

III-E

Watching the oncoming storm. Now the big cloud that was in front of the water-spout

Seems to be lurching forward, so that the waterspout, behind it, looks more like a three-dimensional perspective photograph. Above me the sky is a luminous, silver gray. Yet rain, like silver porcupine quills, has begun to be thrown down. All the lightning is still contained in the big black cloud however. Now thunder claps belch forth from it, causing the startled vultures to fly forth from their nests. I really had better be getting back down, I suppose.

Still it is rather fun to linger on in the wet, letting your clothes get ~~XXX~~ soaked. What difference does it make? No one will scold me for it, or look askance. Supposing I catch cold? It hardly matters; there are no nurses or infirmaries here to make an ass of one. A really serious case of pneumonia would suit me fine. Ker-choo'. There, now I'm being punished for saying so. Aw, what's the use. I really am starting down now. Goodbye, Storm-fiend. Goodbye, vultures.

In reality of course the bourgeois apartment I live in is unlike a desert island. Cozy and warm it is, with a good library and record collection. The fridge stacked with toothsome victuals; the medicine chest with the latest wonder drugs. Yet I feel cut off from the life in the streets. Automobiles and trucks plow by me, ~~XXXX~~ spattering filthy slush on my garments. The man in the street turns his face away. Another island-dweller, no doubt. In a store or a crowded cafe, you get a momentary impression of warmth: Steam belch s out of the expresso machine, fogging the panes with their modern lettering. Of a type that has only been available for about a year. The headlines offer you in giant type, news that is so new you can't realize it yet. A revolution in Brazil! Think of it! Bullets flying through the air, men on the move; Great passions inciting to massive expenditures of energy, changing the lives of many individuals. Yet it is all offered as "today's news," as if we somehow had a right to it, as though it were a part of our lives. That we'd be silly to refuse. Here, have another--crime or revolution? Take your pick.

None of this makes any difference to professional exiles like me, and that includes everybody in the place. We go on sipping our coffee, thinking dark or transparent thoughts... Excuse me, may I have the sugar. Why certainly--pardon me for not having passed it to you. A lot of bunk, none of them really care whether you get an? sugar or not. Just try asking for something a little more difficult and see how far it gets you. Not that I care anyway, being an exile. Nope, the motley spectacle offers no interest whatever for me--

And yet-- and yet I feel myself caught up in its coils-- Its ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ defectuous movement is that of my reasoning powers-- The main point has already changed, but the masses continue to tread the water of backward opinion, living out their mandate as though nothing had happened. We step out into the street, not realizing that the street is different. And so it shall be all our lives; only, from this moment on, nothing will ever be the same again. Fortunately our small pleasures and the monotony of daily existence are safe. You will wear the same clothes, and your friends will still want to see you for the same reasons--you fill a definite place in their lives, and they would be sorry to see you go.