display. Which is much less splendid in the more easily selected from *Hymn to Life*. It seems my idea there was print it and all be damned.

“The government is broke!” Oh good: at least it isn’t Greensleeves.

Tuesday, October 8, 1945 [sic]

I’m tired of writing this in the early still dark, but here I go again, though firmly resolved to return later and add a word in favor of the dawn. Somebody is doing something unspeakable to a cello or perhaps celli on WNCN. The only reason I listen at all is that momentarily one will get the news, the commuter report (which I

³¹⁷ “Our Father” was written in 1971 in the Vermont State Hospital. In writing it, Schuyler might have been influenced by William Blake’s “The Lord’s Prayer” which was included in Auden’s commonplace book, *A Certain World* (1970). John Ashbery read “Our Father” at Schuyler’s funeral.

³¹⁸ Schuyler was working with Jonathan Galassi choosing poems to be included in *Selected Poems* (1988).

enjoy mostly because its numerous traffic jams in no way involve me) and, oh joy, the weather. I already am aware that today is going to be grand, like yesterday.

Yesterday Hy agreed with Darragh in finding my Sunday temper explosion as (if WNCN actually plays “Nessun dorma” *again* I am going to smash the little white radio. In person.) healthy and called for. Good. Me too. Tom says he was in no way angry, simply determined to leave and not wait around stalling on one foot while Helena recovered her keys: still, he insisted on taking a cab home, and taking a cab always means something...

October 10, 1985

Ida Cox: I wonder why I put up with Tom marching in and saying, “I hate that record.” So what? I play records for my own diversion. Furthermore didn’t I put up with what seemed like non-playing of an electric guitar on otherwise pleasant occasions when Tom sang and switched his butt around? Enjoyable yes; and so is divine Ida. “The blues aint nothin’” the hell they aint.

I never thought I’d anxiously await the passing of October, my favorite month of months, but I do want the bread I’m to receive on the 31st. I foresee a lightning ascent to Sam Goody and a lightning descent on Tower Records and the acquisition of more Peggy Lee, more Brook Benton, more Soul, more Duke Ellington, more rock-bottom jazz. If only Whitney Balliett would advise me!

What beautiful blue days we’re having. A stroll in the street is indeed something else.

Friday, October 11, 1985

A brisk walk to the corner mail box: a gray-blue morning in the month that, today, I hope will go slowly on and on. Then I was

musings on the bed when a beam of sunlight cause[d] a line of brick to light up with a mellow red effect.

Perhaps I will see Tom today, perhaps I won't.

Eileen [Myles] came by yesterday, which was delightful. She's so interesting and I like her so much. She still has vestiges of her Yucatan tan. The Yucatan in mid-summer? For Ei I guess, not me.

Sunday, October 13, 1985

Across the street a window goes rather blue: earliest glimmer of dawn, at seven in the morning, so much later, it seems, than it recently was. I can't wait for daylight savings to end!

Sunday, November 10, 1985

Mildred Bailey is singing "Gee but it's hard to love someone when that someone don't love you," which I do not find to be true at all.

Yesterday was my 62nd birthday, and when I told Daniel he gave me a big kiss. On the cheek, but none the less a big one.

I celebrated the night before, holding a small dinner party at Lombardi's on Spring Street: Tom, Helena, Jimmy McCourt and Vincent Virga and Darragh. As I told Daniel, five gays and Helena, who didn't mind at all. \$190 for six, not bad at all nowadays, but Hy will only express shock when I tell him tomorrow morning. What I enjoyed most was playing kneesie with Tom, who either thought I was part of the table or put up with it because it was my birthday party. Either way, I liked it!

[There is a gap of a year and a half here in Schuyler's Diary. Perhaps he stopped writing simply because this was approximately one year after he began keeping the Diary in collaboration with Darragh Park: a project that was intended to cover one year.]

By the time Schuyler began the Diary again in 1987, he had started attending various Episcopal churches, eventually settling on the Church of the Incarnation on Madison Avenue at 35th Street. In 1986, after about six years, Helena Hughes stopped working as Schuyler's assistant.]

June 6, 1987

After the days and days of heat going higher and higher, the torn and dirt-soaked gray pressing down and down into streets, into rooms, in muggy, hugging haze, a morning of clearest clarity: blue, bright, palpable, penetrable, an ascending depth into which to rise, infinity: and if that is the look of the Infinite, the Creator, the Unseeable and Unknowable, who, indeed, would not love Him?

Sunday, November 8, 1987

Tomorrow I will be 64—I always like my birthday so much the number of years doesn't really matter. When Darragh turned 46 he told Jane [Freilicher] he wasn't sure he liked those numbers. She said, "Just be glad they aren't the other way around." And here they are, the other way around.

Went out to breakfast at 7: a clear coolish morning—a jacket over a sweater was one thing too much—now at 9 just hazy enough to look like November.

At the greenmarket in Union Square yesterday morning yellow pears (Clapp's), purple plums, green apples and mottled and red, all shapes and sizes of squash, the white curds of cauliflower set in green, all so abundant, rich, delectable and succulent. I bought thirty Jonagold, crispest and most flavorful of apples. Half of them are

for Tom (as I've been doing every Saturday for some while).

The other morning I had a split second dream, just as I was waking up. There was a voice from a loudspeaker on the kind of car or truck that goes around at election time: "It is now penetrating into the houses." Which meant some kind of lethal gas—nerve gas, perhaps—of total war. Fairfield and Anne were in the room but reacted not at all. I started to think of what I should do (all this in the blink of an eye) when I felt the sensations of the gas already at work, and thought: "I'm only sorry I didn't get to see Tom again," and awoke, which, within the dream, was to die.

And here I am, and Tom will be here shortly.

Monday, November 9, 1987

Walking at 6:30 in the barely morning, I watched a moon with a torn edge hanging in a discolored sky above the Carteret (once a hotel now an apartment house next to the Chelsea) when it was rubbed out, as though on a gray blackboard.

Yesterday, coming back from Saks Fifth Avenue with a red sweater in a black box, I stopped at my bank and when I came out, there in the mist (which was also smoke blown from West Virginia) was the Empire State Building, silvery and half erased and more beautiful than I've ever seen it. Not everything gets worse: that, and round-the-clock banking. Imagine, withdrawing big bucks on Sunday!

Tonight, dinner at 8 for 8 at Il Bufalo: Tom, Darragh, John, Joe B., Raymond [Foye], Jimmy McC., Vincent V., myself. Happy birthday, Jim.

Monday, November 9, 1987

Work will be prayer only if there is also prayer which is not work.

Father Edward Yarnold, Spirituality, SPCK

...it is evident that ecstasy and mystical union are extremely rare, and a quiet moral growth toward maturity is the normal pattern. It is also clear that the quest, though intensely personal and inward, is not a purely internal and incommunicable thing. There is always an outer visible life that supports the interior quest, and the life of prayer is not so private that one cannot learn a great deal from others.

Henry Chadwick, review of above, *TLS*, June 12, 1987

What we shall do and be, and whether we shall, in a few months' time, have any home or possessions, or indeed our lives, is so clearly dependent on events outside our own control as to be almost restful.

Iris Origo,³¹⁹ *War in Val d'Orcia*

Membership in the American Rifle Association includes \$10,000 dismemberment insurance...

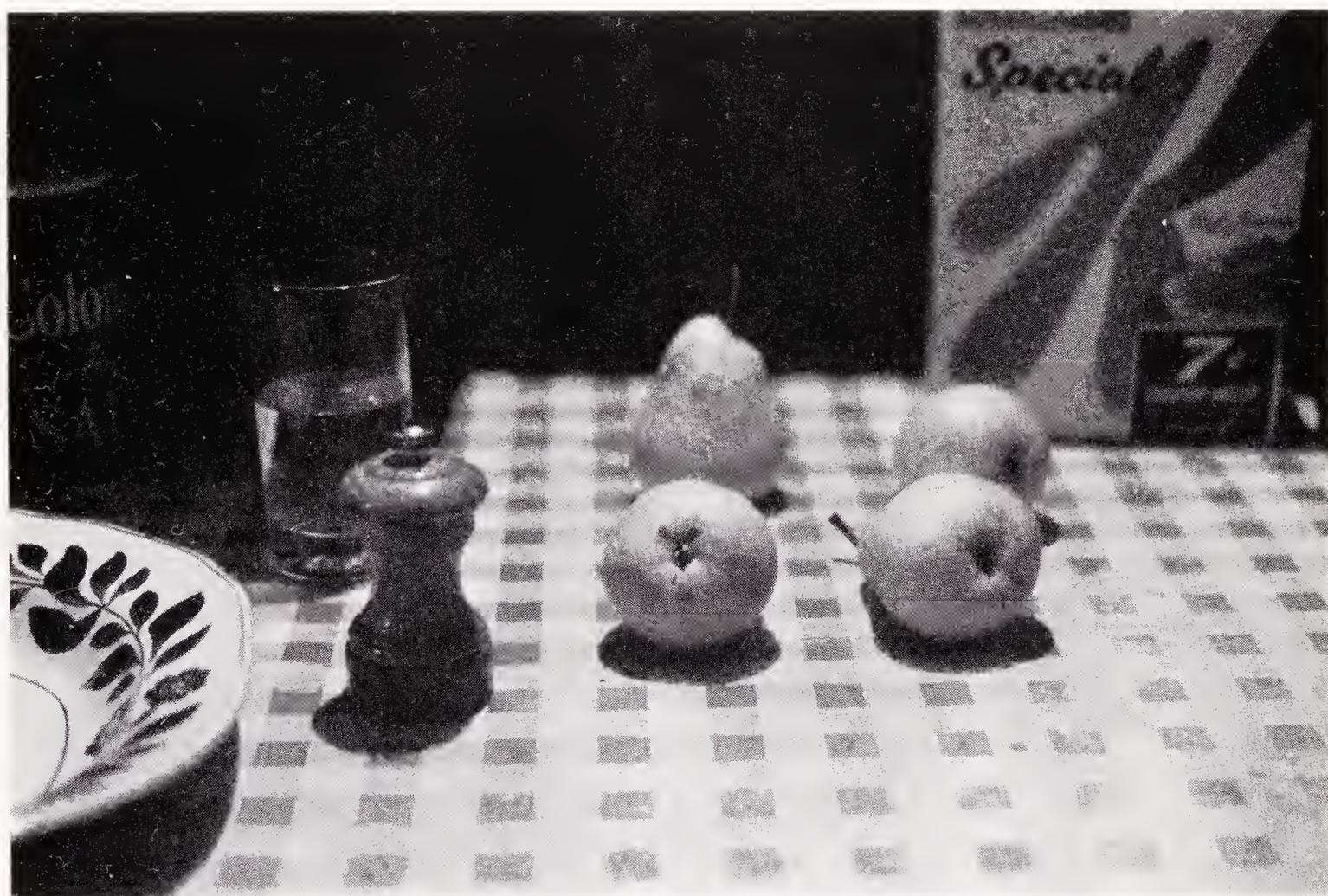
³¹⁹ Iris Origo (1902–1988), literary biographer and autobiographer. *War in Val d'Orcia* is the Marchesa Origo's diary of the war years 1943–1944 on her farm in Tuscany; this excerpt is dated February 13, 1944. Schuyler was fond of Iris Origo's books, which include a study of the poet Leopardi; *The Merchant of Prato*; and her autobiography, *Images and Shadows*.



View from Great Spruce Head Island toward the Barred Islands. Photograph by James Schuyler, ca. 1969.



Porch, Great Spruce Head Island. Photograph by James Schuyler, ca. 1968.



Still-life, Great Spruce Head Island, ca. 1968. Photograph by James Schuyler.



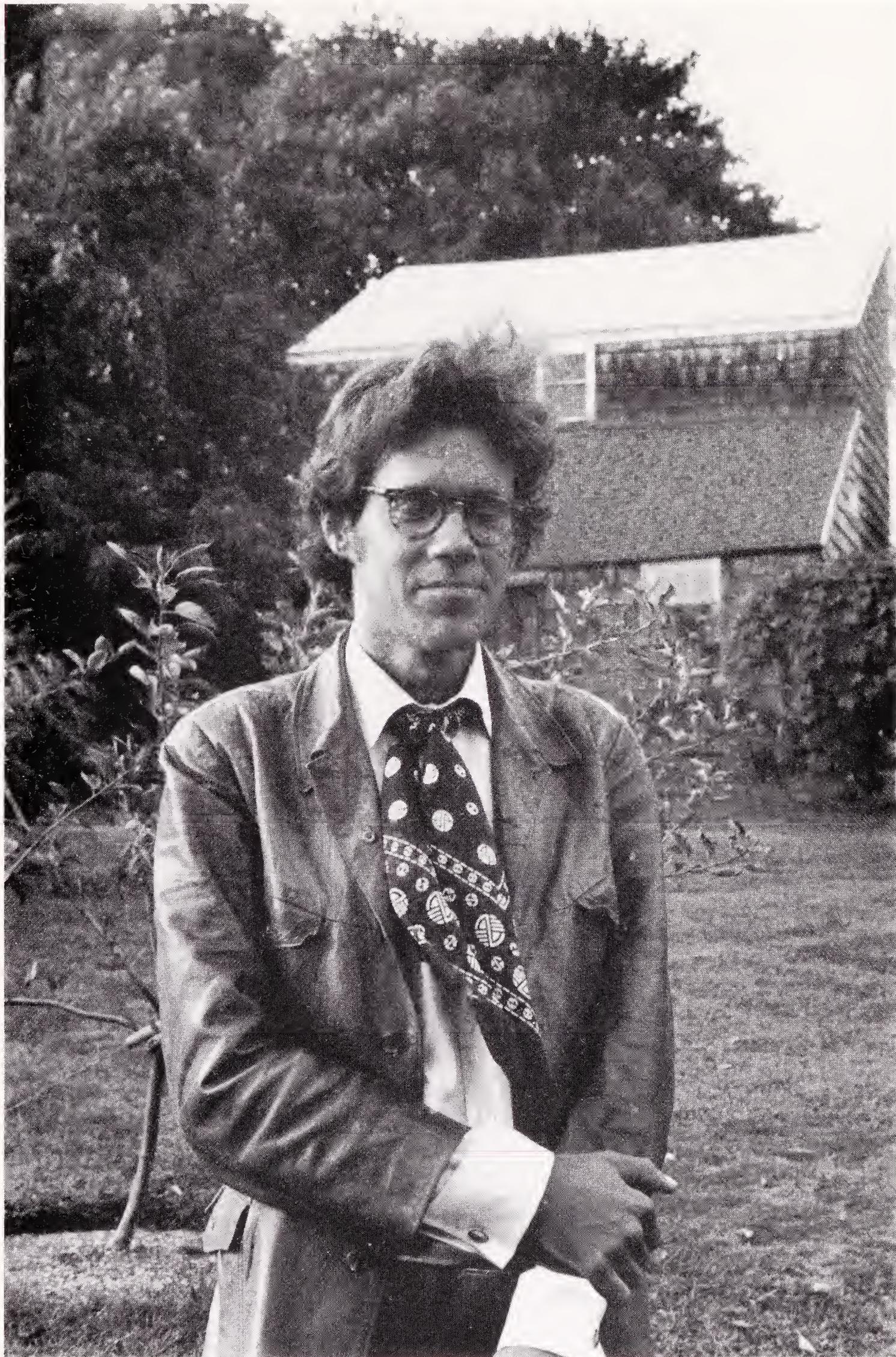
Meadow, Great Spruce Head Island, ca. 1968. Photograph by James Schuyler.



Fairfield Porter, Great Spruce Head Island, ca. 1968. Photograph by James Schuyler.



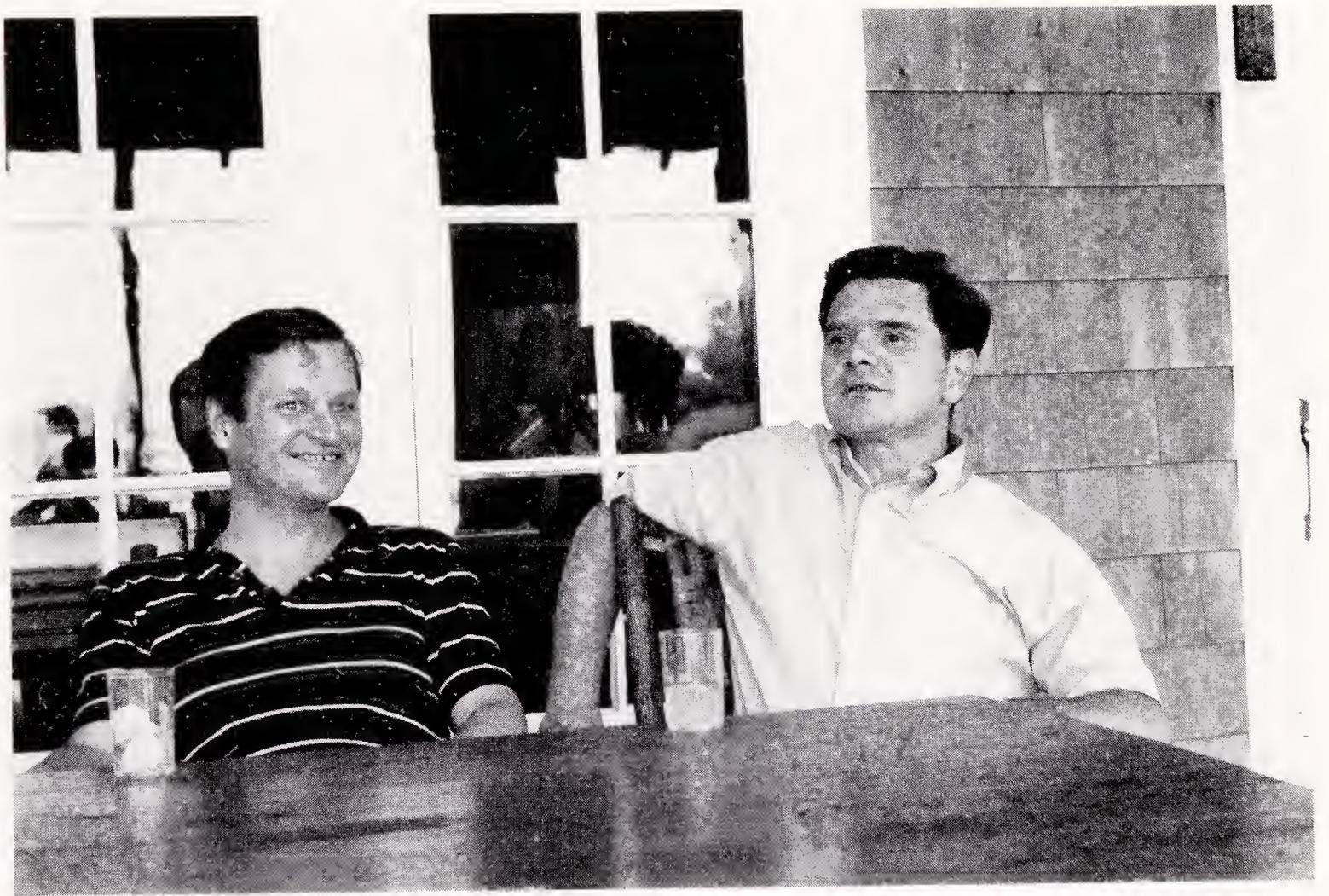
James Schuyler, Calais, VT, ca. 1968-69. Photograph by Joe Brainard.



Joe Brainard, Southampton, ca. 1968. Photograph by James Schuyler.



Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard, ca. 1968. Photograph by James Schuyler.



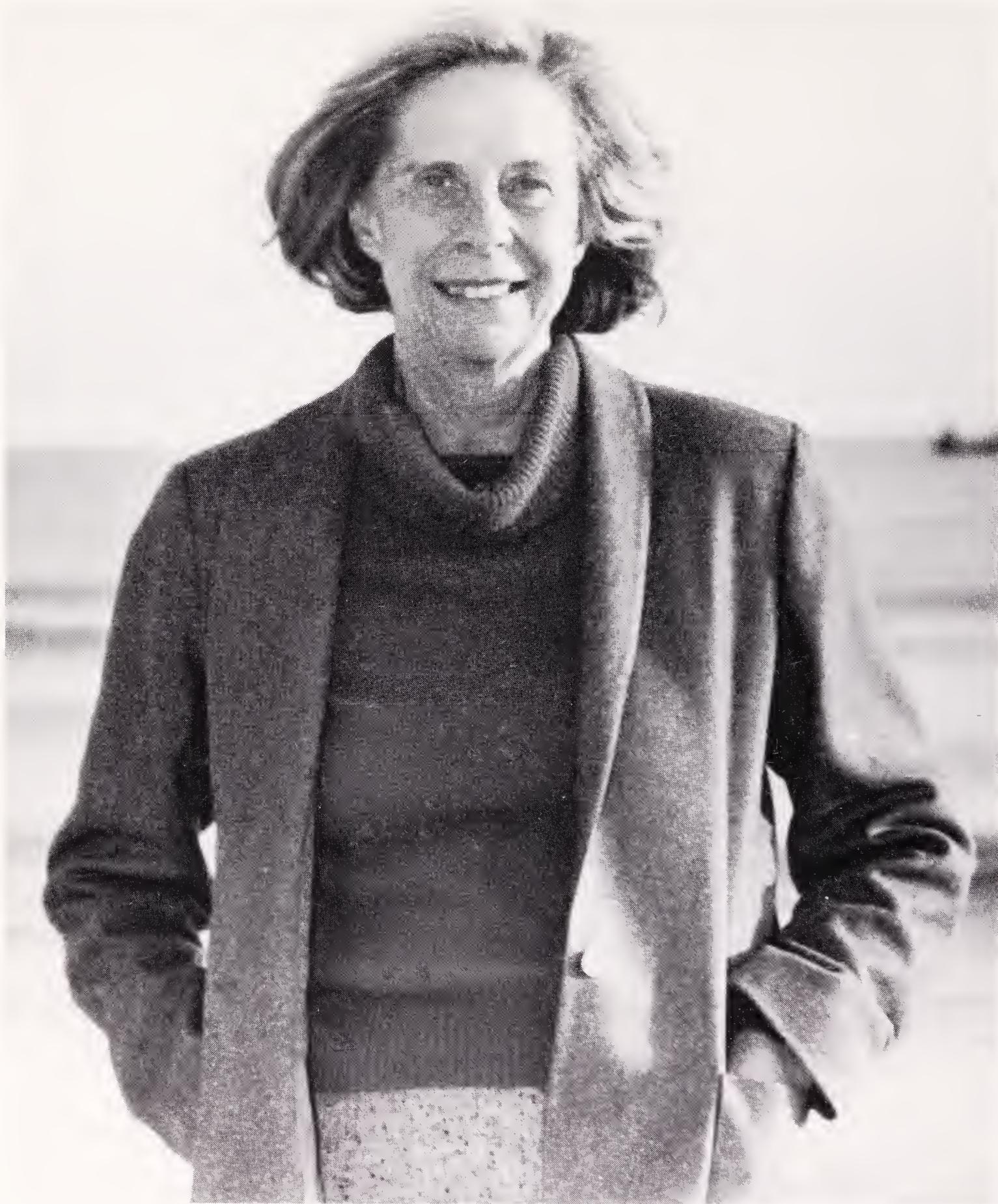
John Ashbery and James Schuyler, Great Spruce Head Island, ca. 1968.



Jane Freilicher, 1960s, Watermill, NY.



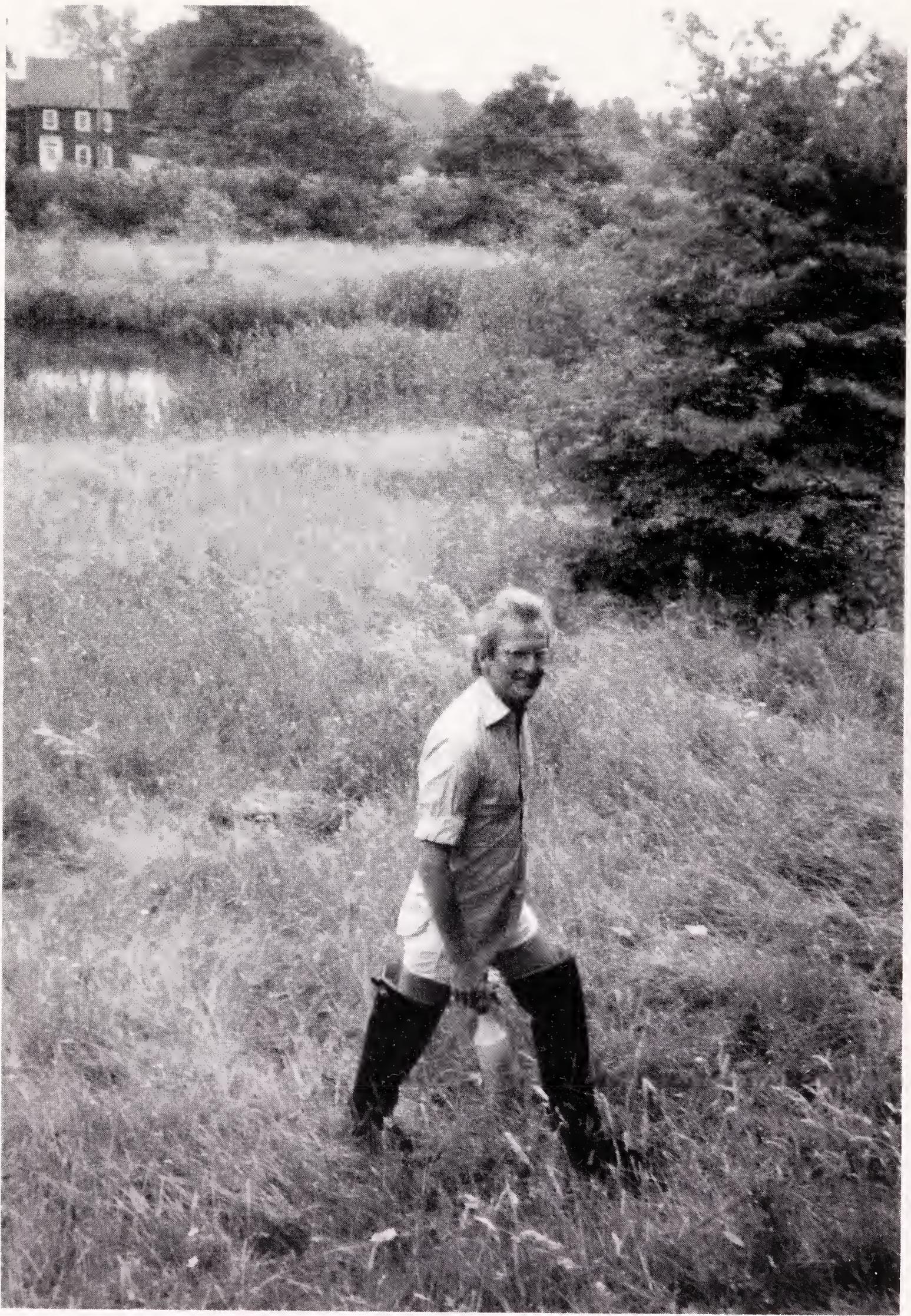
John Ashbery and James Schuyler, spring 1971, outside the Howard Johnson's restaurant in Rochester, NY, which inspired a setting in *A Nest of Ninnies*, chapter one.



Barbara Guest, ca. 1989, Southampton Beach, Long Island.



James Schuyler, 1985. Photograph © 1997 by Nancy Crampton.



Darragh Park, Bridgeton, 1985. Photograph by Tom Carey.



Schuyler at Darragh Park's house in Bridgehampton, Long Island, 1985.
Photograph by Tom Carey.



Tom Carey and James Schuyler, February 14, 1990. Photograph by Duncan Hannah.

November 12, 1987

Yesterday, the first snow of the year: I looked up from my book (*The Merchant of Prato*) and there they were in a whirling jumble: the fat cottony flakes, up and down and back and forth, as though they would never reach the ground. And there was a fringe of icicles, some a foot long, on the balustrade. This—the snow, the icicles—which once would have so delighted me, only made me feel how very far we are from spring. (Well, not entirely...)

Yesterday was Veterans Day. When I was young, it was called Armistice Day, which attached it to a date and an event in history, rather than to an undifferentiated class, one that even includes me! I feel singled out but I don't feel honored; nor do I deserve to. Yes I do. I was brave and I proved it that day on the USS Glennon.³²⁰

“When I was young”: when did I realize I'm old? Perhaps when I laughed and said to the cab driver, “Not at my age!” and looked out the window at all the people younger than I am trotting about.

On Monday Tom came over before we went to dinner, with my birthday present. He came in looking like a lit up Christmas tree and carrying something as heavy as it was bulky: the unabridged Merriam Webster Dictionary! I told him there is always one thing you really want and really need and never, never buy for yourself: for me, this was it. (Now, doubtless, some other object will move up to take its place). But what was wonderful was Tom's pleasure in giving it to me, and his pleasure at mine in receiving it.

³²⁰ Schuyler entered the Navy in 1943 and served on a destroyer doing convoy duty in the North Atlantic.

Charles:³²¹ “Is it brisky enough for you?”

Friday, November 13, 1987

A date that has never bothered me in the least.³²²

Soft blue with whispers of faint pink here and there, sloping down in the east, a little before sunrise, to what Firbank might have called a peach Melba sky.

Where do men get their hair cut nowadays? Not men who go to stylists—the rest of us. The Brothers lost their lease on the little shop next door to the Chelsea, and are moving conveniently around the corner on 7th Avenue. I just went by there and it is oh so far from ready: nothing inside but a pile of wallboard, not yet unpacked. I asked Turk Turchetti, who has the graveyard shift at the desk, if he knew of a barbershop around here. No, he doesn't. He gets his hair cut (it's luxuriant and black and wavy and definitely “styled”) down 6th Avenue somewhere in the Village: “but that's too far for you.” Well, no, it isn't, not if I think it's worth the trouble. “There are a couple of stylists down 8th Avenue, but they cost more than you want to spend.” Not if they cut hair they don't. So he tells me the name of one. I like Turk a lot, but why do people always know your mind when you don't even know it yourself?

Still, the vanished barbershops: The Brothers are busy, with men waiting, five days a week, from 7 to 6. I suppose we have the greed of the landlords to thank for making barbering uneconomic.

But all those men are getting their hair cut. A lot no doubt around where they work; some by their wives/lovers (Bob [J——] used to cut mine). But the rest? I feel like making a survey. No, I would like to read the results of a survey...

³²¹ Charles Jones, Bell Captain at the Chelsea for over 30 years. His son, Kevin, is a bellman there now.

³²² “Give us this day/ —and a Friday/ 13th, August '71,/ at that...” writes Schuyler in “Our Father.”

November 22, 1987

Ser Lapo Mazzei³²³

The third affection in Ser Lapo's heart was his love for "God's Poor." Himself a man of moderate means, he had not much to spare; but when he begged for others from richer men, it was not in an apologetic tone, but with a warmth and assurance that is still moving. In his choice of good works, as in the rest of his dealings, he followed no extravagant flights, but was content to practice the four chief "works of mercy" hallowed by custom, which we find depicted in the pictures of the time: clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and succouring prisoners. As the notary of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, he not only distributed the hospital's alms, but was often visited by rich merchants who entrusted to his kindness and shrewdness the portion of the year's profits which they had set aside for charity, "that they may be good alms." "I tell them," he wrote, "there are so many poor persons, and so many girls to be married off, that it would move a stone"—and sometimes the need was so great that he himself added to the rich men's gifts a few crumbs of his own bread.

It was very early in their friendship that Ser Lapo urged Francesco to follow the example of these other rich merchants. "For I dread lest you may not render a fit account to God, in the other life, of the things he has placed in your care (I say not yours, for they are not any man's) if you have not given part unto the poor."

Above all, he besought Francesco to perform the simplest of a rich man's duties: to feed the hungry.

³²³ Ser Lapo Mazzei (1350–1412), Florentine notary; friend and confidant of Francesco di Marco Datini, the rich merchant whose letters and documents form the basis of Iris Origo's *The Merchant of Prato*.

Oft do I hear of your great banquets, for men and women rich in the vain things of this world; and that is good... But forget not to let the poor, too, sometimes see your fine house, and be filled and nourished by your food, that God may not reproach you, saying, "Had you but once asked *my* friends to the house I had given you!"

Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*, 232–3

November 22, 1987

(Ser Lapo Mazzei)

Some of his time was now spent in sermon-going, and some in reading books of devotion: the *Letters* of St. Jerome and St. Gregory, the *Laudi* of Jacopone da Todi, the *Fioretti* of San Francesco. Yet he commented that although he had read much "in God's books," he had not really drawn much from them. "But I have found three windows through which one can speak to Him: to forgive one's enemies is one; to be humble, the second; and to love all men as one's brothers." The book from which he received most spiritual sustenance was the *Revelations* of St. Brigid of Sweden—because, he said, she had written that the only services that Christ desired were those performed "with a free spirit, and in the charity of love."

Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*, page 235

Going out yesterday, clear, the temperature at 20 degrees, the windchill at 6 below, I thought of the first time I went off the float and into Penobscot Bay—into the harbor [at Great Spruce Head]³²⁴

³²⁴The words between brackets were added by Schuyler, then crossed out.

and, treading water, looked up at Fairfield and said, "It's like swimming in a case of knives."³²⁵

Monday, November 23, 1987

Going out at 5 a.m. to buy the *Times*: the mystery man who fills some secondary function at the desk: "Can't complain, can't complain;" a shrouded motorcycle chained to a support of the entrance canopy; a growing mountain of garbage in black plastic bags; a night (or rather, morning) "black as ink"; the wide-spaced horrible street lights that do their job so well; in the east the tower of the Metropolitan Life building (didn't walk far enough for the gaudy Empire State Building to come into view); the Y with a banner across it "JOIN NOW AND..."; no dogs, but a cat in the deli (the Aristocrat!), and Turk Turchetti buying—lunch? dinner? breakfast?: I have worked a 4 to midnight shift, but never midnight to 8: how is his day structured? I sometimes see him in Riss, the Greek greasy spoon, about 4 or 5 in the afternoon; two dimes, two nickels buy the *Times*: Steffi Graf Wins Virginia Slims; baskets of apples,

³²⁵ "Have you ever swum at night in water so cold it's like plunging into a case of knives..." ("The Morning of the Poem") In both the poem and here in the *Diary*, Schuyler is apparently recalling Elizabeth Bishop's "Wading at Wellfleet," and the lines, "This morning's glitterings reveal/ the sea is 'all a case of knives.'" Bishop in turn quotes from George Herbert's "Affliction" [IV] in *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, a poem which Schuyler may well have known also, and which begins:

Broken in pieces all asunder,
Lord, hunt me not,
A thing forgot,
Once a poor creature, now a wonder,
A wonder tortured in the space
Betwixt this world and that of grace.

My thoughts are all a case of knives,
Wounding my heart
With scattered smart...

oranges, a case full of ice cream; the night man, in uniform, from the apartment house next door talking with a young man sweeping up: what? discarded lottery tickets, it looks like; why, always, at this time is a limousine parked in front? waiting for...? a rock star? rock stars don't go to work at dawn: oh well; a sticker on the glass door: NO VACANCY, and another, RING BELL, but the buzzer sounds before I do; the west elevator is in a mood, so I take the east, which for once takes me to 6, instead of 10, and, when good and ready, directly back to the lobby, to take the tinny service elevator, in which I once got trapped. I made it.

But was the night clear? Were there stars? A moon? Clouds dully lighted by city lights? No, not the last: the air is too fresh, too deliciously just at freezing for that.

Monday, November 23, 1987

...an indifference to the immediacy of truth, is what infuriates him. As though this is a slap in the face of humanity in his person.

On the Cathedral porch four steeds shone gold, which had galloped swiftly from Ancient Greece and had come to a halt here as though on the edge of a precipice.

(also, from memory, on arriving in Venice at night):
...something slipped by my foot that gleamed like swill...

Boris Pasternak, *Safe Conduct*, pages 90, 93 (translated by Beatrice Scott)³²⁶

³²⁶ *Safe Conduct, An Autobiography and Other Writings* by Boris Pasternak, Introduction by Babette Deutsch. New York: New Directions, 1958; first published in 1949 as *Selected Writings*. The third passage (p. 80) actually reads, "...something smooth slipped softly by my wet feet. Something malignantly dark like swill and touched by two or three gleams from the stars." In the Hillringhouse interview, Schuyler says that Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery introduced him to the poetry of Boris

early in '88

Clouds under clouds, a mackerel sky the color of a mackerel, the kind of moderate cold that means: rain changing to sleet and freezing rain changing to snow. A dark day after a snowy one.

Wednesday, January 13, 1988

A morning of freezing rain, blue-gray, across the street a blue-white line of snow. "Hard Hearted Hannah (the Belle of Savannah)" on the air waves. I wish I didn't have an appointment to get my hair cut in an hour or so. But coming back I'll pass—no, enter—that flower shop I like, at the corner of West 21st and 9th Avenue, diagonally across from the Seminary, where a surprise may lurk.

To my rostrum of doctors I have added Dr. Alan Scheer, ear specialist. Night and morning I syringe my ears with vinegar (white vinegar) and warm water. I told Tom I'm tired of smelling like the wrong kind of salad: but I'm no way tired of not saying, "What?" to every other thing that's said to me, no no no I'm not!

Thursday, January 14, 1988

A bitter morning, gorgeous and golden, cold enough to freeze your buns off.

A dinner party at Darragh's: Jane [Freilicher] and Joe [Hazan], John A. and Pierre (Martory, who goes back to Paris tomorrow), Tom and I, and Aladar Marberger, whose view of AIDS seems to

Pasternak (1890–1960). "[Pasternak's] poetry influenced me very much... [especially] one, beginning 'Waving a bough full of fragrance.' The only poems of his that were available in English were in the back of a little anthology of Pasternak's writing which included 'Safe Conduct' that New Directions published. Have you read 'Safe Conduct'? It's marvellous. It's the story of his early years."

be that it has, finally, made him a star. Somebody—Jeffrey or Geoffrey Potter³²⁷—is collecting material for a book about him. Aladar wasn't offstage for a second: "I'm getting up at 4:30 so a Navy jet can fly me to Bethesda—oooh, what they're going to do to me tomorrow!—then I fly to Las Vegas and then to Kansas City—did you know Kansas City has more fountains than Rome? and it's just as beautiful: the robber barons were very civic-minded—and (somebody) will fly me to St. Louis in their Lear Jet —" In Las Vegas he is going to play roulette for all his friends: five fifty cent chips five nights running (his money). I'm playing "the first one to twelve" every play. The long explanation of the game seemed a little like the conversation I have spent my life trying to avoid. Because of the chemotherapy he has lost his hair and beard: he doesn't look well but he does look distinguished (Anne Dunn thinks he will be the first not to die of AIDS).³²⁸

When Jason [Croy] finished cutting my hair and we were both studying it in the mirror he said, "You see, the hair is beginning to have some of the Darragh Park movement." And at the Chinese lady's flower shop I bought tulips the color of spilled wine, short stemmed but not stubby, with plenty of leaves curling and stabbing among them.

January 15, 1988

Feeling in an oysters and clams mood, I decided yesterday afternoon that if I went to Grand Central for an early supper (we're

³²⁷ Jeffrey Potter, the author of *To a Violent Grave*, an "oral biography" of Jackson Pollock, conducted a long series of interviews with Marberger, when he was dying of AIDS, for a book about the closeness of death to life. The book, to have been called *On Fire*, would also have drawn upon Potter's experiences serving with the Royal Indian Army in the Second World War.

³²⁸ In a letter to Anne Dunn, dated January 16, 1988, Schuyler writes, "Darragh gave a nice dinner party the other evening: the Hazan-Freilichers, the Ashbery-Martorys, the Carey-Schuylers, and—STARRING—Aladar Marberger. He talked and talked and talked... On the other hand, he was very sweet, and he is certainly most courageous."

talking 3:30), I could be in and out and back before rush hour. Of course it didn't work out that way. After the oysters—Belons, and rather nasty, tasting of iodine and disagreeably chewy—and the fried clams, I lingered in that book store too long and was totally, utterly chilled trying to cop a cab. It was only when I was safely tucked up in bed, in a flannel nightshirt, that it got through to me that, rush hour or no rush hour, the shuttle across town and the Seventh Avenue to 23rd would have spared me much pain. The thermia was never more hyper.

But I did find Elmore Leonard's *Bandits* finally in paperback. Also Ed McBain's *Shotgun*, almost the only 87th Precinct novel I haven't read. And a George V. Higgins and a Simenon. Not bad.³²⁹

I always thought I wanted to read Alec Waugh's *Loom of Youth*, because of the fuss when it first came out, because of its decisive role in Evelyn's life, because he was so young when he wrote it, because he was his brother's brother³³⁰ But it approaches the unreadable (is anything unreadable? I doubt it: insupportable, yes), and I was unwilling to plough through pages of rugger only to find myself at a cricket pitch. I would have loved it when I was eleven or twelve. But how delightful it used to be when Alec W. came

³²⁹ Elmore Leonard (b. 1925)'s police novels are appreciated by a wide audience; he has read at the Poetry Project at Saint Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery. Ed McBain (b. Evan Lombino, 1926) writes a popular series of novels about a fictitious New York City's 87th Precinct. At his death, Schuyler owned no fewer than 41 Ed McBain books. George V. Higgins (b. 1939) writes literary thrillers, often with Boston settings. Georges Simenon (1903–1989) wrote a classic series of police detective novels centered on the character of *commissaire* Maigret. “‘A transatlantic flight,’ Mrs. Turpin said, ‘I find just right for the latest Simenon.’” (*A Nest of Ninnies*)

³³⁰ In 1917 Evelyn Waugh (1902–1966) was about to enter the public-school of Sherborne when his brother's book, *The Loom of Youth*, was published. Alec Waugh had been expelled from Sherborne in 1915 because of a homosexual scandal, and his novel was obviously autobiographical. As a result, Evelyn Waugh was barred from entering Sherborne (while his brother and their father were struck from the alumni lists) and went instead to Lancing College, a school run along strong High Church, even monastic, lines. Evelyn Waugh described his early years there as “black misery.”

bouncing and bubbling into the Periscope Bookshop:³³¹ quite the opposite, obviously, of his brother.

The temperature has risen from 5 degrees when I woke up to 19 and the wind has dropped. All the same, I don't envy Tom and Michael M, en route to a country inn weekend.

Thursday, January 21, 1988

An hour or so after sunrise, east facing surfaces—the in-set of windows, among others—are coated with light, then and only then, somehow suggesting people who like to make love before breakfast.

Ten, or maybe eleven, days from now Tom will fly to L.A. to stay with his folks, Marilyn and Dobe, and see his grandmothers, Tatty and Ollie (86 and 92, both seriously ailing), his sisters, Melinda and Bug, and his buddies (not Marty Gish, who is in Israel, or Marty Snow, whom he never sees any more). Back to New York for a night and then off to Little Portion, the friary at Port Jefferson, for five months, the first stage of becoming a friar, or brother. A major change in his life, and in mine. God be with him!³³²

Friday, February 12, 1988

Why does it slightly depress me—or perhaps just make me feel tired—that now twelve volumes of the *OED* are available on two—what? chips? discs? whatever. Partly because it makes the horrid

³³¹ Schuyler worked at the Periscope-Holliday Bookshop, at 119 East 54th Street, from about 1954 to 1956. The store specialised in English books and limited edition fine printing.

³³² Martin Snow (b. 1953) is a commodities broker in Los Angeles, with whom Tom Carey has, in fact, stayed in touch.

Carey joined the Society of Saint Francis within the Episcopal Church at the end of January, 1988 and took up residence at Little Portion Friary in Mount Sinai, New York.

word-game aspect of the great dictionary too available. I always blame the *OED* for all those lines of Wylan's like, "where the baltering torrent shrinks to a soodling thread,"³³³ words used with no precision based on no observation at all.

Last night Raymond and I [went] to the Ballroom on West 28th where: "And now, ladies and gentlemen: MISS PEGGY LEE!" Because of the bones she broke in her foot, she was first propped stage left: white satin, white fox, white pageboy wig, diamonds (?) and big tinted glasses, a jeweled cane, then hurled into the chair from which she sang. Her voice is still beautiful—*is* she 74?—diction, interpretation impeccable (the Maggie Teyte³³⁴ of the jazz song), her group just the musicians they should be (they looked stoned with boredom, waiting for her little lead-in anecdotes to pass and get back to doing their stuff). Whoever arranged and lighted "Fever"—perhaps she did: one never knows, do one?—deserves a dozen silver roses.

Some of her own songs seemed to me, as they always do, a little too thoughtful and arty-schmarty, but what the hell. I was glad Raymond felt as enthusiastic about the performance as I did: he thanked me for suggesting the outing and said he would never have done it by himself. Me either.

The ultimate fan sat next to us: a Peggy Lee groupie. Raymond asked him if he had ever met Miss Lee: "Yes! The first time was in New Jersey in 1952 before she made it big. I went backstage with a couple of her records for her [to] sign and..."

³³³ "Yes, these are the dog-days, Fortunatus:/ The heather lies limp and dead/ On the mountain, the baltering torrent/ Shrunk to a soodling thread..." from "Under Sirius," in Auden's book *Nones*, much of the manuscript of which Schuyler typed for Auden on Ischia. The phrase stuck with Schuyler and he quoted it more than once; on July 15, 1968, Schuyler wrote Ron Padgett, "I bought a camera, and 'the baltering torrent' of my checking account 'has shrunk to a soodling thread' to borrow one of Auden's mellifluencies." According to P.J. Kavanagh (*TLS*, September 6, 1996), Auden, accused of having coined "soodling," defended it as "good Derbyshire."

³³⁴ Dame Maggie Teyte (1888–1976), Australian soprano, known especially for her interpretation of French songs. Debussy chose her to replace Mary Garden as Mélisande in 1908, and she was sometimes accompanied by him in recitals.

Wednesday, February 24, 1988

Going out a little after six, cold on my face like cold running water, the sky beginning to lighten, deep in the east, at the end of the street, from blue to peach, a disagreeable cloisonné look of the wrong time of year. But not a bad time: Anne Dunn just came to town and we'll have dinner tomorrow night (no, Friday night), and next Wednesday Tom is coming in from the Friary at Mt. Sinai. How I miss him! And he misses me. His cat, Barbara, now lives here, which somewhat palliates.³³⁵ More about her another time.

Monday, March 7, 1988

A colorless early morning, opaque, not with fog or cloudiness, but distance, with depth.

Tuesday, March 8, 1988

Walking along, the *Times* folded under one arm, a small banana in hand, staring at one of those high up street lamps that cast their light so far, wondering what's in them, and the damn thing goes off. But not the next lamp further west, or the next. I would have thought some super-timer turned them off all at once; but no. This gradual way makes a kind of sense, but I can't explain it.

When I went out, Barbara was happily tucked up in her Bloomingdale's shopping bag. When I got back, not ten minutes later, she was, as always, in *my* place on the bed. The light I read by means

³³⁵ In late January, 1988, when Carey became a Franciscan, he gave his cat, Barbara, to Schuyler. The following year, January 13, 1989, Schuyler wrote Carey, "On January 27 it will be the 1st anniversary of Barbara moving in and taking over. What a great day for Jimbo! Which reminds me: the other morning I dreamed I was saying to you, 'Why does she have to be *your* cat or *my* cat? Why can't she be *our* cat? After all, she didn't just *happen!*'"

heat to her. She was surprised when I didn't make her move, but not all that pleased when I pulled the lamp on its arm over my way. Now the water for the Irish oatmeal has come to a boil.

Wednesday, March 23, 1988

I love to go out before sunrise and see the east ripped, torn and slashed with shades of almost color; then a young man says, "Can you let me have mumble mumble" (but it sounds like "ten cents"). "How much?" "Uh—whatever you can spare, sir." Which turns out to be maybe forty-four cents. "God bless you, Sir!" Then coming back from the deli with another *Times*, another banana, three young things go by and one of them passes close to me and turns up his face to say, "Good morning," in a voice like gardenia petals, which reminds me of passing three quite different young things on 3rd Avenue years ago and one was saying (his coat worn over his shoulders, like a cape), "'Vile Bodies'—that's us!"³³⁶ A paperbound book was wedged in my mailbox: poems by Anthony Howell,³³⁷ inscribed with the line, "Though a sweat breaks out along the parsimonious hedge," which I misread in the elevator as, "a sweat breaks out along the persimmon hedge." In the back of my mind, I still see that hedge of persimmon trees.

March 25, 1988

We had to walk the pony all the way home to keep from spilling the milk.

Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*

³³⁶ *Vile Bodies* (1930) is a novel by Evelyn Waugh.

³³⁷ Anthony Howell (b. 1945), English poet. It is Howell's custom to inscribe presentation copies of his books with a line from one of the book's poems. "Though a sweat breaks out along the parsimonious wedge" is a line from "The Shark Net" in *Why I May Never See the Walls of China*, published in 1986.

Thursday, March 31, 1988

At last an early spring dawn, the Empire State Building with its gaudy lights off against a washed out sky (the most faded blue), its tower imposed on two glowing coral stripes of cloud.

At the all night Korean market (22nd and Seventh Avenue) I bought bananas (more green than yellow, but stubby, as I like them), and a tiny box of costly Chilean raspberries. The berries are closed with a piece of cellophane which says MY FRUIT on it, and for which Barbara has a passion. She smells it, licks it, chases it along the floor, bites it and carries it around. I thought it was the raspberry taste and smell she liked, so I put one in a dish and gave it to her. No dice. So it's the plastic, or the combination of berry and plastic, she likes; whatever, it gives her a lot of fun.

Easter Eve
April 2, 1988

Intermittent showers were predicted for all the Easter weekend, but as of this morning one one-hundredth of an inch has fallen. But where? Central Park, perhaps. An hour or so after dawn, there seemed to be no color at all, except the oppressively bright yellow taxis. Otherwise just the weight of gray overhead, and gray everywhere else too.

Last Thursday Tom's maternal grandmother Taddy died, two weeks after Ollie, Dobe Carey's mother.³³⁸ The first was in her late eighties, the latter ninety-two. Both deaths were expected, and indeed a much needed relief for Marilyn Carey. Monday I will have lunch with Tom, who is coming into town to see [...] Michael (a.k.a. Marge), a relationship that sometimes gives me jealous fits; other times, I am more rational.

This afternoon Jane Freilicher has an opening, and there is a

³³⁸ Olive Carey's obituary appeared in the *New York Times* on March 17, 1988.

party at their apartment afterward. Tomorrow evening, alas and alack, Anne flies back home to France, to baby-sit James Wishart³³⁹ while her second grandchild is being born in Aix. And here is Anne on February 6th, 1956, when she was married to James's grandfather:

Afterwards we went on to that [an opening]³⁴⁰ of Michael Wishart, whose charming wife Anne is Philip Dunn's sister and has become a millionairess through her father's death. This generally known item of news seemed to spread a wave of worldly excitement through the crowded room, where people stood with their backs to the pictures or actually leaning against them, jabbering their heads off."

Frances Partridge, *Everything to Lose*³⁴¹

Tuesday, April 5, 1988

It costs a dollar

now to mail

four letters: that

is, domestically. Nor

can you use E Series two-bit

stamps

³³⁹ James Wishart (b. 1982), Anne Dunn's grandson, the older son of Francis Wishart and his wife, Catherine. Francis Wishart (b. 1951) is Dunn's son from her first marriage, to the painter Michael Wishart (1928–1996).

³⁴⁰ Schuyler's clarification.

³⁴¹ Frances (Marshall) Partridge (b. 1900), English diarist, and a member of the Bloomsbury circle. Her husband, Ralph Partridge, had been married to the painter Dora Carrington and was the third side of the Carrington/ Lytton Strachey/ Ralph Partridge triangle. *Everything to Lose*, Frances Partridge's diary for the years 1945–1960, was published in 1985 by Little, Brown and Company.

over-seas. Why? No reason
in the paper: just
the prohibition. And yet
four letters for
precisely
a buck (no pennies,
no one cent stamps
left hanging around)
has a symmetry
four twenty-two cent stamps
did not: here my dear,
here
is a dime
and a two cent stamp.

JS April 5, 1988

April 10, 1988

Eleven o'clock service at Good Shepherd. The Gospel John 20:

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them, The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered him,

“My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

April 13, 1988

April weather—sapphire chips embedded in cold dirty cotton wool, and magnolias opening their fleshy candles.

A favorite memory: going to a Saturday matinée downtown in Washington. My mother OK'd the movie—Wallace Beery³⁴² as Barnum. But it was the vaudeville that impressed: the floor show from the Paradise nightclub in New York. Frank Fay³⁴³—or a convincing sound-alike—led out one stately beauty after the other, each wearing feathers in her hair, a train, and a *cache-sexe*. “Now how about it folks! Let's give this little lady a great big hand!”

April 14, 1988

A morning like a dead sheep, with cold mutton in the offing.

Saturday, April 16, 1988

Yesterday an early supper at Grand Central, six Wellfleet, sweet and cold, and oyster stew, OK, but I really wanted a pan roast. I

³⁴² Wallace Beery (1885–1949), film actor. He appeared in over 200 movies, in a great variety of roles, from a Swedish housemaid in the early slapstick series, “Swedie”; to a ferocious thug in “The Big House” (1930). “Mighty Barnum” was released in 1934.

³⁴³ Frank Fay (1894–1961), vaudeville, stage and movie actor. Fay starred in the original Broadway production of the play “Harvey.” He was married to Barbara Stanwyck for a time.

wish the romanesque vaulting of the Oyster Bar wasn't outlined with little sparkly light bulbs: Christmas in April as well [as] July. All improvements in those crypts are for the worse, like almost everything they do to the Station, except restoring the starry ceiling and scraping the blackout paint off the glass roof—that only took forty-two years! And the unspeakable monster Kodak photomural that ruins the east end of the main room. Oh well, at least it wasn't torn down, like Penn Station, which I would rather not think about.

In the paperback bookstore I found a trove of movie star postcards: the best, Joan Crawford grimacing murderously as she hefts an axe with a withered arm. Then by gleaming ways to the Vanderbilt and 43rd Street exit and up Madison a few blocks, doing justice to the windows of Brooks, Paul Stuart and Tripler (much to covet), west on 46th across 5th Avenue to a shoe store whose advertised Playboy Walking Shoe was not at all what I wanted: the thick crepe soles looked made of cinders. So, \$100 richer, home.

And how did I manage a walk of a duration I have not taken in more than four years? L.L. Bean's Maine hiking shoe! Khaki canvas uppers (over the ankle) and heavily welted rubber soles—the same as the pair I gave Frank [O'Hara] in '52 (or '53), because I never wore them and he liked them so much. He wore them until they wore out. \$25 was never better spent; not by me anyway.

An inch and a half of rain fell in Death Valley: news that thrills me.

April 19, 1988

A morning chilly and delicious as the Sunsweet "Ready to Eat" prunes I just took out of the ice-box (as I will always call it) and, well, ate. That is, five of them: delicious and chilly as this morning ripening in morning glory clarity.

A weekend with Tom in town. He has shaved off the outer flanks of his beard, which makes his face look narrower, and

sported a cast on the ankle he sprained. We wrangled about Jesse Jackson/Mike Dukakis³⁴⁴ (the New York primary is today), he explained Yaway³⁴⁵ (sp?) to me, I sincerely admired his new poem, and, as always, the time flew by, like—?

Yesterday Charles “Charlie” Wright came by, to try to lure me into giving a reading next season for the Dia Foundation (funded, I believe, by a sister of Christophe de Menil).³⁴⁶ The fee, \$3,000, is indeed tempting. I talked with Tom about it beforehand, and the first thing he said was, “Jim, I’ll be with you every step of the way.” That might be what would do it.

April 20, 1988

A black sky turning blue, as in the two Cropseys of Castle Garden yesterday at the New York Historical Society; but those are paintings of full moonlight: perhaps this morning was more like an Atkinson Grimshaw.³⁴⁷

Jasper F. Cropsey: born 1823, a hundred years before me,

³⁴⁴ The Reverend Jesse Jackson (b. 1941) and Michael Dukakis (b. 1933) were both running in the primaries for the Democratic nomination for President in 1988. Dukakis was nominated but lost the election to the Republican George Bush.

³⁴⁵ Yahweh is the usual transliteration of the Tetragrammaton, the four consonants (Y, H, W, H) that spell the Hebrew proper name of God.

³⁴⁶ Charles Wright (b. 1954) was the Director of the Dia Center for the Arts (formerly the Dia Art Foundation) from 1985 until 1994. The Center organizes exhibitions of contemporary art in their buildings on West 22nd Street and in SoHo, and sponsors a series of readings at 155 Mercer Street. Christophe de Menil (b. 1933), is a dress designer and a philanthropist in the arts, whose sister, Fariha Friedrich (formerly Philippa de Menil), started the Dia Art Foundation with her husband, art dealer Heiner Friedrich, in 1974. In 1981 and 1986 Christophe de Menil commissioned tape recordings of Schuyler reading “The Morning of the Poem” and “Hymn to Life,” respectively.

³⁴⁷ (John) Atkinson Grimshaw (1836–1893), English painter, known for his paintings of crepuscular, deserted, tree-lined streets. Reviewing an exhibition of Grimshaw’s paintings in the October, 1961 *Art News*, Schuyler wrote, “The forest scenes are frosty, academically romantic, like a landscape visualized from a novel.”

which seems very far away, and died in 1900, which seems much, much nearer!

I found a penny—a shiny copper penny, prettiest of American coins—in the elevator, the kind of thing my mother loved to do, and for which she always had a ready proverb: not, Falls to the floor, comes to the door, that's when you drop a coin or silver, say a silver spoon; and it's not See a *penny* and pick it up...!

Great Aunt Margaret: “Don't sit down like a spoonful of mush.”³⁴⁸

Saturday, April 23, 1988

While I was waiting to see Daniel this morning he had a call, a patient who was having eye trouble, possibly AIDS related. He told him who to see, then in the examination room said the caller was a good friend (Eric), whom he would be seeing all this weekend, Daniel's first this year at Fire Island. I said, “You must have a lot of strength to cope with this epidemic.” “Sometimes I wonder about how much strength I do have, Jim.” I said, “At least you haven't run off to Wyoming like some doctors.” “Don't think I haven't thought about it.” But he hasn't done it; Raymond's doctor did. Then we talked about Tom and the Franciscans and what it is they do. After I explained, as best I could, he said, “I like people who have a commitment: I *believe* in that.”

And I lost four pounds. A pound a week, which he says is fine.

It's clouding up, and his weekend beach weather won't be all that great. Still, he can get his rooftop gardening (otherwise the

³⁴⁸ Margaret Slater Godley (1843–1928), James Schuyler's great-aunt, the sister of his grandmother, Ella Slater Connor. Aunt Margaret helped bring up Schuyler's mother and her two brothers after the suicide of their father, Schuyler's grandfather, in 1895. Bidy, the grandmother of the twins Patrick and Michael Delehantey in *What's for Dinner?*, remembers how her own grandmother used to admonish her: “‘Don't sit down like a spoonful of mush,’ she used to say to me. I can hear her now.”

deer eat it all) done: some of that surprised me; on second thought, not really.

April 23, 1988

Harry Daley: *This Small Cloud: A Personal Memoir*³⁴⁹

During autumn evenings the natural mists were thickened by smoke from the kipper-curing sheds. Flames lit up mysteriously the various activities connected with herring-curing; strange-speaking people were about; the newsboys' cry of "another murder" seemed exceptionally mournful. We hardly felt safe even in bed with our heads under the bedclothes. But our mother was always sitting downstairs, which was more than some children could say, and when we were asleep she would gently pull our legs out straight to make us grow tall and upright. (Lowestoft 1901-16; page 17)

Her mother once said, emphasising each word to heighten the drama, "Mrs Daley! You—should—have—heard—our—Kathy. Oh dear! She came rushing in the front door—*flew* through to the scullery without saying a word—put one hand on the sink the other on the mangle—and—*farted*—you—never—heard—anything—like—it!" Poor mother, looking on everything as a challenge, but taken off her guard, could only murmur half-heartedly, "But you should have heard my Annie last Sunday morning." (ibid page 14)

³⁴⁹ Harry Daley (1901–1971), an openly homosexual English policeman who became close friends with J.R. Ackerley in 1925, and through him met E.M. Forster, with whom he had an affair in the late 20s. His autobiography, *This Small Cloud*, was published by George Weidenfield and Nicolson in 1986 with a Foreword by Forster's biographer, P. N. Furbank.

“Come on Daddy—play with us,” we begged (...) “All right then,” he would reply, sleepily, “let’s play at dogs—you smell my behind and I’ll growl.” He was strong enough to climb about on, and we crawled sniffing over his lovely, warm, drowsy body whilst he growled deeply now and again. We would put our heads between his open thighs and quickly withdraw before he suddenly clapped them together and trapped us. We yelled with delight at a narrow escape, but to get your head trapped was both frightening and delicious. Sometimes my mother, pretending to be shocked or perhaps genuinely so, would try to give him a smack, only to be grabbed in his strong arms and pulled down to be lovingly hugged and kissed. (ibid page 18)

As I lay awake one night, sick and lonely on the cabin seat, a young fisherman on watch at the tiller came quietly down to the cabin to get some sweets. There was a rustle of paper as he leaned over me to reach his bunk, then he put a chocolate caramel into my mouth, rested his warm face for a little while on mine, gave me a kiss, and quietly returned to the deck. (ibid pages 38-39)

At the height of the depression literally every park seat, shelter, cart, van and lorry held its sleeping figure, and many men took to sleeping on the towing path across Hammersmith Bridge. Though supposed to be a pleasant walk, the towing path was really a place of horror—a mile of bushes running along the riverside, unlit at night and the ideal place for unfortunate people, too old, ugly or diseased to stand a chance in the lighted streets, to have fun with each other in the dark. During the day ancient drunken prostitutes, who in Victorian times had queened it in velvet and feathers in Leicester Square, wanked off old men at a shilling a time, watched through bleary eyes by mumbling methylated spirit drinkers who sat on the seats surrounded by their empties. Sometimes also watched by us, when at

rowing practice we stopped close inshore for a rest. Still rubbing away at the unresponsive old cocks they would shout to us to “fuck off”; in return we would blow out raspberries—all rather undignified, I suppose. (Metropolitan Police 1925-50 page 137)

At the riding school on one occasion the Colonel had cried out in despair, “Oh Trevor! Trevor! you’ve got a wonderful head of hair—but you’ll *never* bloody well learn to ride.” (ibid page 141)

Midnight, Thursday, May 5, 1988

Thursday upcoming, that is, Wednesday definitely dead.

Between here and Seventh Avenue there is just one skimpy tree, on this side anyway, its young leaves glistening colorlessly against the brightness of the urban night: a bus panting as it waits for the light to change, the blue neon sign of the Zig Zag Bar and its blue neon cocktail glass in which the green olive hops back and forth. Across the street the words RADIO SHACK burn red: banners, canopies.

Glad to come in and shut the door and find Barbara romping about. Perhaps she’d like a pinch of catnip.

Little Portion

*May 10, 1988*³⁵⁰

at midnight I will rise to give you thanks...

Noon office

³⁵⁰ Also headed “Little Portion” and dated May 10, 1988 are two poems included in “Last Poems”: “Birds” and “A View.”

Little Portion
Thursday, May 12, 1988

A clear, crisp, cold-enough-to-get-warmer rubbishy kind of Long Island morning, the kind I like.

There is a certain something not to be said for being the only amateur in a small flock of Brothers and Brothers-to-be saying morning prayers—"that's page 591, *Jim*." But why mistake helpfulness for—well, anything else?

Here comes Bob, to drive me up to the bakery, so I can watch Tom bake bread.

Thursday, May 19, 1988

Just now I saw two copper pennies glittering on the wet sidewalk—did I pick them up? Better believe it. And on Tuesday I got in a cab at 65th and Park and there, on the seat, was a five dollar bill. My heart wouldn't have given a bigger jump if it had been a hundred. That's one of my few superstitions: that finding money is lucky: that it brings good luck, that is. One other thing, the number 16. At a small fair, when I was a kid in Chevy Chase, a barker for a spin-the-wheel game, said "Come on, Sonny, what's your lucky number?" I said, off the top of my head, "Sixteen." He spun the wheel and I won something trivial. So how could that not be my lucky number?

Week before last I stayed at Little Portion Friary: a part of that community, going to prayers, saying the office, taking communion at evening mass, spending so much time with Tom; then coming back. Barbara was glad to see me. That, at least, was nice. Otherwise...

*Hudson*³⁵¹
May 28, 1988

Evening light on leaves, on grass, through net curtains: the town square, Hudson, New York, the limestone Columbia County Building, pink-creamy summer (it's that warm) evening light on its side; on top, the inverted dish of a shallow copper—verdigris—dome, like the Library of Congress. Cars whispering around.

Memorial Day [May 30], 1988
Hudson, New York

My first walk down an alley (to the best of my recollection), since we left F Street when I was five.³⁵² This one is backyards on one side, jerrybuilt garages on the other, overhead, a tumbled gray so much like the Hudson Valley I remember from Snedens Landing.³⁵³ How much, rather against my will at times, I've moved around, how old I'm getting, how little I like it when clerks or cab drivers call me *young fellow*. The sky is still gray but the sun is out.

Last night, after dinner in that agreeable restaurant in Housatonic, where the poet brothers wait table,³⁵⁴ I had a passionate desire for something forbidden—not what the others were having and I was not: a martini, wine, the kind of dessert called something like “Chocolate Suicide”—a cigarette, one lousy cigarette. Does

³⁵¹ John Ashbery, whom Schuyler was visiting, has a house in Hudson, New York, which he shares with David Kermani.

³⁵² In the fall of 1929, when Schuyler's parents were divorced, Schuyler and his mother moved from 114 F Street S.E. to 2032 Belmont Road N.W., Washington D.C.

³⁵³ In the summer of 1953, Schuyler was living with Arthur Gold and his duo-piano partner, Robert Fizdale, in Snedens Landing, New York.

³⁵⁴ Michael and Peter Gizzi. From about 1987 to 1992, both brothers worked at Embree's restaurant in Housatonic, N.Y.

this go on forever? Maybe not: right this minute, I do not want a cigarette.

Abandoned gas station becomes
temporary pumpkin fest. .

Ron Silliman, *What*³⁵⁵

Tuesday, June 7, 1988

The difference between five a.m. and six a.m. this wonderful time of year: at five I let Barbara out on the balcony for her morning reconnoiter (peering into other people's windows) and the sky is washed-out blue, with rhythmic stripes of thin cloud in color, a mix of orange, rose and pink; at six, I go out and the sky is skimmed all over with a thin cloud layer that has the pattern of sand seen through barely agitated water, as at the Lake Erie beach in 1935 (or '36). Now Barbara is curled up in the triangle of sun that comes in the window this time of the morning.

I decided I couldn't afford, just now, to buy two filing cabinets and a top with which to make a desk; and realized yesterday I have spent on clothes and records almost exactly that sum. This gives me the feeling that *now* I can afford the new desk components! Better think about that.

Tonight Anne Porter makes her debut as a poetry reader; next November, so do I.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Ron Silliman (b. 1946), poet. *What* is a book-length poem published in 1988 by The Figures press. This couplet, however, is from Silliman's poem, "Hidden," first published in *O.blék/3*, 1988, (edited by Peter Gizzi), and collected in the book *Demo to Ink* (1992). *What* and "Hidden" are both parts of Silliman's series, *The Alphabet*.

³⁵⁶ Anne Porter's first public reading on Tuesday, June 7, 1988, was part of Marc Cohen and Susan Baran's Intuflo series, then held in a hardware store on Madison Avenue in the 60s. She read with Ron Padgett. Schuyler was in the audience.

Schuyler, who had declined to read in public for most of his life, accepted the Dia Center for the Arts's invitation to read there on November 15, 1988. The reading

Friday, June 10, 1988

Yesterday, rain, not much but steady, enough to make staying in seem the wiser part of valor. Later, it cleared off and Mary Abbott and I strolled over to Chelsea Central and ate plates of Wellfleet oysters ("Canadian Wellfleets," the waitress firmly said) of so varied and intense a flavor as to be a kind of food one only knows about from books. Mary was dressed in rather a startling way: shimmering black over dark paisley, and a hat a friend made for her, of slate green, its shape an enlarged variation on a cloche, lined with orange, with many orange turn-ups and orange surprises: a hat upon which the late Queen Mary might have cast an eye both incredulous and covetous, but, ultimately, unwilling. Mary carried it off with gay aplomb. Mary doesn't drink, I don't drink; the night before, neither Doug [Crane] or Frank [Polach] had had a drink for a month; ditto for Bob Dash.

I just came back from the market I favor with a colorful bag of juice oranges (4 for \$1) and limes (3 for \$1). Mystery: a while ago limes went up in price as they became smaller, more wizened and juiceless: "end of season, end of season" was the cry. Now they are big, smooth and crowded with juice. Where do they come from, what's it all about? And as I rounded the corner I looked over my shoulder and the sun, in a clear sky that could become searing, shone blindingly straight in my face.

TV and radio are running out of ways to describe what

was a huge success, and Schuyler gave at least seven subsequent readings at various places before his death in 1991.

One reason for Schuyler's earlier refusal to read was his extreme anxiety "about doing things in front of a crowd of people." (Interview with Robert Thompson, 1990, published in *The Denver Quarterly*, Spring, 1992). Another reason, as Schuyler told Thompson, was that in readings you miss "the voice of the poem. Very often, if you hear a person read a poem, you don't hear what the poem sounds like at all. It goes by too quickly, and their voice distracts you from all the inner sounds of a poem."

happened to Tawana Brawley:³⁵⁷ it used to be “...covered with racial slurs and dog feces and put in a plastic bag” but has become “who was covered with animal excrement in Wappingers Falls,” slurs and plastic bag can now, I suppose, be taken as understood.

June 8, 1988 [sic]³⁵⁸
2

Options: the Green Market at Union Square (local strawberries); Tower Records (which can wait); the Beatrix Potter show at the Morgan Library, for which I rather pine. How about: Union Square this morning, and Morgan Library this afternoon? What a great scheme!

Actually, the total effect of Mary's costume was of a rare, large, probably benign fungus, found deep in the woods. A fungus with a ready smile, sparkling eyes and well supplied with Navajo jewelry.

Friday, June 17, 1988

There are two Spanish restaurants in this block: one here in the Chelsea, the other a few doors nearer Seventh Avenue. Both specialize in lobster, and on a hazy, hot and humid summer morning the smell of their garbage is not that of lobster bisque. And please don't tell me it's officially still spring; it hasn't been spring for a week now.

³⁵⁷ Tawana Brawley, a black teenager, claimed to have been raped by a gang of white men and left with feces and racial epithets smeared on her body. In October, 1988, after a seven month investigation, a New York State Grand Jury found that she had fabricated the story and the evidence.

³⁵⁸ Dated thus on the typescript, but seemingly a continuation of the previous entry, or written the following day, June 11.

It's overcast this morning, but Barbara is snoozing in her spot in front of the west window where the sun would shine in if the sun were shining.

Saturday, June 25, 1988

The relief after the heat wave! which climaxed Wednesday at a record-setting 98 degrees: reckoning in the humidity, said to feel the same as 104 degrees, and indeed it did, especially in Hy Weitzen's office, where the air condition[er] would run but not cool. Then yesterday, and now this morning, bliss, cool breezes, a pellucid sky, and Tom is coming to town for the weekend.

A great sale at Brooks Brothers, where, yesterday, I bought, among other pretties, three striped shirts (green, red, blue) at 50% off. And yesterday and today, I finally assuaged my obligation to the Fort Wayne Museum of Art by writing not one but three garden-centric poems for the catalogue of a show of garden paintings. In a way it's one poem, called "Three Gardens,"³⁵⁹ but that title subsumes three separate poems: "4404 Stanford," the house where we lived at the time of Freddy's³⁶⁰ birth; "Via Erta Canina," (think I'll cut the Via), Steep Dog Street, where Bill Aalto and I rented an apartment in a trecento house from aptly named Avocato Volpe;³⁶¹ "Chelsea," which catalogues the contents of my present windowbox, really, a floor box. But, it is one poem: however, should they wish to increase their "honorarium" from \$100 to \$300, I would not return the bonus. Fat chance.

Just back from Union Square, with strawberries that look, smell and taste a good deal more like it than the bargain berries I got last week, most of which ended in the trash. Also, a bunch of yarrow, shading from pink-violet to almost white; at the moment

³⁵⁹ Published among "Last Poems" in *Collected Poems*.

³⁶⁰ Schuyler's half brother, Fredric Ridenour. The house was in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

³⁶¹ In Florence, 1947.

they are not in the right container. I wonder if such exists; that I possess, that is.

What Bernie Oshei³⁶² heard the tongue-tied kid say at the winter track meet in Delaware Park: “My hanth cold, my feet’th cold, and I hatha pith.”

Wednesday, June 29, 1988

As I looked out of the window at Sheridan Road they looked at me, and were so full of delight in the pleasure they were giving me that some final thread of resistance gave way and I understood not only how entirely generous they were but also that generosity might be the greatest pleasure there is. (page 49)

Parting the slit in the front of his underwear, he sent his urine in an arch out onto the frozen ground. It glittered in the moonlight. He was in the shadow of the porch roof, where he could not be seen by anybody driving past—though who would be, before daylight? With one knee bent and his foot braced against the porch railing he stood staring off into the darkness where she was. (page 80)

William Maxwell:³⁶³ *So Long, See You Tomorrow*

³⁶² Bernard Oshei, Schuyler’s best friend in adolescence. Delaware Park is in Buffalo, New York.

³⁶³ William Maxwell (b. 1908), novelist, whose novels include *They Came Like Swallows* (1937) and *The Folded Leaf* (1945). For many years he was fiction editor at *The New Yorker*. *So Long, See You Tomorrow* was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1980.

Friday, July 1, 1988

Last Sunday was Gay Pride, and Tom marched, though not with the prancers and dancers [...]. A lavender line was painted down Fifth Avenue: who pays for it? paints it? paints it out? why lavender? Why not green, so suggestive of Oscar and Bosie, affectation and limp wrists?³⁶⁴ That would make the blood of the beer-faced Irish boil! And how Chester [Kallman] would have loved it, camping and throwing long-stemmed kisses! Too bad Cardinal Spellman³⁶⁵ could not lead the saraband, swishing along in watered silk, drawing crosses in the air, as he once did at me, when our eyes met outside Grand Central.

Dreams, dreams.

Nevertheless, an important occasion.

Saturday, July 2, 1988

The mystery of the Amish I sometimes see this time of the morning (round about 6:30), concerning themselves with the shop a few doors east, which sells ice, or, prepares your income tax return. This morning, a woman in a bonnet, and a fresh-faced boy in a straw hat were carrying bags of ice. She scooted along, looking quickly up and down the empty street; nor were they traveling by horse and buggy: rather, a costly vehicle, between a mini-bus and a hearse. Ice for what? To do with the Saturday greenmarket, where

³⁶⁴ Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) and his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas (1870–1945). For Wilde, the color green was “the sign of a subtle artistic temperament, and in nations is said to denote a laxity, if not a decadence, of morals.” He and his friends wore green carnations in their buttonholes to the opening night of his play, “Lady Windermere’s Fan” in 1892, and Wilde and Douglas were satirized in *The Green Carnation* (1894), a novel by Robert Hichens.

³⁶⁵ Francis, Cardinal Spellman (1889–1967), Roman Catholic Cardinal of New York from 1946 to 1967. Cardinal Spellman’s homosexuality was widely known of in the New York gay world of the 50s; his camp nickname was Minnie.

I see other Amish? Perhaps these Amish? Bingo! They sell fresh cheese.

Later. Back from Union Square, where I almost bought a cloud of baby's breath from a woman who looked like a picture in a book about life in a French village: "Morning Market: Mme. Amélie." "Do not put water: they are dried." "Then I would like *these* instead." "You do not want them?" "No. I want something I can throw out." I know all about dusty baby's breath. She disapproved. "Are these astilbe?" "Yes." Only in America had she met with such a lack of education, such waste, and her glance (like a knitting needle), said so. I felt like saying, "I thought maybe they were *Aruncus sylvestris*," but I was uncertain of its common name (old man's beard? goat's beard?), and *Aruncus* does its stuff in August. Her fingers made change as deftly as they had wound her hair into a tight bun, set rather high on the back of her head. How unlike the "And how are you today?" of the farmer vendors one most often deals with there! A meeting short and sharp, which she does not remember. I do.

These loose spires of creamy white need a better word than, feathery. Perhaps "astilbe" will do.

No Amish, but it was crowded, and I was not out for cheese.

Sunday, July 3, 1988

First the leaves on the astilbe wilted, then the flowers overnight went from creamy to birdshit. Indeed I did get something I could throw out.

July 4, 1988

I learnt to restrain speculative tendencies and to follow the unforgotten advice of my master, Charcot: to look at the

same things again and again until they themselves begin to speak.

Freud, quoted in *The New Yorker*³⁶⁶

Tuesday, July 5, 1988

The sky is, well, veiled. Or merely hidden, or, obscured. A winter road may be a glare of ice: this sky is a glare of haze, portending ill: rising temperatures, soaring humidity. It's the humidity that counts. At least the long holiday weekend is over: like chewing on a ripe seed capsule of *Papaver somniferum*.

Wednesday, July 6, 1988

Sat facing the glass end wall at Raymond's on 9th Street³⁶⁷ last evening looking out into the garden, whose walls enclosed a balminess cool, clear and unexpected. Ivy, a shrub with spotted leaves, a tall louring sculpture-structure that would look well smothered in who-cares-which vine—just make sure it's rampant. Jerry Matherly³⁶⁸ the other guest. Both of them have an incomprehensible enthusiasm for the vile Capote biography,³⁶⁹ and for Truman's writing. Strange business.

³⁶⁶ The quotation is from an article on Freud by Janet Malcolm in the issue for April 20, 1987. Jean Martin Charcot (1825–1893), was a founder of the school of neurology at the Salpêtrière Hospital and an influential teacher there.

³⁶⁷ Raymond Foye was living with Henry Geldzahler, former Curator of Twentieth Century Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and from 1980–1985 New York City Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. (Foye also had an apartment in the Chelsea Hotel). Schuyler gave two practice readings in the 9th Street apartment in preparation for his November, 1988 reading at the Dia Center.

³⁶⁸ Jerry Matherly, a friend of Raymond Foye's, worked at the Museum of Modern Art on and off from 1961 (just after Schuyler left) until 1973.

³⁶⁹ *Capote: A Biography*, by Gerald Clarke (1988).

Barbara lies asleep (what else?) by the window, one white foot in the sun.

In an editorial in the *Times*, the writer used the word “thus” more than once, and came up with the juicy, “lawyerly.” See how many times you can say that before bugle blower’s locklip sets in.

Friday, July 8, 1988

Barbara comes to long enough to switch her butt around and replace it in the sun by her head and one paw. Back to sleep.

The morning rather cool (“coolish” E. Wilson³⁷⁰ would write: in his journal, at least: never has that suffix been so heartily applied, as though by someone who *loves* commercial mayonnaise), rather cool, but the sun through distant haze already falls on buildings’ flanks (more Wilson) with a serious long hot summer look.

Still, Wilson’s journals are good, very good indeed, when he gets back to what people say, and how they say it. All the same, there is a lot of curious Twenties-early-Thirties Waldo Frank³⁷¹ kind of writing—a catalogue of a brand new Washington hotel room so detailed it ends up sounding like Cowper’s³⁷² invocation of the [Russian]³⁷³ ice palace.

The hotel was the Shoreham: I went to school (The John F. Oyster)³⁷⁴ a short way down the same street; I remember a

³⁷⁰ Edmund Wilson (1895–1972), critic and man of letters, whose journals, *The Twenties* (1975), *The Thirties* (1980), *The Forties* (1983), *The Fifties* (1986), and *The Sixties* (1993) were published after his death.

³⁷¹ Waldo Frank (1889–1967), novelist and critic.

³⁷² William Cowper (1731–1800), English poet. The “Empress of Russia’s palace of ice” is described for 49 lines in Book V of Cowper’s long poem, “The Task.”

³⁷³ Adjective added, then deleted by Schuyler.

³⁷⁴ Near Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. in Washington D.C.

photograph of Huey Long dancing there; I remember swimming in its grand indoor, but not subterranean, pool, for which I paid with a Smokey Mountain fifty cent piece I was never supposed to spend, because it was a collectors' item, because its value would, stealthily, silently, unendingly,—well—grow, wax, increase. “I don't know where it is.” “You spent it.” “I did not! I did not!” But I did: like Huey Long and Edmund Wilson, I too had my moment at the Shoreham.

July 12, 1988

In the morning paper, the chilling news that Tony Holland³⁷⁵ (“ANTHONY HOLLAND, ACTOR”) is dead of AIDS: he killed himself, nevertheless he died of this plague, AIDS. A new aspect—new to me—the thought: at least he lived to sixty, at least he had his career, his successes. Talking a mile a minute at Kenward's parties, a drink in his hand, the skin on his face so taut, all about him taut, and so gifted.

So Tony committed suicide: in God's name, why not? He had a reason, and he acted on it: honor to him.

A pall over the day, matched by the dank and dripping cloud cover.

Wednesday, July 13, 1988

A summer morning impartially stripes the sidewalk with shadow and with sunlight: diagonal shadows interleaved with shadows of sunlight, and walking in one feels no different than walking in the other.

³⁷⁵ Anthony Holland's obituary in the *New York Times*, July 12, 1988, was headed, “Anthony Holland Is Dead at 60; Actor, Ill With AIDS, Is a Suicide.”

Thursday, July 14, 1988

A not great morning, not so far. Opened one of two quarts of skim milk Jonathan bought yesterday at the Red Apple, which curdled when poured into coffee. It was dated July 9th: yesterday was the 13th. The other quart was dated the 12th. All the same, this would not have happened before the lovable dairy folks hustled a new law into effect, which permits dating that reflects a putative longer shelf life: which exists only where there is proper refrigeration. Anything for a buck.

So off to d'Agostino, which opens at 8 and was still closed at 8:15: no cashier had shown up yet. Backtrack to the further deli. A man was putting containers of milk behind those already in the case. "Are *these* today's milk?" "Yes but *these* are fresh too." I took a quart of today's, and hustled home to my coffee. Enough is as good as a feast.

The prospect of lunch with Trevor Winkfield and Charles North lifts my spirits, and so does that of going out to Little Portion next week.

Little Portion

Wednesday, July 20, 1988

Thunder and lightning last night, rather near at hand, but not right here—did it rain? Such heavy fog this morning, the universal wetness proved nothing: but the tall pale delicate cups of the hostas flattened (almost) on the ground do: it rained alright.

Little Portion
Thursday, July 21, 1988

In an interval of a rainy evening, driving with Tom into Port Jefferson for dinner, down one of the winding, up-hill-and-down-dale roads, and there at the bottom, beyond a bend, is a woods, trees receding, higher behind lower, all smothered in fox grape leaves. They had the draped clothly look of worn away old hills: smoothed, however, but not smooth: an endless layering of leaves, big leaves, less green than leaden-sky-reflecting, no more a color than white and black are said to be.

But why weren't the trees underneath killed, literally smothered, by the leafy inundation?

What a long time since I last lay reading in bed at night and heard rain drumming on the roof and water gurgling in the water spouts!

Evening before last I read the lesson (from second Corinthians) at mass—a "first" indeed for me. One advances, perhaps, creeping, almost invisibly, and by little hops, even jumps.

Monday, August 8, 1988

Most mornings, when I happen to look, I see the man, bald or balding, at his full length window (it opens onto a fire-escape landing), one flight up, in the rather interesting loft building, next to the Communists directly across. He wears a dark kimono—sleeves only to the elbow—his left arm resting on his knee—his left leg is up on I can't see what: the window ledge doubtless—and in his right hand a truly out-sized white cup, as big as Mama Vuillard's, but shaped differently, and with a handle. He stays quite a while: I have never seen him come to the window, or go back inside: watching the world go by. He can look down and see the sidewalk on his, the north, side of the street, as well as the early morning foot traffic on mine, which, because of my balcony, I can't see. For

long spells I forget all about him, then when I'm watering the plants, or whatever, if it's the right time of the morning—around 6:30 is likely—there he is: or, there he isn't.

His building is old-fashioned, classical but simple, until the top story, where the windows are separated by Ionic columns, five of them, painted an agreeable, not too dark, shade of green. Nowhere else is there such elaboration.

Overhead, shreds of light gray and apricot moving in and under bright summer blue. Along the sidewalk, several homeless people sleeping with their shopping bags, their goods, next to them. I know where they piss alright: where do they shit?

Little Portion
Wednesday, August 10, 1988

I have become like a leather flask in the smoke...

Psalm 119, 83

August 14, 1988

random scribbles from TV

“...the kind of massadge ya need.”

Art Linkletter,³⁷⁶ for Contour Chairs

“I can't figure you out.”

Lyle Talbot to Ann Dvorak, “Three on a Match”³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ Art Linkletter (b. 1912), the host of “People are Funny” and other television shows in the 1950s and 60s, now does commercials on late night TV.

³⁷⁷ Lyle Talbot (1902–1996), film and television actor, appeared in over 150 films, often in “slick, man-about-town” roles. For 10 years he played Ozzie Nelson's best friend on the television show, “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet.” Ann Dvorak

“I’m no puritan and I’m no killjoy and I’m no buttinsky...”
Joan Blondell,³⁷⁸ *ibid*

Verdi’s “Attila”³⁷⁹

“But from the seaweed of these waves
A new phoenix will arise.”

Attila: “Call the Druids.”

Attila: “Sacred Daughters of the Huns,
Play upon your lyres.”

Foresto to his beloved Odabella: “Heartless girl, you still
dare talk to me of love?”

Last line: Attila: (his newly espoused having stabbed him
with his own sword): “Et tu, Odabella?”

“I used to live over to Vermont.”
Jim Cantore, the Weather Channel

“...the dehydrated Ohio...”

(1912–1979), movie actress, played Paul Muni’s sister in “Scarface,” among other roles. “Three on a Match,” (1932), was directed by Mervyn Le Roy. The cast also included Joan Blondell, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart.

³⁷⁸ Joan Blondell (1909–1979), American movie actress who often played “dizzy blonde” roles, notably in the Busby Berkeley musical, “Golddiggers of 1933.”

³⁷⁹ Verdi’s “Attila,” with a libretto by Temistocle Solera and Francesco Maria Piave, after Zacharias Werner’s play, “Attila, König der Hunnen,” premiered at Teatro La Fenice in 1846.

Monday, September 19, 1988

A sunny, hazy, hazy morning, the first of true autumn haze. Not long ago, there were a few days, one, in particular, when the sun shone but cast no shadows: smoke borne on the jet stream, smoke from the forest fires in the west, fires that tried to extinguish Old Faithful. Those now seem contained.³⁸⁰ Here, after endless cloudless balmy weather, intermittent sun and rain, showers, drizzle, or, “Heavy at times with possibly local flooding,” are upon us.

A month ago Tom (now Brother Thomas) went to San Francisco for a year. He’s living in San Damiano Friary, and working with prisoners: the illiterate (among others), who would like to learn how to read, but can’t bring themselves to admit it.

Thursday, September 22, 1988

The first of autumn, or it will be, this afternoon a little before three. Each morning, fewer of the Bohemian wine-glass flowers on the morning glory entwined on the cast-iron balustrade: vanishing, like stars from a dying galaxy.

But when I saw Mars on a recent morning, hung alone to the right of the Empire State Building, at first it seemed so big, so bright, I watched it to see it move: surely, just another man-made wonder: posted in space to send back TV advertising! No: for once, the McCoy, though its redness went undetected by this naked eye, and so did Schiaparelli’s³⁸¹ discredited canals.

³⁸⁰ Forest fires burned large sections of Yellowstone National Park in September, 1988.

³⁸¹ Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835–1910), Italian astronomer, who in 1877 reported his discovery of grooves, or “canali,” on the surface of Mars. The word was mistranslated into English as “canals,” leading to speculation about possible life on the planet.

Saturday, September 24, 1988

A curdled morning sky, lumpy and uninviting as cold oatmeal.

Dinner last night at Raymond's (9th Street), with Vincent Katz and his slightly reserved, very pretty, Brazilian wife. She is slender and elegant, with rounded cheekbones and hollow cheeks, and as dark as he is. And her name is on the tip of my mind: it too begins with V. And is: Vivien [Bittencourt]. How much they are in love showed in the pleasure Vincent took in her revealing some ordinary fact about life in Rio: how many the largest soccer stadium could seat. Vincent repeated the incredible number, leaning toward her, smiling and sparkling. She repeated it back, and sparkled and smiled. Just like his mother Ada once laughing up at Alex (a party at the Burckhardts');³⁸² a few days later, they went off to Virginia and were married.

Monday, September 26, 1988

The pink morning glories are pretty much over, but the blue ones thrive in the cool weather. This morning along the top of the balustrade an uneven bright blue line—just the top edges of today's flowers hanging out in space over the street, like that "line of sapphire at the bottom of the sky" one saw far off down the Arno on winter mornings in '48, stopping on the Ponte Santa Trinità, which was still a war-time Bailey Bridge.³⁸³

These cool, not to say chilly, nights, Barbara has come back to bed. She waits for the reading light to go off and for me to settle

³⁸² Rudy Burckhardt was then married to the painter Edith Schloss. They separated in 1961.

³⁸³ The Ponte Santa Trinità, just downriver from the Ponte Vecchio, was blown up by the Germans in the Second World War, as were all of the bridges in Florence except the Ponte Vecchio. Schuyler and Bill Aalto lived in Florence from late 1947 to spring 1948, arriving only 3 years after the city had been taken by the Allies.

myself, then hops up and, turning at right angles to me, settle[s] her furry hindquarters against me and we go to sleep. When I'm seriously thinking of getting up, I sometimes turn and lie on my back a while. Then she kneads bread on my midriff, a signal that she wants to be fed.

Monday, October 3, 1988

The morning glory leaves pale, inexpensive gold—transparent—a few blue flowers, but none of the smaller vin rosé kind.

Friday, October 7, 1988

Morning glory leaves quite withered away in the cold (wind chill factor: 33 degrees! Early October?), and one or two blue flowers struggle into meager life on a flannel morning. The rosemary ("How you've grown") comes indoors, where there are small, paler than sulphur carnations in a dark blue bottle, and a stem of lilies, with petals like shavings from an iceberg. "When the buds open," the florist said, "remove the pollen." So as not to stain that whiteness, perhaps. But I don't do it, I like to see the long anthers hung on their stalks, and see them ripen.

Barbara will never compromise: all she has to do is move enough so the typewriter carriage can move too. But no, she feigns a bite at my hand, hops down with a thud, and takes a few papers with her.

Saturday, October 22, 1988

Skies of pewter, scoured bright by a cold wind. People hustle, coat collars turned up, women with scarves tied over their heads. All that's left of the morning glory vines is a wiry snarl.

Friday, October 28, 1988

The sun coming up turns the fragmentary cloud cover the colors lingerie—ladies' delicate unmentionables—used to be: peach, Nile green. But when the sun goes down, it sets New Jersey on fire and lights up the western flanks of Manhattan's ugliest buildings in beauty.

Sunday, October 30, 1988

Cold: 40 degrees, wind chill factor of 30, but it felt more piercing than that on the dash to the deli at 6:30 on the first morning of back to standard time: "real" time, I can never help feeling. A short rough scene in the store: a sloppy heavy getting-up-there drunk waving a bag of something fat and salty and yelling, "I gotta shit! I gotta a cock! I gotta..." and he started to undo his clothes. "Outta here outta here:" the Cretean with the thick mustache and mustache-like eyebrows began shoving him roughly, but rude and noisy put up a good show of resistance. Another guy joined in. I went on checking out the *Times* to make sure all the sections were there. "Yeah," the drunk yelled, "Yeah! Hit me again—I like it..." Exit. The men came back in, laughing. Everybody had had a good time—so why does my mind always go, "Bystander killed in gun play?"

Now: St. John's in the Village at 8, or Church of the Incarnation at 8:30?

Sunday, November 6, 1988

In a sky no longer night only in that it has a perceptible color, a sharp crescent moon and, nearby, the morning star, and no other, pinned there like the emblem of a mystic order. Below, straight away, a marquee closely edged with orange light bulbs, burning, perhaps some spicy after hours club left over from another epoch? No, just a Bojangles outlet for fat, puffy fried chicken.

Three young black guys in the store, talking about Savage, the after-hours club next door: "He said he wanted me *around* I thought he *meant* he wanted me around!" "Like throwing out those guys he threw out?" Laughter. "Like he wanted me *around!*" Heartier laughter. At the counter the night clerk is passing out with fatigue.

[All of the rest of this entry is lightly crossed out, apparently by Schuyler, but reads:]

And at the hotel desk: "I haven't seen Turk...?" who works weekends. "Oh, he's in Rochester." ?? "For the operation. On his kidney." John is slow and not all that articulate: perhaps Richard will be more forthcoming. A transplant?

But Rochester, Minnesota, I imagine, where the Mayo Clinic is, to which I once drove with Cousin Ruth's husband Freeman (a dentist) and his father (another dentist? a doctor, at any rate).³⁸⁵ We passed in the flatness the Hormel plant and stopped somewhere for lunch. The sign above a bathroom door was warped and seemed to

³⁸⁴ In 1988 Schuyler was going to various Episcopal churches in Manhattan before he eventually settled on the Church of the Incarnation at Madison Avenue and 35th Street. He was confirmed as an Episcopalian there, "after a lifetime as a non-practicing Presbyterian," (Letter to Carl Little, January 14, 1990) in December, 1989.

³⁸⁵ Ruth Blunt was Schuyler's second cousin, the granddaughter of his great-aunt Margaret. In age, though, she was nearly a contemporary of Schuyler's mother. Dr. Freeman Blunt's father was a well-known pioneer dentist in Minnesota.

say MEN. But after my leak I looked around for towels and there on the wall was a KOTEX dispenser. I fled, appalled: isn't it against the law for little boys to use the Ladies' Room?

But what to send Turk? A pot of narcissus seems a good bet—at least they will be white and fragrant and not some ghastly color unpredictable from here. Poor guy: he's seemed solemn lately, but I put it down to post-vacation blues: he did go to the Turkish Riviera and Byzantium.

November 6, 1988 (2)

Later. It is Rochester, New York, where Turk's family lives, his trouble is gall stones, and he will be back on Friday.

Monday, November 7, 1988

For \$39.95 one can buy genuine reproductions of the authentic widow's mite—both of them: "...for she gave all she had." In a word, buy until it hurts. Then give a mite.

All three elevators are out at five this Monday morning. Perhaps Charles will bring me a *Times*, if he decides to distribute those he usually does by way of the stairs. Meantime, trapped seven flights up in this picturesque old firetrap; and it might be worse: I might live on the tenth floor. Or the roof.

Tomorrow we elect a president, and the next day is my birthday and I go over the hill! "Downward to darkness on extended wing."³⁸⁶ But with a Medicare card in my beak, and Social Security benefits clutched in my claws.

³⁸⁶ The last four lines of Wallace Stevens's poem, "Sunday Morning" are:

And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

Tuesday, November 22, 1988

Too hot in here, too cold out there—for the window to be open at any rate. But the sun shines bright, a refreshing change after a rain-drenched, rain-swept weekend at John's in Hudson. We (minus John) went to a reading by Barbara Guest at Bard in—the name of the town eludes my aging brain, and a reception afterward at Geoff Young's, where I talked to Clark Coolidge and others—Michael Gizzi,³⁸⁷ his shy brother Peter, and so on.

Let's see: on November 9th I turned 65, which, what with Medicare and Social Security, places me firmly over the hill in Senior Citizen land. Turning 50 and 60 didn't get to me, but this one rather does: such a sense of all that is gone and won't come back: nothing necessarily admirable to covet—the way I looked in the spring of 1957, perhaps. How old was I? Thirty-three? Yes. And years when I might have written more poems and didn't. On the other hand, Vincent Virga writes me that at the reading for the Dia Foundation on the 15th,³⁸⁸ I looked, “Kingly. Magnificent. A true star.” So what the hell (if I looked at all that way, it was the lighting for the videotaping). Nevertheless: what the hell! Past is indeed past,³⁸⁹ and being 33 was less than no fun at all: being 65 is. Rather fun, I mean.

³⁸⁷ Michael Gizzi arranged Barbara Guest's reading as part of a series at Simon's Rock in Alford, Massachusetts, a small school run by Bard College.

³⁸⁸ In a letter to Anne Dunn, dated November 17, 1988, Schuyler wrote of the much anticipated, and by him dreaded, Dia reading, “As for my moment in the spotlight—well, truth to tell, I was a fucking sensation.”

³⁸⁹ “Past is past, and if one/ remembers what one meant/ to do and never did, is/ not to have thought to do/ enough?” These are the first lines of “Salute,” the poem with which Schuyler invariably began his readings.

Monday, November 28, 1988

Some of the first letters written in 1854 after he left prison camp give a foretaste of *The House of the Dead* and reveal his “credo,” a belief “that there is nothing more beautiful, more profound, more attractive, more wise, more courageous and more perfect than Christ.”

Liza Knapp, review of *Dostoevsky Complete Letters*,
TLS, 11/11–17/88

In the midst of copying this Barbara, who is stretched out on the back of the desk, pushed the *TLS* onto the floor, then began to bat my hand. What a very human cat!

Monday, December 5, 1988

There is always a theme in the news, and lately it has been child abuse: but in the more tranquil world of the weather, where I prefer to dwell, it is “lake effect snow.” Water vaporizing from the Great Lakes meets Arctic air sweeping down from Canada, *et voilà*, snow. That’s how I grasp it, anyway. We have moved on from “lake effect snow,” pure and simple, to “...favored lake effect areas...” where soon “...we’ll see the lake snow *kick in*.” Buffalo no doubt, this winter will suffer one or more lake effect blizzards.

I have been going spasmodically to the early service at the Church of the Incarnation, and feel rather at home in its not vast Gothic Revival spaces. Father Ousley (the Rev. J. Douglas, that is)³⁹⁰ has a fine voice which he uses with an equally fine lack of affectation—no Episcopal throat there. The early service (8:30 on

³⁹⁰ The Reverend John Douglas Ousley (b. 1947), rector, since 1985, of the Church of the Incarnation, at Madison Avenue and 35th Street, in New York City. Schuyler became a member of the church in 1989 and his funeral was held there in 1991.

Sundays) is of course simply the Eucharist and a short homily, which is what I am there for, and not those hymns with endless verses nor (oh dear!) sermons.

Tom told me yesterday that if one reads the offices every day, in two years you will have read—the Bible through once? Twice? The psalms any number of times: it's clear how ignorant I am, but it seems a fairly painless way of dealing with Paul and his epistles.

The woods and every fragrant tree . . .

Baruch

Thursday, December 8, 1988

The early sky, an enameled 18th Century saucer—French blue and some bright tint—not at all at home with the glum piles of ordered brick and stone and glass beneath it. A cold (not so very) morning in which Gorbachev and spouse prepare to return prematurely to Russia: an earthquake there, and when his people suffer a leader must be there to, well, lead them.

Last night the *not*-fun of having one's words yelled at one, in duet with the clanging of a Steinway. Poems, for the most part, meant to be read at a glance, journal jottings, almost unsingable, and certainly not like this. If the voice is treated as another instrument, then it must sound as well played as the piano (or whatever): and it did not, oh no, not either of them (the soprano or the baritone, that is, singing two different groups)...³⁹¹

A little later, and the tinting effects have faded to white (clean

³⁹¹ On December 7, 1988, Schuyler and Darragh Park attended a concert which included two song cycles set to Schuyler's poems by composer Gerald Busby (b. 1935): *What Ails My Fern*, for mezzo-soprano and piano, and *Intimate Gifts*, for baritone and piano. Busby's other works include "Runes" (1976), for the Paul Taylor Dance Company; the music for Robert Altman's film "Three Women" (1977); and the opera "Orpheus in Love" (1991), with a libretto by Craig Lucas.

and soiled), and a few curds floating about in the blue whey go very well with what we offer them to decorate.

Monday, December 12, 1988

The kind of cold called bitter: a morning bright and sharp as a new knife. Bundled up—and down—to my eyebrows, march off the half a block to the usual early lunch: Monday is split pea soup day: can't miss that!

And if there was a thread of thought to this, it's lost in the tangle of persuading a new ribbon to wind on a spool it didn't want to wind on.

Tuesday, December 13, 1988

“...expect organized snow to develop...minor dustings...” and at 6: “light snow showers” (which to me sounds a wrong word for snow) at La Guardia, but not here, where it is positively warmer than yesterday, and so much less windy.

Dinner last night at the Waverly Inn (Darragh, Joe Brainard), like stepping back into the 30s, except everyone was too well (newly, expensively) dressed: no shabby tweed jackets, no elbow patches. I had forgotten the supreme discomfort of their tea room picturesque booths. But the food is the same, of a kind rather hard to find in NYC nowadays: chicken pot pie, fine; and Joe said the same for the Yankee pot roast. Doubt that I'll go back there soon.

Predicted: this morning, a few flurries. And when I went out, it was snowing, invisibly: felt it on my face, saw it on the sidewalk, but looking straight ahead, in the air: nothing at all. The first snowfall of the year! I like to honor it, it has its own feeling, like no other day of the year; and because of the way I used to feel about snow, loving it so much. All the first years I lived in New York ('44-'47,

maybe), it snowed hardly at all. Then when we were living in Florence, New York had a blizzard!³⁹² What a cheat. Now, well...

Friday, December 16, 1988

Blackest night still involves a damn cold morning, and I try to dispel the annual Christmas/New Year curse at Incarnation. It helps, a lot—and what a horrible way to feel this is! But it is the common lot.

Or perhaps the common lot is loving all those carols, right down to “Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer,” which now counts as a carol? Or best loved Christmas songs: “White Christmas,” “I Saw Mama Kissing Santa Claus;” or an Advent calendar called a Christmas count-down calendar? And what about my own urge to buy, buy, give, give: or rather, lavish, lavish?

Christmas giving is what the economy of retail stores turns on. Oh, great.

Saturday, December 17, 1988

About 6 in the evening: a misshapen hunk of moon through running, oily clouds and cold rubbed on the cheeks, as though by a rough washcloth. In the hall, the unlovely sound of someone doing scales on a wind instrument—why are scales always so unpleasant for everyone except whoever’s doing them? But I liked the cold and the wicked winter moon, even if the promised snow didn’t happen: here, in town, at least.

³⁹² The blizzard of late December, 1947, left a record 26½ inches of snow in New York City.

December, 1988

The heart of “42nd Street”³⁹³

“Remind me to tell you I think you’re swell —”

Ruby Keeler:³⁹⁴ “*Jim*, they didn’t tell me *you* were here, it was *grand* of you to come.”

Bebe Daniels:³⁹⁵ “And go out there and be so *swell*...”

Sunday, December 18, 1988

Early, buildings across the way can barely be made out through the lights and images reflected on the glass. Open the window a crack and say to Barbara, sitting nearby, “Want to go out?” Barbara knows cold when she feels it and gives me her, “Ask a stupid question...” look. But sooner or later she will want to go out, charge up and down the balcony, peer down intently at cars and passers-by through the iron chrysanthemum foliage, then paw the window pane, demanding to be let in.

Saturday, January 14, 1989

A clear morning, for a change, light falling everywhere, like peeling fruit and finding the bright flesh underneath. Cold, but not all

³⁹³ “42nd Street” (1933) was choreographed by Busby Berkeley and starred Ruby Keeler, Bebe Daniels, Ginger Rogers and Dick Powell.

³⁹⁴ Ruby Keeler (b. 1910), actress and dancer who starred in the Busby Berkeley musicals, “42nd Street” and “Golddiggers of 1933.”

³⁹⁵ Bebe Daniels (1901–1971), movie actress. A popular comedienne of the silent era, she had her greatest successes in musicals, such as “42nd Street” (1933).

that cold: better, this time of year, than the warm-for-winter weather two days ago, when I had to go uptown in the rain, taking what's left of a heavy cold with me.

Tuesday, January 17, 1989

Sunlight, soft as the warming-up winter morning is going to be, brighter and then less so, as the clouds move about. A likeable day, and better than yesterday, when, finally, in a quick-tempered moment, I fired my assistant.³⁹⁶ It doesn't make me happy to have done so, but I am relieved: finally, one can not go on and on with a forty-year old man with the pilfering, not to say thievish, instincts of a child. Even his one stout defender, his brother, finally turned him out. No one can help him because he won't let them: if he says, "It won't ever happen again!" he believes it. In fact, except when he's caught, I doubt that he's much aware it has happened, and, quite soon, not aware at all. But I don't feel much sympathy: it's hard to take pity on a pickpocket, when it's your pocket that's picked.

Yes, I liked him, and I'm glad I won't be seeing him again.

Wednesday, January 18, 1989

I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; Shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it!

Isaiah 44

³⁹⁶ Johnathan Leake.

Meantime, the sun comes up over Manhattan; I will write to Tom and to Peter Gizzi, go shopping, see about a ticket for my trip to San Francisco, have lunch, and hope to be at church at noon. Then what? Take my shoes off and read the mail, if there is any.

Yesterday to the Metropolitan with Darragh, and the "Painting in Renaissance Siena: 1420-1500."³⁹⁷ Much that is beautiful, but I might have liked better, Duccio,³⁹⁸ Sassetta,³⁹⁹ Giovanni di Paolo⁴⁰⁰ and their followers. A few followers. Things get pretty sad when Florence and Signorelli⁴⁰¹ infiltrate. As for this recent and laughable fabrication, Master of the Osservanza...⁴⁰² Next time, I want to go through it later to earlier, ending in Sassetta's breathtaking dispersals of interior space.

But many of the pictures have the devotional radiance of icons.

³⁹⁷ The exhibition was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from December 20, 1988 through March 19, 1989.

³⁹⁸ Duccio di Buoninsegna (ca.1260–1318/19), Siennese painter of the pre-Renaissance period. His paintings were a great influence on the Siennese painters of the following century.

³⁹⁹ Sassetta (Stefano di Giovanni) (active by 1423–d.1450), Siennese painter of the Renaissance.

⁴⁰⁰ Giovanni di Paolo (active by 1417–d.1482), Siennese painter. "Giovanni di Paolo's inventive powers excelled in narrative subjects that had little or no fixed visual tradition in Siennese art." (From the catalogue to the exhibition by Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter and Carl Brandon Strehlke.)

⁴⁰¹ Luca Signorelli (ca.1450–1523), Tuscan painter, student of Piero della Francesca and associate of Pietro Perugino, with whom he worked in Florence and on frescos in the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

⁴⁰² Master of the Osservanza (active second quarter of the 15th century). "The name of the painter derives from a triptych in the Church of the Osservanza outside Siena and applies to a group of works that, until 1940, were universally attributed to Sassetta..." From the catalogue to the exhibition by Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter and Carl Brandon Strehlke.

Saturday, January 21, 1989

Surprising, against a sky blue with cold, a water tank with a fringe of icicles, looking as artificial, in this clear and snowless weather, as those elongations of stone in Italian grottos. For sure and for certain though: it is that cold.

Weeping may spend the night,
but joy comes in the morning.

Psalm 30

In you, Lord, is our hope;
And we shall never hope in vain.

Morning Prayer

January 23, 1989

Sunshine through high cloudiness.

Tuesday, January 24, 1989

The annoyances of the trip out (one hiatus after the other) vanish completely, here at Little Portion, a place God has blessed.

“Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.”

Sunday, January 29, 1989

An opalescent sky, one without much fire: it is winter after all. This January one would scarcely know it: two out of three days at Little Portion were crystal perfection. The other it rained, in a piddling

sort of way, but wasn't cold. Obviously, or the rain would have been snow. The echt cold is said to be on its way. But not, pray God, such as they have in Alaska: 80 degrees below zero.

Two weeks from today I'll be in San Francisco. How odd. I sincerely thought I'd never go to California: no, not ever.

[In February, Schuyler took a short trip to San Francisco. He stayed with Tom Carey at the San Damiano Friary on Dolores Street, the West Coast house of the Society of Saint Francis within the Episcopalian Church, where Carey lived and worked from August, 1988 to September, 1989.

Schuyler had been invited west by Bill Berkson to give a reading at the San Francisco Art Institute, where Berkson teaches. Schuyler also visited Berkson in Bolinas, just north of the city. The reading, on February 10, was a great success.]

Wednesday, February 14, 1989 [sic]

San Damiano Friary

San Francisco: I love the way the cute houses hold each other up as they scramble up the steep hills, and I hate walking down the steep hills: my legs weren't made for steeping. I love driving out of it and how you see at a glance how deep the Pacific is, and see how much bigger than the Atlantic and see, on a sunny winter day, its two beautiful colors (my favorite colors): light blue and dark blue. And the trees along Dolores Street and in the park over the way, hardly any of whose names I know, except palm, and, in a brave rash moment, date palm.

And of course out of town there are tall straight stands of eucalyptus. And the city looks ravishing coming back to it in the evening, as though cramped Manhattan were spread out over these Western hills, to display it to better effect.

March 1, 1989

Sluggish and lackluster performance of Tchaikovsky "Serenade for Strings," conducted by Colin Davis. It made me long for the astringent sound of that French orchestra we heard in Amsterdam in 1947.

March 2, 1989

The other night a work that seemed thickly prolonged orchestral ennui turned out to be a Brahms symphony! Chagrin, for me. Tonight his 3rd is all subtle harmoniousness, that haunting, almost danceable refrain in the 2nd movement and altogether what I remember & love: the world's in place again.

March 3, 1989

"Wintry Mix"

Thursday, March 16, 1989

On this brilliant, cool, delicious day the city seemed the work of a child who owns a pencil, a ruler, and a paint set.

Barbara is stretched out behind the typewriter, looking at me out of the corner of her eye, which I have never noticed her do before. It is so nice when I first wake up, and find her next to me, and give her a lot of scratching, stroking and ear fluffing before I get up. I have to do it then, because the second I start to get up, she's off the bed and heading for her empty dish or for the French window which she wants opened for her morning exploratory stroll along the balcony.

Palm Sunday, March 19, 1989

Cold, clear, a scatter of cloud scraps, the sky intensely blue as California where, at Bolinas, it seemed so much bluer, so much more Californian, than it ever does here. In the late afternoon clarity all colors have their beauty: the window frames of the building across the street are a rich and satisfying brown.

Barbara caught a mouse last night. I couldn't believe it, it sounded like she was throwing trunks around the room. Then I saw her put down the poor little creature and wait, cat-like, for it to continue the game. Then she lost it under the TV table, where I had so carefully nested various boxes and suitcases with stacks and stacks of paperbacks behind them, next to them a row of small pictures. Well, now everything is everywhere and she's on the hunt again. I saw her a bit ago with, to my astonishment, a mouse. Then she lost it in the same place. Except, merciful heavens, she's got it again!

Not now she hasn't. I watched her lose it again and catch it again and then I clapped a glass over the mouse and slid a shirt cardboard under it, then the short and awful trip to the bathroom to be flushed away. Not your usual Beatrix Potter tale. Barbara took no interest, and is still hunting among the dispersed storage. Can she have found a nest? I assumed it came in from one of the numerous old holes with which this room is riddled: under my bed, behind the radiator, and so on.

I had meant to write about how close I came to tears while Father Ousley was reading the Passion from St. Luke this morning. Now I feel a good deal more a part of the world that crucified Jesus.

I was most moved when Jesus said to the good thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

It's a relief to find that it is not the bad thief with whom I identify!

Our days are like the grass;
we flourish like a flower of the field;
When the wind goes over it, it is gone,
and its place shall know it no more.

Psalm 103, 15–16

Wednesday, March 22, 1989

To the north, another David Hockney⁴⁰³ sky, cold as ice, but it only looks so: spring has come in cool and brisk.

Just back from noon service, where my thoughts were everywhere except on what was going on. Usually I can manage to be a part of—to take part in, that is, the service; today I didn't much get beyond the beauty of my favorite windows, the grape vine, green and a rich blue, lightened by small circles of clear glass.⁴⁰⁴

No, I did attend to the gospel, and hear how Jesus fingered Judas, and told him to do what he had to do quickly. There is something so sinister about it: he gives Judas the morsel, “and the devil entered into him,” as though summoned by Jesus. Why? Judas seems meant to be innately evil: but why? Why is there supposed to [be] a vein of ineradicable wickedness in men? I don't believe it.

Saturday, March 25, 1989

After yesterday's incessant rain, it is pleasant to look up and see soft patches of peach blow, and, perhaps, light blue behind gray gauze.

Barbara is on the desk, and quite suspicious because she's allowed to stay, this time. A dog would quickly learn that the problem is her rump vis-a-vis the typewriter carriage: where each must move, that is, if I am to type. Oh dear: there goes Barbara, with a tiny cry of resentment. I never said I wished you were a dog, sweetheart, it isn't like that at all.

⁴⁰³ David Hockney (b. 1937), English painter; a longtime resident of Los Angeles. A “David Hockney sky” is likely to be a cloudless blue one.

⁴⁰⁴ The Church of the Incarnation, originally built in 1864, was rebuilt after a fire in 1882 and decorated by some of the artists of the “American Renaissance” including John LaFarge, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint Gaudens. The window with the grapevine motif in the south wall is by LaFarge.

The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart,
See, they bark at me.⁴⁰⁵

Is that how that goes? If I had three dogs, those are the names I would like to give them.

The newspapers of my childhood had a little box with "A Thought for Today" in it. Here's mine: A jail isn't a jail anymore, it's a facility.

As often as I said, "My foot has slipped,"
Your love, O Lord, upheld me.

Psalm 94, 18

Wednesday, March 29, 1989

Little Portion

Yesterday's sunshine: today's cloud cover.

And so to discover whether morning prayer is now, at 6:30, or then, at 7:30.

It was then, 7:30, but I was here, in bed, asleep.

later.

Woods full of rubbish
of their own devising

Saturday, April 9, 1989 [sic]⁴⁰⁶

Rain, even the lightest, slightest rain, looks so odd, so downright illogical, after balmy, burnished days dawning into further days that scarcely subside into night.

⁴⁰⁵ From *King Lear*, Act III, Scene 6.

⁴⁰⁶ April 9 was Sunday.

Friday, April 21, 1989

In the middle of the night, somewhere around two, a feeling of intensity, calm intensity, after reading in St. Luke. Not thinking anything in particular. I can almost imagine what it would be like to pray, wordlessly, not by rote, not randomly verbalizing. Perhaps prayer is sometimes a state of repose?

Saturday, April 22, 1989

...and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh, within the period of ten months, compacted with blood, from the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage. And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth, and my first sound was a cry, like that of all.

Book of Wisdom 7:1

April 24, 1989

Days clearer than any bell—the glass Liberty Bell I remember from childhood, that once held pellets of brightly colored candy—that swing through temperature changes in a kind of loop-the-loop. Three days ago I told David [Trinidad] that “If New York weather was like this in the summer, New York summers would be perfect,” and, when we were ready to leave the eatery, how strange it seemed not to be looking around for an overcoat or a raincoat, some sort of jacket. Then yesterday I was wearing an overcoat again, going to church a little after eight, and glad of it. Now today

will be in the sixties and tomorrow in the seventies. Brief New York spring days, with the long “hazy, hot and humid” summer swinging into view.

It begins to get light satisfyingly early, despite daylight-savings.

I’m so happy that Tom is so happy with all the good things that are happening in his life—and that he will be coming to Saint Elizabeth’s, in Brooklyn, in September.⁴⁰⁷ I had been rather holding my breath that they might want to keep him in San Francisco. I miss seeing him so much.

[In early spring, 1989, Schuyler met Artie Growich outside a barber shop near the Chelsea Hotel. “He’s 5’6”, Neapolitan on Mama’s side, which is how he looks...” as Schuyler wrote to Anne Dunn. Growich, then 32, and Schuyler became lovers and were soon sharing Schuyler’s room in the Chelsea.]

Sunday, April 30, 1989

Artie sleeping all morning, spread out like a brown starfish on the white bed.

Monday, May 1, 1989

The pride of the heavenly heights is the clear firmament, the appearance of heaven in a spectacle of glory. The sun, when it appears, making proclamations as it goes forth, is a marvelous instrument, the work of the Most High.

Book of Ecclesiasticus, 43:1

⁴⁰⁷ In September, 1989 Tom Carey moved to Saint Elizabeth’s Friary, in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn, where he is a Novice Guardian.

There it is, and no mention of the word blue: “the clear firmament.”

He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour till it was all leavened.” A parable that goes home to anyone who has ever baked bread. Like the woman who was baking at Gettysburg, perhaps the only rational person at that famous battle. When I was a child I saw her house, and its bullet holes.

I take back that “rational”: men do what they must. Still, she seems a heroine.

Saturday, June (oops) May 20, 1989

Now that warm weather is really, finally here, and seedlings are up in my planter, I go out early to look at them (why are there always two right together, one of which will have to be weeded out? why? why?), and I see for the first time since last fall the “man across the street.” He still stands at his floor length loft window, one flight up, but perhaps in a different robe? This one seems to have longer sleeves than a kimono. He looks like a Manet version of a Velasquez portrait (or a Manet version of a Goya version of a Velasquez portrait): his surround completely dark framed by green (not bright), his robe a medium blue, head, hands, and feet a good flesh color, as though he already had begun to spend time in the sun, not forgetting his fairly full bald pate (the long front to back kind, rather than the round), holding a white cup. Half an hour later, he is still there, minus the cup: if his interest in early morning street life, of which there is not much, is so avid, what does he do all the cold months? Well, perhaps he’s watching it behind his dark window every morning, unseen by me. He’s like Barbara, who can’t wait to run out and press her face to some space in the balustrade and look and look. What is a yellow taxi to a cat? What’s more to the point, he’s attractive to me and he’s like me, the only people in my ken who regularly take an interest in the passing show. Below him are two street level shop signs: NEW YORK FOOTCARE

and DENTAL
ASSOCIATES
OF NEW YORK

Is he one of those? He looks much more so, than an artist,
which is what living in a loft suggests to my old fashioned mind!

Monday, May 22, 1989

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isaiah 11:1

...the stars shone in their watches, and were glad; he called
them, and they said, "Here we are!"

Baruch 3:37

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

First Corinthians

Monday, May 29, 1989

Scribbled on a piece of yellow paper that must date from '56 or a
little later:

Remenick: "What care I where the off-ox
treads? I plough another furrow
than you see."

It's not written down as verse. Thoreau, bragging again, per-
haps? It chimes such a bell of familiarity in my head, but nothing

comes back about when, and in what book, I read it.⁴⁰⁸ Like passing someone on the street you used to know, and he hasn't changed a bit, and you don't stop to speak, as happened here on 23rd Street a couple of years ago: Wendall Edgar,⁴⁰⁹ the first man I ever knew who had a nose job. He was also the first man I ever knew who knew Jane Bowles, and more or less worshiped her and her work. As Jane said when she disallowed a new issuing of *Two Serious Ladies*: "It has its own little following, like a Lilly Daché hat."⁴¹⁰

Yesterday, so fresh, so clear, all the possible perfection of springtime in one day. Dinner with Joe Brainard, at a good Italian restaurant he knew called Tiziano. He said Memorial Day weekend always felt like the end of something, not the beginning. I said I had thought so too, that it felt like Labor Day and July and August were well behind us. Not the treat for Joe⁴¹¹ it would be for

⁴⁰⁸ In a review of Seymour Remenick's drawings for *Art News*, January 1957, Schuyler wrote, "Remenick is always himself. His work has a kind of clumsiness, a telling lack of facility, a crabbed independence, like that of Thoreau: 'What care I where the off-ox treads? I plough another furrow than you see.' Those sentences scan; but Thoreau wrote them out as prose." Cut, probably for lack of space, the review as published ends with "a crabbed independence" and omits the reference to Thoreau. (What Thoreau actually wrote, in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, was, "What have I to do with ploughs? I cut another furrow than you see. Where the off-ox treads, there it is not, it is farther off; where the nigh ox walks, it will not be, it is nigher still.")

⁴⁰⁹ Unidentified.

⁴¹⁰ In a letter to John Button dated "Last Saturday in May" [1956], Schuyler recorded Bowles's remark differently: "And I haven't told you ... the marvelous things Jane Bowles said (she said about *Two Serious Ladies*, 'It's got a quiet reputation of its own, like Hattie Carnegie') or how I'll never recover from the sincere and beautiful compliments she paid me about the text I wrote for Paul ['The Picnic Cantata']—at first I said 'Oh thank you' and then it came over me who was speaking and the kind of value I place on what she says: I thought I'd have to go out and run back and forth across the Brooklyn Bridge a few hundred times while I calmed down."

Lilly Daché (1892–1989) was a French fashion designer who worked in New York, famous for elegant and unusual hat designs. Hattie Carnegie (1886–1956) was an influential fashion designer in New York, known for her "sense of style and taste."

⁴¹¹ Joe Brainard spent his summers with Kenward Elmslie in Vermont.

me. "They" won't give him a new passport unless he brings bona-fide witnesses (bona-fide citizens, that is) to attest his citizenship. "You must have had a passport when you went to Spain?" "Oh, that got cut up for a collage a long time ago..." What a guy.

The sun slants down, Barbara jumps around killing flies, the radio is on and I'm typing, oblivious (pretty much) of Artie sleeping deeply. A combination I thought couldn't work. Well, well.

Tuesday, May 30, 1989

Walking west on 23rd Artie yells, "I stepped in *shit!*"

"I'm glad it wasn't me."

"You crazy? It's *lucky* to step in shit: something lucky'll happen to me before we get back to the Chelsea." Coming back from the post office, going east on 23rd, he yells, "It's money! It's money!" And it was: a crumpled up dollar bill someone dropped getting out of a taxi. "And I'm going to find more money before the end of the block." He didn't, but the suspense was as good as a horse race.

Going along 24th he points up at the roofline of London Terrace: "You know why those gargoyles are owls?"

"I know they scare mice..."

"*Mice*. They scare pigeons. You see any pigeons? You see any pigeon shit?"

Wednesday, May 31, 1989

"Hazy, hot and humid today, with a chance of afternoon thunderstorms." Weather that's hard to love, but an air conditioner going full [*two words x'ed out here*] throttled (that spelling is not right either) helps a lot. It looks hot out there, but then, it often looked exactly the same three weeks ago, and hot it was not.

Let me bless with gratitude the perfection of Sunday and Monday, and the acceptability of yesterday.

June 3, 1989

Kenneth [Koch] has read so much, and knows so much, and bus-tled about so much...

Glad to be out here, at Barbara Guest's in Southampton, out of the locked-in badness in the city. No hazy, hot and humid here, all clear at 7 in the morning, and too cool to feel the humidity if there is any (there isn't). Or is there? Off there on my left, my ocean side, there condenses the thinnest of clouds, a sheer scrim; in front of it, a few nebulous sheep.

The coolness gets cooler, cool enough for a sweater. But when I come down, I take the sweater off.

Behind me the door opens. A hand thrusts out a ms. "Here: some hard work." I nibble a few. Yes, he's writing poetry; but I can't find any poems.

June 9, 1989

To obtain \$500 of a \$6,000 grant from the NY Foundation of the Arts, I had to perform a Social Service: i.e. last evening I read in the INTUFLO series, orchestrated by Marc Cohen and Susan Baran. More than a little glad that Cornelia Foss was there, and heard the poem which is much about Glenn Gould,⁴¹² the love of her life. FMOI (For My Own Information): read:

⁴¹² Glenn Gould (1932–1982) was a good friend of Cornelia Foss's. The poem that refers to him is "Shadowy Room:" "Perishable perfection/ of Glenn Gould playing/ Bach purls on, oblivious/ of interruption..." It is included among the "Last Poems" in *Collected Poems*, as were all of the poems in the list that follows.

“Advent”
“Shaker”
“Rain”
“The light within”
“Horse Chestnut Trees and Roses”
“Mood Indigo”
“On the dresser”
“Let’s All Hear It For Mildred Bailey!”
“Simone Signoret”
“Three Gardens”
“Under the Hanger”
“A View”
“Birds”
“Shadowy Room”
“Haze”
“This soft October...”
“White Boat, Blue Boat”
“Noon Office”
“A Chapel”
“Yellow Flowers”
“A cardinal”

Particularly satisfying to read aloud: “Mood Indigo,” “Under the Hanger.” The latter somewhat of a surprise: I had feared its accumulations might become boring. A mistake to read “Mildred Bailey” flanked by “On the dresser,” an N.G. poem I hope to bury, and “M. Bailey’s” leaden echo, “Simone Signoret” (“Three Dead Women”). Those two, aloud, *mai piu*. Except for the last two, these are in the order in which they were written: OK just this once, but not necessarily the best idea. Two other poems not to be read again: “3 Gardens,” “This soft October...” the first is accused of thinness, the second of more thinness, plus my distrust, more than a little inspired by Tom’s not liking it. His dislike of it is perhaps caused by his hostility to the associating of mundane wine (which he thinks of as “alcohol”) with that used as a sacrament. I understand, but I don’t share his view. Or he may simply think it’s a not so hot poem, which puts us back at square one.

As for who was there (John Godfrey) and who said what, it is all written on my heart in fading ink. One begins to understand how an actor becomes a ham, and how actors fall in love with their audiences—their “public”—and when they try to say so, sound so phoney.

Thursday, June 15, 1989

Last night, around nine—maybe ten—the sky to the east, seen from the balcony, not sky at all: low rolling clouds bulky with rain, right down on us, soaking up and diffusing all the lights of the city, a rare, dimmed, spectacle, as though black could play the role in diminishing the intensity of color that white can. In fact, there seems no “as though” about it. Or more accurately, the light was gently fractured into its not usually visible (to the unaided eye, that is) hues, reflected off the blackish clouds, seen at night: the colors those that occur where one primary softens into another.

Then, fine rain. This morning, a while ago, looked up from the paper and saw it slicing the window in thick diagonals. Now, “light rain and drizzle,” to continue indefinitely. But, it’s hazy, cool and humid: can this reprieve really happen in mid-June New York? It can and it is.

Yesterday saw “Let’s Get Lost,” Bruce Weber’s⁴¹³ high style heart (I meant to write, art, but heart is right) turning his obsession with Chet Baker the jazz trumpeter into a grainy high contrast lugubrious sharp focus cocktail lounge ballade: an exploitation film about talents, drugs and death: or rather, about smooth faced youth and wrinkles.

I was happy indeed, after a light Chinese collation and brisk chat with Raymond, to come home and arouse a sleeping Artie.

⁴¹³ Bruce Weber (b. 1946), photographer and filmmaker. He is known for his black & white photographs of male and female nudes and his influential advertising work for Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren. He has published several books of photographs, including *Bear Pond* (1990).

Saturday, June 17, 1989

The nearness of the summer solstice gives me the sensation of plunging already into autumn, just as I once felt I was plunging from the top balcony of Carnegie Hall, right into the orchestra, blurred by my sleepy eyes into a harmony of black, white, and resonant cello color. In the present case, best to walk about, looking at plants, trees and houses (people do not always want to be stared at—conned and studied!), not memorizing: letting memory do its work.

Driving up yesterday from Bigburg,⁴¹⁴ woods along the Taconic Parkway stuffed with mountain laurel: slowing up is not at all the same as getting out and looking closely at those sea-shell perfect flowers. Still, a delight to see the bushes lighting up the woods, going back—and back—one did not see how far.

(A sneezing attack makes me break off.)

Wednesday, July 12, 1989

The sky lightly smudged all over with one bright smudge, as though made by a thumb—a very large thumb, that is.

When Artie went off last week to spend a few days with his brother and sister-in-law in Cincinnati, I was not totally unglad: good for both of us I thought; and so did he, though he said it was “New York I need to get away from” (that too was true). But now that he is coming back tomorrow, my joy considerably outweighs the ungladness (what a word)!

Finishing up shaving just now, I was also, somewhere, in my mind, searching for an image of what Artie’s return is like to me: what momentarily stuck (so to speak) was, a bronze snowflake. No wonder there are those who find my verse bereft of simile and

⁴¹⁴ Schuyler was en route from New York City to visit John Ashbery in Hudson.

metaphor.⁴¹⁵ Just as well, it would seem. Still, I can both see and hear the lethal clatter of those bronze snowflakes. Artie is maybe a little more like a bronze cruller.

Sunday, August 27, 1989

There's the moon, right up there, to the right of the Empire State Building—or rather, its white-gold cuticle. And, further, there—the morning star, shining brightly as one of the better sort of diamonds. But of course it isn't a star at all, merely another neighborly planet in the solar system, which the whizzing voyage of *Discovery*⁴¹⁶ makes seem as near at hand as some woman in curlers, resting her arms on the windowsill and smiling down into the street.

Wednesday, September 6, 1989

An early dinner with Darragh last evening at Twigs, with a young man seated very much right next to us who had, and was using, one of those porto-do it yourself phones. He made a long, loud call, more or less yelling, much of which was indeed personal, painful and embarrassing, though who for, I'm not sure. Under cover of its jet plane volume, we spoke freely of how much we disliked it, and wished it would end and he would leave. It did and he did—Darragh wondered why he spoke as though talking to someone in

⁴¹⁵ This is a reference to Douglas Crase, who had written in 1985 that Schuyler seemed to consider simile and metaphor “inherently untrustworthy.” In his review of *Collected Poems* in *Poetry*, January, 1994, Crase referred to that earlier review and said:

When I wrote in my review that Jimmy was scrupulous in his use of analogy I meant it as a compliment. Now I'm not so sure that he took it that way.

⁴¹⁶ The Space Shuttle “Discovery” was launched into orbit on September 29, 1988.

Florence, but he had missed the moment in the prologue where it was revealed the action would take place on a trans-Atlantic, New York–Rome, line. I speculated that every day he reserved one juicy call to make while his otherwise lonely meal cooled its heels and lost its savour. I couldn't imagine not preferring to make that call in private; no more than he preferred to make it in public.

After dinner, walking uptown on Eighth Avenue, we faced tremendous seething black clouds, like smoke from an all-encompassing grass fire, only seeming rather to mean rain. Which they didn't. What became of that drama while we watched the Mets snatch victory from the Cubs at the ultimate moment in the ninth inning? I no longer remember who did what (the *Times* will say), only how much I liked watching Ryne Sandberg...⁴¹⁷

November 9, 1989

Artie said in his sleep—"Oh yes—I know," & rolled over. Sleep affirming, perhaps, rather than life affirming.

Tuesday, November 14, 1989

On Sunday at Arrowhead, the house outside Lenox, Mass., the house where Melville lived for six or seven years (the time of writing *Moby Dick*, and his—well, crush is not the word, but let it stand—on Hawthorne), I gave a reading, in a made-over barn rather than the house.⁴¹⁸ Let's see, where am I? Read these poems:

⁴¹⁷ Ryne Sandberg (b. 1959), second-baseman for the Chicago Cubs; a powerful hitter and potential Hall of Famer who left baseball in the early 1990s.

⁴¹⁸ The reading was part of a series organized by Michael Gizzi. Herman Melville (1819–1891) lived on his farm, Arrowhead, near Pittsfield, Massachusetts from 1850 to 1863, where for a year Nathaniel Hawthorne was his near neighbor in Lennox. Melville idolized the older writer, to whom he dedicated *Moby-Dick* (1851);

“Salute;” “February;” “Light Blue Above;” “Eyes at the Window” (afterward, a young man said, “Who is Norma Sheer?”⁴¹⁹ Neither Bill Corbett nor I could satisfy him; nor did he want to know!); “Korean Mums” (always a hit); “Fauré 2nd Piano Quartet;” “Song (The light...)”... The rest were poems written since I put the Selected together, which is to say, uncollected, though many have been published here and there): “Advent;” “Shaker;” “Rain;” “The light within” (a poem I like, though no one has said a word ever about it); “Horse-Chestnut Trees and Roses” (a smash hit: it’s calling myself a “gardening Sirhan Sirhan” that does the trick, I’m afraid); “Mood Indigo;” “Mildred Bailey” (most people didn’t know who the hell I was talking about: but I bet Clark Coolidge did!); “3 Gardens” (won’t read that again—thin stuff); Gilbert White’s Journal—or rather, “Under the Hanger” (in mid-flight, I find myself wondering how many in the audience can take much more of this, but a lot can and like it, and not just poetry mavens who enjoy a good long tedious poem; and I love to read it aloud); “A View;” “Birds;” “Shadowy Room” (the mystery hit of this reading); “Haze;” “Reserved Sacrament;” “White Boat, Blue Boat” (which I’m “giving” to Hy Weitzen for his 75th birthday); “Noon Office;” “A Chapel;” “Yellow Flowers” (the copy I read from lacked the dedication to Bill Corbett, which I only realized as I read; so I announced it at the end of the poem: Bill and I had already gone through this when it came out in *The New Yorker*.⁴²⁰ Oh dear: and he’s such a nice guy); “A cardinal” (in which, finally, I said something of what I feel about Fairfield, and how he comes

“Exultant was his worship of Hawthorne, absolute his desire for surrender. He craved of Hawthorne an understanding and sympathy that neither Hawthorne, nor any other human being, perhaps, could ever have given.” (Raymond M. Weaver, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1921.

⁴¹⁹ Norma Shearer (born Edith N. Fisher; 1900–1983), movie actress, known for her “chic sophistication.” She starred in “The Women” (1939) and won an Academy Award for “The Divorcée” in 1930. “The eyes at the window are Norma Shearer’s/at the train window...” (“Eyes at the Window”).

⁴²⁰ “Yellow Flowers” is dedicated to William Corbett. It was published in *The New Yorker* without the dedication because *The New Yorker* has a policy of not printing dedications.

back and back to me). John would have liked me to read “Ajaccio Violets,” but I didn’t: perhaps I’m afraid of seeming moralistic and judging (judgmental?)—for sure, I don’t know how to pronounce Ajaccio! Nor, I think, does JA. Also left out two poems I read last June at INTUFLO: “Simone Signoret,” which, read aloud, seemed overblown and very, very badly (or at least, carelessly) written: she deserved better—since I’ve sworn off birthday poems, perhaps I’ll do the same with obits, and I didn’t read “On the dresser:” Bernie Oshei’s mother’s name, Hortense Chittenden, got a horse laugh at INTUFLO: I can see why it would, now, particularly coming where it does in the poem, an instance perhaps of bathos; but it was always a lovely name to me, one that suited the young woman in the photograph on Bernie’s dresser...⁴²¹

I meant to read “Ten Poems,” the set I wrote for Andrew Lord’s Zurich catalogue, but forgot to bring them (and I think now I’ll call them, Poems for Andrew Lord).⁴²² He called me last week on the ninth to wish me a happy birthday; his voice full of sunshine: what a sweetie.

I didn’t write about my birthday dinner the next day, and there’s no time now (too tired). It was Joe Brainard’s treat at Chelsea Central: Darragh, John, David Trinidad, Raymond Foye, Eileen Myles, Joe, self, and Artie. Artie looked a treat, drank some wine and was very gay and winning, laughing and saying I don’t remember what. Everyone liked him, and thought I had underplayed his good looks. That he was willing to come, and enjoyed himself and liked my friends, was what pleased me most.

⁴²¹ “Time/ passed and at/ the draft board physical/ a doctor said, ‘Wasn’t/ your mother Hortense/ Chittenden?...’” “On the dresser,” published in *Collected Poems*.

⁴²² In the end, Schuyler titled the work, “Andrew Lord Poems.” It was published in the catalogue of Lord’s exhibition at Galerie Bruno Bischofberger in 1992, and in *Collected Poems*.

Sunday, December 3, 1989

And I too shall be audited.—J.A.

Quoted by Father Ousley in his homily this morning.

Monday, December 4, 1989

This is Hawaii!
better believe it:
“Nor any way out of it!”
Captain Cooke cried,
and died in the surf.

—all I remember of a poem composed in a dream tonight. In an earlier dream, I managed a whole novel.

Tuesday, March 6, 1990

Snow slants down like summer rain pausing, now and then, and a few feathery insubstantial flakes hang there briefly. The effect not of rainfall, merely of wetness, except that a few copings now draw fresh white lines on the day: a day like a dirty window.

On Sunday for the first time I was the lay reader at the Church of the Incarnation at the early mass—Romans 5: 12-19. Next on March 25th, then on Palm Sunday. Very happy about the latter, indeed.

Wednesday, March 7, 1990

So cold, it feels—indoors, at the window—as though one could snap bits and pieces of metal and stone architectural ornament the way one can frozen leaves and petals. Only traces of yesterday's snow tucked in shadowy places, like cold cream in wrinkles.

Tuesday, April 10, 1990

Young men in ads this spring, men in TV commercials mowing lawns and spraying Roundup, killing weeds with poison and a manic grin, all wear fresh-washed looking light blue T shirts or polo shirts: so yesterday I went out to lunch with Eileen Myles (her treat) under a sky clear and blue as a T shirt, a pocketless T shirt, and not a polo shirt with even a single button of cloud. We went down 8th Avenue to Chelsea Foods, where the Greenwich salad is a mixture of fruit and greens and strips and strips of ham, in a mysterious strawberry vinaigrette. I enjoy Ei so much, her fierceness and sudden resentments, her talent, her illusions about writing stories as a way to make money, her readiness to gossip. Her ex-girl friend, M., had the jarring experience of meeting someone new in Florida who, after a time and as a step toward a more "permanent" relationship, confessed she had tested positive. This has made M. not only angry with the Floridian, but with innocent Ei—I can imagine wanting to take it out on the world. The infection dates back to a time of shared needles, in an earlier phase of the poor girl's life, and M. seems under small risk of having become infected herself. Perhaps her rage comes from a feeling of betrayal, her encounter with the lie that kills. Then we finished lunch and walked back to the Chelsea under the laundered sky, stopping so I could buy an Easter lily in a pot, and she an ice-cream cone.

Artie finally has a haircut with which he's satisfied. He came in yesterday and said, "I got a lot of compliments on my haircut."

Saturday, April 28, 1990

On a bright, hot, breezy April afternoon the city looks freshly pared: pared, but dusty.

May 28, 1990

Thin cloud, like soap on a half-scrubbed face. Warm, in a cool kind of way.

June 8, 1990

“The subject of any work,” [Vuillard] wrote in his diary, “is an emotion simple and natural to the author.”

Roberta Smith, *New York Times*.

Saturday, August 4, 1990

A length of seashell lining in the early sky, and under it, a fistful of dark cloud, raggedly grabbed, still in shadow, brightens and softens into a lump of coral as I watch it.

Sunday, August 5, 1990

Just watered the morning glories, who coil and thrust and seek, crazily waving tendrils out into space, wanting support where there is none. The humidity as thick as the cloud cover, a blanket enfolding me and the lights and yelling guys going by and one sea gull,

big as an old fashioned plane (it seems), a monoplane, they were called, flapping its lazy wings as it crosses Manhattan: why? Is the word out that something tasty is awash in the East River? And why won't my morning glories bloom? Other people's do. And how little inclined I feel toward going to church: the chapel at Incarnation will be stuffy and its marble not cool, but clammy. And in this spirit the lay reader prepares to dress.

Transfiguration, [August 6,] 1990

Black umbrellas slanting down against the rain blowing from the east, like the shields soldiers once held aslant against the arrows of battle. Which is a rather exaggerated simile, rain being merely rain, while arrows, after all, were arrows.

Wednesday, August 8, 1990

Before five, the sky black as the metroplex⁴²³ (favorite new word) lets it get. Somewhat cooler and with a breeze out of the west, which makes the stink of the lobster shells more subtle.

The relief night clerk says, "The President is going to speak in the morning—about this Iraq business." He is laughing and full of gay expectation and hope. From what? The boob on the tube? They, it is said, come armed with chemical weapons: "mustard gas, nerve gas..." We are ready for that: we have gas masks, and more, we have the Stealth Bomber.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a bathtub toy? Wait, alas, and see.

⁴²³ The nine-screen Chelsea Cinemas had recently opened in the same block of 23rd Street as the Chelsea Hotel.

Wednesday, August 15, 1990

Finally the morning glory vine is blooming splendidly: which sounds like blossoms in the hundreds: forget it! My counting compulsion stops at a dozen—which is, more or less, what there are—crinkle-edged cerise trumpets, each turning white as it narrows and deepens. The way the single, circular petal was folded in the bud, like a rolled umbrella, shows in lines pressed finely into its delicat⁴²⁴ flesh, as thin as fine silk, but so much more perishable. The wrong weather and—but today is the right weather, and there they are, protected among the complicated shelving of their fair sized, heart shaped leaves.

Tuesday, August 21, 1990

So cool and dark a day that the trumpets of the morning glories are still wide open at three-thirty in the afternoon. People dressed as for the fall walk bending forward, somewhat, into the wind. Dark speckles of rain appear on the sidewalk, which is the color of the sky. Umbrellas begin to open, and soon close. So it's been going on all day: and what is so rare as an August day like this? Or so welcome?

Friday, August 24, 1990

An even darker morning, fine rain, cool unto cold (or rather, truly chilly), and in their green security the morning glories glow like precious lamps in a fairy story. Next, we are to have a thunder

⁴²⁴ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines “delicated” as an adjective derived from the verb “to delicate” or make delicate, and cites a usage from Elizabeth Barrett Browning: “These delicat⁴²⁴ muslins rather seem Than be, you think?”

storm, then the temperature soars to ninety, and I must go give in three or four days a reading in Easthampton. I don't know why, but I don't want to: it is simply not on my mental schedule of things to do in August. Perhaps I, who am always on vacation, feel that I too should take a vacation.

Night before last a delightful dinner party at Nathan Kernan's,⁴²⁵ which I enjoyed so much that, for once, I was not the first to leave. Nor the last: we left together.

Sunday, October 28, 1990

Under banked blue-black clouds, a pure wash of thin gold cleans the late afternoon buildings, and invests them with an unearned dignity and freshness. In the east, what one might call regular, or daily, sky blue shows in the cleavage of the clouds over Queens—and perhaps over all Long Island, from which I returned (Darragh's) yesterday afternoon.

Monday, October 29, 1990

Yesterday morning seemed cold, only not really: not cold enough for my new semi-heavy overcoat from Eddie Bauer: that's reserved for today. Grudgingly I turned on the radiator and the heat roared out like a Biblical beast. Barbara stretched out, her back pressed up against it, as though she had found her long lost mother. Outdoors, the sky glitters like a winter weather prediction, crystal clear in its readability.

Dinner with Joe B. and Nathan: Nathan brought me (a loan) the thin volume of James Lees-Milne's⁴²⁶ autobiography, and I

⁴²⁵ The other guests at this dinner were Tom Carey and Eileen Myles.

⁴²⁶ James Lees-Milne (b. 1908), English art historian and diarist. His books include *The Age of Adam* (1947), *Roman Mornings* (1956), *Baroque in Italy* (1959), *The Earls of*

loaned him the first volume of Patrick Leigh F's⁴²⁷ story of his walk to Constantinople in 1933, when he was so young and so handsome.

Tuesday, October 30, 1990

The sky at 6 clear and gray as blotting paper, a sky for which the loud unmodulated grind of a garbage truck is the fitting music on the right instrument.

Tomorrow morning Tim Dlugos is going to be interviewed, and to read part of his long poem just published in *The Paris Review*, on one of the morning talk shows—"Good Morning America," I believe it's called.⁴²⁸ If only this were not in a segment called, "Living With AIDS"! His latest affliction is one suffered only by people with AIDS and birds, which causes his temperature to go rocketing up and up. A line of Stevens kept coming into my mind: "Dying lady, rejoice! rejoice!"⁴²⁹ How can he? Why should he? Because he's going to Abraham's bosom? But he'd prefer to stay in his Christopher's arms.⁴³⁰

Creation (1962), and his diaries for the years 1942 through 1949, published in four volumes from 1975 to 1985. His autobiography, *Another Self*, was first published in 1970.

⁴²⁷ Patrick Leigh Fermor (b. 1915), English writer. As a young man he traveled on foot from London to Constantinople on the eve of the Second World War. He described the trip in his books, *A Time of Gifts* (1978) and *Between the Woods and the Water* (1987).

⁴²⁸ In his introduction to Dlugos's posthumous book of poems *Strong Place* (1991), David Trinidad wrote, "On October 31st, Tim appeared on *Good Morning America*... and read from his poems: 'I feel so confident/ most days that I can stay/ alive, survive and thrive/ with AIDS.' A couple of weeks later he was admitted to Roosevelt Hospital for the last time..."

⁴²⁹ From the poem, "A Thought Revolved."

⁴³⁰ Christopher Wiss was Dlugos's lover.

Tuesday, January 1, 1991

Sooty tatters of cloud in a warm blue sky (although the day is cold), coasting low almost among the buildings that reach up to be gilded by the sun resting on the horizon before it sets. A fresh and beautiful New Year day.

And now to change and go to the Hazans' party.

James Schuyler: A Chronology

1923

James Marcus Schuyler was born on November 9 in Chicago Illinois. His parents, Marcus James Schuyler and Margaret Connor Schuyler, were living in the nearby town of Downers Grove, where Mark Schuyler, a newspaperman, had his own small paper. Marcus Schuyler had been born on a farm near Ottumwa, Iowa in 1882. Margaret Daisy Connor was born in 1890 in Albert Lea, Minnesota, where she and Mark Schuyler were married in 1922.

1926 or 1927

The family moved to Washington D.C., and Mark Schuyler got a job with the *Washington Post*.

1929

Schuyler's mother divorced his father, whom Schuyler remembered as a "heavy, jolly, well-read man"; "an enchantingly wonderful man. Unfortunately, he was a compulsive gambler, which my mother found rather hard to take."¹ Schuyler's mother was given custody of their only child.

Schuyler and his mother moved from 114 F Street, S.E., to 2032 Belmont Road, N.W., Washington DC.

For a time, after the divorce, Schuyler's maternal grandmother, Ella Slater Connor, lived with Schuyler and his mother in Washington. Granny Connor, as he called her, took James, who was "barely out of kindergarten" to museums: the Freer, the Corcoran and, especially, the Smithsonian; Granny Connor also taught him the names of flowers and birds. Schuyler later modeled the grandmother in his novel *Alfred and Guinevere* on her.

1931

October: Margaret Connor Schuyler married her second husband, Fredric Berton Ridenour, a building contractor. James Schuyler took his stepfather's name and was known as James Schuyler Ridenour until 1947.

Schuyler attended elementary school in Washington D.C.

1933

May 20: Schuyler's half-brother, Fredric Ridenour, was born. The family was then living at 4404 Stanford, in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

¹ From Peter Schjeldahl's interview with Schuyler, taped in January, 1977 (unpublished).

1935

The family moved to Buffalo, New York, where Schuyler began junior high-school. In seventh grade he met Bernard Oshei, his best friend throughout adolescence.

1936

May: Granny Connor died in Albert Lea, Minnesota. Schuyler attended the funeral with his mother and step-father.

1937

The Ridenour family moved to 784 Chestnut Hill Road in East Aurora, New York, a small town outside Buffalo.

1937-1941

At home, life with his step-father was not happy for Schuyler; he later compared it to "a novel by Dostoyevsky."² He also felt out of place in suburban East Aurora where he "didn't really fit in with the crowd in high school who were very athletic-oriented. There wasn't anyone like me who liked to read books and who was interested in art..."³ His closest friend, Bernie Oshei, lived in Buffalo, but used to visit Schuyler in East Aurora every weekend.

Schuyler had been baptized a Presbyterian, but when he was in high school, his mother and step-father became Christian Scientists.

Schuyler's step-father disapproved of Schuyler's love of reading and used to punish him by not letting him have a library card, though Schuyler got one anyway. An influential high school English teacher, Luther Smeltzer, introduced Schuyler to the poetry of William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore: "In the Buffalo Public Library they had her *Selected Poems*, with the introduction by T.S. Eliot, and I used to sit there in my overcoat and read it right through."⁴

In the summer, Schuyler used to pitch a tent in "a gully, a slightly wild area" at the back of the house, where he would go to be alone and read. One afternoon when he was about 15, Schuyler was in his tent reading *Unforgotten Years*, the autobiography of Logan Pearsall Smith in which he describes how knowing Whitman gave him the idea that he would be a writer. Schuyler looked up and saw the landscape "shimmer" and decided that he too would be a writer.

Schuyler became aware of his homosexuality early in life. In his last year or two of high school, Schuyler fell in love, as he relates in "The Morning of the Poem," with Paul Sipprell, the scion of a family of photographers in Buffalo. His feelings, however, were unreciprocated.

² Schjeldahl, *ibid.*

³ "James Schuyler: An Interview By Mark Hillringhouse," published in *The American Poetry Review*, March/April, 1985.

⁴ Carl Little "An Interview with James Schuyler," published in *Agni*, No. 37, 1993; first published in *Talisman*, No. 9, Fall, 1992.

1941

September: Schuyler entered Bethany College, a small school in West Virginia associated with the Disciples of Christ, a protestant denomination. He had been awarded a \$200 examination scholarship, renewable for four years. Schuyler's academic career at Bethany was not brilliant. He ended his freshman year with three F's, a C and a B (in Shakespeare). He was a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity, where, he later claimed, he spent most of his college years playing bridge.

1942

Summer: Schuyler was required to enroll for the summer 1942 term at Bethany in order to earn enough credits to stay in school. In that term he earned the single A of his college career, in Victorian Literature. Presumably, this course was taught by Dr. Florence Hoagland, "a wonderful woman... who was the head of the English department and who encouraged me in a wonderful way," as Schuyler later remembered.⁵

June: Schuyler's father, Marcus Schuyler, died of a heart attack at the newspaper where he was working in Jackson, Michigan. He was 59. After his parents' divorce, James Schuyler had seen his father only a few times.

1943

January: Schuyler left Bethany and joined the Navy. His grades for the semester of 1942-43 had been six F's, a D and a C and he was not entitled to return for the spring semester.

Schuyler attended boot camp in New York State and in the summer was enrolled in the sonar school at Key West, the same school that Frank O'Hara was to attend the following year. Subsequently he was assigned to the USS Glennon, doing convoy duty in the north Atlantic. "I was brave and I proved it that day on the USS Glennon," Schuyler says in the Diary. In 1986 he recalled:

I guess we blew up a few submarines. The first night we were out of New York, one of the Queens crossed the convoy's path, everything was in the dark, and split a destroyer in our convoy in two. And the lights came on, and there were all these men floating around, some of whom got fished out, many of whom didn't.⁶

On a visit to New York City, Schuyler met Chester Kallman and his roommate David Protetch in the bar of the Hotel Astor. Kallman, a poet, was the lover of W.H. Auden. Protetch was in the Navy but entered medical school soon after being discharged in November, 1944.

1944

On leave in New York, the last night his ship was in port, Schuyler got drunk and the ship sailed without him. He panicked and stayed AWOL for a couple of weeks before he was finally apprehended, or turned himself in. There was a

⁵ Carl Little interview, op. cit.

⁶ Carl Little interview, ibid.

hearing, during which his homosexuality was revealed, which led to his being discharged as “undesirable.”⁷

After being discharged from the Navy, Schuyler came to New York where he got a job working at NBC for the Voice of America. His job was essentially clerical: proofreading the “log,” which was the daily record of everything that was scheduled for each broadcasting studio.

In Pop Tunick’s “long-gone gay bar” he met Bill Aalto, a handsome dark-haired Finnish-American “who looked not unlike/ a butch version of Valentino.”⁸ Schuyler and Aalto began living together in a cold-water apartment at 63 Downing Street in Greenwich Village.

1945

Summer: Schuyler and Aalto took a trip to Canada, stopping at Montreal, Quebec and, probably, Lac St. Jean.

1946

Summer: Schuyler and Aalto took a trip to Boston.

1947

Schuyler sold a farm in Arkansas which he had inherited ten years previously from his paternal grandmother. With the \$6,000 (or \$6,500) he got for it, Schuyler and Bill Aalto went to Italy.

We both wanted to live abroad, with the intention of becoming writers. Bill wanted to write a long history of guerilla warfare; I wanted simply to be a creative writer. It never occurred to me at this stage that I might one day write poetry. My real ambition was to write, say, short stories for *The New Yorker*...⁹

Sailing on a Dutch liner, Schuyler and Aalto stopped first in Amsterdam, then in Paris. Together they made a bicycle trip through the French countryside to the towns mentioned in Henry James’s *A Little Tour in France*.

Schuyler resumed his father’s name and was no longer known as James Ridenour. “It’s good to/ have your own name.” (“A few days”)

In Florence, Schuyler and Aalto shared an apartment in the Via Erta Canina, and Schuyler enrolled at the University of Florence.

1948

Spring: Auden and Kallman, en route to Ischia, visited Schuyler and Aalto in Florence. In June, Schuyler and Aalto were with Auden and Kallman on Ischia, where Brian Howard and his lover, Sam, were also visiting.

⁷ Information based on the editor’s conversations with Tom Carey and Hy Weitzen, and correspondence in the collection of Fredric and Hilde Ridenour.

⁸ “Dining Out with Doug and Frank”.

⁹ Schjeldahl interview, op. cit.

Fall: Schuyler and Aalto were in Rome, where they met the American novelist Donald Windham.

October 7: Schuyler, Aalto and Windham traveled to Naples together; from there, Aalto and Schuyler went on to Ischia where they had agreed to live in Auden's house over the winter while he was in New York.

December: Chester Kallman joined Schuyler and Aalto on Ischia. Schuyler went to Rome for an operation for hemorrhoids. Auden sent him money for the operation.

1949

March: Truman Capote and Jack Dunphy, and Tennessee Williams and Frank Merlo were all visiting Ischia. Schuyler and Capote became friends and Capote gave Schuyler helpful criticism of his writing.

In March also, Schuyler and Aalto broke up after Aalto tried to kill Schuyler with a carving knife. Aalto went back to Rome. Schuyler, in the meantime, had met and begun an affair with an American artist and designer, Charles Heilemann.

April: Auden returned to Ischia. Schuyler typed most of the manuscript of Auden's book *Nones*, thinking, "Well, if this is poetry, I'm certainly never going to write any myself."¹⁰

June–August: Schuyler travelled through Italy to Paris, then returned to Ischia briefly. On the ferry taking him to Naples to return to New York at the end of August, he met a young New Yorker, Morris Golde, who would later become a good friend.

September: In New York, Schuyler and Charles Heilemann stayed in Chester Kallman's apartment at 129 East 27th Street. Through John Hohnsbeen, whom he met through Kallman and who worked for the art dealer Curt Valentin, Schuyler got a job at the Kleemann Gallery on 57th Street between Madison and Park Avenues.

1950

Schuyler and Heilemann moved to their own apartment on Second Avenue between 46th and 47th Streets.

Through Heilemann, Schuyler met Helen Burckhardt, a textile designer, who had just moved to New York from Switzerland.

1951

Three short stories of Schuyler's were accepted for publication in the Spring issue of *Accent*, a literary quarterly. The only other piece in the issue that Schuyler liked was a poem called "Three-Penny Opera" by someone named Frank O'Hara. When John Bernard Myers, the director of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery and an old acquaintance from Buffalo, called to congratulate him, Schuyler mentioned liking O'Hara's poem. "My dear, it's too extraordinary!" Myers said. "He's sitting here in the room with me now!" Schuyler did not meet O'Hara until later that year.

¹⁰ Carl Little interview, op. cit.

Summer: Schuyler and Heilemann and Helen Burckhardt shared a cabin in Pykes Fall, Vermont.

Through Helen Burckhardt, Schuyler met her brother, the photographer Rudy Burckhardt and his wife Edith Schloss and remet Burckhardt's close friend Edwin Denby, whom Schuyler had first met in Italy.

October 1: Schuyler met Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery at the party after Larry Rivers's first exhibition at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery.

October 23: Schuyler visited his friends Donald Windham and Sandy Campbell in a manic and ecstatic state, claiming to have talked to the Virgin Mary who told him that Judgement Day was at hand. The next day Schuyler entered Bloomingdale mental hospital in White Plains, New York.

Schuyler stayed in White Plains for several months. There, inspired by Frank O'Hara's "Three-Penny Opera," Schuyler began writing his first poems, including "Salute."

1952

January: Schuyler was released from Bloomingdale.

"Salute," was published in *New World Writing* Number 1, guest-edited by Howard Moss, the poetry editor of *The New Yorker*.

Schuyler was seeing a great deal of both John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara.

Both John and Frank were very encouraging and made me feel that I wasn't just a poet who was being tested, but that I was a poet. That was perhaps one of the most, if not *the* most important moment of my life: to be accepted by people of whose work I was absolutely certain.¹¹

Spring: Schuyler's relationship with Charles Heilemann ended. Schuyler moved out of the Second Avenue apartment and stayed with John Hohnsbeen in the East 90s. Through his friend the art critic Stuart Preston, Schuyler got a job in the elegant Periscope-Holliday Bookstore on East 54th Street.

Apparently, a love affair developed between Schuyler and Edwin Denby, a poet and dance critic some years older than Schuyler.

Schuyler met Kenneth Koch, Jane Freilicher, Kenward Elmslie, John Latouche, Barbara Guest, Larry Rivers, Fairfield and Anne Porter.

Schuyler wrote the short play, "Presenting Jane."

Summer: Using a rented house on Georgica Pond in East Hampton, John Latouche directed a film of "Presenting Jane," in which the characters in the play, Freilicher, Ashbery and O'Hara, played themselves. In the end, only a few scenes were shot, but these were later used in a production of the play itself in New York. During a car trip back from East Hampton, Schuyler and John Ashbery began to write their collaborative novel, *A Nest of Ninnies*.

Fall: Schuyler and Frank O'Hara began to share an apartment at 326 East 49th Street, where Schuyler was to live on and off for the next seven years.

¹¹ Schjeldahl interview, op.cit.

1953

February: "Presenting Jane" was produced by John Bernard Myers's and Herbert Machiz's Artists' Theater at the Theater de Lys in Greenwich Village, with sets by Elaine de Kooning and footage from that summer's filming. Also on the bill were O'Hara's "Try! Try!" and Koch's "Red Riding Hood."

Schuyler's short play, "Shopping and Waiting" was produced by the Poets' Theater in Cambridge Mass.

Summer: Edwin Denby brought Schuyler and John Ashbery out to Snedens Landing, New York to visit his friends Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, the duopianists. Schuyler and Arthur Gold began a love affair that would last three years and which caused a serious rift between Schuyler and Denby. Schuyler spent the rest of the summer living with Gold and Fizdale at Snedens Landing in a large Victorian house known as the Ding-Dong House. At the same time, Robert Fizdale formed an attachment with Frank O'Hara. Through Gold and Fizdale Schuyler was exposed to an artistic and social milieu that included Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Samuel Barber, Gian Carlo Menotti, George Balanchine, Tanaquil LeClerq, Jerome Robbins, Lotte Lenya, Leonard Bernstein...

During this summer at Snedens Landing, Schuyler began writing his novel, *Alfred and Guinevere*.

Fall: Gold and Fizdale left for a concert tour of Europe, and Schuyler and O'Hara were back on 49th Street.

Winter: Richard Miller and Daisy Aldan's Tiber Press published the first issue of a little magazine called *Folder* which included poems by Ashbery, O'Hara, Koch and Schuyler, and Schuyler's play, "Shopping and Waiting."

1954

Through Arthur Gold, Schuyler had been asked to write the text for a piece of music he and Fizdale had commissioned from Paul Bowles. The result was "A Picnic Cantata," for four women's voices, two pianos and percussion, which was recorded on Columbia Records that year.

Summer: Gold and Fizdale rented Alice Esty's house in New Canaan, Connecticut, and Schuyler was at work there on *Alfred and Guinevere*.

August: Schuyler accompanied Arthur Gold to Europe where Gold and Fizdale were to give a series of recitals. They landed at Cherbourg on August 9 and spent a few weeks in Austria before going south to Venice, where they stayed for about a month.

October 17: Schuyler and Gold and Fizdale went to Rome, where they lived in the Villa Aurelia in an apartment provided by the American Academy in Rome.

December: Schuyler travelled to Genoa and to Sicily.

1955

January 6: Gold and Fizdale gave a recital tea at the Villa Aurelia just before leaving with Schuyler on a whirlwind tour, with concerts in Vicenza, Verona, Milan, Strasbourg and Baden-Baden, en route to Paris, where they arrived on January 16. They stayed in the Hotel Quai Voltaire; Schuyler went to the theater, the Louvre, and visited several times with Kenneth and Janice Koch who were also in Paris.

February 3: Schuyler, Gold and Fizdale returned to New York.

June: O'Hara's friend Joe LeSueur moved in with O'Hara on 49th Street. O'Hara and LeSueur were to live together for nine years. Schuyler was nominally living with Arthur Gold, but used to spend time at the 49th Street apartment "to get away from the piano practicing" and write.

Schuyler met Joan Mitchell, Mike Goldberg, Norman Bluhm, Alex and Ada Katz, John Button and Alvin Novak.

Spring: Gold and Schuyler sublet an apartment on East 60th Street off Lexington Avenue belonging to the "neo-romantic" painter Leonid and his wife, the harpsichord player Sylvia Marlowe. "The first thing I did when we moved into Leonid's was take down some Tchelichews and put up a Freilicher and a couple of Porters," Schuyler wrote to Barbara Guest on July 7, 1955.

July: Schuyler made his first visit to Fairfield and Anne Porter's summer home on Great Spruce Head Island, in Penobscot Bay, Maine. During this visit Porter painted the first of his many portraits of Schuyler. "I've never enjoyed any company or place so much," Schuyler wrote the Porters in August, 1955. Frank O'Hara also visited the Porters on the island that summer, just after Schuyler left.

Fall: Schuyler began to write reviews for *Art News*. Thomas Hess, the editor, usually hired artists or poets as reviewers, and among them at various times were John Ashbery, Lawrence Campbell, Elaine de Kooning, Barbara Guest, Frank O'Hara, Fairfield Porter, Irving Sandler, Edith Schloss, James Schuyler and Parker Tyler.

Schuyler's reviews began to appear in *Art News* with the December 1955 issue. At the time, *Art News* made an effort to review, at least briefly, every gallery exhibition in New York. For Schuyler it meant spending at least a week every month going around town to see the exhibitions assigned to him and then writing his reviews.

Late in the year, Arthur Gold moved into an apartment at 333 Central Park West where Schuyler lived with him, when he wasn't staying with O'Hara on 49th Street, or visiting the Porters in Southampton, as he frequently did in 1955 and early 1956.

1956

April: Schuyler visited Frank O'Hara in Cambridge, Mass, where he was spending the first six months of 1956 as Playwright in Residence at the Poets' Theater.

Spring: Schuyler realized he was in love with John Button, a young painter from California whom he had met through Frank O'Hara.

July: Schuyler and Arthur Gold were living in the Porters' Southampton house at 49 South Main Street while the Porters were in Maine. Schuyler was trying to finish *Alfred and Guinevere*, which had originally been accepted by Harcourt Brace in 1954 on the condition that he make extensive revisions. He seems to have completed a revision of the novel by the end of the summer, but was still revising the book, in response to the editor's "niggling little criticisms," in and beyond March, 1957.

Schuyler's love for John Button was complicated by the fact that Button's lover, Alvin Novak, had recently moved from California to New York to live with Button and had become a friend of Schuyler's.

End of July: Schuyler decided to end his relationship with Arthur Gold, and

returned from Southampton to live with O'Hara and Joe LeSueur at 326 East 49th Street. When he arrived at 49th Street, however, Schuyler found O'Hara nearly hysterical with grief over the death of his close friend Violet Lang.

Soon afterwards, Schuyler and O'Hara visited Morris Golde on Fire Island. There, Schuyler began to experience a severe anxiety attack, brought on by the combination of breaking up with Gold, O'Hara's despair at the death of Lang, and John Latouche's death in the same week. O'Hara protectively kept Schuyler in his room and asked Golde to go out in his boat to get some tranquilizers (there were no stores and no cars on that part of the island). Golde managed to get some Miltowns from acquaintances he encountered on another boat. On Sunday they all learned that Jackson Pollock had died the previous night (August 11) in a car accident.

Fall: Schuyler went into analysis. He began working at the Periscope-Holliday Bookstore again.

1957

January: Frank O'Hara and Joe LeSueur moved out of 326 East 49th Street, leaving Schuyler there by himself.

Spring: Schuyler's infatuation with John Button was over, but they remained friends. Schuyler also grew close to Alvin Novak, who had moved to Hoboken, and Schuyler enjoyed taking the ferry across the Hudson to visit him there.

Through Novak, Schuyler met Donald Droll, a graduate of Black Mountain College and an art dealer, and they became lovers. Droll was later the director of the Fischbach Gallery and Knoedler and Company.

May: Schuyler began working at the front desk of the Museum of Modern Art, as both John Button and Alvin Novak were doing already, and as O'Hara had done earlier. Since 1955, O'Hara had been working upstairs at the museum, organizing travelling exhibitions for the International Program.

Fall: John Ashbery returned temporarily from France and shared the apartment on 49th Street with Schuyler until the following spring.

1958

After April 15, when a serious fire broke out in the galleries of MOMA, Schuyler was moved upstairs to work in the Department of Circulation Exhibitions where he helped organize a travelling exhibition of French drawings from American collections.

Summer: Schuyler was dividing his time between Droll's apartment at 438 East 87th Street and the apartment on 49th Street, where he still received mail.

October: Schuyler was promoted to the permanent staff of the museum and so was covered by the museum's group health plan, which even so paid only half of his psychoanalyst's fees.

Schuyler's novel, *Alfred and Guinevere*, was finally published by Harcourt Brace, with a dedication to Arthur Gold, and illustrations by Paul Sagsoorian.

November: Schuyler had broken up with Donald Droll and was back living at 49th Street and sharing the apartment with the superintendent, Mr. Merczeg.

1959

February: Schuyler and Droll were back together, and Schuyler wrote to Ashbery from 87th Street, "My life has taken a marital turn back toward the good, or D..."

August: Schuyler and Droll made plans to share "The Bungle House" in Southampton with Kenneth and Janice Koch, but Schuyler didn't come out as often as he'd planned to; his romance with Droll, always full of ups and downs, was drawing to a close.

September: Schuyler's affair with Droll was over, but they were to remain good friends.

November: 326 East 49th Street was scheduled for demolition; Schuyler moved out and sublet John Button's apartment at 28 East 2nd Street.

December: Schuyler left MOMA.

1960

February: Schuyler was re-hired by the Museum of Modern Art to work in the International Program.

March: Fairfield Porter arranged for Schuyler rent an apartment at 181 Avenue A, recently vacated by Philip and Dorothy Pearlstein. It was around the corner from Porter's own *pied-à-terre* at 500 East 11th Street. Unfortunately, the apartment was frequently burglarized and many of his own and Ashbery's possessions, which he had left in Schuyler's keeping from 49th Street, were stolen.

August–October: Schuyler spent a lot of time visiting Fairfield and Anne Porter in Southampton, often bringing Adele Honig, a woman who worked at both *Art News* and at the Museum of Modern Art and with whom Schuyler apparently had an affair in 1960 and 1961.

The influential anthology, *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960*, edited by Donald Allen, was published. It included poems by Schuyler, Ashbery, O'Hara, Koch and other younger poets. Schuyler's "Statement on Poetics" for the book stressed the connection between new, post-war poetry and contemporary painting. Marianne Moore reviewed the book in the *New York Herald Tribune* and singled out Schuyler's work for praise.

Schuyler's first book of poetry, *Salute*, appeared, part of a group of four books published by the Tiber Press which were all collaborations between poets and painters. Schuyler's work was paired with screen prints by Grace Hartigan; the other poet/artist collaborators were John Ashbery and Joan Mitchell, Kenneth Koch and Alfred Leslie, and Frank O'Hara and Michael Goldberg.

1961

The first issue of *Locus Solus* appeared, edited by Schuyler. The magazine, titled after Raymond Roussel's novel, had been started by Harry Mathews and John Ashbery in Paris, who invited Schuyler and Kenneth Koch to join them as co-editors. This issue included poems by Koch, Ashbery, O'Hara, Barbara Guest, Anne Porter, Fairfield Porter, Edwin Denby and George Montgomery, a story by Harry Mathews, a play by Rudy Burckhardt and Schuyler's story, "Current Events."

February: Schuyler stopped working at the Museum of Modern Art.

March: Schuyler's mental condition worsened and he entered Grace New

Haven Community Hospital. John Bernard Myers helped arrange Schuyler's admittance there on the recommendation of James Merrill and David Jackson. Schuyler stayed in New Haven until June, when Fairfield Porter picked him up and brought him to Great Spruce Head Island. The Porter family was spending the summer on the island for the first time since 1956. Schuyler was to live with the Porters until 1973.

1962

A collaborative poem/painting by Schuyler and painter Robert Dash was exhibited at the Jill Kornblee Gallery. Dash and Schuyler had met in the late 50s through Fairfield Porter.

1964

July: Schuyler's stepfather, with whom his relationship had been difficult since adolescence, died.

Through Kenward Elmslie, Schuyler met Ted Berrigan, Tony Towle, Ron and Pat Padgett and Joe Brainard.

December: Schuyler spent Christmas with his mother in East Aurora, his first visit there in many years.

1965

May 24th or So was published by Tibor de Nagy Gallery Editions. It was dedicated to Jane [Freilicher] and Joe Hazan.

August: Schuyler visited his mother in East Aurora.

1966

July: John Ashbery visited the Porters on Great Spruce Head Island and he and Schuyler worked on *A Nest of Ninnies*.

July 25: Frank O'Hara died in a small hospital on Long Island, two days after being struck by a jeep on the beach at Fire Island. Although Schuyler had drifted away from his earlier close friendship with O'Hara, they had remained friends and Schuyler, along with the rest of the New York art and poetry world, was shocked and deeply saddened by (what John Ashbery called) "Frank's disappearance." At the time, Schuyler was in Maine with the Porters, who broke the news to him, but did not let him go to Long Island to attend the funeral, fearing it would be too upsetting. "The first reaction was just numbness," Schuyler later said, but about a month afterwards he wrote the poem "Buried at Springs."

1967

Summer: Fairfield and Anne Porter and their two daughters, Katherine and Elizabeth, went to Europe for the summer, leaving Schuyler to take care of the house in Southampton.

At the end of the summer, Schuyler visited Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard in Calais, Vermont, where Ron and Pat Padgett were also visiting. Early in September Schuyler took the Padgetts up to Great Spruce Head Island for a few days, and Schuyler and Padgett wrote a collaborative poem, "Under the Dome."

1968

January 1: after a single entry in September, 1967, Schuyler, with Fairfield Porter's encouragement, began to keep a Diary.

April: Schuyler visited John Ashbery at his mother's home in Pultneyville, New York, where they continued to work on *A Nest of Ninnies*.

Schuyler bought a camera and took up photography. Most of Schuyler's photography was done on Great Spruce Head Island and consists of landscapes, still lifes and portraits in both color and black and white.

Summer: John Ashbery visited Great Spruce Head Island and in September he and Schuyler finally finished *A Nest of Ninnies*.

August: Schuyler took a car trip with Kenneth and Janice Koch to Nova Scotia.

October: Schuyler visited Kenward Elmslie in Vermont.

1969

Schuyler's first commercially published book of poems, *Freely Espousing*, was published by Doubleday under the imprint of Paris Review Editions, with a dedication to Anne and Fairfield Porter and a cover by Alex Katz.

A Nest of Ninnies was published by Dutton. W. H. Auden reviewed the novel in the *New York Times Book Review* and said it was "destined to become a minor classic."

The Fairfield Porter family, and Schuyler, moved to Amherst Massachusetts, where Porter had accepted a teaching position at Amherst College for the academic year of 1969-1970. Ron and Pat Padgett house-sat for the year in Southampton.

When he wasn't with the Porter family in Amherst or on Great Spruce Head Island, Schuyler was frequently travelling, between Amherst, Southampton (where he would stay at 49 South Main Street with the Padgetts), New York City (where he would usually stay with Kenward Elmslie) and Calais, Vermont (also with Elmslie and Joe Brainard).

November: Schuyler spent Thanksgiving with his mother in East Aurora.

1970

April: Schuyler again visited East Aurora.

1971

February: Schuyler began to sublet a small apartment on East 35th Street that had belonged to the painter Neil Welliver, who had decided to live year-round in Maine.

Schuyler was one of the judges of the Frank O'Hara Book Award. Given annually to a poet who had not yet had a book published, the Award sponsored the publication of the poet's first book by the Columbia University Press. In 1971 the Award went to Kenward Elmslie, who published *Motor Disturbance*.

Schuyler, partly inspired by Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, began to write "The Crystal Lithium," a long poem, using a longer line than anything he had written before.

April 3: During a stay in New York City, Schuyler met Bob J—— on Palm Sunday eve in the Everard Baths. Schuyler and J—— began a two-year love affair.

July: It had been arranged that Schuyler would spend the summer in Southampton with Ron and Pat Padgett, and their son Wayne, then about 5, who were living in the Porters' house while the Porters were in Maine. Over the July Fourth weekend, Schuyler underwent a serious nervous breakdown and badly frightened both Ron and Pat Padgett with behavior that was threatening toward Wayne Padgett. Schuyler was taken to Southampton Hospital, then transferred to the State Mental Hospital at Islip, New York, where he stayed for ten days.

After being discharged from the hospital in Islip, Schuyler went to stay with Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard in Calais, Vermont, where he arrived on July 21. There, at the beginning of August, Schuyler went through another severe mental crisis and he was committed to the Vermont State Hospital at Waterbury where he remained for three and a half weeks.

In Waterbury, Schuyler made several friends among the patients and published at least one issue of a little magazine, *The Daily Planet*, with contributions by various hospital patients as well as Ron Padgett, Joe Brainard, Clark Coolidge, Celia Coolidge, Elizabeth Hazan and Schuyler himself. Schuyler wrote a number of poems in the hospital which he included in his next book, *Hymn to Life*, in a section headed "Waterbury."

September: After being released from the hospital, Schuyler drove back to New York with Bob J—— where they spent a few days at the Gramercy Park Hotel, before Schuyler finally returned to Southampton early in September, once the Porters had returned from Maine.

Fall: Schuyler was dividing his time between Southampton and the apartment on 35th Street.

1972

March: Schuyler received a creative writing grant of \$5,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Later that month Schuyler took a trip to Washington D.C. with John Ashbery, Anne Dunn, and her son Francis Wishart. The trip inspired Schuyler to write "Hymn to Life," his longest poem up to that point.

March: Schuyler completed a 45 page prose work called "Life, Death and Other Dreams; An Eclogue for Gerrit Henry" which was published in the fall issue of *The Paris Review*.

Spring: Schuyler met Darragh Park, a young painter who was staying with Bob Dash.

May: Schuyler was writing "Hymn to Life."

May 22: Schuyler wrote Harry Mathews, "My own life has been far from untroubled, climaxing in a break-up with Bob J——. That was several weeks ago..." Nonetheless, Schuyler continued to see J—— throughout that summer, and into the next year, so when the affair finally ended is hard to know.

Summer: Schuyler stayed in the Porters' Southampton house alone while the family was in Maine. He was writing a novel, *What's for Dinner?*, and editing the

first (and only) issue of a mimeographed magazine called *49 South*, which appeared that August with a cover drawing by Robert Dash.

Schuyler and Bob Dash collaborated on *Gardens*, a portfolio of lithographs by Dash, each accompanied by a line from Schuyler's Diary.

Fall: Schuyler visited Kenward Elmslie in Calais, Vermont where he continued working on *What's for Dinner?* and wrote the poems headed "Evenings in Vermont" in *Hymn to Life*.

A Sun Cab, with cover and illustrations by Fairfield Porter, was published by Adventures in Poetry press.

The Crystal Lithium was published by Random House, with a cover by Fairfield Porter and dedicated to "Bob" [J——].

1973

March: Presumably the final break-up with J—— occurred sometime during the first few months of 1973.

Schuyler was in Payne Whitney early in 1973.

Summer: Schuyler again spent the summer at the Porters' Southampton house, while they were in Maine, this time with his friend Ruth Kligman. The two of them gave several dinner parties. Schuyler finished *What's for Dinner?* and wrote a blurb for Kligman's book, *Love Affair*, a memoir of her affair with Jackson Pollock.

Schuyler also began seeing a new psychiatrist, Dr. Hyman Weitzen, who practiced in the Hamptons and in New York City. When he first met Schuyler, Weitzen found diagnosis extremely difficult because of the many different drugs Schuyler was taking. To Weitzen, Schuyler "looked" schizophrenic, but after he had been weaned off many of his drugs, Weitzen decided he was suffering from depression. Weitzen remained Schuyler's psychiatrist for the rest of Schuyler's life.

September: A trust fund for Schuyler's benefit was established by a friend. Schuyler sent change-of-address forms announcing his (definitive) move from Southampton to 250 East 35th Street.

Penguin Modern Poets #24, with work by Schuyler, Kenneth Koch and Kenward Elmslie, was published.

1974

Hymn to Life was published by Random House, with a cover by Fairfield Porter and a dedication to "Bob" [J——].

Schuyler spent some time with his mother in East Aurora, during which John Ashbery drove over from Pultneyville and had dinner with them at the Roycroft Inn.

Summer and fall: Schuyler frequently visited Bob Dash at his house in Sagaponack.

1975

January and February: Schuyler was in Payne Whitney, the psychiatric hospital associated with New York Hospital, where he wrote "The Payne Whitney Poems."

Schuyler and Joan Mitchell collaborated on a series of poem/pastels.

June: Random House turned down *What's for Dinner?* and Schuyler suffered an anxiety attack, which led to his cancelling a planned trip to visit Anne Dunn in the south of France.

July 7: Schuyler had another breakdown and Fairfield Porter took him to Bellevue Hospital, where he stayed for about two weeks.

July 21: Schuyler moved to the New York Hospital Psychiatric Center, on Bloomingdale Road in White Plains, New York, known as "Bloomingdale," the same mental hospital where he had been in 1951, when he had written "Salute." He stayed there the rest of the summer.

September 18: Fairfield Porter died suddenly at the age of 68 while on his morning walk.

December: Schuyler was out of Bloomingdale and back in the small dark apartment on 35th Street.

1976

May: Schuyler moved to a rooming house at 348 West 20th Street. Schuyler was pleased to be in Chelsea, near his friends Darragh Park, John Ashbery, Doug Crase and Frank Polach, Kenward Elmslie, Ruth Kligman and Janice Koch. Schuyler described the apartment in a letter to Anne Dunn:

It's a little strange, I guess. It's in an old brownstone, and is what Kenward accurately calls a pensione. I share a large bath, in which there is a small refrigerator. The first time I looked inside it there were six large cucumbers... What's really great about this place is that it faces south, utterly quiet and flooded with sunshine...

July and August: Schuyler visited his mother in East Aurora, where they were visited by John Ashbery. During this stay, Schuyler wrote his longest poem, "The Morning of the Poem." Schuyler originally intended "The Morning of the Poem" to be book length, but when he returned to New York he was unable to continue so he ended it.

December: Schuyler was in Lenox Hill Hospital for a few days, but was out in time to attend Jane Freilicher and Joe Hazan's annual New Year's Day party on January 1, 1977 with Darragh Park.

1977

January 4 and January 10: Schuyler was interviewed on tape by Peter Schjeldahl, who was writing a biography of Frank O'Hara.

April 24: A fire broke out in Schuyler's room in the 20th Street rooming house, caused by his smoking in bed. When he was discovered by the firemen, his breathing and pulse had stopped and his lungs were badly seared. Schuyler was taken to the intensive care ward at St. Vincent's Hospital.

Schuyler didn't return to the 20th Street room and his belongings, which had suffered water and smoke damage, were put into storage in a warehouse owned by Morris Golde. Many papers, including parts of the *Diary* and other manuscripts and letters, were soaked and only saved through the efforts of David Kermani, Darragh Park and Frank Polach who painstakingly dried them.

June: Schuyler entered the Neurological Institute of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

Summer: Schuyler moved to Lincoln Square Hotel for Adults, a sort of nursing home at 2120 Broadway, (or 201 West 74th Street). Schuyler was still suffering from acute anxiety attacks and in September and again in October he was admitted to Roosevelt Hospital.

Kenward Elmslie's Z Press published *The Home Book*, a miscellany of poetry, prose and plays edited by Trevor Winkfield. The cover was a drawing of Schuyler by Darragh Park and the book was dedicated to John Ashbery.

1978

January: Schuyler was admitted to Roosevelt Hospital for another brief stay.

September: Schuyler and Charles North sent letters soliciting contributions to their magazine, or anthology, *Broadway*. It was published in 1979, with a cover illustration by Paula North.

October: Schuyler moved to the Allerton Hotel, a "single room occupancy" hotel on West 22nd Street off Eighth Avenue, and a grim and unsuitable environment. Schuyler was at a low point; his dirty clothes covered the floor of the room.

Fall: Black Sparrow Press published *What's for Dinner?* with a cover by Jane Freilicher and dedicated to Anne Dunn.

1979

March: Schuyler was admitted to Payne Whitney.

May: Schuyler was again in Payne Whitney. Anne Dunn went back to the Allerton to fetch his false teeth and his glasses and found the room, which she had never visited, "a nightmare," "an unbelievable mess."

May 24: Ruth Kligman and Anne Dunn packed Schuyler's belongings and moved him to room 625 in the Chelsea Hotel, where he would live for the rest of his life.

It was Ruth Kligman who came up with the idea of the Chelsea Hotel—"New York's answer to a youth hostel I once saw in Venice," as Schuyler described it in a letter to Ashbery in 1966. On 23rd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, it was built in 1884 by the architectural firm of Hubert, Pirsson and Hoodless in an eclectic late Victorian "Esthetic" style: a red brick facade with tiers of wrought-iron balustrades in "a design of crazy/ chrysanthemums and willow leaves." Bronze plaques at the entrance commemorate former residents: Thomas Wolfe, Brendan Behan, Dylan Thomas, O. Henry, Arthur B. Davies—and now, James Schuyler. Schuyler's sometime friend from Gold and Fizdale days, Virgil Thomson, had been living there since around 1940 in one of the buildings's original, vast apartments; the hotel was famous as a bohemian hangout.

A group of Schuyler's friends decided that the Frank O'Hara Foundation, which was no longer sponsoring the publication of young poets, should be used for collecting funds to help Schuyler. Morris Golde was in charge, and helped arrange for Schuyler to have an assistant come every morning with his medication, the newspaper, cook him breakfast and help with other errands. Charles North suggested the poet, Eileen Myles, for the job.

When Myles first met Schuyler in his room at the Chelsea, with Anne Dunn

and Donald Droll, he was thin, with long curly hair down to his shoulders and was wearing a little white undershirt. He seemed frail and paralysed with fear: "He just really looked like somebody who's spent his life in mental hospitals."

Myles developed a routine of arriving in the morning with Schuyler's pills and the *New York Times* and making him French toast for breakfast—a routine that subsequent helpers would stick to.

"From his bed he ran the show," Myles wrote in her story, "Chelsea Girls":

The presence of his attention was so strong, so deeply passive—such a thing to bathe your tiny desperate words in that when it was gone you had to stop and hover in the silence again... You had to stay silent for a very long time some days. He was like music, Jimmy was, and you had to be like music too to be with him, but understand in his room he was conductor... He directed the yellow air in room 625. It was marvelous to be around. It was huge and impassive. What emerged in the silence was a strong picture, more akin to a child or a beautiful animal.¹²

June: Schuyler began to see old friends again: "Last night the Hazans... Tonight it's the Norths, tomorrow Barbara [Guest], the next night JA. So you see I'm coming out of my hidey-hole," he wrote to Anne Dunn (June 12, 1979).

August: Myles traveled to Colorado, and Schuyler visited his mother in East Aurora, who was living with Schuyler's half brother Fredric Ridenour and his wife, Hilde. There Schuyler began writing another long poem, "A few days."

September: After Schuyler's return, with Eileen Myles still away, others filled in for her: Steve Carey, a poet, a friend of his, Eleanor Nauen, and Rochelle Kraut, also a poet. One day when Steve Carey couldn't make it, he asked his younger brother, Tom, to go up to the Chelsea. Twenty-eight, good looking, gay, extremely personable, "the/ son and grandson of two/ great movie actors, the/ two Harry Careys,"¹³ himself a budding actor and rock musician, Tom Carey was an instant hit with Schuyler.

Sometime that fall, after her trip to Colorado, Myles decided she couldn't work for Schuyler any longer, and Tom Carey took the job, sharing the duties with Helena Hughes, another young poet.

Schuyler fell deeply in love with Tom Carey, though he realized that it was a love unlikely ever to be consummated or fully returned.

1980

March: Schuyler's obsession with Tom Carey had become so uncomfortable for Carey that he had to stop working for Schuyler. They remained friends, however, and after a few months Carey began to see Schuyler regularly again and they started writing a novel together, *Small Crimes*. Helena Hughes continued to work for Schuyler for the next six years.

The Morning of the Poem was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux with a

¹² Eileen Myles, *Chelsea Girls*, Black Sparrow Press, 1994.

¹³ "Tom," published in *A Few Days*.

cover drawing by Anne Dunn and a dedication to Darragh Park. The book was to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1981.

Collabs With Helena Hughes was published by Misty Terrace Press, with a cover drawing by George Schneeman.

1981

Schuyler resumed work on "A few days," the long poem he had started in East Aurora in the summer of 1979.

March: Schuyler's sister-in-law, Hilde Ridenour, called to tell him his mother, Margaret Connor Schuyler Ridenour, had died at the age of 90. With this news, Schuyler ended "A few days."

August: Schuyler realized that Tom Carey had been stealing letters and manuscripts from his room and selling them to buy drugs. Eventually Helena Hughes was able to retrieve most of the papers and Carey, who was now off drugs, later repaid the book dealers who had bought them from him.

Summer: Schuyler made the first of what were to become annual visits to Darragh Park's summer house in Bridgehampton, Long Island, which Park had acquired the year before.

November: Schuyler and Tom Carey attended the Eye and Ear Theater production of Schuyler's play, "Shopping and Waiting," a double bill with John Ashbery's "The Heroes."

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, in 1981 Schuyler also received a Guggenheim Fellowship: "It's quite a generous sum," he wrote a friend.

1982

Schuyler was awarded a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Geoffrey Young's The Figures press published *Early in '71*, a selection from Schuyler's *Diary* for 1971.

July 3: The exhibition "Poets and Painters" opened at the Guild Hall Museum in East Hampton and included Schuyler and Darragh Park's collaborative poem/painting, "Oriane".

November: Schuyler received an award of \$1500 from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

1983

Morris Golde resigned as President of the Frank O'Hara Foundation. Helena Hughes became increasingly active in soliciting money for Schuyler from various grant agencies, and managed to keep him financially solvent despite his serious medical problems.

Summer: Schuyler was diagnosed with diabetes. He began to go to a new doctor, Dr. Daniel Newman, who took a personal interest in Schuyler and his numerous physical problems, some of which were undoubtedly contributing to, or being confused with, his psychological ones. Newman was able to get Schuyler's blood sugar level lowered and partly control his diabetes.

Schuyler was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Poets with an award of \$10,000.

1984

May 21: Schuyler underwent an arterial bypass operation on his right leg, which he was in danger of losing due to complications from diabetes. The operation was not a complete success and on May 31 the procedure was revised using a teflon graft, this time successfully.

August: Schuyler had two toes amputated.

November: Schuyler left Farrar, Straus & Giroux, where *The Morning of the Poem* had been published, for Random House, where *A Few Days* was published in 1985.

December: Schuyler was admitted to Beekman Hospital for a few days after a blackout, diagnosed as a "micro stroke."

1985

January: Bill de Noyelles began working for Schuyler as a part-time assistant, dividing the week with Helena Hughes.

February: Another week at Beekman Hospital, for pneumonia.

March: Another stay at Beekman Hospital: aspirin overdose.

July 19-21: Schuyler and Tom Carey visited Darragh Park in Bridgehampton. They paid a call on Anne Porter in nearby Southampton, who had recently sold the house on South Main Street but had kept some of the land on which she had built a smaller house for herself. On his return to New York, Schuyler wrote "Horse-Chestnut Trees and Roses," after seeing how the new owner of Fairfield Porter's house had torn out the rose bushes and cut down the horse-chestnut tree.

August: Schuyler suffered his last serious nervous breakdown and was admitted to Saint Vincent's Hospital for about two weeks.

September: Upset by Schuyler's August breakdown, Bill de Noyelles quit as part-time assistant.

Fall: After a long hiatus, Schuyler resumed his *Diary* as part of a project undertaken with Darragh Park to create—and it was hoped, publish—what Park has described as "accompanying journals which would not, however, be mutually descriptive." A selection from these parallel journals was eventually published by Tibor de Nagy Editions in 1995, with an introduction by Douglas Crase.

"A few days" won the annual *Paris Review* prize for a long poem.

A Few Days was published by Random House with a cover by Darragh Park and dedicated to Tom Carey.

October: Schuyler learned that he had been awarded a \$25,000 Whiting Award, one of ten in the first year of the prize. On Halloween night, Schuyler, accompanied by Eileen Myles, went to the Morgan Library to accept the award.

1986

Helena Hughes and Schuyler parted company after six years. Schuyler hired another assistant, Johnathan Leake.

1988

Schuyler received a grant of \$5,000 from The Fund for Poetry, and an Ingram Merrill Foundation grant for \$10,000.

January: Tom Carey joined the Brothers of Saint Francis, an Episcopalian

order and went to live at Little Portion Friary on Long Island. Schuyler was disappointed at first, since it meant they would see less of each other, but he soon became reconciled to Carey's vocation and vicariously participated in it. Tom Carey's cat, Barbara, came to live with Schuyler.

Early May: Schuyler visited Tom Carey at Little Portion Friary on Long Island.

Late May: Schuyler visited John Ashbery and David Kermani in Hudson, New York.

June: Inspired by Tom Carey's Episcopalianism, Schuyler was attending various Episcopalian churches in New York.

August: Schuyler visited Tom Carey at Little Portion Friary.

Selected Poems, a collection taken from his previous six books, was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux with a cover by Darragh Park and a dedication to Daniel Newman. In his blurb for the book jacket, John Ashbery wrote, "Schuyler is simply the best we have."

November 15: Schuyler gave his first public reading, at the Dia Foundation in SoHo. As Schuyler truthfully wrote in a letter to Anne Dunn, he was "a fucking sensation."

To commemorate the reading, the Dia Foundation also published a chapbook, *For Joe Brainard*, a selection from Schuyler's *Diary* for 1968-1969.

November 19: Schuyler spent the weekend with John Ashbery in Hudson, N.Y. and they attended a reading by Barbara Guest, organized by Michael Gizzi at Simon's Rock College in Massachusetts.

December 7: Schuyler and Darragh Park attended a concert which included two song cycles set to his poems by Gerald Busby.

1989

January: Schuyler visited Little Portion Friary.

February: Schuyler went to San Francisco for a brief visit, where he stayed at the San Damiano Friary—the West Coast house of the order of Episcopalian Franciscans that Tom Carey belonged to. He also visited Bill Berkson in Bolinas.

February 10: Schuyler gave a reading at the San Francisco Art Institute.

Spring: Schuyler met Artie Growich, who began living with Schuyler. Outside of his relationship with Schuyler, Growich's interests centered around basketball, horse racing, and a local pool hall. Eventually the relationship developed into a close platonic one, and Growich continued to live with Schuyler on and off until Schuyler's death.

June 3: Schuyler visited Barbara Guest in Southampton.

June 8: Schuyler read in the Intuflo reading series, organized by Marc Cohen and Susan Baran.

June: Schuyler visited John Ashbery in Hudson, N.Y.

Broadway 2, a second anthology of poetry and drawing edited by Schuyler and Charles North, was published, with a cover by Trevor Winkfield.

November 8: Schuyler read at Arrowhead, Herman Melville's home and barn in the Berkshires. The reading was organized by Michael Gizzi.

November 23: Schuyler read at the 92nd Street Y with John Ashbery.

December 12: Schuyler was confirmed as an Episcopalian "After a lifetime as a

non-practicing Presbyterian" (Letter to Carl Little, January 14, 1990).

Schuyler joined the Church of the Incarnation, on Madison Avenue at 35th Street, where he eventually became a lay reader.

1990

February 2: Schuyler and Darragh Park visited Park's mother's grave in Morristown N.J. The visit inspired the poem "Over the Hills."

Spring: *The Denver Quarterly*, a literary magazine published by the University of Denver, brought out a special issue devoted to Schuyler, with essays by twenty poets, critics, and friends, and three new poems.

May 6: Schuyler read at The Poetry Project at Saint Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery with Eileen Myles.

August 28: Schuyler read at Guild Hall in East Hampton.

October 23: Schuyler read at Intuflo with Tom Carey.

December 6: Schuyler attended the poet Tim Dlugos's funeral with Darragh Park.

1991

February 6: Schuyler read at N.Y.U. with Barbara Guest.

April 5: Tom Carey went to Schuyler's room in the Chelsea Hotel and found him conscious but unresponsive; he had suffered a stroke. Carey and Raymond Foye accompanied him in an ambulance to Saint Vincent's Hospital.

For a week, Schuyler was in intensive care at Saint Vincent's, visited there by many friends including John Ashbery, Douglas Crase and Frank Polach, Eileen Myles, Anne Dunn, Ron Padgett, Artie Growich, Darragh Park, Charles North, Simon Pettet, David Trinidad, Nathan Kernan, Ada and Vincent Katz. Schuyler seemed alert and responding to his visitors but was unable to speak. One of the last people to see him alive was Anne Porter who visited on April 11.

April 12: James Schuyler died at the age of 67. A funeral service was held at the Church of the Incarnation on April 16.

In the fall, Schuyler's ashes were buried in the small cemetery on the grounds of Little Portion Friary, Mount Sinai, New York.

Appendix of Names

Bill Aalto (1916–1958) James Schuyler's lover from 1944 to 1949. Aalto was a Finnish-American veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and fought on the side of the Republic in the Spanish Civil War in 1937–1939. Back in the United States at the onset of World War Two, he was recruited by the just-formed O.S.S., and assigned to teach methods of guerrilla warfare to Army recruits. While doing so, Aalto lost his right hand after he pulled a hand-grenade away from a recruit who had "frozen" just after pulling the pin. Later, Aalto earned his undergraduate degree at Columbia on the GI Bill.

Aalto and Schuyler "picked each other up/ in Pop Tunick's long-gone gay bar...in dreams, and I dream about him/ a lot, he's always the nice guy/ I first knew and loved, not/ the figure of terror he became," wrote Schuyler in "Dining Out with Doug and Frank." Schuyler and Aalto lived together for a time at 63 Downing Street before leaving for Italy in the fall of 1947. They spent the winter and spring of 1948–49 taking care of W. H. Auden's house in Ischia while Auden was in New York. Aalto's temper was famously volatile and after he tried to kill Schuyler with a carving knife (March, 1949), the couple split up. Aalto left Ischia to live in Rome and eventually worked his way back to New York. He died of leukemia in 1958, leaving his Army pension of several hundred dollars to Schuyler.

Mary Abbott (b. 1921), painter. She showed at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in the 1950s and at Bob Keene's bookstore/gallery in Southampton. Abbott and Schuyler were friends since the 1950s.

John Ashbery (b. 1927), poet. Ashbery graduated from Harvard in 1949 and it was there that he met fellow poets Frank O'Hara and Kenneth Koch. Ashbery first met Schuyler in New York in 1951 and they became friends in early 1952, remaining close until the end of Schuyler's life: "so close both personally and esthetically that asking advice from him is only a step removed from consulting oneself," as Ashbery wrote in "Introduction to a Reading Given by James Schuyler." Ashbery lived mostly in Paris from 1955 to 1965, where he wrote art criticism for the *Herald Tribune* and for *Art News*, but he returned to New York for almost a year in 1957–58 and lived with Schuyler at 326 East 49th Street.

John Ashbery has published seventeen collections of poetry, including *Some Trees* (1956), which was chosen by W. H. Auden for the Yale Younger Poets Series; *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1975), which won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award and the National Book Award; *Selected Poems* (1985); and *Can You Hear, Bird* (1996). He and Schuyler collaborated intermittently over more than 15 years to write the novel *A Nest of Ninnies* (1969). After returning to New York in 1965, Ashbery was executive editor of *Art News* until

1972 and then art critic for *New York* and *Newsweek* magazines. His selected art criticism, *Reported Sightings: Art Chronicles 1957–1987*, was published in 1991.

W(ystan) H(ugh) Auden (1907–1973), English poet. Auden moved to the United States during the Second World War and became a good friend of Schuyler's in the late 40s through Auden's lover, Chester Kallman. Schuyler typed out many of the poems in Auden's book *Nones* while he was staying with Auden and Kallman on Ischia. After Auden's death in 1973, Schuyler wrote the poem "Wystan Auden."

Don Bachardy (b. 1934), artist and Christopher Isherwood's lover. He is best known for portraits in ink wash and pencil. Schuyler reviewed Bachardy's 1962 New York exhibition in the February 1962 *Art News*: "Bachardy's easy elegance is akin to Diaghilev's and Cocteau's; it does not preclude fineness of art."

Susan Baran (b. 1947), poet. Her book, *Harmonious Whole*, was published by The Groundwater Press in 1989. She and her husband, Marc Cohen, ran the Intuflo series of poetry readings in New York City from 1987 to 1992.

Bill Berkson (b. 1939), poet and art critic. Berkson's books include *Shining Leaves* (1969), *Song Heard Around St. Bridget's* (1974, a collaboration with Frank O'Hara), *Ants* (1975), *Red Devil* (1983), *Lush Life* (1983). He edited the anthology *Best & Company* (1969) with poems by Schuyler, Elmslie, Ashbery, O'Hara, Brainard, Waldman, Warsh, and others. Berkson was a close friend and protégé of Frank O'Hara's and he edited a posthumous selection of O'Hara's poems published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1967, *In Memory of My Feelings*, and with Joe LeSueur co-edited *Homage to Frank O'Hara* (1978; 1988).

Berkson's book, *Blue is the Hero*, takes its title from a line in one of Schuyler's art reviews. Schuyler subsequently dedicated his poem, "Gray, intermittently blue, eyed hero" to Berkson.

Sandra Berrigan (b. 1942), poet. She is the former wife of the poet Ted Berrigan. Her books include *Daily Rites* (1972) and *Summer Sleeper* (1981).

Vivien Bittencourt (b. 1962), photographer and video maker. She is married to the poet Vincent Katz.

Jane Bowles (1917–1973), fiction writer; wife of the writer and composer Paul Bowles. Jane Bowles's oeuvre consists of one novel, *Two Serious Ladies*; a play, "In the Summer House"; and 13 stories. John Ashbery called her "One of the finest modern writers of fiction in any language"; the wry, deadpan tone of her work might have been an influence on Schuyler and Ashbery's novel, *A Nest of Ninnies*.

Joe Brainard (1942–1994), artist and writer. Brainard came to New York from Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1960 with his high-school friend Ron Padgett. He met Schuyler in the early 1960s.

Brainard's first solo exhibition, when he was 23, was followed by numerous solo and group exhibitions during the next decade. In 1975 he had a show at Fischbach Gallery consisting of 1,500 small collages. A prolific graphic artist, Brainard collaborated with many poets during the 1960s and 70s, including Kenward Elmslie, Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, Michael Brownstein, Bill Berkson, Anne Waldman, Robert Creeley, John Ashbery and others. His own writings include *I Remember* (1970; collected edition, 1975; reissued 1995), *Selected Writings* (1971), *Bolinas Journal* (1971), *New Work* (1973), *Nothing to Write Home About* (1981).

In a cover article on Joe Brainard in the April, 1967 issue of *Art News*, Schuyler wrote, "He is a painting ecologist whose work draws the things it needs to it, in the interest of completeness and balance, of evident but usually imperceived truths."

Brainard died of AIDS in May, 1994.

Michael Brownstein (b. 1943), poet and novelist. His books include *Behind the Wheel* (1967), *Brainstorms* (1971), *Country Cousins* (1974), *Strange Days Ahead* (1975), *Oracle Night* (1982) and *Self-Reliance* (1994). Schuyler's poem "Bleeding Gums" is dedicated to him.

Helen Burckhardt (b. 1911), textile designer. Helen Burckhardt, Rudy Burckhardt's sister, came to New York from Switzerland in 1950. She met Schuyler through his then lover, Charles Heilemann, who was also a designer. The three of them shared a cabin in Vermont in the summer of 1951.

Rudy Burckhardt (b. 1914), photographer, filmmaker and painter. Burckhardt was a close friend of Edwin Denby's from the time of their meeting, in Burckhardt's native Switzerland in the early 30s, until Denby's death in 1983. His books include *Conversations with Rudy Burckhardt* (1987) and *Talking Pictures* (1994), both with Simon Pettet; and *Mobile Homes* (1979), a miscellany of writings and photographs. A retrospective of his films was held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1987. He is married to the painter Yvonne Jacquette.

Truman Capote (1924–1984), novelist and short-story writer; author of *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms* (1948), *The Grass Harp* (1951), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958), *In Cold Blood* (1966) and *Answered Prayers* (1986). Schuyler knew him in New York and Italy in the late 40s and early 50s. In the interview with Carl Little, Schuyler says, "Before I knew John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara, I used to show things I wrote to Truman when he was in New York, and he was almost the most encouraging person in a way. He was very astute and would always point out something good, that he thought was effective."

Harry Carey, Jr. (b. 1921), movie actor; Tom Carey's father, and the son of cowboy actor Harry Carey (Sr.) who gave him the nick-name "Dobe" because his hair was the color of adobe bricks. Harry Carey, Jr. appeared in classic Westerns directed by John Ford, including "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" and "The

Searchers;" in Howard Hawks's "Gentlemen Prefer Blonds," and many other films.

Marilyn (Fix) Carey (b. 1925) Tom Carey's mother; the daughter of the actor Paul Fix, and the wife of Harry Carey, Jr. With her husband, she runs Soledad Productions, a small documentary film company.

Olive (Golden) Carey (1896–1988). Tom Carey's grandmother. As Olive Golden, she acted in both silent and sound films. In 1914, she appeared with her future husband, Harry Carey (Sr.) in "The Sorrowful Shore," and the couple later played opposite each other in "Trader Horn." Other films include "The Searchers," "Cobweb," and "The Alamo."

Patricia Olive Carey (b. 1953). Tom Carey's younger sister, nick-named Bug, is a chef in a restaurant in Santa Barbara, California.

Steve Carey (1945–1989), poet; older brother of Tom Carey. He was the author of many books of poetry, including *Smith Going Backwards*, *Fleur-de-Lis* (1972), *Gentle Subsidy* (1975), *The California Papers* (1981) and *A/P* (1984), as well as several unpublished novels. He died of a heart attack at the age of 44.

Tom Carey (b. 1951), poet, actor, musician and since 1988 a Brother in the Society of Saint Francis within the Episcopal Church. Carey is a Novice Guardian at Saint Elizabeth's Friary, Brooklyn, where he directs the Bushwick Play Project, is a poet-in-residence in the New York City Public Schools, and also works at All Saints Church, Richmond Hill. Carey was Schuyler's assistant from late 1979 until mid-March 1980; he left after Schuyler fell obsessively in love with him, but they remained close friends. Throughout the 1980's and until Schuyler's death in 1991, Carey and Schuyler spoke or saw each other nearly every day.

Marc Cohen (b. 1951), poet. His book, *On Maplewood Time*, with an introduction by Schuyler and a cover drawing by Darragh Park was published by The Groundwater Press in 1989. He and his wife, Susan Baran, met Schuyler through Darragh Park in about 1986.

Clark Coolidge (b. 1939), poet and musician; the author of almost twenty books, including *Space* (1970), *Polaroid* (1975), *American Ones* (1981), *The Crystal Text* (1986), *At Egypt* (1988), *Sound as Thought: Poems 1982–1984* (1990). His poetry makes use of what Richard Kostelanetz has called "post-Ashberian acoherence." Schuyler dedicated the poem "The Dog Wants His Dinner," to Coolidge, and said in an interview, "I didn't just dedicate it to him, I wrote it with him in mind. I like Clark's poetry very much, although writing in that style is not for me, I like playing with words or making hieroglyphs out of words."

William Corbett (b. 1943), poet. He is the author of many books of poetry, including *Columbus Square Journal* (1975), *Runaway Pond* (1981), *Collected Poems: City Nature* (1984), *Remembrances* (1987), *On Blue Note* (1989), *Don't Think: Look*

(1991), *New and Selected Poems* (1995). He is also the author of *Philip Guston's Late Work: A Memoir* and *Literary New England: A History and a Guide*.

Schuyler admired Corbett's work and the two poets had already corresponded by the time they first met at a party given by Ann Lauterbach to celebrate the publication of Kenward Elmslie and Joe Brainard's book *Sung Sex* (1989). Schuyler dedicated the poem "Yellow Flowers" to Bill Corbett.

Bob Cornell (b. 1931), for many years held various administrative positions with the New York City Ballet. Cornell was very close to Edwin Denby in the late fifties and sixties.

Christopher Cox (1949–1990), writer, editor and photographer. Cox was a member of The Violet Quill group of gay writers who met in New York in the late 1970s and early 80s. He was the author of *The Key West Companion*.

Lee Crabtree (d. 1973), musician and composer. Crabtree was a member of the Lower-East-Side band The Fugs, and also collaborated with and accompanied Kenward Elmslie in performances of their songs.

Douglas Crase (b. 1944), poet. His book, *The Revisionist* was published in 1981. He has written about James Schuyler's work in *Poetry*, *The Denver Quarterly*, and other publications. He and his lover, Frank Polach, appear in the poem "Dining Out with Doug and Frank."

Robert Dash (b. 1931), painter and gardener. Robert Dash met Schuyler through Fairfield Porter in the late 50s. He moved to eastern Long Island in 1966, and in 1967 began to design and create an "artist's garden," Madoo, now a not-for-profit foundation. For a time, when Schuyler was living with the Porters in nearby Southampton, he and Schuyler saw each other at least once a week and they collaborated on poems, stories and paintings. "An East Window on Elizabeth Street" is among the poems Schuyler dedicated to Dash.

Reviewing Bob Dash's 1962 exhibition at the Kornblee Gallery for the February, 1962 *Art News*, Schuyler wrote, "Dash's evolution as a colorist is seen in *Garden Shade*, planting lush violets and reds in his own characteristic green. The fall of light is in the fall of strokes."

Edwin Denby (1903–1983), poet and dance critic. Lincoln Kirstein called his essay on Balanchine's "Agon," "The most telling and comprehensive technical appreciation of a dance work that has been written." Denby's *Complete Poems*, edited and with an introduction by Ron Padgett, was published in 1986. His books of dance writings include *Looking at the Dance* (1949, republished 1968, 1973, 1978), *Dances, Buildings and People in the Streets* (1965, republished 1973, 1979), and *Dance Writings* (1986). In the early 50s he had a romantic relationship with Schuyler which, as Schuyler put it, "ended very badly." It was through Denby, however, that Schuyler met Arthur Gold.

Bill de Noyelles (b. 1960), poet and artist. De Noyelles was Schuyler's part-time assistant from January through September 1985. He edited the magazine *Blue Smoke* from 1984 to 1986; the fourth and last issue included Schuyler's poem, "Naked at the Keys."

Michael di Capua (b. 1938) Schuyler's editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux for *The Morning of the Poem*.

Tim Dlugos (1950–1990), poet. His books include *Je Suis Ein Americano* (1979), *Entre Nous* (1982), *Strong Place* (1991) and *Powerless* (1996). During the two years before his death from AIDS in December, 1990, Dlugos was studying for the Episcopalian priesthood at the Yale Divinity School.

Anne Dunn (b. 1929), English painter. Dunn's first marriage, to the painter Michael Wishart (1928–1996), ended in 1959, and she then married the painter Rodrigo Moynihan (1910–1990). Dunn, Moynihan, John Ashbery and Sonia Orwell edited and published the influential journal *Art and Literature* (1964–1967). She first met Schuyler in 1961 and they remained close friends until his death. A long excerpt from a letter from Anne Dunn is incorporated into "The Morning of the Poem"; and her drawing is used on the cover of that book. "A Name Day" is dedicated to her.

Writing about Dunn's works for a Fischbach Gallery brochure, Schuyler spoke of their "knowledge of how to handle abstraction in a realist work, turning the deep woods of New Brunswick, and the earth, leaves and sky of Provence into color field painting from which, in the nature of things, evolve wild flowers or cherries..."

Kenward Elmslie (b. 1929), poet and librettist. His books include *The Champ* (1968), *Album* (1969; dedicated to Schuyler), *Motor Disturbance* (1971), *Circus Nerves* (1971), *City Junket* (1972), *The Orchid Stories* (1973), *Tropicalism* (1975), *Moving Right Along* (1980), *26 Bars* (1986), *Sung Sex* (1989), *Postcards on Parade* (1993), *Bare Bones* (1995). He has written several librettos and works for the stage including the libretto for the Broadway musical "The Grass Harp," based on Truman Capote's novel, with music by Claibe Richardson (1971), and the libretto for Ned Rorem's opera "Miss Julie" (1965; revised 1994). In the 60s, Schuyler and Elmslie collaborated in writing two short plays: "Unpacking the Black Trunk," which was produced by the Artists' Theater in New York in 1965, and "The Wednesday Club."

Elmslie shared his life with Joe Brainard from the early 1960s until Brainard's death in 1994. In the 1960s and early 70s, Schuyler often stayed at Elmslie's house in Greenwich Village, and at his summer place in Calais, Vermont, where he wrote many poems, including "A Vermont Diary" in *The Crystal Lithium* and the section "Evenings in Vermont" in *Hymn to Life*.

Larry Fagin (b. 1937), poet. His books include *Parade of the Caterpillars* (1968), *Brain Damage* (1971), *I'll Be Seeing You: Selected Poems 1962–1975* (1978), *The List Poem* (1991). As editor of the mimeo magazine *Adventures in Poetry* he published

an excerpt from *A Nest of Ninnies* in 1969, and *Adventures in Poetry Books* published Schuyler's collection *A Sun Cab* (1972), with a cover and illustrations by Fairfield Porter.

Paul Fix (1902–1986), film and television actor; Tom Carey's maternal grandfather. Fix appeared in over 300 films, including "Red River," "The Bad Seed," "Giant," "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Johnny Guitar." He also played the Sheriff in the television series "The Rifleman" and Dr. McCoy in the first episode of "Star Trek."

Dr. S.H. Foo (b. 1948), neurologist. Dr. Foo attended on Schuyler at New York's Beekman Downtown Hospital in December, 1984, when he suffered a slight stroke.

Cornelia Foss is an artist and has shown extensively in New York and Long Island.

Raymond Foye (b. 1957), editor and publisher of Hanuman Books. Foye, also a resident of the Chelsea Hotel, became friends with Schuyler in 1986 and eventually catalogued Schuyler's papers before their sale to the University of California at San Diego. His interview with Schuyler was published in the first and only issue of the periodical *XXIst Century*, Winter 1991/1992, along with excerpts from the *Diary*.

Jane Freilicher (b. 1924), painter. Freilicher was a close friend and muse of Schuyler's, Ashbery's, Koch's and O'Hara's from the early 50s on. She lent her name to the title character in Schuyler's lost play, "Presenting Jane" (originally "Presenting Jane Freilicher"), written in 1952. In 1957 she married Joe Hazan. The poem "June 30, 1974," in *The Morning of the Poem* is dedicated to Jane and Joe Hazan.

Reviewing Freilicher's work in *Art News* in November, 1961, Schuyler wrote, "Jane Freilicher has abandoned motif and taken beauty for subject matter, a brave and winning choice; and a rare one in New York.... That observation of beaches, birds and flowers were [sic] the kick-off is credible, but the end is pure and joyous painting, joyous and witty."

Jonathan Galassi (b. 1949), literary editor and poet. Galassi was Schuyler's editor at Random House for *A Few Days*. Later he left Random House to work for Farrar, Straus & Giroux, where he edited Schuyler's *Selected Poems* and the posthumous *Collected Poems*.

Michael Gizzi (b. 1949), poet. Michael Gizzi is the editor of *Lingo* and organized the reading Schuyler gave in November, 1989 at Arrowhead, Herman Melville's house in the Berkshires. He currently runs Hard Press.

Peter Gizzi (b. 1959), poet. Peter Gizzi is the brother of Michael Gizzi and was the editor of *O.blék*. He now teaches at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Poems by both Gizzi brothers were published by Schuyler and Charles North in their jointly edited anthology *Broadway 2* (1989).

John Godfrey (b. 1944), poet. His books include *26 Poems* (1971), *Dabble* (1982), *Where the Weather Suits My Clothes* (1984), *Midnight On Your Left* (1988). He is currently a practicing nurse.

Maxine Groffsky, Schuyler's literary agent. Groffsky was still in college when she first met Schuyler, at a party in Elaine de Kooning's studio to celebrate the publication of *Alfred and Guinevere* in 1958. As Paris Editor of *The Paris Review* in 1969, she was instrumental in getting Paris Review Editions to publish *Freely Espousing*. She became Schuyler's agent beginning with *The Morning of the Poem* in 1980, and continued to represent him until his death.

Artie Growich (b. 1956), a sometime employee of the Chelsea Hotel with whom Schuyler began a romantic involvement in the spring of 1989. Shortly after meeting him, Schuyler wrote to Anne Dunn on June 16, 1989, "But what has really kicked any order out of my life, is someone named Artie Growich: he's 5'6", Neapolitan on Mama's side, which is how he looks..." Schuyler took vicarious pleasure in Growich's devotion to basketball, pool and horse-racing, "the broadcasts of which are divinely brief," Schuyler wrote. Growich lived with Schuyler intermittently until Schuyler's death.

Barbara Guest (b. 1920), poet. Her books of poetry include *Poems* (1962), *The Blue Stairs* (1968), *Moscow Mansions* (1973), *The Countess from Minneapolis* (1976), *Seeking Air* (1978), *Fair Realism* (1988), *Defensive Rapture* (1993), *Selected Poems* (1995). She has also written a biography, *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. & Her World* (1985). Schuyler's long friendship with Barbara Guest began in the early 1950's when she and Frank O'Hara both read their poetry at a gathering at John Latouche's house. "The thought of that evening and the impression that her poems made on me still excites me and makes me want to get out the pencil or perhaps the typewriter," Schuyler said in a 1977 interview with Peter Schjeldahl.

Anthony Holland (1928–1988), actor. Holland studied with Lee Strasberg and was a member of the original Second City comedy troupe. He made his Broadway debut in 1963 and was best known for comic roles in Broadway, off-Broadway, film and television productions. In 1987, knowing he was dying of AIDS, Holland performed in "The Hunger Artist," Martha Clarke's adaptation from Kafka's works, for which he won his second Obie Award.

Helena Hughes (b. 1951), poet. Hughes worked as Schuyler's assistant from late 1979 until 1986. Among other things, the job entailed supervising his medication, accompanying him to his doctors, managing his finances and applying for grants. A close friendship developed between Hughes and Schuyler and they collaborated on an unpublished novel, *In County Wexford*, and published a book of collaborative poems, *Collabs with Helena Hughes* (Misty Terrace Press, 1980). Schuyler dedicated the poems "Lilacs," "Tomorrow" and "November" to her.

Christopher Isherwood (1904–1986), English novelist, short-story writer and playwright. Isherwood emigrated to the United States with W.H. Auden in 1939 and became an American citizen in 1946. His books include *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* (1935), *Lions and Shadows* (1938), *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939), *Prater Violet* (1945), *The World in the Evening* (1954), *A Single Man* (1964), and *Christopher and His Kind* (1972). He was a lifelong friend of Auden's, with whom he collaborated on three plays and an account of their wartime visit to China.

Bob J——, a salesman at Brooks Brothers and later, Abercrombie and Fitch, with whom Schuyler was in love from the spring of 1971 until the relationship ended in about 1973. He was the dedicatee of Schuyler's books *The Crystal Lithium*, (1972) and *Hymn to Life* (1974), and the object of the love poems headed "Loving You" in both books, as well as the poem "This Dark Apartment," written after the breakup of the relationship. At the time of their meeting, J—— was in his early forties, married and living in New Jersey.

Yvonne Jacquette (b. 1934), artist. Her mostly urban landscapes are often painted as though we were looking down on them from the air. She and Rudy Burckhardt have been married since 1964. Schuyler dedicated his poem "Blue" to Yvonne Jacquette.

Chester Kallman (1921–1975), poet and librettist. Kallman was W.H. Auden's companion from 1939 until Auden's death in 1973, and was his collaborator on a number of opera librettos, including Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress" and Henze's "Elegy for Young Lovers." Kallman's book of poems, *Storm at Castelfranco*, published in 1956, was dedicated to Schuyler with a poem "in 'camp,'" as Schuyler complained in "A few days." From the mid-1940s until about 1950, Kallman was probably Schuyler's closest friend. The pair of them were known as "Fiordigili" and "Dorabella" after the two sisters in Mozart's "Così fan tutte."

Reviewing an exhibition of Don Bachardy's portrait drawings in *Art News* (February, 1962), Schuyler writes, in passing, of "Chester Kallman's eyes, that have seen much." "Chester was a martyr/ to the dry martini," Schuyler wrote in "A few days"; and in an unpublished elegy to Kallman: "But why, so/ gifted, was he so death oriented?/ The plain clothes cop and dangerous/ rough trade, the endless drinking,/ drinking, drinking down the sunless/ path to Lethe. And he was so/ funny, so deft with a joke or/ anecdote. His quick impersonations."

Ada (Del Moro) Katz, wife of Alex Katz. A research biologist at the time of her marriage to Katz in 1958, she was later a founder and Artistic Director of the Eye and Ear Theater, a company that produces plays by contemporary poets with sets by contemporary artists. In the fall of 1981 the Eye and Ear Theater produced Schuyler's very short play "Shopping and Waiting" with a set by Alex Katz, in a double bill with Ashbery's "The Heroes," with sets designed by Jane Freilicher.

Alex Katz (b. 1927), painter. In the 50s, he, along with Jane Freilicher and Larry Rivers, was one of the younger painters who "discovered," and in turn influenced

Fairfield Porter; Schuyler's friendship with him also began in the mid 50s.

Reviewing Katz's 1959 exhibition in *Art News*, Schuyler wrote, "It is taste that wins, and the existence of the picture as a resolution of color tensions... There is a gradual taking out of detail that leaves their force behind." Schuyler was painted by Katz in 1959, and he also posed with Ada Katz and Rudy Burckhardt for Katz's 1961 painting, "The Incident," as Schuyler described in an article for *Art News*, "Alex Katz Paints a Picture," (February, 1962) and recalled in "A few days." In 1969, a Katz collage was used on the cover of Schuyler's first commercially published book of poems, *Freely Espousing*.

Vincent Katz (b. 1960), poet. His books include, *A Tremor in the Morning* (1986), *Cabal of Zealots* (1988), *New York Hello!* (1991), and a translation of Sextus Propertius's first book of elegies, *Charm* (1995). He is the son of Alex and Ada Katz and Schuyler knew him from infancy.

Bob Keene (b. 1917) opened his bookstore and gallery at 38 Main Street in Southampton in 1956 with an exhibition of paintings by Larry Rivers. The gallery also showed work by Willem de Kooning, Fairfield Porter, Mary Abbott, Grace Hartigan (to whom Keene was married) and many others. His present bookstore is at 21 South Main Street, Southampton.

David Kermani (b. 1946), met Schuyler in 1970 through John Ashbery, when Kermani was a graduate student at Columbia. From 1977 to 1982 he was Director of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery. He is the author of *John Ashbery: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (1976). He shares a house with Ashbery in Hudson, New York.

Nathan Kernan (b. 1950), is the author of *Poems*, with lithographs by Joan Mitchell, published by Tyler Graphics in 1992. He and Schuyler were friends in the last year of Schuyler's life.

Janice (Elwood) Koch (1931–1981), Kenneth Koch's first wife and a good friend of Schuyler's. She met Koch in 1952 while he was teaching at the University of California at Berkeley and she was a student there. She later came to New York, where she and Koch were married in 1954, and she worked as an editor. After the couple separated, Janice Koch went back to graduate school and simultaneously earned a law degree and a degree in physics. Schuyler dedicated his poem "Money Musk" to her.

Katherine Koch (b. 1955), artist. She is the daughter of Kenneth and Janice Koch and was a close childhood friend of Lizzie Porter's.

Kenneth Koch (b. 1925), poet. His many books include *Poems* (1953), *Thank You and Other Poems* (1962), *The Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems* (1969), *The Art of Love* (1975), *Days and Nights* (1982), *Selected Poems 1950–82* (1985), *One Train* (1995), *On the Great Atlantic Rainway: Selected Poems 1950–1988* (1994). In 1952, when Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery first introduced Schuyler to Koch, whom they had known at Harvard, Schuyler felt that Koch, "wasn't too crazy about

what the cuckoo had laid in *his nest*, and he was perhaps a bit snubbing. But later, we both relaxed and became friends.” Koch, O’Hara, Ashbery, Schuyler and Barbara Guest formed the nucleus of the so-called “New York School” of poets, a term apparently first applied to them by John Bernard Myers, though never particularly subscribed to by the poets themselves. Koch has been widely influential as a teacher, both through his educational books, such as *Wishes, Lies and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry* (1970) and through his courses at Columbia University.

Schuyler dedicated “The Cenotaph” to Koch.

John Koethe (b. 1945), poet. His books include *Domes*, which was published as the Frank O’Hara Foundation Award book in 1973, with a cover illustration by Fairfield Porter; and *The Late Wisconsin Spring* (1984), with a cover illustration by Robert Dash. He is a professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin. His former wife, **Susan Koethe**, is a medical scientist.

Joe LeSueur (b. 1924), writer. His book-length poem, *The Unmentionable*, was published in 1982. LeSueur was long a close friend of Frank O’Hara, with whom he lived from 1955 to 1965. LeSueur and Bill Berkson co-edited the memorial volume, *Homage to Frank O’Hara*, first published in 1978.

Andrew Lord (b. 1950), English sculptor. His works, in clay and in bronze, often resemble outsized pitchers, urns or vases. Schuyler’s “Andrew Lord Poems” were commissioned for the book that accompanied Lord’s exhibition at the Galerie Bruno Bischofberger in Zürich in 1992. The book was dedicated to Schuyler’s memory.

Aladar Marberger (1947–1988), director of the Fischbach Gallery, where at various times Jane Freilicher, Alex Katz, Joe Brainard, Anne Dunn, John Button, George Schneeman and others of Schuyler’s friends showed.

Pierre Martory (b. 1920), French poet; a close friend of John Ashbery’s since 1956. He is the author of a novel, *Phébus ou le beau Mariage* (1953), and a book of poems, *The Landscape is Behind the Door* (1994); translated by John Ashbery.

Harry Mathews (b. 1930), novelist and poet. Mathews is a longtime resident of Paris and since 1973 has been a member of the Oulipo group of writers. His novels include *The Conversions* (1962), *Tlooth* (1966), *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium and Other Novels* (1975), *Cigarettes* (1987), and *The Journalist* (1994). Mathews was the publisher and co-editor, with Schuyler, Koch and Ashbery, of *Locus Solus*, a literary magazine which ran for five issues from 1961 to 1963.

James McCourt (b. 1941), novelist. McCourt met Schuyler through Darragh Park in 1980. He is the author of the novel *Mawrdew Czgowchwz* (1975), and the story collections *Kaye Wayfaring in “Avenged”* (1984), and *Time Remaining* (1993). In the last, Schuyler appears as the poet referred to as “the Skylark.”

Melinda (Carey) Menoni (b. 1946), Tom Carey's older sister, is parish administrator of All Saints By the Sea Church in Montecito, California.

James Merrill (1926–1995), poet, and a longtime acquaintance of Schuyler's. His books include *First Poems* (1950), *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace and Other Poems* (1959, reissued 1970), *The Divine Comedies* (1976), *Metamorphosis of 741* (1977, winner of the Pulitzer Prize), *The Changing Light at Sandover* (1982), *New Selected Poems* (1993), and *A Scattering of Salts* (1995). The Ingram Merrill Foundation, which James Merrill started, gave financial assistance to Schuyler on more than one occasion.

Adrian Milton (b. 1951). A friend of Tom Carey's and the author of *Lavender Light: Daily Meditations for Gay Men in Recovery*.

J.J. Mitchell (1940–1986). Mitchell was a beautiful young man about town, and Frank O'Hara's lover in 1964–65.

Howard Moss (1922–1987), poet, editor and critic. For many years the poetry editor of *The New Yorker*, it was Moss who first published Schuyler's poetry when he was guest editor of *New World Writing I* in 1952. As Schuyler wrote David Trinidad (October 5, 1985), "I... wrote a bale of junk out of which New Yorker poetry editor (and poet) Howard Moss (a sweetheart) fished my all-important 'Salute'". Moss's books of poetry include *The Wound and the Weather* (1946), *The Toy Fair* (1954), *Finding them Lost* (1965), and *Selected Poems* (1971). His anthology, *The Poet's Story* (1973), included Schuyler's "Life, Death and Other Dreams," and his essay on Schuyler, "Whatever is Moving," was reprinted in his collection, *Minor Monuments* (1986).

Eileen Myles (b. 1949), poet and fiction writer. Myles first met Schuyler as his assistant in 1979 and remained close to him until his death. Her books include *Sappho's Boat* (1982), *1969* (1989), *Not Me* (1991), *Chelsea Girls* (1994), and *Maxfield Parrish* (1995). Her story, "Chelsea Girls" is partly about working for Schuyler soon after he had moved to the Chelsea Hotel. Schuyler frequently mentioned Myles when asked by interviewers about other poets whose work he admired.

Dr. Daniel Newman (1947–1994), Schuyler's physician. Schuyler began going to Dr. Newman in 1983, and Newman was very largely responsible for a marked improvement in Schuyler's health and well-being in the late 1980s. In 1988, Schuyler dedicated *Selected Poems* to him. Daniel Newman died of AIDS in 1994.

Charles North (b. 1941), poet. He and his wife Paula North, a painter, became close friends of Schuyler's in the early 70s. North and Schuyler edited *Broadway, A Poets and Painters Anthology* together in 1979, and *Broadway II* in 1989. North's books include *Lineups* (1972), *Elizabethan and Nova Scotian Music* (1974), *Leap Year: Poems 1968–1978* (1978), and *The Year of the Olive Oil* (1989). Of his work Schuyler wrote, "His joy in words, and the things words adumbrate, is infectious: we catch

a contagion of enlightenment.” Schuyler dedicated the poem “Light from Canada” to Charles North.

Alice Notley (b. 1945), poet. Her books include *165 Meeting House Lane* (1971), *Alice Ordered Me To Be Made* (1976), *Dr. Williams’ Heiresses* (1980), *How Spring Comes* (1981), *At Night the States* (1987), *Selected Poems of Alice Notley* (1993), and *The Descent of Alette* (1996). She was married to Ted Berrigan, who died in 1983, and now lives in Paris with her husband, the poet Douglas Oliver, with whom she collaborated on *The Scarlet Cabinet* (1992). Schuyler dedicated the poem “Overcast, Hot” to Alice Notley.

Frank O’Hara (1926–1966), poet and museum curator. O’Hara’s effect on New York art and poetry circles in the 1950s and 60s was electric. As Kenneth Koch wrote in *Homage to Frank O’Hara* (Big Sky, 1978, 1988), “His presence and his poetry made things go on around him which could not have happened in the same way if he hadn’t been there. I know this is true of my poetry; and I would guess it was true also of the poetry of James Schuyler and John Ashbery, and of the painting of Jane Freilicher, Larry Rivers, Mike Goldberg, Grace Hartigan and other painters too.” His books include *Meditations in an Emergency* (1957), *Lunch Poems* (1964), *The Collected Poems of Frank O’Hara* (1971; reissued 1995). He and Schuyler met in the fall of 1951 at a party after the opening of Larry Rivers’s exhibition at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery. They already knew of each other, however, since both had had work published in *Accent* earlier that year. O’Hara’s poem in *Accent*, “The Three-Penny Opera,” was the formal inspiration for Schuyler’s early and important poem “Salute,” and when O’Hara, and his Harvard friend John Ashbery, accepted and welcomed Schuyler as a fellow poet Schuyler was elated and felt confirmed in his vocation. Schuyler and O’Hara shared an apartment at 326 East 49th Street, on and off, from 1952 until January, 1957. “With Frank and George at Lexington,” “Buried at Springs,” “Four Poems,” and “To Frank O’Hara” are among the poems Schuyler wrote about or to O’Hara.

Bernard Oshei (b. 1922), James Schuyler’s best friend through adolescence. They met in the seventh grade in Buffalo, New York, and after Schuyler’s family moved to East Aurora, Oshei used to spend most weekends visiting him there. There are many references to their friendship in “The Morning of the Poem.”

Patricia Padgett (b. 1937) is married to the poet Ron Padgett.

Ron Padgett (b. 1942), poet, translator and editor. His books include *Bean Spasms* (with Ted Berrigan) (1967), *Great Balls of Fire* (1969), *Toujours l’amour* (1976), *Tulsa Kid* (1979), *Triangles in the Afternoon* (1979), *The Big Something* (1990), a translation of the *Complete Poems of Blaise Cendrars* (1993) and *New & Selected Poems* (1995). Schuyler met Padgett and his wife Patricia in the early 1960s. A fictitious Ron Padgett appears in Schuyler’s story, “At Home with Ron Padgett” (*The Home Book*).

“Ron Padgett’s poems,” Schuyler wrote, “are remarkably clear, almost invisibly so, like a refreshing glass of cold water.”

Wayne Padgett (b. 1966), son of Ron and Patricia Padgett.

Darragh Park (b. 1939), painter and close friend of Schuyler's from the early seventies until Schuyler's death. Every Sunday, for many years, Schuyler was in the habit of calling Park for a long chat, and Schuyler usually visited Park at his house in Bridgehampton, Long Island at least once every summer from 1981 on. His paintings have been included in numerous gallery and museum exhibitions throughout the United States. He has had long associations with poets and has illustrated many poetry book covers, including Schuyler's *The Home Book*, *A Few Days*, *Selected Poems* and *Collected Poems*. *The Morning of the Poem* is dedicated to Park.

Writing about Park's landscapes exhibited at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1979, Schuyler says, "His pictures are about movement, how movement in one direction is countered by thrust in another: the contraposto of a twisted body translated into terms of landscape." "These paintings, so apparently purely visual, are also strong matters of comment, about what is, and what is not, worthwhile."

Frank Polach (b. 1944), botanist and poet. He and his lover, Douglas Crase, were friends and neighbors of Schuyler's in Chelsea and appear in the poem, "Dining Out with Doug and Frank," which is dedicated to Polach.

Aline (Kilham) Porter (1909–1991), painter and the wife of Eliot Porter; they lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

In July, 1968, when John Ashbery was planning a visit to Great Spruce Head Island and he and Schuyler hoped to finish *A Nest of Ninnies*, Schuyler wrote him, "I hope Aline Porter (wife of Eliot, the painter who 'shows' at Betty Parsons') is still here when you come. She's very Nest." Aline Porter must have agreed, for in a note to Schuyler thanking him for a copy of the book, she wrote (March 18, 1969), "I became very fond of the people in the book and felt that I wished I could go on travelling around with them."

Anne (Channing) Porter (b. 1911), poet; wife of Fairfield Porter. Anne Porter attended Bryn Mawr and Radcliffe. She and Fairfield Porter were married in 1932. She became a Roman Catholic in 1955. Schuyler—who had known W.H. Auden, Chester Kallman, Brian Howard, Truman Capote, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery and Jane Freilicher—once referred to Anne Porter as "the wittiest person I have ever met." Hers, though, is a wit, and a sensibility, of quiet understatement. Schuyler very much appreciated her poetry, which he included in *Locus Solus I*, and, as Porter recalls, once wrote her from the hospital in New Haven, "We must write, because I'm as great as Walt Whitman and you are as great as Emily Dickinson!" Her book, *An Altogether Different Language* (1994), a modest sized gathering of a life's work, was nominated for the National Book Award.

David Porter (b. 1941) is Fairfield Porter's nephew, the son of his brother John, and a professor of biology at the University of Georgia in Athens. David's wife is **Jean (Austin) Porter** (b. 1943) and **Annie Porter** (b. 1967) is their daughter.

Ebby (Edward) Porter (b. 1935), the son of Fairfield Porter's brother youngest John, is an artist and teacher in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His wife **Elaine (Snow) Porter** (b. 1940) is a teacher.

Edward Porter (1904–1983), older brother of Fairfield Porter and the third child of James and Ruth Porter. Edward was an amateur photographer (Stieglitz highly praised his work) and managed the Porter family real estate interests in Chicago. His wife, **Audrey (Fountain) Porter** (b. 1900), graduated from Bryn Mawr and studied at the Art Students' League in New York.

Eliot Porter (1901–1990), photographer; older brother of Fairfield Porter. Eliot Porter earned degrees in chemical engineering and medicine at Harvard and taught biochemistry there from 1929 to 1939, at the same time pursuing his childhood interest in photography. After 1939 and an exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz's gallery, An American Place, Porter became a full time photographer, concentrating on landscape and "nature" photography. A pioneer in the use of color photography, his books include *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World* (1962) and *Summer Island—Penobscot Country* (1966; a study of Great Spruce Head Island).

Elizabeth Porter (b. 1956), known as Lizzie; the youngest child of Anne and Fairfield Porter. She is earning a graduate degree in social work.

Fairfield Porter (1907–1975), painter. Porter was born in Chicago. His father was an architect; his mother a graduate of Bryn Mawr, with a love of Classical Greek literature and learning in general which she passed on to her children. Fairfield Porter became serious about painting at Harvard and studied for two years at the Art Students' League in New York. After he and Anne Channing married in 1932 they lived in New York, supported by Porter's private income, which allowed him to continue painting though his works did not sell, or get widely exhibited until after his first show at Tibor de Nagy in 1952. In 1951 he began to write reviews for *Art News* and other magazines. In 1949, the Porter family moved to 49 South Main Street in Southampton, Long Island. Schuyler met Fairfield and Anne Porter in 1952 and soon began spending long stretches of time with them in Southampton and on Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. A profound emotional attachment grew between Schuyler and the man whom he later called, with an exactitude that sounds like understatement, his "best friend." In 1961 Schuyler came to recuperate with the Porters after a mental breakdown and lived with them for 12 years until 1973.

In 1983 the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston organized a large retrospective exhibition of Porter's work which travelled to the Whitney Museum in New York City. A book of Porter's art criticism, *Art in Its Own Terms: Selected Criticism, 1935–1975*, edited by Rackstraw Downes, was published by Taplinger Publishing Company in 1979 and republished by Zoland Books in 1993.

In an article on Porter's work in the March, 1967 *Art News*, Schuyler wrote, "...The paint is itself a palpable fact that holds an imprint of life and infuses life into the image." "We are not told anything. What is seen is that out of the exteriors of things an image of life can be created..." "Its [Porter's painting's] art is

one that values the everyday as the ultimate, the most varied and desirable knowledge.”

Gertrude (Olsen) Porter (b. 1909), known as Trudy; the wife of Fairfield Porter’s brother John. She graduated from Smith College and earned a graduate degree in geology from Bryn Mawr. Every summer, into her 80s, she tended the vegetable garden on Great Spruce Head Island.

John Porter (1910–1993), youngest brother of Fairfield Porter; a science teacher in the Bronxville, New York, public schools. His wife is Gertrude Porter.

John Fairfield Porter (1934–1980), oldest child of Anne and Fairfield Porter. John Porter suffered all his life from what was apparently a form of autism. In a letter from 1958 to his friend Arthur Giardelli, Fairfield Porter wrote, “John was sick from birth with a mysterious illness that was never quite understood... He seems simpleminded—he remains childish and can’t take care of himself quite, so he lives on a farm in Vermont...” Johnny, as he was known, regularly came home to stay with his family in Southampton at Christmas, Thanksgiving, and for the month of February, in which his birthday fell. Schuyler seemed to feel a special empathy for him, and taught him to use a tape recorder, a skill which was to be a source of much pleasure for Johnny Porter.

Katherine Porter (b. 1949), the fourth child and eldest daughter of Fairfield and Anne Porter. She is a doctor living in Atlanta, Georgia.

Laurence Porter (b. 1936), Fairfield and Anne Porter’s second son. He is a professor of Comparative Literature and French at Michigan State University. He married **Betsy (Hart) Porter** (b. 1938), an architect, in 1960. Their son **Leon Porter** was born in 1967.

Stephen Porter (b. 1941), Eliot and Aline Porter’s son, is a sculptor now teaching at Pennsylvania State University. He is married to **Martha (McCormick) Porter** (b. 1940), known as Marcie.

(Meyer) David Protetch (1921–1969), physician. Protetch shared an apartment with Chester Kallman in the 1940’s and was a friend of Schuyler’s from that time, and later Schuyler’s physician. He was also W.H. Auden’s physician in New York; Auden’s poem “The Art of Healing,” published in the *New Yorker* and in the book *Epistle to a Godson*, (1972), is dedicated to the memory of Protetch.

Fredric Ridenour (b. 1933) is Schuyler’s half-brother. Until his retirement he was in the building industry, like Schuyler’s step-father. He and his wife, Hilde, live in East Aurora, New York. They have three children, John, Michael, and Margaret.

Hildegard (Obermüller) Ridenour (b. 1936), wife of Schuyler’s half-brother Fredric Ridenour. Hilde Ridenour is a native of Germany, where the couple met

and were married while Fredric Ridenour was with the U.S. Army Occupational Forces. She teaches German to American scientists and businessmen.

John Ridenour (b. 1956). Schuyler's nephew, the oldest son of Fredric and Hilde Ridenour. He lives in Colorado and works in construction.

Margaret Ridenhour (known as Peggy) (b. 1964), Schuyler's niece, the daughter of Fredric and Hilde Ridenour. She graduated from Canisius College with a B.A. in international business and is studying to become a Certified Public Accountant.

Margaret Daisy Connor Schuyler Ridenour (1890–1981). Schuyler's mother. Margaret Connor grew up in Albert Lea, Minnesota, the daughter of Frederick and Ella Slater Connor. When Margaret Connor was five, her father, who had left his family and gone back to Ireland, returned to Albert Lea and committed suicide by hanging himself in the barn: a piece of family history James Schuyler was very likely unaware of. Margaret Slater Godley, Ella Connor's much older sister, stepped in and helped raise Margaret Connor and her two brothers. Margaret Connor graduated from Albert Lea College with a B.A. in 1913. Before her marriage, she held several secretarial and administrative jobs, and was also a delegate to a convention of the National League of Women Voters. In 1922 she married Marcus James Schuyler, a newspaperman. Mark Schuyler had his own newspaper in Downers Grove, Illinois, and Margaret Connor Schuyler also wrote for the paper. Their son, James Schuyler, was born in 1923. The family moved to Washington DC in 1926 or 1927. Margaret and Marcus Schuyler were divorced in 1929, and Margaret Connor Schuyler married F. Berton Ridenour, a building contractor, in 1931. Their son, Fredric Ridenour, James Schuyler's half-brother, was born in 1933. In 1935 the Ridenour family moved to Buffalo, N.Y., and two years later, moved outside the city to suburban East Aurora. Berton Ridenour died in 1964. Margaret Ridenour died in East Aurora in 1981.

Michael Ridenhour (b. 1962), Schuyler's nephew, the second son of Fredric and Hilde Ridenour, is a carpenter in Colorado.

Larry Rivers (born Irving Grossberg, 1923), painter. A jazz musician in the 1940s, Rivers began to paint soon after meeting the nineteen year old Jane Freilicher, whose husband at the time was a member of his band. Rivers was, and is, a charismatic and catalytic figure in the New York art world; it was at the party following his first show at Tibor de Nagy Gallery that Schuyler met Frank O'Hara (who was in love with Rivers) and John Ashbery. Fairfield Porter, whose painting career was revitalized by his friendship with Rivers, Freilicher, O'Hara, Schuyler et al., characterized Rivers's painting in a review for the December 1958 *Art News* as, "a subjective Impressionism like that of Symbolist poetry."

Frances (Ludlum) Fix Rowley (d. 1988), known as Taddy Rowley, was an interior decorator, and Tom Carey's maternal grandmother. She and Paul Fix were divorced in the late 1940's; she married Fitch Rowley in 1953.

Perdita Schaffner (b. 1919), daughter of the poet H.D. Her essays have appeared in the periodicals *Grand Street*, *The American Scholar*, *Iowa Review*, and as introductions to works by H.D.

George Schneeman (b. 1934), painter, ceramicist. His drawings and collages have illustrated or appeared on the covers of many of his poet friends' books, including Ted Berrigan's *Nothing for You* (1977), Ron Padgett's *Arrive by Pullman*, Lewis Warsh's *Long Distance* (1971), Alice Notley's *Waltzing Matilda* (1981), Bill Berkson's *Recent Visitors* (1973), and Schuyler and Helena Hughes's *Collabs with Helena Hughes* (1980). George and Katie Schneeman often invited Schuyler to their East Village apartment for dinner in the 70s, after he had left the Porters. Schuyler owned Schneeman's portraits of Bill Berkson and of Tom Carey.

Larry Stanton (1947–1984), artist. Stanton was a close friend of Morris Golde, Tim Dlugos and other friends of Schuyler's. A monograph on his work was published by Twelvetreets Press in 1986.

Mark Strand (b. 1934), poet; United States Poet Laureate in 1990–91. His books include *Sleeping with One Eye Open* (1964), *The Story of Our Lives* (1973), *Selected Poems* (1980), and *Dark Harbor: A Poem* (1993). In 1969 Strand edited *The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940*.

Nancy (Porter) Straus (b. 1900) was Fairfield Porter's sister, the oldest of the five Porter siblings. After graduating from Bryn Mawr, she entered medical school but left after one year to teach on an Indian reservation, along with her best friend Betsy Kales. Betsy Kales married Dr. Francis Straus and Nancy Porter married his brother **Michael Straus** (1898–1970), a newspaperman who became Commissioner of Reclamations during the New Deal. Nancy Straus was involved in liberal politics and a vital participant in her husband's career. After the deaths of Michael Straus and of Betsy Kales Straus, Nancy Straus and the widowed Dr. Francis Straus lived together until his death.

Harold Talbott (b. 1939), a Tibetan Buddhist scholar and the Chairman of the Buddhayana Foundation. Schuyler, who had first known Talbott in the 50s, was reintroduced to him through Helena Hughes, like Talbott a Buddhist. In the early 80s, Schuyler and Hughes visited Talbott at his home on Cape Cod, where Schuyler wrote "The Rose of Marion," dedicated to Harold Talbott.

Virgil Thomson (1896–1989), composer and music critic whom Schuyler got to know through Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale in the fifties. In the 1920s and 30s, Thomson lived in Paris, where he wrote his best-known work, the opera "Four Saints in Three Acts" with a libretto by Gertrude Stein. Thomson lived in a large upstairs apartment in the Chelsea Hotel from 1940 until his death. His autobiography, *Virgil Thomson by Virgil Thomson* was first published in 1966.

David Trinidad (b. 1953), poet. His books include *Pavanne* (1981), *November* (1987), *Hand Over Heart* (1991), for which Schuyler wrote a blurb, and *Answer Song*

(1995). Trinidad's work revels in popular and TV culture, "turning," as Schuyler put it, "the paste jewels of pop art into the real thing." Schuyler dedicated the poem "Mood Indigo" to him.

Vincent Virga (b. 1942), novelist and picture editor. Virga is the author of the novels *Gaywyck* and *The Comfortable Corner*, he is James McCourt's lover.

Anne Waldman (b. 1945) poet and performer. Waldman, a former Director of the Poetry Project at the Saint Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, is currently Director of the Department of Writing and Poetics at the Naropa Institute, Boulder Colorado. Her books of poetry include *Giant Night* (1970), *Life Notes* (1973), *Fast Speaking Woman* (1975), *Makeup on Empty Space* (1984), *Helping the Dreamer: New and Selected Poems* (1988), and *Iovis* (1993). Among the anthologies she has edited are *The World Anthology* (1969), *Nice to See You: Homage to Ted Berrigan* (1991), and *Out of This World* (1991). With Lewis Warsh she edited *Angel Hair* magazine (1967–69) and *Angel Hair* books; and with Ron Padgett and Joan Simon she was a Director of Full Court Press. Schuyler's poem "Wonderful World" is dedicated to Anne Waldman.

Lewis Warsh (b. 1944), poet and novelist. His books include *Moving Through Air* (1968), *Dreaming as One* (1971), *Blue Heaven* (1978), *Methods of Birth Control* (1983), *Agnes & Sally* (1984), *The Corset* (1986), *Information from the Surface of Venus* (1987), *A Free Man* (1989), and *Avenue of Escape* (1995). With Anne Waldman he co-edited *Angel Hair* magazine and *Angel Hair* books (1966–1977). Since 1977 Warsh has edited and published *United Artists* magazine and *United Artists* books.

Dr. Hyman Weitzen (b. 1914), psychiatrist. Weitzen was Schuyler's psychiatrist from May, 1973 until Schuyler's death. Schuyler dedicated the poem "White Boat, Blue Boat" to him.

John Wells (b.1949), painter. Wells met Schuyler through Aladar Marberger, his classmate at Carnegie Mellon University. Since 1983 he has exhibited at the Barbara Braathen Gallery in New York, and in numerous group shows.

Trevor Winkfield (b. 1944), English-born painter, poet and editor. From 1967 to 1972, Winkfield edited and published the literary magazine *Juillard* from Leeds, England. A collage of excerpts from Schuyler's Diary, "For Joe Brainard," was published in *Juillard*, and was later included in *The Home Book*, a miscellany of previously uncollected poems, stories and plays by Schuyler edited by Winkfield and published by Z Press in 1977.

Winkfield has lived in New York for many years, where there have been numerous exhibitions of his paintings. He has provided covers for books by John Ashbery, Ron Padgett and other writers. A book of his own writings, *In the Scissors' Courtyard*, appeared in 1994, and *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, an anthology of excerpts and short pieces by Raymond Roussel, edited by Winkfield, was published in 1995.

Christopher Wiss (b. 1959), a marketing executive; he and Tim Dlugos became lovers in 1986.

Geoffrey Young (b. 1944), poet and publisher of poets. He is the author of *Subject to Fits* (1980) among other books. His press, The Figures, has printed books by Paul Auster, Tom Clark, Laura Chester, Clark Coolidge, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Padgett, Bob Perelman, Tom Raworth, Kit Robinson, Ron Silliman and many others. The Figures published an excerpt Schuyler made from these Diaries, *Early in '71* (1982), and *That Various Field for James Schuyler* (1991), a small memorial book of tributes edited by Young and William Corbett. Schuyler's poem "Sleep-Gummed Eyes" is dedicated to Geoffrey Young.

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James Schuyler, ca. 1928. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

James Schuyler with his mother, Washington, DC, ca. 1929. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

James Schuyler, ca. 1940. Photograph by Sipprell Studio. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

James Schuyler, Key West, 1943. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

James Schuyler in the doorway to his apartment in Via Erta Canina, Florence, 1948. Photograph by Chester Kallman. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

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Chester Kallman and James Schuyler, Ischia, 1948–49. Courtesy Fredric and Hilde Ridenour

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James Schuyler, Ischia, 1948–49. Courtesy Robert Dash

James Schuyler in front of the Periscope-Holliday Bookstore, ca. 1956. Courtesy John Ashbery

James Schuyler, John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch, August, 1956. Courtesy John Ashbery

Frank O'Hara and James Schuyler, Southampton, summer, 1956. Photograph by John Button. Courtesy Alvin Novak

James Schuyler, 1956. Photograph by John Button. Courtesy Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD and the Estate of John Button

View from Great Spruce Head Island. Photograph by James Schuyler, ca. 1969. Courtesy Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD

Porch, Great Spruce Head Island. Photograph by James Schuyler, ca. 1968. Courtesy Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD

Still-life, Great Spruce Head Island, ca. 1968. Courtesy Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD

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