

about
the novel," I tell my
wife.

"why don't you tell
him?"

"Christ, I can't totally
re-make this
guy!"

"he believes in you,
tell him"

"look, F. Scott Fitzgerald used
to read his stuff
to his woman
right after he wrote
it.
isn't that
even worse than
talking about
it?"

"but
you said
F. Scott Fitzgerald
was the most over-rated
writer of
our time"

"I just can't tell Harry
to
stop talking about
his novel."

"he's your friend"

"maybe he's your friend,"
I tell her.

"but
I'm no writer"

"for this," I tell her,
"let us bless the
gods and everything
else."

NO NONSENSE

Faulkner loved his
whiskey
and along with the
writing
he didn't have
time
for much
else.

he didn't open
most of his
mail

just held it up
to the light

and if it didn't
contain a
check

he trashed
it.

SNAKE-EYES

William Saroyan
married the same
woman
twice

which means
he must have
forgotten
something
about the
first
time.

anyhow, he claimed
it ruined his
life.

but,
actually,
there are
many things
which can
ruin

a man's
life

just
depending upon
which one
gets to him
first.

A PROBLEM

we met at dinner
a place off the
harbor.
Paul, his wife,
Tina.
me, my wife,
Sarah.

we finished
dinner.
I suggested
drinks at our
place.

they followed
our BMW in
their
Mercedes.

around drinks
we got into
politics and
religion.
I looked at
Paul and
noticed that
his face had
turned into a
cardboard
face, his
eyes into
marbles.

then I saw
my face
in the mirror
above the
mantle.

I had the
head of an
alligator.

I poured
more
drinks.

the conversation
got into
after-life,
abortion and
the Russians.

then somebody
started in
on ethnic
jokes
and the night
was over.

we walked them
to the
door.
they got into
their Mercedes
and backed out
down the
drive.

we waved
they blinked
their
lights.

we went
back
inside.

"I wonder what
they are saying
about
us?" I
ventured.

"what are we
going to say
about
them?" Sarah
asked.

"nothing," I
answered.

"did you ever
notice?"
she asked.

"what?"

"sometimes you
have
a head
like an
alligator."

"I've noticed."

"we don't have
any friends,"
Sarah
said.

RED TENNIS SHOES

he sits
3 or 4 rows
below me.

his hand
trembles
as he takes
a cigar
from his
mouth.

he stands up,
stretches,
tucks his shirt
into his
pants.

he finds
a large piece of
yellow paper
in one of his
pockets.

he sits down
with the yellow
paper
in one hand
and the
cigar