

"GOD!" she squeals. "How did you ever get yourself into that trap?"

"Well," I say, "once it was thought I had some novels in me, but it turned out they were only poems."

& then the party resumes
despite my presence.

THE LINEUP

She comes into the Blue Beard room
where I do my writing
& stands behind my chair.

I stop typing & stare ahead at the wall
with the next line hanging by a hair
& wait,
but she doesn't say anything.

"Yeah?" I say finally.

"I was thinking ..." she says.

"About?" I say.

"The pictures of those people," she says,
"that you have there above your desk.
They all committed suicide."

"So?" I say.

"It worries me," she says.

She's right, of course, on Hart Crane,
Van Gogh, Hemingway, Suckling
& Harry Crosby,
but she chooses to ignore the fact
that both Pound & Henry Miller
died of old age.

Then she's gone
& so is the next line;
in fact, the whole goddamned poem
starts falling apart.

I tear out the sheet
& stomp downstairs waving my arms.

"What's the matter?" she asks.

"I lost it," I say.

"I'm sorry," she says.

"As for Hemingway," I say,
"one of his wives once left
a batch of his stories on a train
& he was never able to reconstruct them"

M. ROUSSEAU

"the guilt-ridden nerd," I said,
"who wrote down his confessions."

"Ah, that Rousseau," she said, leaning her painting
against the wall & folding the easel.

"Yes," I said, "& as one with a Catholic upbringing,
I think the world would have been better off
if he had gone to church & made his confessions
in secret to a priest.

"But that Rousseau was not brought up a Catholic,"
she said, putting my bottle of vodka
back in the cabinet.

"I know, I know," I said, "but he fucked up the French
with his goddamned writings."

"Oh, the French," she said, going out to the kitchen
to check the dinner.

"Yes, the French." I said, getting up
& taking my bottle of vodka out of the cabinet
to pour another unartistic,
but forgiving drink.

THE ENIGMA OF ARRIVAL

We sailed in
about dusk,
tied up the boat
& walked into town
to do some drinking:

the Florita was crowded
so we crossed
the plaza