

# Generation Loss

by

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“Doesn’t anybody stay in one place anymore?”

Carole King, “So Far Away”

## I

When he couldn't afford rolls of Tri-X 400 Black and White, Sam hocked the *Barb* on the street outside Moe's Books. He was too proud to borrow money even from me. So it could have been him I saw after my Friday morning shift at the register: Sam pacing in a tartan robe that brushed the curb, a copy of the ten-cent paper wedged between his elbow and his ribs. He wore four charms around his neck, the largest a topaz—Sam's birthstone. His hair reached the small of his back, which Sam had required me to reach when he rolled over in bed and complained of an itch.

I stood inside the bookstore gripping the doorknob, trying to figure if Sam's hair would be that long if he hadn't cut it since he'd left. I held the door open for a customer and followed her outside.

"Investigator confirms—JFK's killers known!" The man brandishing the paper barked the headline the way a boy half his age might in the opening of a crime movie. He hissed the tail end of "killers" at the men and women who passed without glancing at the knee-high stack of papers by his side.

"A couple of years late, don't you think?" I asked, offering him a dime. I met his eyes as he pulled a copy out from under his arm. Of course it wasn't him. This was the seventh time in eight months that I'd seen a supposed Sam. My first instinct was always to avoid him, no matter how badly I wanted to ask where he'd been. He wanted to be left alone.

"You can't rush revelation," the man said. He turned to face the street.  
"Investigator confirms—JFK's killers known!"

An hour later, I sat with a hundred other students in a lecture hall in LeConte, reading the paper as I waited for Professor Pluckett to arrive. I hadn't enrolled in courses this semester, but Annie had convinced me to attend a class or two to remain abreast with the student body, which had begun to abandon political protests for happenings and Be-Ins that drew the line of political engagement at one's presence in a smoke-spewing crowd. My paranoia about being found out as a freeloader, or my desire to remain unseen, had limited my options to the hundred-person science lectures that I'd avoided since my freshman fall.

Pluckett was one of the few senior professors who refused to relegate lecture duty to a more theatrical course assistant. Three times a week, he deposited his leather satchel (which he never opened) on the unadorned desk at the end of the hall (at which he never sat) and recited from memory a passionless lesson he must have performed forty times before. He paused for questions only at the end of each fifty-minute monologue. After class he personally eradicated from the board any diagrams he'd composed in chalk, drawing an eraser back and forth over the graphs and semi-shaded spheres as if the security of our nation depended on withholding each lesson from the evening janitorial staff.

Three months into the course, he hadn't made a single mistake, although his rote delivery of hypotheses and theorems could lull a quarter of the class to sleep. I used him to my advantage. After being battered by the rudiments of physics, a hall's-worth of stupefied freshmen were particularly receptive to anything else, even my vague political canvassing. I'd personally recruited a half-dozen members of my class to meetings of the Collective.

Skimming the *Barb*'s headline story, I wasn't wooed by the evidence suggesting that Johnson had facilitated his superior's assassination. I turned to a bulletin about a police raid in the Haight, set under a photo of a woman in dinner plate sunglasses being escorted out of the frame by two blurry police officers. At the bottom of the page, I found the stub headlined "Telly – April 14" that described the buttons and bumper stickers that had appeared around Telegraph Ave earlier this week heralding an impending occurrence at the titular time and place.

Annie, the cofounder of our Collective, had crafted the paragraph that we were calling our first press release:

*Nobody knows for sure what'll ensue on the fourteenth, but word along the weedvine says you might want to make Haste with your spades, your rakes, your hoes... and every green thumb knows to wear closed-toed shoes to this shindig.*

Our tidy dispatch paled in comparison to the pamphlets and posters the Movement had distributed three years ago, missives I'd spent whole nights folding and stapling in the kitchen of Frank Marchetti's apartment while the steering committee staged debates in his bedroom. If the *Barb* existed at the Movement's birth, we would have taken out a full-page ad asserting our platform (at one point, we'd had the funds). We would have devoted a paragraph to our specific grievances against the administration before detailing our demands in bullet-point. At the bottom of the page, the reader could have found the date and time of our next general assembly, and in the center of the page we'd have pasted a still from Sam's movie,

the one of Marchetti atop the cop car in Sproul Plaza with his hands raised over the crowd. We would have left no room for the reader's imagination.

Had Annie announced the mission of our Collective in plain terms, most readers would have turned the page before the fourth line of text, prepared to watch another political procession parade down Telegraph. The lack of factual content in our column, coupled with a few knowing winks to the audience, invited any *Barb* reader receptive to conspiracy (most of them, I knew) to join our cause.

Without my noticing, Pluckett had begun to pace the floor of the hall, delivering an uninflected account of relative motion. I tried copying the equations he'd written on the board into the margins of my paper, but I was sitting too far back to decipher his chalk marks.

I flipped through the rest of the issue, half expecting to come across "Film Flam." Sam's column had always embarrassed me. He padded the article, ostensibly a roundup of each week's independent releases, with stories from our life. He prefaced an Antonioni review with a description of the dinner we'd eaten before the film, then mused on how the combination of food and conversation had colored his viewing experience. He once interrupted a profile of Kenneth Anger to transcribe an argument we were having while he typed at the kitchen table.

"No body is ever at rest," Pluckett said. "When you say a body is not in motion, you are merely describing it from a frame of reference from which your motion is more apparent."

I skimmed the paper's byline for Sam's name, even though I knew he wasn't there, the same way I'd known it couldn't be him outside Moe's, or walking a shaggy

terrier on the lawn of the Civic Center, or hunched four rows ahead of me at last week's screening of *In a Lonely Place*.

Professor Pluckett stopped pacing by the first row of students, leaning with one arm against the nearest desk.

“A collision between two bodies can always be described in a frame of reference,” he began, before trailing off. I leaned forward in my groaning seat, amazed that Pluckett could be forgetting his script for the first time. His face tilted toward the ceiling, as if he could deduce information about fixed particles and colliding bodies from the panels overhead. Other students had begun to murmur, hushed discontent spreading across the auditorium like the start of a light rain. Pluckett held up one finger to restore silence to the hall and released a terse sneeze. “In which the total momentum is zero.”



## II

That night I answered a soft, steady knock to find the leader of the Free Speech Movement scouring his boots against my doormat. Unlike the phantasmic Sams skulking through Berkeley, Frank Marchetti in the flesh came as no surprise.

He clenched and unclenched his fist as he slouched on the other side of the door, summoning a first word from between quivering lips. He was wearing someone's army jacket, decorated with unpolished metals. His outfit, coupled with his shoulder-length hair, might have convinced one of my neighbors that he'd escaped a VA Hospital.

"It's nice to see you." I spoke first and I must have meant it, because I followed my greeting with an invitation into my apartment. He slouched through the door and lingered in the small living room, his hands in his jacket pockets, which bulged as he continued to squeeze his fists. He'd always been skittish, but the old Marchetti hadn't needed me to show him to the kitchen. I sat him at the table, where he began plucking at the tassels on the tablecloth while I made us coffee.

"How many pots you think I've made for you?" I asked. I was referring to those marathon meetings the Movement's Steering Committee had endured in his bedroom, Friday evenings through Sunday mornings spent grappling with the grammatical fine points of the first amendment in near-total darkness. Before we'd arrived at his apartment, Marchetti always curtained the windows and unplugged the phone to prevent any distractions.

He replied with a nod. I didn't fault him for his silence. He'd always been careful with his words, even with those of us who knew better than to shove him through a snagged sibilant.

I handed him a mug, and he waved his hands through the steam as if he'd come in from a snowstorm, not a damp evening by the bay.

"Dinah, did I ever thank you?" he said. "For a single cup?"

I nearly dropped the pot. The spray singed my hand.

"You were too busy hashing it out with Stew and Alicia and the others," I said, striving for nonchalance as I wiped my hand on my jeans. "And posing for the camera."

The mug near his lips, Marchetti laughed, upsetting the delicate surface of the liquid. He kissed the rim, deeming it too hot to drink. The sunken eyes above his grin reminded me of Brian Jones on the cover of the newest Stones album.

"Been on tour with Jagger?" I asked. "Or have you been hiding out on a commune?"

"Of sorts," he said after another peck at the coffee. "I've been in Los Angeles."

"Was it spiritual?" I slid into the chair across from him. "You get a mantra?"

"If I had one, you know I couldn't tell it to you."

"You see Alpert while you were there?" I'd uttered the name of Marchetti's second-in-command more times in two minutes than I had in the last year.

"We tried to find the time to meet up," he said. "But I couldn't make room in my busy schedule."

We shared a smirk. Marchetti and I had never been close friends, but we no longer needed to conceal our mutual dislike of Alpert, who'd relied on the loyalty of the Movement to sell out his first few concerts.

"Where were you staying?" If I asked the right questions, I wouldn't have to answer any myself.

"At UCLA," Marchetti said.

"Don't tell me you re-enrolled."

He shrugged, the rim of the mug underlining the bags beneath his eyes. After the dissolution of the Movement following its bitter victory, Marchetti had been the only student the deans had recommended for expulsion, on the grounds of property damage. I'd assumed that the experience had soured him on academia, as it had for Sam, who'd dropped out without needing to be asked.

"Why are you here?" Out loud, the question sounded rude.

"It seemed like time to come back," he said. "I thought maybe they needed me here." A slight upturn at the end of his sentence nearly rendered it a question. But it could have been a tic.

As he tightened his jacket, I saw the button that had been hidden behind his collar. In a magenta swirl, the white words "Telly—April 14." I couldn't resist.

"You know, that's me," I said, motioning to his collar.

"This?" He drew his chin into his stippled neck to read the button. "Some freak handed this to me outside the pizza place on Channing. What's it all about?"

I told him, with pride, how I'd co-founded a gardening cooperative. Friday, April 14 was the date of our first (and likely only) operation: the planting of a

guerrilla garden in a vacant lot around the corner from campus on Haste, which the University now owned after tearing down a row of low-rent housing. Our takeover was two weeks away but we had no agenda, no budget, no blueprints. The plan for the park would be decided on the day.

“You getting anybody to film it?” Marchetti was leaning forward now, his fingers laced under his chin. “Might be nice to keep a record.”

I gathered our empty mugs and brought them to the sink.

“Who wants to watch a potted tree being dropped into a pit?” I asked. I looked up from the faucet to find Marchetti beside me at the counter.

“If you need any help organizing,” he began, “if you need any help crafting any literature or motivating the crowd on the day—I hope you’ll let me know.”

I leaned in to scrutinize a stubborn stain on a dish—one from the set Sam’s mother had given us when we moved in together my sophomore year. I recognized the request in Marchetti’s offer, and I wasn’t ready to forgive him.

I finished emptying the sink and Marchetti lingered in the kitchen, pulling at the tassels of the tablecloth before adjusting and readjusting a framed photo of my parents that hung over the table. He mouthed phrases to himself as he attempted to locate the frame’s equilibrium, then turned to leave without a word. I followed him to the door. He looked back after stepping outside.

“One last thing,” Marchetti said, scraping his boots again on the mat. “It’s about S-s-s...”

“Sam.” I beat him to the end of the susurrus. “You haven’t seen him, have you?”

Marchetti shook his head.

“I was going to ask you the same thing,” he said. “I was also wondering if you still have his films, or if he took them with him when he...”

How had I not expected this? The entire time he’d spent sitting in my kitchen, tearing at the edges of my tablecloth, Marchetti had been working up the courage to stake his claim to the movies he’d commissioned Sam to film, edit, and project—an archive of the Movement stacked in cardboard boxes under our bed.

“He wasn’t thinking straight those last few days,” I said. “He might have tossed them. Or he took them with him.”

“We really could have used those,” Marchetti said.

At the bottom of the stairs, he offered me a wave or tested the air for rain. In the backlight provided by a streetlamp, Marchetti’s long, unwashed hair granted him the silhouette of a seeker. Weathered by the sun, and sporting a beard that he could tug at times of meditation, he resembled a saint in a Spanish movie Sam once took me to see, about an ascetic who lived atop a pillar in the middle of the desert to defy worldly temptation. But a saint moves to a divine rhythm, and every seeker has a goal. What call had Marchetti answered by retreating to the desert?

And why hadn’t seeing him after almost a year surprised me?

Maybe because lonely men in dimly lit basements are still poring over the Warren Commission report, assembling inconsistencies into articles that make the front page of the *Barb*. Maybe because Silas Alpert, who lived with his band in a compound in Laurel Canyon, made the charts last month with an LP featuring three CORE protest songs and a Dylan cover (“A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall,” five years too

late). Maybe because, even if I hadn't run into Sam on Telegraph that morning, or on any morning in the eight months since he'd disappeared, he continued to wear paths in the topsoil of my mind that I couldn't help but tread.

I watched rain paint a ponderosa wet. As the drizzle worked its way into a storm, I went inside, thinking as I closed the door that Marchetti's jacket lacked a hood.

### III

I slid one of the three cardboard boxes out from under my bed and severed the tape with the set of house keys Sam had left on our dresser. Each of the reels I'd stacked was labeled on the side in his precise print. Some bore descriptions of their contents ("10/2/64 – Marchetti on the Car" and "12/3/64 – Sproul Sit-In") but the more recent films flaunted evocative titles. "Devolution of the Revolution," read one, dated only 1966, each "o" intersected by the arms of a peace sign.

Another box in the closet contained a portable projector, the sort used to show instructional films at high schools—the very projector that Sam had borrowed from his tenth grade health class at Berkeley High to screen his first shorts. I rested the bulky machine on the bedside table and aimed it at the wall. I snapped "Marchetti on the Car" into the supplier and fed the pinched leader through the teeth of the projector. No better place to begin.

The Movement had begun hosting screenings to curry support among the students who had yet to denounce the free speech ban. We showed double features, first something politically charged like *Potemkin* or *The Grapes of Wrath*, followed by one of Sam's shorts. We concluded the screening with a moderated discussion. We'd learned early on that nothing could force the peers who passed our tables outside Sproul to read our lit, no matter how graciously they accepted it. Once you'd watched a film, though, you couldn't toss it in the trash or lose it at the bottom of your book bag.

The familiar warmth of the beam grazed my hand as I focused the light on the wall.

“Marchetti on the Car” was filmed three weeks after Chancellor Carroll banned all political petitioning on campus, claiming that it interfered with the operation of the University. This ban inspired retaliation by an alliance of student groups ranging from SDS die-hards to the pocket square–touting Young Republicans. Students organizing for a variety of causes, some in opposition to one another, had agreed to petition in the center of campus until the ban was lifted. When Silas Alpert, a CORE member who’d spent the summer registering black voters in Mississippi, refused to leave his post at a booth decrying employment discrimination at a local diner chain, a campus security guard called for police. They drove their car up to the steps of Sproul Hall—impeding the operation of the University more effectively than a single folding table—and forced him into the passenger seat.

Sam had been wandering the walkways with a Paillard Bolex P3, loaned to him by *Fotoworld Magazine* in exchange for a written review. He followed a hollering chorus to Sproul and trained his gaze on what he found: a group of students surrounding a car that seemed to have stalled on campus, shoving the fender as if they could eject its unwitting passenger by rocking hard enough.

Watching for the first time in two years, I realized that I remembered scenes from that morning in October not as I’d seen them from across the plaza, but as Sam had witnessed them through his viewfinder. The wagging jackets of the students jerking the locked doors of the car; one of hundreds of coeds who straightened her skirt as she knelt to impede the car’s movement; Sam pressing the camera against the rear passenger window to catch Alpert in the backseat, fogging the interior with impatient drags from a cigarette.



And then the first shot of a pair of socked feet dancing along the roof, arching and angling to find traction on the sleek metal. Cue a shot of Marchetti towering over his rapt peers, framed against the white sky as he delivers his first speech. His exhortations for attention, his sudden jerks and spins as he attempts to face everyone at once, speak for themselves in a film without an audio track.

Now Sam is across the plaza, underlining Marchetti's wiry body with three hundred bobbing heads. Then the obligatory shots of the menacing police, thick batons tapping nervous rhythms against their slacks. Followed by glimmers of the audience. Two girls carrying trays from the dining hall, hoping to capitalize on the clear day, set their food down where they're standing. In a row of students stretching diagonally from one corner of the frame to the other, I'm the only one to turn her head toward the camera.

I turn to look at Marchetti, then back through the lens at Sam, motioning with my head toward the car and the man worth filming. I look through the lens, through the bedroom wall at the viewer, entreating them to keep in mind what the cameraman refuses to show. My expression grows more and more exasperated as Sam refuses to pan away from me. At last, he follows the trajectory of my pointed finger to Marchetti just as he descends from the roof of the police car to allow another student the chance to speak.

I ran the movie again, struck by what Sam failed to show.

He'd run out of film after Marchetti's speech, so the ensuing hours of oration, delivered by dozens of equally impassioned students, went undocumented. He'd rushed to a lab across the bridge to have his film developed, and so didn't capture the

boys who began lobbing eggs at the car in an attempt to clear the courtyard. He missed the blockade that formed in the doorway of Sproul Hall, forcing deans to contort through second-floor windows and cross the roof to an adjacent building at the end of the workday.

Most striking was the silence of Sam's film. Although Marchetti's lips moved in time to the jerking of his long limbs, no words emerged. After Sam sold this footage to a local TV station, Marchetti's muteness allowed anchors across the country to fashion any script they pleased. Following Chancellor Carroll's claim that the spontaneous demonstration had been organized by a contingent of Red Book-beating Maoists who'd bent student sentiment in a radical direction, the paraphrases of Marchetti's speech assumed an increasingly communistic slant on the nightly news. Marchetti was so horrified by these allegations that he phoned the office of Channel 2 in Oakland, identified the source of the footage, and tracked the anonymous filmmaker to the Heyns reading room one Wednesday night during midterms.

Although Sam agreed to help right the record, not even Marchetti could recover his words once they'd been spent. The arguments that had flowed freely from his mouth while standing before a humming crowd froze in his throat when alone in Sam's closet (the only recording space available to the duo with the right acoustics). He stammered through his re-imagined remarks for hours, spitting out shards of his speech onto mag-tape that Sam couldn't splice together into coherent sentences. He left the room only after forcing Sam to vow that he'd be present at the next meeting of the Movement, and that he'd bring with him a portable tape recorder.

As the camera pushed toward Alpert in the backseat of the police car for a second time, a gray glimmer in the reflection of the window caught my eye. I shut off the lamp and pulled the film out of the projector, the celluloid uncoiling across the floor as I attempted to locate a single frame no wider than my thumbnail. I flipped on the light of the projector and held the film a safe distance from the lamp. In the bottom half of the car window, over Alpert's lips as he expelled a plume of smoke, I could make out the reflection of the camera's black lens. Behind the Bolex was the blurred outline of Sam's head.

His ear peeked out from the edge of the camera, but I wanted to see Sam's nose, his lips, his free eye. I drew the film closer to the projector, ignoring the pinpricks of heat stabbing my fingertips. The blurred outline thinned to assume his face. I could nearly make out the creases above his brow that deepened after hours of editing, when he'd emerge from our bathroom with a newly spliced scene. Before his face came into full focus, the lamp blew a brown bubble through the frame. The film split, releasing the rising scent of burnt rubber. The projector bulb cast the shadow of an invisible tuft of smoke against the wall, which we'd left bare for the purpose of screening Sam's films.

#### IV

There were no more than thirty of us in the smallest meeting room in the basement of the student union. We'd had to push a table into the hallway and retrieve chairs from a nearby office so everyone could sit. Annie sat with her head cocked to one side, knotting her hair around a finger as Ruth Garnham described her cousin's offer to offload forty to fifty rolls of grass at her house.

“He can deliver the sod on Thursday, but then it's up to us to get it to the lot the next morning.”

“Why don't we roll it there?” asked a boy in a denim jacket, sandwiched between the second row of spectators and the back wall. After someone laughed the boy grinned as if he'd meant to tell a joke.

“Let's respect Ruth's turn to talk,” Annie said.

Annie and I were the first members of the Collective, but to ensure that no hierarchy formed within the group we sat apart and took care not to dominate the conversation. Alternating members assembled an agenda that was read aloud at the beginning of each meeting, and whoever delivered the introduction selected the next speaker from among the hands that rose during the recitation of talking points.

“To be honest, I don't know much about sod,” Ruth said as she sat. “But I'd be happy to water it if it needs watering.”

“Who's the next speaker, Ruth?” Annie asked after a moment of silence.

Although she was a sophomore, and although the highest position she'd held prior had been high school class president, Annie was a figure of authority within our Collective. She'd pressed the two hundred buttons that we'd sold on the streets of

Telegraph to fund the sod, which we'd bought at a deal from Ruth's cousin from Guerneville. At least he claimed to have cut us a deal. While many of us kept planters in our yards and pots on our sills, no member of the Collective had experience with large-scale landscaping.

Ruth stood again and scanned the anxious faces in the room. She selected Erica, the only regular attendee of our meetings who had a daughter my age.

"Will the sod stay green in your yard?" Erica asked. "I'm sure Morty would let us store the rolls in the meat lockers. Are they much bigger than a pig?"

Annie looked at me and rolled her eyes, and I tried to suppress a smile. Erica found a way to insert her husband's grocery chain into every discussion. Last week, she'd suggested that we plant broccoli heads from Mort's produce section along the garden's edge.

"My aunt runs an ice rink in Oakland," said the same boy who'd made the accidental crack about rolling the bundles of grass down the hill. "We could, like, keep it there?"

"Can we call on each other before we speak?" Annie said.

"How are we all going to get it to Haste?"

"Will gloves be provided?"

"If we're providing gloves, are we providing shovels?"

"Don't you need a roller to smooth out the sod?"

"Are we operating under the assumption that everyone who contributes to the Collective has access to the appropriate gardening gear?"

"I'm sure Morty can cut us all a deal on dish-gloves."

The door swung into the room, rattling the back legs of the chair closest to the entrance. Marchetti recoiled from the thirty faces that turned to greet him.

“I’m here for the meeting?” he said, tripping over the ‘m’. “For the garden? Hi, Dinah.”

Every head in the room followed Marchetti’s gaze to my seat. I hadn’t been paying much attention until he’d opened the door. I’d stayed up late last night picking apart the Gordian knot of film I’d tied in my search for Sam’s reflection.

“Who are you?” Annie asked, although she was looking directly at me.

“I heard you were still planning, and I hoped I could help,” he said. “My name’s Frank Marchetti.”

Those sitting on the edges of the room leaned forward to get a look at the man in the filthy army jacket, unsure if they’d heard him right. He was wearing the same outfit he’d had on last night, only wetter. His combat boots cut shrill steps across the linoleum.

“Frank Marchetti? The one who...” Annie faltered, searching for the most polite way to describe the student activist who’d seized control of a successful student rebellion before disappearing. “The one who used to go here?”

“I heard you needed some helping organizing next Friday’s rally,” he said, leaning against the door.

“It’s not a rally,” I said. “More of a takeover. A gathering. A garden-in, we’re calling it.”

“We’re discussing the acquisition of sod,” Ruth said.

“Sod?” Marchetti managed the single syllable on his first try. “What’s sod?”

“It’s a sheet of grass,” Ruth said.

“Folded up like a Yule log,” I said.

“So you *can* roll it,” said the kid in the denim jacket. “To get it places?”

“What other tools are you going to buy?” Marchetti asked.

“We agreed that any accumulated capital ran the risk of being subject to competing interests within the Collective,” Annie said.

“So we’ll just turn away those who don’t have shovels or rakes?” asked a grad student in the back, wearing full-rimmed glasses that doubled the size of his already wide eyes. “If we’re not supplying all of the apparatus, aren’t we betraying the notion of an egalitarian collective?”

“They can help plan,” I suggested.

“So the people who bought tools with their hard-earned money are going to do the grunt work while the ones too lazy to bring their own get to order us around?” The disgust in Erica’s voice silenced everyone.

“There won’t be supervisors,” Annie said.

“Then how are we going to plant trees? How are we going to lay paths? How are we going to divvy up any of the work that requires multiple people working in a concerted effort?”

“Who’s providing the trees?”

“What about the seeds?”

“We’re relying on individual involvement,” Annie said. “We didn’t raise the money for any of these things in the first place.”

“And whose fault is that?” someone asked.

“We put it to a vote weeks ago,” I said. “We’re a collective, remember?”

“Oh, so it’s all our fault.”

“No,” Annie said, “It’s nobody’s.”

“How convenient.”

“How do you propose we split blame thirty ways?” Annie asked.

“Very carefully,” said the boy in denim.

“We’re not going to be blaming anyone,” Annie said. “Because this is going to work. We are going to continue to spread the word over the next week and a half, and more people will join our cause. Ruth, you’re going to call your cousin and ask him, politely, for as many gardening tools as he can spare, and if you’d be kind enough to keep the sod in your backyard, those who have cars or can borrow them will arrive early in the morning on Friday and pick them up.”

“Who’s going to want dirt muddying up their backseat?”

“What should I tell my uncle if he wants to know why I need the car?”

“You tell him you’re orchestrating a non-violent takeover of land that’s been unduly seized by the University,” Marchetti said as he stood. “People don’t offer up their cars for a garden. They make sacrifices for a cause.”

“The garden is the cause,” I said, my cheeks beginning to burn.

“The medium is the message,” offered the egalitarian grad student.

“But if they can’t see something beyond the sod, no one’s going to help build it,” Marchetti said.

“What do you propose we do?” Annie asked, indignant.



“First, I’d think hard about the name of your event,” Marchetti said. With all eyes trained on him, his chest swelled. His clothes had dried in his migration to the center of the room. “Garden-in sounds like a stammer.” He allowed a pause for the few people who laughed at this self-deprecating joke. “And it’s too domestic. It shouldn’t sound decorative or ornamental. You want to build a space that people can engage with, one that’s connected to civic duty. You’re really planning a park.”

Even Annie nodded at this.

“Now you need to raise the stakes. When I led the battle for free speech, we were fighting what some people thought was an abstract fight. But to us, who’d spent the summer registering voters in Mississippi, the right to speak was a matter of flesh and blood. You speak with your body, don’t you? You’ve got to make it concrete.”

Either Marchetti was avoiding the words that typically tripped him up, or his stammer had vanished the way it first had when he’d thrown himself in front of the crowd blockading the police car.

“How could we make it more real than sod and dirt?” I asked.

Marchetti turned to face me. The purple bags around his eyes brought out their white.

“Have you forgotten that our governor—a washed-up, red-baiting, B-movie star whose chief cinematic accomplishment was getting upstaged by a chimp—got elected by pledging to ‘clean up the Berkeley Mess’? Or that the same FBI that tapped our phones is now trying to intimidate the Panthers, who’ve taken arms—legally, mind you—in order to combat the police state? I don’t know if you’re all aware, but the United States is currently engaged in the largest airborne operation

since the Second World War. But this time we're the aggressors. And the only reason anybody over here is protesting is because their boyfriend or their uncle or their cousin or their brother might get shot down while they're bombing South Vietnamese peasants. We only care if we have skin in the game. Not that any of our trickery overseas will matter when our meddling in East-Asia sets the Kremlin on red alert and the Soviets start raining down—”

“We need to have skin in the garden,” Annie said, standing to reach Marchetti's level.

“Skin in the park!” he corrected, rounding the table to join her.

I didn't even try to mask my disappointment. No one was looking at me anymore. From the beginning, Annie and I had insisted that the garden remain a garden. It was meant to be an escape from everything else that went wrong in the world. Of course we knew what was happening everywhere and all the time. How could we not, when footage of the war played on every channel like a football game? It wasn't that we didn't care, but that hope only made it hurt worse as the world continued to tear itself to shreds. We were ready to give ourselves to a place where the prick of a thorny bush would mean nothing beyond its own sharp, tidy pain.

All this had changed the moment Marchetti opened his mouth.

“Pick the battle,” he said. “Let's put it to a vote.”

So people took turns shouting out causes we could tether to the park. Nuclear disarmament. Civil rights. The banning of a pesticide that, as someone explained to the room, had been linked to defects and deaths in flocks of migratory birds. The denim-jacket boy drew another round of laughs from the room by suggesting that we

construct the park to protest the fact that the Beatles hadn't released an album in almost eight months.

We decided that a universal goal would be the most desirable: we would build the park in honor of peace. This meant disarmament, this meant de-escalation, it meant retreat from Vietnam. It meant an end to our search for the proper cause.

As Marchetti paced the room tallying the votes, the anger I felt toward him soured into envy. Even I'd fallen behind the cause he'd generated out of nothing, out of hot air, out of verbiage. By the time he slipped out of the room, eager to cross campus before he was again recognized, I'd even begun to feel gratitude for the hunched figure in the puke-colored coat. Like lightning from a thundercloud, his electric rhetoric had imbued the Collective with a common purpose—with life itself.

It was still light when I got home, so I drew the bedroom shades before loading “12/3/64 – Sproul Sit-In” into Sam’s projector. The strip of clear tape he’d used to link the blank leader to the first close-up scored Marchetti’s face like a tattoo as he addressed the crowd beneath his perch on the steps of Sproul Hall. His call to arms, witnessed by enough students to fill the plaza, concluded in a comparison between a water mill and a University that yields its product by harnessing the river of student action. In the event that the operation of the mill is deemed immoral—“too revolting to proceed”—Marchetti reminds his peers that all it takes to halt production is for the students to dam the river. With that, he turns and enters the building, his audience in tow.

The only route to victory, our Steering Committee had decided, was if we forced all deans out of their offices and into the open, where they might begin final deliberations on the free speech ban. Sam condenses the staggered influx of bodies (between four and nine hundred, depending on which newspaper landed on your doorstep the following morning) into four shots of scuffing feet. Once all are inside, he offers a tour of the three floors of the occupied hall, each glimpse preceded by a shot of the sign in the stairwell.

Floor One: Sam weaves through the dozens of students participating in a spirit-lifting line dance, stooping to chart the tangling of arms, the exchanges of elbows.

Floor Two: A sober view of an International Relations seminar being conducted by Professor Isaak in the office of a dean who found himself ousted by a fast-approaching wall of young bodies.

Floor Three: A wide shot of several students lying across the waxed floor of our silent study hall. I sit snug in a close-up, a notebook leaning on my thighs and an open copy of *King Lear* draped across the peaks of my bent knees.

Sam's shots of high-ceilinged halls and student-packed offices omit the police outside the front door. A state of siege is suggested only in a single shot angled out of a second floor window, down the length of a rope ladder. (After police gathered on the steps, this ladder provided a temporary means by which rations of bologna, sourdough, and mustard were smuggled into our ragtag embassy.)

Then the police enter the scene through the front door. The impatience with which they snatch at shoulders and drag prone protestors down the halls might strike the viewer as a narrative inconsistency, given how Sam has condensed the prior evening into a five-minute montage. Because Sam's provided no shots of the authorities kneeling outside in the dark, pressing spent cigarette butts into the steps of Sproul Hall, their sudden appearance is played for shock.

Sam crams the next few hours into a series of close-ups and inserts. Arrayed out of chronological order, night and day double over on one another. The squint of a curly-haired coed being dragged down a stairwell, rejecting each step with a violent nod. Marchetti's elbows knotted about a second-floor stairway railing; an officer bedecked in a motorcycle helmet prizing Marchetti from the wall. Through a lens

flared by the rising sun, I'm hauled out of my corner of the third floor by a pair of security guards, my notebook still teetering like a rope-bridge across my knees.

Then, without warning, Sam shoves the viewer through another jump cut, as if impatient to reach the most electric sequence in the film: a continuous take, framed on the bottom by his legs, as two pairs of bobbing shoulders drag the cameraman down several flights of stairs. The helmeted silhouettes wax and wane as they pass through cones of stairwell lamplight. The frame staggers with each collision between Sam's head and the tall steps leading toward the foyer. Tempted by the wasp buzz of the camera, the man on the right looks back into the lens. The film ends with a cut to black.

I'm the only one who can fill the gap between the shot of me being carted off and the shot of Sam's body winding down the steps. No one else knows that as Sam skipped steps to reach the third floor, he wasn't thinking of his film—he wasn't lamenting the limited light offered in the stairwell, or wondering how he might best piece together the dozens of rolls he'd shot. As he ran to reach the girl he'd seen in the corner of Marchetti's dim apartment at a dozen meetings, the crush of Sam's pulse in his ears reminded him that he was more than one brick in his friend's proverbial dam.

At the sight of the pair of policemen, I'd gone limp, allowing them to arrest me only by forcing them to lift me off the floor. My body rocking like a hammock, I remained calm until I saw the lanky boy with the camera training his lens on me. When I realized he was filming my arrest, my face flushed. As had been the case

during Marchetti's speech in Sproul last month, the last thing I wanted was to be a character in this stranger's film.

"Cut that out!" I yelled at the cameraman. Certain I'd meant to address them, the two policemen stopped where they stood and looked at one another. Sam also assumed I was berating the men in sweat-stained navy uniforms. His first instinct was to halve the distance between himself and the police by leaping across the hall.

Without his Bolex pressed to his face, I hardly recognized the cameraman who'd paced the periphery of every event the Movement had organized. As he crawled toward the middle-aged men who gripped my wrists and ankles, Sam and I regarded each other for the first time without the mediation of a lens. I hadn't expected his eyes to be green.

He sank his teeth into one officer's leg. The breath leapt from my body as I hit the floor. Both policemen worked to tear Sam's jaw from the screaming man's slacks and subdue him, one officer locked around each of his writhing feet. Rounding the corner on his back, Sam returned his camera to his face. As he disappeared down the stairs, he was still chewing a frayed square of blue pant leg.

Just before sliding through the entrance of the building, Sam tossed his camera across the lobby with the desperate prayer that some sympathetic party find and keep his footage safe. He spent the following day and night in an old detention camp in Santa Rita alongside five hundred other students, cursing himself for sacrificing crucial footage for a girl whose name he still didn't know.

Even without the testimony of Sam's camera, the conditions in Sproul Hall were detailed beneath headlines decrying police brutality and undue incarceration.

Only three members of the Steering Committee had made it back to Berkeley in time for an afternoon assembly held in the Greek, but the amphitheater was full of neighbors, professors, and parents who'd been disgusted by the mistreatment of the state's students. The board of regents didn't even attend the meeting in which Chancellor Carroll formally repealed the ban on free speech, but I was there.

I described the scene to Sam a day later, over the phone in my dorm's common room. On my way out of the hall, I'd been the one to find his Cine-Kodak nested in a ball of tattered green fabric (formerly a defiant major's favorite cardigan), and I'd called the phone number etched on the hand-grip each morning until he was home. I recalled for Sam the hisses that rounded the half-circle of spectators overlooking the podium as Carroll approached the microphone, and the deafening applause that drowned out his final remarks after conceding defeat. I heard Sam's cackles, filtered through the receiver, as I remembered out loud how Marchetti had vaulted the stage to deliver his own address, only to be cut short by the police who stormed the podium.

"Marchetti was mugging for the cameras when they dragged him off," I said.

A tinny room tone hummed over the line.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there to see it," Sam said.

"There were plenty of reporters," I said, certain Sam blamed me for the two days he'd spent in jail. "It'll be all over tomorrow's papers."

"That's not the same thing," he said. "I'm not saying I want it to happen all over again, but why'd it have to end without me?"



## VI

Marchetti spent the first half of our Tuesday session in silence, engrossed in the intricacies of the bare basement wall, while Annie, Ruth, and the others deliberated on the mundanities of providing protestors with shovels and the proper technique for laying sod (every meeting meant another debate about the sod). When his input was requested, Marchetti returned to the center of the room and concluded, at the end of a lengthy diatribe against the establishment press, that the Collective had better place a full-page ad in the *Barb* detailing our plan and platform. This suggestion elicited a ripple of nods from the same demonstrators who'd already agreed that buttons, enigmatic columns, and personal appeals were safer methods of recruitment.

The following week, we had to meet in the backyard of Ruth Garnham's home near La Loma Park to accommodate the growing number of acolytes interested in witnessing Marchetti's routine. Standing before several rows of housewives, storeowners, and students who'd hitchhiked from campus, Marchetti justified our seizure of state-owned land by excoriating the University that had allowed it to fall into decay. Not once in the years I'd known him had he ever before expressed concern for the natural world, but as he paced the length of Ruth's pool, lamenting the bureaucracy that had allowed a fertile strip of land to run fallow, I was just as convinced as anyone that the fate of all greenery on our planet depended in some small but critical way on the success of our park.

As entertaining as Marchetti's violent dramatization of our reclamation was—descriptions of breaking the earth punctuated by the pantomimed thrust of an imaginary pickaxe—something about his performance suggested that they weren't

meant for those aspiring gardeners gathered in the backyard. He threw his voice over the seated crowd, and he rarely looked anyone in the eyes while he spoke. He may as well have been rehearsing his diatribes in the mirror, or dictating them for a letter destined for burial in the op-ed section bulking up the back pages of the *Barb*.

On April 12, two days before the park was to be built, Marchetti paused during his instruction on proper arrest protocol to look through the audience with such intensity that I followed his gaze over my shoulder. Jerking my head to find nothing behind us, I knew that we'd both been searching for the same person. While Marchetti went limp to demonstrate how an arrestee could preoccupy at least two policemen, I saw Sam in the shadow of his every gesture. Marchetti's voice pitched but never peaked, ensuring every syllable would endure on mag-tape, and he took care to dodge the patches of shade under Ruth's two apricot trees, remaining in daylight for the sake of the finicky film stocks Sam preferred.

As I walked home after the meeting, Sam's voice in my head extolled the day's footage. Cutting between Marchetti's carefully timed movements and the reactions of the crouching crowd, some of whom were actually taking notes in journals propped on their knees, Sam could have made a compelling recruitment film.

*"The arrest bit will play well, won't it? Might even get a few laughs."*

I nearly wandered into Moe's on my day off to pick up a book he wanted me to read—Cleaver, Pynchon, *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me*.

*"But I wish he wouldn't look straight into the lens when he gets serious. No one wants to feel like they're being talked down to."*

Ignoring the tug on my elbow and the voice in my head, I bore south down Telegraph, past musicians tuning strings in cafes and arguments cascading out of apartments overhead. I took the familiar left at the corner of Haste.

I walked the perimeter of the lot, careful not to set foot in the mud. It was flat, more or less, with a modest slope toward the center. Unpainted wood littered the expanse of dirt, the neglected remains of a residence hall that had been abandoned in favor of plans to compact the land into another soccer field. The vacancy where the frame of the building had collapsed allowed a generous view of the hills.

Cars lined the nearest edge of the lot's interior. Some looked as if they'd been parked for the day, while other sets of wheels had sunk into the unpaved earth. A bar of moonlight stretched across the sleek hood of the nearest Ford. Rust had chewed the fenders of a few older models, now caked in dirt. Parked in an unkempt row, they transformed the vacant lot into a war zone, as if their drivers had fled to the tune of an air raid siren.

By the time I returned to the corner where I'd started walking, Marchetti was waiting for me. We shared a moment in which we sized up the clearing of mud and trash.

The first time I'd passed the newly leveled lot last year, I'd imagined a row of women replacing jagged rocks with stepping-stones. Marchetti filled the same vacancy with hundreds of irate protestors, armed with hoes and spades, cheering for the arrival of someone who could channel their outrage into action.

“We raised enough to get ads in the *Barb*, the *East Bay Times*, and the *Californian*.” Marchetti was the first to speak this time. “That’s a nice cross-section, don’t you think?”

Standing by the lot two days before Marchetti’s plan was to be set in motion, what could I do but nod?

“We both want what’s best for the park,” Marchetti said. The final plosive hooked itself on his lips. Faced with an audience of one, his stammer had returned. “Why don’t we go inside?”

As I accepted Marchetti’s offer, I realized I hadn’t given a thought to where he’d been living since his return. He’d made considerable distance into the lot before I realized I was supposed to follow. The soil, still damp from last night’s rain, sucked at the soles of my sneakers. I joined Marchetti at a corner of the moldering wooden frame, where I noticed in its shadow a narrow tent a Boy Scout could have pitched. Marchetti dipped through the folds back-first, peeling off his shoes and depositing them in the mud before pulling his legs through the pair of triangular curtains. I hesitated, unsure what waited inside, until Marchetti stuck his head through the slit in the green fabric.

“Don’t tell me you’ve never been camping before,” he said.

Marchetti had announced earlier that afternoon that we all had a stake in the park, but I hadn’t realized how deep his went. We sat cross-legged, leaning toward one another to conform to the angles of the abode. A small battery-powered lantern near the entrance cast our shadows against the canvas so that anyone who walked down Haste, or aimed his camera at the tent, might catch our shadow-puppet show.

“Where else was I supposed to go?” he asked, reading the pity on my face. Preoccupied with a loose thread in the bedroll beneath us, he forced a smile.

“You could have told me. Annie or I could have kept you up for a while,” I said. Had he brought me here to curry favor? I was moments away from putting my hand on his shoulder when he raised his head.

“It’s like someone flipped the record to a side I didn’t know was there,” he said. “Where’s everyone we know?”

“I’ve been here this whole time,” I said. “It hasn’t changed all that much. People are still holding benefits and concerts, even if they don’t always know what they’re for. And Carroll’s still trying to prove that bongos aren’t protected speech so he can ban them from Sproul.”

Marchetti snorted, which made me laugh. I couldn’t remember our last one-on-one conversation before last week’s reunion. I could only imagine him delivering diatribes from the hoods of cars, or staged at the top of a flight of stairs or behind a podium; the arguments he’d won in the chiaroscuro of his curtained dorm room, boxing another member of the Steering Committee into a concession with impregnable rhetoric. And Sam had always been standing over Marchetti’s shoulder or kneeling before him to capture his peer and idol.

“It’d make a good movie, wouldn’t it?” Marchetti said, as if my thoughts had flickered across my face. “Colorful, full of life. It won’t be the same without him. Or any of them. Not with Silas in Los Angeles, and Sam in Oregon, and Alicia back in New York.”

“Oregon?”

“Shit.” It took Marchetti several seconds to spit out the expletive, wincing as he tried to speak. “You really didn’t know?”

“Know what?” I said. “Where is he?”

“Before he left, he’d promised that producer at the BBC some footage for a program about communes. Remember? I called her. She said he’d said something about going north. So after leaving UCLA I picked up his trail. I needed the wet air, anyway.”

Marchetti avoided my eyes as he dug through his knapsack.

“I found him at Lee Farley’s ranch. Last month. Just before I came back down.”

“Why didn’t you tell me you’d seen him?” I asked.

Shoulder-deep in the bag, he stopped his rustling and drew out a grey canister.

“For the same reason you lied to me about the rest of Sam’s movies. I know they still exist. He said so.” Marchetti was turning the disc in his hands like a magician preparing to make a coin disappear. “Neither of us wanted to give him up.”

Sam’s tidy hand ran across the blue tape sealing the reel: “The Train.”

“No one’s seen it,” Marchetti said. “I was thinking maybe we could—”

“No,” I said.

“Why do you blame me?” Marchetti sat up, brushing his head against the tapered wall of the tent. I was struck again by the absurdity of our camp-out, but I squelched the laugh in my throat. “Did you even try to find him after he left? Did you make a single call? Take a step out of Berkeley?”

I hadn't. He didn't want to be found. Not by Marchetti, or me, or anyone else. Even if I could have found him, I was sure Sam was beyond recovery. What, then, did this new film mean?

I plucked the canister from Marchetti's hands and tore through the tent curtain, ignoring the futile grip of the mud as I stomped across the lot. As I made my way toward Telegraph, the tent emitted a dull orange glow interrupted only by the silhouette of Marchetti projected against its screen, a ghost haunting the park-to-be.

## VII

Before I fed the roll through Sam's projector, I knew what would unravel on the wall when I lit the bulb and ran the motor. Sure enough, the film began amidst a crowd whose members brandished picket signs, their cardstock messages bending about the wood posts in the face of coastal wind. A sloppy zoom through the shoulders of a middle-aged couple revealed the back of Marchetti's head, leading the pack toward the railroad tracks just past Fourth Street.

Almost two years after being expelled from the University, desperation in the corners of his squinting eyes, Marchetti is scheduled to meet a steam engine bearing marines to their final stop before being shipped to Vietnam. For practicality's sake, Sam accordions the hour-long tour through the streets of Berkeley into three shaky minutes of marching that are interrupted by stolid close-ups of the spectators and policemen lining the route. Some of these onlookers are silent silhouettes backlit by the sun, while others speak to the viewer without moving their lips, through interviews that Sam recorded beforehand. None of the oral testimonies correspond to the faces projected across my bedroom wall. A Wagnerian thrum accompanies the fused features of a broad-jawed officer of the law, whose sunglasses reflect the camera being thrust in his face.

The Wagner endures as the bobbing dissidents approach the rail-yard. Already, a charcoal plume divides the white sky above the train, which announces its presence with a wolf-howl whistle (an embellishment added by Sam). The crowd parts before Marchetti, who leads a line of women sharing the light weight of a scroll adorned with the words, "Bring Our Boys Home." The mothers remain on the tracks,



their torsos concealed by the parchment they convey, certain that the strength of their resolve is enough to bring the impending train to a halt.

On cue, the police enter from camera right and left. In their efforts to sever the bonds between the women, they tear the banner to shreds. But as they escort the women out of Sam's stable frame, dozens of students emerge to replace them. With the train's approach, the inky steam engulfs the protestors sitting on the tracks.

And the train has not stopped moving, although the conductor has slowed its pace to a crawl to ensure that fewer civilians are harmed in its approach on the military base. The law continues to work like John Henry in reverse, disassembling the network of students layering the tracks. They lift students by their armpits like petulant toddlers. Young men with shaved heads lean out of the windows of the train. Some raise two-fingers over the crowd. One throws a Coke bottle just past the camera. Sam leans right, then left, to chart the passage of the steel leviathan between the shoulders of the officers who've formed a fence between the protest and the tracks. The frame comes to rest several yards ahead of the train, where a silhouette remains cross-legged, only a longhaired head visible above the smoke—a figure resolved to die rather than abandon their post.

I don't know if Sam recognizes the man on the rails (I didn't) before shoving through the wall of police. By the time Sam succeeds in tearing Frank Marchetti from the tracks and throwing him onto the gravel, he hasn't sized up the officer who comes at him with a baton. The wooden club dispenses the blurred image of the crowd, leaving nothing in its place.

The Wagner ended with the same abrupt cliff-drop that engulfed my bedroom in darkness. I sat there for a moment, tears welling in my eyes, unable to turn off the projector or turn on the lamp. I listened for the click of the film's tail against the projector, but it didn't come. Half the film had yet to be rewound at the receiving end.

My bedroom filled with a tone that vanished as quickly as it had sounded. A flash interrupted the darkness, followed by a thin white trail of light that ran across the wall in a jagged line. The line resolved itself into a circle and burst into stars.

Sam had etched the second half of the documentary directly onto the roll of the film, which had gone unused after the baton destroyed his camera and the eye behind the viewfinder. In this evocation of blindness, in the darkness and the scrawled light creeping through the cracks in the celluloid, I saw what Sam wanted me to see: a steadily rising white line mirroring the hike home, the sounds of combat down the hill lost in the static surging behind his swollen eyelid.

Sam had reduced the rest of our month to primitive geometry. In the sparks and stars rattling out of the projector I saw our spats over the following days, which Sam spent in our bathroom, cutting his footage on the bathroom counter and refusing my pleas that he go to the hospital. In a maelstrom of white lines knotting the frame, I saw Silas tear Sam out of bed early one morning and escort him to the doctor, who told us that the damage had been done, and if only we'd come in sooner...

In the bursting bubbles and arcs sloping across the frame, I saw our last attempts at reconciliation. Every black frame marked another silent exchange, Sam interrupting my schoolwork at the kitchen table to retrieve a snack, me leaving a hot teakettle by the door of his makeshift darkroom. Then he disappeared. The first sign

of his absence was the empty parking spot on the curb in front of our apartment, a vacancy mirrored by the blank, white frame hovering on the wall above our bed.

I gathered the film, snapped the canister shut, and added it to a stack in the nearest box. I lay in bed, but I was up until morning wondering how the scene on the tracks would have ended if Sam hadn't been filming. Without the viewfinder bending light to his eye through a series of mirrors, he might have seen the officer approaching the tracks. Had he forgotten the camera was there? Or was Marchetti's rescue more cinematic than my arrest in Sproul Hall?

Even after I pulled all three boxes of the archive out from under our bed and pushed them into the living room, I still couldn't sleep.

## VIII

It was just after sunrise when Ruth Garnham's cousin pulled up to her house, the back of his truck loaded with the promised sod. I approached the driver side window, explained my connection to Ruth, and asked him for a ride. Two hours later at the Guerneville Shell Station, I convinced the father of a pair of uniformed Boy Scouts to ferry me to Oregon. From the curb of a bus stop in Eugene, I approved passing cars with my thumb until a sheep farmer named Vincent stopped. A flatbed full of lambs bleated over us as we confirmed that Lee Farley's ranch was en route to Marcola, although Vincent shook his head in disbelief as I climbed into his truck.

As Vince recounted the rumors he'd heard about Farley's place—the most memorable being the Halloween raid that filled the three nearest police stations with costumed inmates—I forgave myself for not once entertaining the notion that Sam, who never enjoyed being part of the action, had sought asylum at Farley's ranch.

Lee and Sam had met on Vietnam Day, 1965, when the author passed through Berkeley on the first leg of his cross-country book tour in a shelled-out Volkswagon bus. Farley led a makeshift motorcade through the streets surrounding the campus before being introduced by Marchetti to the crowd gathered in the Memorial Stadium. He took his place behind the podium, cleared his throat, and delivered a liturgical rendition of the Gilligan's Island theme, which sank beneath a chorus of boos.

After viewing the movie Sam had reaped from the day's footage, Marchetti had for the first and only time ordered his friend to destroy a film. For the first and only time, Sam had refused one of Marchetti's requests. Even after Farley published an open apology in the *Barb* (in which he blamed his actions on a mislabeled pitcher

of acid-spiked orange juice), Marchetti refused to forgive the man who had trivialized the protest of an atrocity.

As we pulled up on the edge of Farley's property, Vince offered me a quarter embedded in a handshake.

"When you're ready to come home, you call your parents or me," he said. I accepted the change without asking for his number or letting him know that I wasn't a teenager.

Crossing the clearing that separated me from Farley's house, I intruded upon a meadow reserved for a bristly llama. Running the risk of being mistaken for an intruder, I raced to the nearest fence, landing on the other side to slow applause.

"No need to run." Lee Farley sat on the stoop of his home, picking a loose flake of leather from a worn cowboy boot in his lap. He shoved his foot in the shoe and stood. "Not even coyotes freak out Lady Bird anymore, which portends danger for the new flock."

Farley squeezed my upper-arm with his calloused hand and helped me to my feet. I had to crane my neck to regard his face.

"You're Sam's girl," he said. His grip on my arm softened.

"He's still here, isn't he?"

"Where else would he be? Sam's one of our old stand-bys." As Farley spoke, he guided me through the front door of the house, down a network of hallways.

"How's the Italian doing? Left as quickly as he came a few weeks back. If you'd timed it better, we could've had a whole family reunion."

We dodged a trio of children—Farley’s, I hoped—who tumbled down a narrow flight of stairs, each carrying a stack of hardcover books, their free palms drawing shrieks from the handrail. We entered a kitchen flooded with the smell of burnt lentils, long neglected on the stove. Framed by the window over the sink, the avalanching children raced toward a bonfire behind the house. At least a dozen young men and women, sporting headbands and frayed rompers, circled to greet them.

“You’ll find him by the pile.” Farley propped the screen door with his boot just long enough for me to pass onto the back porch.

Farley’s circling guests allowed a gap for the children to present their books to the fire, which accepted the offering with a belch of smoke. As the onlookers resumed their spinning, a stray observer defied their rotation. He charted a path in the opposite direction, spiraling around each member of the procession before forsaking their pull for the next body. As the teenagers bounded across the backyard, casting long hair about their heads, Sam held one hand toward his partners as if offering to dance.

He looked the way he had before he left, dressed in a button-down shirt and slacks that managed to stand out from the calico sundresses worn by others, fashioned like von Trapp clothes from the first-floor curtains. The only anomaly visible from this distance was that he’d borrowed a pair of Farley’s cowboy boots. Their spurs rattled as he raced around his friends.

“Look who decided to join us,” called a girl in dual braids, at least five years my junior, as Farley approached his cabal. Sam dropped his arms to his sides and strode toward me.

We hugged, and I inhaled the scent of hay off his shoulder.

“Dinah,” he said into my ear, “It’s good to see you. Well, sort of.”

I thought he’d meant to downplay his pleasure at my presence, but I realized as we pulled away from one another he was making a joke about his right eye. Although more or less yoked to his will, it forgot the orders that its partner followed, the dilated pupil drifting away from my gaze while we spoke.

“Have anything to say about what we’re witnessing here?” he asked. He raised a small microphone linked to a tape recorder on his belt.

“It’s an awful lot,” I said.

“I was getting some real good commentary from Stooges,” Sam said. “Do you mind if we—I’ll be right back, I promise.” He jerked his head toward the man in the tan vest, and his body followed. I stood with my back to the wind, defying the cloud of smoke billowing from the bonfire until the girl who’d greeted Farley tugged me into the circle. Her hand in mine, I accelerated our pace until we were breathing down Sam’s neck. He was, in turn, hounding Stooges.

“I’m not trying to be a sneak,” Sam growled into his microphone. He cut himself off by turning the tool back to his longhaired friend. “If you want me out of your way, I’ll go ahead and wire the whole fucking house.”

“All I’m saying, Sam,” panted Stooges between deep breaths, “is that when you pull that thing out, you’re distorting the reality of the situation. How’s a guy supposed to act natural with a microphone in his face?”

“Just try to explain to me what these books are here for.” Sam aimed the microphone at his subject’s mouth like a dentist leaning in to extract a rotten tooth.

“We’re tossing in all the books we’ve ever heard of,” Stooges coughed. “All that’ll be left in the house are the ones no one knows. Then we’ll have no choice but to read them.”

“Mind saying that again?” Sam asked. “You turned your head at the end.”

“Can’t a guy enjoy a stack of burning books in peace?”

As participants in the ritual grew bored or satisfied or sick from inhaling smoke, Sam continued trailing the stubborn celebrants who remained in orbit around the bonfire. When no one else was left, he held his microphone to the flames for several long minutes before joining me at the porch.

“Saw you met Bluebell,” Sam said, fitting his backside into the space between me and the porch beam.

“The one I was running with?” I said. “How old is she?”

“Last week Farley and Stooges caught trout. They threw them in the sink, were going to debone them before dinner. Bluebell saw that one of the fish’s gills were still opening and closing, so she brought it back to the creek. When she put it in the water, it wouldn’t move. I couldn’t even record her voice. She just started crying. Too big of a bummer.”

“What are you taping all this for?” I asked. “Working on a soundtrack?”

“No movie in the works. This is just a way to pass the time.”

Farley had snapped a low-hanging branch from an alder on the edge of his property, and he was using it to stoke a faint hint of fire from the dying mound. The dull orange of the flame matched the sunset’s lining. “You want to see what I’ve really been working on?”



## IX

Sam had travelled hundreds of miles to commandeer the bath at one end of Farley's first-floor hallway. The set up was nearly identical to the one I'd dragged out of our bathroom the month after his departure. Somewhere between Berkeley and Eugene he'd acquired a photo enlarger, which sat on the counter by the sink. Lakes of developer, fixer, and stopper rocked in trays resting in the dry tub.

"This is what I've been tooling with," Sam said. His guiding grip on my shoulders surprised me, and I had to stifle the impulse to shrug off his hands. He motioned to the grid of glossy papers he'd taped over every inch of the bathroom's wide mirror, drafts in a series that didn't strike me as a success.

"The order is left to right," he said, cracking his knuckles in my ear. "Like a sentence."

The series began with a square frame, a bridge straddling a wide river. Trees prodded the fog that clung to the hill above the resolute water, which Sam had halted at high tide. The following picture was identical to the previous one, but darker and slightly out of focus, a copy of the previous photo whose edges spilled over the white borders of the frame. Sam had repeated this process twenty more times, diluting the bridge and its surroundings to a stew of grey and black and white, less legible by the final photo than a reflection in a murky lake. I stepped back, pressing my heels against the edge of the tub to size up the blurring guardrails, the trees reduced to charcoal stains, the tessellating trestles dissolving into mist.

"They work well in a series," I told him. "Like a fade out?"

The photos were hypnotically boring.

“That’s the idea,” Sam said. “There’s so much nebulous stuff—dirt, dust, chatter—waiting to get caught in the recapture.”

Maintaining his half-gaze on me, Sam found the lowered seat of the toilet with his hand and sat. I perched on the edge of the tub, leaning away from the chemical stink rising from the trays.

“You can say the same thing over and over, but sooner or later it starts to sound like nothing. When Marchetti was here, I asked him how it works,” he said, trying to stare at his work. “You know, why not get the ex-physicist’s explanation? I don’t remember how it happens, exactly. He called it generation loss.”

I repeated the name.

“How long are you planning on staying?” Sam asked.

“I need to be back tomorrow.”

“Park’s not going to plant itself,” Sam said. I thought I heard disappointment in his voice. “Marchetti told me. On the phone.”

“You’ve maintained a correspondence,” I said. “Touching.”

“He was the only one who bothered to find me,” Sam said.

“I’m here now, aren’t I?”

“So what do you want?” Sam asked. “There must be something I can do for you.”

“If you’ve been talking to Marchetti, you must know his plans,” I said, ignoring the sting of Sam’s remark. “How he wants to lead a march like there’s a train full of GIs headed for the lot?”

“It worked like a charm last time,” Sam said. “As far as he was concerned.”

“That was completely different. We had lawyers. We had attention. Now we have Reagan, and they say he’s got cops training dogs in Tilden Park.”

“If you’re so concerned with the safety of all involved, what are you doing here? What’s going to happen to your followers?”

“They’re not my followers,” I said, to buy myself time. I’d asked myself the same question as I watched the sun rise outside Ruth’s house. If I really feared that planting our garden ran the risk of a confrontation with the police, why had I left? Watching the sky regain color in Ruth Garnham’s front yard, I’d told myself that I was leaving town to find the one person fit to bear witness to events I couldn’t stall.

“We need someone to film it,” I said. “As a precaution. If we can’t stop them, we can at least keep a record.”

“Hardly matters if nobody watches the movie when it’s over.”

As Sam rose from his seat, I reached for his hand. The amber glow of the safelight inspired an unflattering comparison between him and the sepia bridges disappearing behind him on the mirror. Unlike his series of photographs, he’d faded all at once. He looked less like the Sam I remembered than any of the blonde-haired men I’d seen on the streets of Berkeley—somehow less himself than the scratches running the frames of his last film.

“Why send me your movie if you didn’t care enough to see me?”

Sam’s brow contorted in confusion. He looked through me with his forgetful eye.

“Your movie, Sam,” I said. “The new one of the train.”

“I gave it to Marchetti when he came to visit,” Sam said. He began pawing at the roll of toilet paper anchored to the wall. “I asked him to collect all my films and bring them to the Pacific Film Archive. Figured they might prove useful to anyone interested in history.”

“But not to me?”

“Not just you, Dinah. Anyone. Or no one, I don’t know. All they show is what happened.”

“It’s never just what happened,” I said. “The *Daily Californian* called stopping the train a misguided protest.”

“Trying to stop the train. Failing to stop the train.”

“But the *Barb* called it a police riot. They published photos of cops beating back students and of recruits pouting out the windows.”

“And the *Oracle*’s front page story’s a recipe for patchouli toothpaste.”

“So it matters where you aim the camera,” I said.

“But it doesn’t matter who’s holding it. Anyone can shoot your little park. I’ve been out of the water too long.”

“I need your help with this last thing, and then you can go for good.”

“You think I wanted to leave?” he asked.

“You didn’t seem too interested in staying.”

Sam looked at the lopsided pyramid of tissue he’d loosed onto the floor.

“Shoving a camera in a cop’s face won’t stop them from hurting anyone,” he said. “It only makes them feel more like John Wayne. By the time I left, I realized they were posing for the camera as much as we were.”

“Believe me,” I said. “I never once posed for you.”

Sam turned to hide his smirk.

“Why would Marchetti give me your movie?” I asked.

“On his way out of here last month, he tried to convince me to leave,” Sam said. “Maybe he thought you were the only one who could get me to follow him.”

“Or maybe he wanted me out of his hair,” I said.

“Either way, we’ll have to leave soon if we want to make it down in time.”

Sam drew the shower curtain over the bath to protect the developer beds as he headed for the door.

“So you’ll film it?” I said.

“That’s all that I’ll do.” The light from the hall and the smell of burnt lentils flooded the darkroom as he opened the door. “I’m not stepping out from behind my camera.”

## X

I spent the first half of the ride south balled in the passenger seat, my head rattling against the window of Sam's sedan as I struggled to sleep. I spent the rest of the trip behind the wheel, keeping the car from careening into the Pacific while I interrogated my drowsy passenger about the last nine months. Between his own stabs at sleep in the decade-old sedan, which wheezed when crawling uphill and groaned the length of each ensuing descent, Sam described how he'd arrived in Oregon with only a backpack containing a working camera and some films, including the one he'd given Marchetti last month and the record of Farley's ill-fated speech. The writer had been so honored by the gesture that he'd offered Sam a patronage of sorts: the use of his personal photographic equipment and a permanent, private lodging in the barn.

"You really liked it there?" I asked. "Living like an animal?"

"When it gets cold, I throw a goat on top of the sheets."

"So that's why you left home? It was too cold?"

I looked away from the road materializing out of the dark.

"I didn't want to lose the other eye," Sam said.

We reached the Bay after sunrise, but Sam had to stop in San Francisco to pick up film for the camera he hadn't used since leaving Berkeley. Despite my protests, he forced me to keep the car running on the curb while he ran into the lab. By the time we reached the other end of the Bay Bridge it was well past nine, the scheduled start of Marchetti's rally. Sam loaded the camera in the passenger seat as we approached campus. He unrolled the window and leaned his top half out of the car

like a dog relishing the wind, pressing the viewfinder to his good eye and aiming the device at the sky.

“Think the cloud cover’ll lift by the time they start planting?” Sam asked. “I should have gotten faster stock.”

“Marchetti probably checked the weather,” I reassured him. “If we weren’t going to have a picturesque protest, he would have rallied to change the date.”

My plan was to park on Bancroft so that we’d be as close to the plaza as possible by the time Marchetti introduced the day, but we rounded the corner to find each intersection along Telegraph lined with wooden barricades. Two policemen monitored the nearest sign. The older officer circled his index finger in the air at us before attending to the clusters of pedestrians drifting toward Sproul.

“What’s with the sawhorses, officers?” In defiance of my timid protests, Sam trained his lens on the police as he yelled. “We need to get through.”

“Today’s a demonstration,” the senior officer said. “Can’t have any vehicles coming through where people are walking. You’re not running that thing, are you?”

“You keeping cars out or people in?” Sam said.

“It’s their legally protected right to march, so long as they’ve cleared it with the city.” The policeman rubbed the white mustache eclipsing the corners of his mouth. “It’s our job to keep them safe when they do that.”

Something began to stir under the officer’s drawl, the oceanic rumble of a gathering of bodies. I could make out the outline of a chant, but not the actual words being relayed by the crowd gathered to greet and be greeted by Marchetti.

“Try another side street,” Sam said. “We’re missing the speech.”

The streets surrounding the school were lined with cars, some cul-de-sacs overflowing with double lanes of abandoned traffic. I inched along the perimeter of the University, mindful of the pedestrians winding their way toward the center of campus. Sam drummed his fingers on the glove compartment, on the rim of the half-rolled window, on his knee and my shoulder before reaching for the latch on the door.

I pressed my foot into the accelerator, throwing him back against his seat.

“Jesus, Dinah,” Sam said. “Want the morning to go to waste?”

“We’re going to get it together,” I said.

We inched uphill along the other end of campus, the sonic tide of the crowd ebbing to a subtle drone. As I passed the wood-paneled dorm where I’d spent my first year (both sides of the road guarded by an endless string of parked cars), Sam’s sedan began to shudder.

“I wasn’t kidding about going uphill,” Sam said. “Take it easy or let me out.”

“We’ll never find each other in the crowd.”

“I’ll be the guy standing behind Marchetti with the camera.”

Sam fiddled with the door, and no matter how hard I pressed on the pedal the car refused to pick up speed. As we turned onto the narrow road leading to the entrance of the Greek, the engine gave a final pant and died. I grabbed Sam’s sleeve as I felt the stomach-churning lilt of backwards motion, just before he took hold of the wheel.

“Brake!” he commanded. He threw the car into park as the back wheel slammed into the ivy-lined hillside to our left. He nearly slammed the passenger door on my leg as I slid out after him.



Sam dragged me down the hill, skipping stairs and stumbling over lumps in the pavement raised by the roots of nearby eucalyptus. He removed the camera from his face only to make adjustments to the aperture. As we neared Sproul, a voice sheathed in static broke through the blood throbbing in my ears. The words channeling out of an amplifier came into sharp focus like the first frames of Sam's film against my bedroom wall—Marchetti's voice rebounded off every surface, soaring over the chatter of the growing crowd.

“After the Movement disbanded, I started having nightmares of bomb drills—remember those from middle school?—where the siren would blare and Mrs. Hector would march us into the hallway to duck and cover. In my dream I'd fall through the tile floor and through the boiler-room and through bedrock and nothing while my classmates above me vanished in a cloud of yellow ash.”

“Why didn't you let me out at the bottom of the hill?” Sam spoke without looking at me. Marchetti filled the space where my reply was meant to go.

“We're eating dinner in my parents' dining room in Pasadena, a sauce from my father's beefsteak tomatoes—he's a Sicilian, so of course he prunes a tidy garden—and I find myself unable to raise the fork to my lips. Even though I've watched my mother clean the tomatoes just fine, I can't eat. I can see the radioactive glitter coating the vegetables like fairy dust. Or are tomatoes fruits?”

Sam was so intent on adjusting the focus ring that he nearly collided with the wall of onlookers passing through Sather Gate. As he shouldered his way between bodies to reach the proper vantage point from which to film his friend, I shuffled along the edge of the square in amazement. The crowd foreshadowed by the endless

line of parked cars was large enough to green the vacant lot ten times over. Children held construction paper signs over their heads, their messages lost in a sea of bustling waists. A stray onlooker dragged a briefcase through the maze of men and women leaning on backhoes and rakes, devoting their attention to the hoarse speaker standing at the top of Sproul Hall's steps. Maybe the commuter had been lured into the mass by the speaker's voice, which sounded familiar, if ravaged by time.

“Short story short, our spat about the quality of my mother's cooking escalates until Dad books me a room at the psych ward at UCLA. When I got out, I may as well have emerged from a fallout bunker after armageddon. It was like I'd been released into a sci-fi comic. My parents wouldn't talk to me. All my friends had evacuated Berkeley. We were bombing Vietnam more than ever, making claims about repairing the Earth while preparing to escape to the moon. I wandered like Vincent Price at the beginning of that movie. What was it? ‘The Last Man on Earth.’”

Banners went slack as Marchetti grew quiet. Onlookers lowered their picket signs, which vanished behind the heads of neighbors. An earnest silence replaced the energetic murmur of a crowd excited to plant a garden and repair the world. In the vigil commemorating Marchetti's lost year, all of us were forced to recognize how we were being led by one of our own—not a paragon of progress or a voice of the people, but a lonely, disappointed twenty-five year old trapped onstage during a labored search for his next words.

“We exist in a world of constant clashing, but one cleavage at the atomic level can set off a chain reaction that engulfs the world in flame. Even walking down the street sometimes I worry that I'll bring down my foot wrong on a bunch of sidewalk

atoms, and it's Endsville for me and everyone in a ten-mile radius—a steaming crater in the middle of the bay. I'm going too long, aren't I? But then I encountered this garden, which seemed like the smallest act of good in the world, so insubstantial it might hardly matter. When I heard about it, the simmering in my head went quiet like someone had taken a pan off the stove. If there's a chain of destruction that's always rattling, I began to wonder why there couldn't be a chain of generation, of growth. Why shouldn't one small, good thing pave the way for two more? Four? Eight? If this were possible, before we knew it we'd be in paradise. It's getting late. We should plant our park.”

## XI

The crowd lurched into motion without applause as Marchetti descended the stairs and crossed the plaza. I staggered through the syncopated preamble as the mass of marchers tripped over one another's feet in a search for rhythm. We tried to match Marchetti's strides down Telegraph, picket signs swaying above our heads like batons conducting the march at competing tempos. The marchers who weren't hoisting romantic slogans into the air—"plant love, not war"; "make it with Mother Earth!"—bore an arsenal of gardening implements, dull shovels and trowels with their incisive blades, rakes and hoes slung over their shoulders. At the end of the block I could make out Sam, crouching to present us in a steady wide shot.

Police had been following alongside from the beginning, masquerading as escorts, but we knew what slim authority they wielded would melt away the moment we reached the lot.

A teenage boy in a striped shirt, hands protected by thick leather gloves, pushed a thick black roller down the sidewalk like a lawn mower. A friend walked backwards in place atop the spinning cylinder, balancing his weight with both hands on the pilot's head.

Gardeners began planting their flags on the edge of the dirt lot. Hand-painted block-letters matter called for peace, unity, and love. When demands for legislation, disarmament, evacuation, reparations, resolution had borne no fruit, they'd accepted an abstraction as their final demand. So they scrawled love across banners, ironed it on jackets, brandished it on picket signs. They lamented its loss, calling for its return as if it could be beckoned.

I've always thought of love, instead, as a proposition that presents itself if the conditions are right. From opposite ends of Sproul Plaza, a camera's lens had arranged it between Sam and me three years ago. And it must have meant something similar to Marchetti as he knocked on my door last month, banking on being invited inside, or while he stood at a podium preparing to invite five hundred followers down Telegraph Avenue to build their own refuge—notice me and I'll notice you.

As we set to work, our tone was so celebratory that I wondered if I'd been the only one listening to Marchetti's address, a ten-minute affair stretched at least twice as long by his verbal impediments. I'm sure I wasn't the only one who'd expected a political diatribe on par with those he'd delivered during the climactic moments of the Movement. His old logical assaults upon the audience, as impenetrable as proofs, had given away to admissions better suited for a confession booth than a rally. I couldn't remember a single time he'd ever described his home life, or the depth of his apocalyptic preoccupations. As I stomped down the street, peering between shoulders in an attempt to catch Sam filming the crowd head-on, I couldn't shake my failure to interrogate the scraps of Marchetti's story that he'd let slip over the past month.

I'd mistaken his tent in the lot for a sign of his dedication to our cause, when his involvement in the park was really an act of last resort. I'd assumed the last few weeks had fueled his ego (no doubt, they had) but I hadn't considered that he had nowhere else to go. As Marchetti began passing off rolls of sod, which were neatly stacked on the sidewalk by the lot, I wondered where he'd go after handing out his temporary home.

Sam captured the afternoon better than I can. The way the police, acting on a request from the University, broke rank as we approached the lot. (How were they going to arrest us all for repairing a civic disaster?) The shirtless men and women breaking ground with pickaxes, sending dirt through the air in broken arcs. The line of workers relaying rolls of sod like buckets of water meant to starve a barn fire. The last person in each line unravels a carpet of grass with a flourish before masking the dry earth. The impatient among them stomp at the corners of the squares of grass rather than wait for the lawn roller still bumbling down the hill.

A couple with a child kneels in what will soon be the stretch of shade offered by a freshly planted stone pine. In the space of a cut, they've constructed a seesaw from a bucket, a slab of wood, and two sets of bike handlebars.

The only blood spilled during our non-hostile takeover is that of a well-liked Classics professor bursting out of his overalls, who forces his elbow through the driver-side window of a bombed-out Ford Mainline to coax the car into neutral. The wound blushes Kodachrome Red against the rusted rear fender as he and his friends push the car onto the street.

Cut back to the completed see-saw, now mounted by a blonde boy in overalls on one end and five coeds on the other, who upset the balance of the scale so severely that the seat of the skinny kid's pants forsakes the board at the height of each ascent.

I'm in the film. I help pry apart the wooden outline of the residence hall with the flat end of a hammer, handing off planks to a man bedecked in flannel who axes the beams into planks for a walkway. Marchetti glances for the first time at the lens,

and a moment of recognition transforms his stolid face. He runs to embrace the cameraman, and the park rolls over as the camera falls to Sam's side.

There I am in the next shot, teaching myself how to use an augur. The whole image shakes with Sam's laughter as I stomp on the heel of the tool, attempting to carve a hole in the soil that will accept the begonias at my side. The instability of the frame only increases when I look into the lens, beseeching the man on the other side for help he refuses to provide. In the final sequence of Part I, you can make me out in the hungry crowd gathered around a makeshift pot broiling with tan beans. Watch my interest fade as the woman stirring the stew recounts how the steaming cylinder began the day as a trash can.

I approached Sam where he was sitting in the shade of a potted cypress that had yet to be planted, replacing the spent film in his camera with a fresh roll. Marchetti was standing over him, expounding about a topic that lost its urgency in my approach.

"...they're saying they're on the way, but I doubt he'll have the guts," Marchetti concluded as I approached.

"Who's coming?" I asked. I assumed it was a friend of ours, one of the freaks planning an outlandish conclusion to the day's action. "Don't tell me Alpert's christening the park with a surprise show."

We shared a moment of suspense as Sam attempted to feed the slanted leader of his fresh roll through the teeth of his camera. He pressed the release and the camera accepted the tongue of celluloid.

“It’s hard keeping track of it all,” Sam said without looking up from the puzzle of gears in his lap.

“But you’re doing fantastic!” Marchetti said. “You get those two dogs humping in the corner? An utterly perfect addendum. If you don’t close with that, you’ve blown the whole day.”

“I have to judge distances differently without a free eye,” Sam said. “But I haven’t tripped yet.” He looked at me and smiled. A ring of red lining his left eye socket promised a sunburn.

“You should have let me walk with you,” I said.

Sam sighed and dropped his camera in his lap. He was about respond when a cry from the street drew us to the opposite edge of the park.

They marched in an orderly array, five men to a row. Men in olive helmets, vests, and boots. Rifles slung over their shoulders, they were here to claim the park.



## XII

“The bastard went through with it,” Marchetti said, and I knew by the even tone of his voice that he’d been talking about the same bastard before I’d approached the tree. Marchetti had known they were coming, and he’d said nothing to anyone but Sam.

As amateur gardeners raced through the park gathering their belongings, Marchetti began circling his comrades, arms raised like the wings of a bird of prey.

“Stand your ground,” he said. “They can’t arrest all of us.”

“Do you see their guns?” I yelled at Marchetti. “No one’s worried about being arrested.”

Marchetti snapped his hands around my wrists. I looked for Sam, but he’d already begun recording the soldiers’ approach, his back turned to the chaos spreading throughout the park.

“I need your help asserting a unified front,” Marchetti said. “We could use a semblance of solidarity.”

“Have you forgotten the train?” I said in a stage whisper. “They’re not going to stop until they’ve gotten what they want, and they want us out of here.”

Sam had begun pelting insults at the uniformed procession, trying to get the soldiers to look into his lens.

“And if things get too out of hand, we’ll get it all on film,” Marchetti said. “Trust me, they’ll come out of this looking much worse than we will.”

I ditched the newly baptized Wonderment Walkway for the quickest path to the opposite corner, while Marchetti amassed a row of gardeners to line the perimeter of our park. Sam hunched as he ran down the aisle of defenders, conjuring a Soviet-

style portrait of brave workers framed against a pale blue sky, pitted against an unimaginable enemy. Marchetti presided over a unified front of freaks, professors, housewives, cashiers, hipsters, and even a few leather-clad bikers attracted more by the prospect of violence than our square of mud.

I'll never know whether Marchetti sincerely intended to negotiate with the soldiers who, as we later learned, were carrying out orders delivered by our Governor. As hard as he tried to instill hope in the followers loyal enough to defend the park, the legal ground on which Marchetti stood wasn't much more solid than that on which the National Guard had been deployed—officially, to squelch an uprising in the heart of a city teetering on the brink of bedlam.

There was a moment of indecision in which both sides faced one another in silence, daring the opposition to put forth the first word. Maybe Marchetti could have won over the soldiers with an invitation to slide off their thick jackets and join the festivities they'd interrupted. Or he could have used the same verbal alchemy with which he'd conjured action from anecdotes about a mental collapse.

The reason for the soldiers' silence became clear as they began to fix rubber masks like snorkels to their faces, thick filters covering their mouths as they barked muffled orders across the street. Marchetti's appeal was cut short by his own muzzle. As he stood with his arms raised above the crowd buttressing the park, words refused to cross his lips. His face grew red with frustration. Spit foamed in the corners of his mouth. His first enunciation was cut short by the burst of a pneumatic tube, the arc of a black bead, and the bloom of a cloud of green gas.

The first line of defenders pressed the heels of their palms into their eyes and ran. The Guardsmen had blocked our nearest route of retreat, forcing most of us back into park pursued by heavy boots that tore the sod to shreds. The day-farmers who stood their ground, not yet dissuaded by the vapor wringing tears from their blinded eyes, ceded to the first bursts of what the press later identified as buckshot.

Marchetti was subdued first by the fringe of a spray of pellets, then by three khaki-vested bodies. Sam was able to elude capture even while filming Marchetti's arrest, his functional eye shielded by his viewfinder. A veil of green fog descended between Sam and me, and I turned toward Telegraph.

By the time we arrived with the phalanx in tow, masses of students were standing in the streets. Owners raced to close shops before the rising tide of violence licked their storefronts, fussing with keys that refused to fit in locks, tormenting rusted awning cranks that resisted every revolution. The street was somehow both empty and awash in untraceable action, the usual mob of students and shoppers replaced with onlookers and militants.

My memory of the afternoon is a blur—incomplete not by fault of an exposed reel of film or an impatient jump cut, but because plumes of noxious gas blurred my vision, while the blasts of shotguns did their best to deafen me. Racing up Telegraph, away from the prattle of shattered glass and the screams of my former classmates, I blinked to rid my eyes of searing hot tears.

I passed a group of men in Nehru jackets as they overturned a mail van, which began to smoke the moment it struck the pavement. A biker and a coed conveyed a limp body by the scruff of his leather jacket like two cats dragging a wounded kitten.

Bandanna-clad revolutionaries—they'd prepared ahead of time—juggled a canister of tear gas before arcing it back to the soldiers with a generous swing of a baseball bat.

A teenager crowned with a traffic cone held the wrong end of a rifle still in the hands of its helmeted owner. The duo pirouetted across the street until the same masked figure who'd grand-slammed the smoke bomb applied his bat to the side of the officer's face. Sheltered by a deep alley, a woman with a baby on her shoulders vaulted a fence, boosted by the same boys who'd delivered the lawn roller to the park.

I could have turned off any side street, but if I reached home without Sam, I'd never see him again. He'd likely inserted himself into the most dangerous situation available in order to record dramatic footage.

I headed back in the direction of the park. The rows of demonstrators who'd gathered on Telegraph had by now thinned, leaving a few stragglers to circle the streets with no clear purpose. Sam ran by Moe's, in pursuit of a pair of soldiers who'd angled their guns up at a group of spectators heckling from a nearby roof. When I noticed that he'd lost his camera, I feared that the entire day had been for nothing. I realized that I'd come back for the film in his bag.

He scooped a stone from a planter and lobbed it across the sidewalk. It rattled against a helmet, drawing the attention of the two soldiers. One of them lowered his weapon as he turned. A burst stifled my scream. Sam collapsed as if he'd been tackled. I raced to the curb, heedless of the roof-bound watchers urging me to seek shelter.

I realized it wasn't Sam by the time I knelt by the young man—no older than twenty—who'd hocked me a copy of the *Barb* weeks back. His blood ran toward a

storm drain interrupting the curb. Remembering the advice I'd been given on the eve of our sit-in three years back, I tore off my sweater and pressed the ball of cloth against his heaving stomach. The white fabric filled with red. The guardsmen turned to retaliate against the silhouetted figures on top of the store, who'd begun throwing roof tiles at the shooters.

His eyes were closed, but I could tell by the muscles clenched along his jaw that the boy was at least alive. I couldn't move him. I called out, and Sam arrived.

He crossed Telegraph in long, deliberate steps that kept his frame stable. He'd fixed his lens on us, but his bad eye, open beside the camera, charted a path in the direction of the vanished soldiers. He bared his teeth in a grimace bordering on a smile, an expression that declared the horrific thrill of capturing such a pathetic scene.

Sam hastened to my side only after a click from within his camera signaled that he'd run out of film. Together we attempted to keep the boy's blood inside him. Even when our hands met amid the tattered fabric of his shirt, I couldn't look at Sam's face. The ambulance finally arrived, and I clambered in after the boy on the stretcher without facing the back door.

As we sped toward Herrick Hospital, I didn't need to look out the window to know what Sam was doing. I knew he'd nestled under a canopy to swap another roll of film into the camera before climbing the hill to reach his car. He'd head back across the bridge to get his film developed, and he'd spend the next few days poring over his footage with the same muted astonishment that he'd worn as he stood over me and his bleeding lookalike.

In his final cut, Sam follows the arc of the stone through the air toward the guardsman's helmet. The soldier lowers his gun and fires. Sam whips the camera back just in time to capture the collapse. A woman in a white sweater runs across the street and gathers the body in her arms before Sam cuts again. The film ends with a long take of the hysterical woman kneeling over a motionless body, the wound tastefully censored by a bloodied cloth, a ball of blood and fabric losing its human warmth. She looks into the camera and begs the audience for help.

Sam couldn't have directed a better riot.

### XIII

The pier was more crowded than I'd expected. The usual fishermen had been joined by newcomers eager to prove that they could make do in a time of martial law. Since bulldozing our park, National Guardsmen had begun circling Berkeley in jeeps. They loitered on the corners of every street bordering the University, breaking up groups of pedestrians exceeding three members, restricting deliveries to the daylight hours, enforcing a strict nighttime curfew, all with particular attention paid to men with long hair and women in short skirts.

At the only meeting of our defunct Collective following the disaster at the park, Erica had reiterated her husband's fears that his stores couldn't keep up with the demand for canned vegetables and frozen meat. Supermarket shelves across town had gone bare, demanding customers find other sources of food, even if a sign posted at the entrance to the marina warned against eating fish reeled in from the polluted bay.

The sun gilded the water in late-afternoon light as it neared the horizon. The regulars hauled in their lines well before sunset, exasperated by the clueless visitors bumming bait and drumming up conversation about which lures worked best in brackish water. Before he left, one fisherman felt compelled to demonstrate the proper casting of a line after a man in a suit, accompanied by two mortified boys, snagged his hook on the ear of a teenage girl in tie-dye while drawing back his line. I managed to record the whole scene.

I also caught three children crying after they learned that the silver shimmers leaking blood in a bucket would be their dinner. One girl in pajamas gripped her father's waist as a fisherman tore his lure from the belly of a writhing stingray and

tossed the fish back into the water like a torn kite. The dad limped back to land with his kid manacled to his leg.

As far as I knew, Sam was still at City Hall, camped outside the jail where Marchetti was imprisoned, filming the brief sparks of each protest that was stamped out by the police on duty outside the rabble-rouser's cell. I'd heard about the mound of flowers rising along the brick wall that separated the leader of the march from freedom, but I didn't have to see it for myself; Sam would chart its verdant growth on celluloid. Let him film what he wanted to film. I'd focus on the scenes outside the scope of his epic. After watching him load hundreds of reels and adjust the aperture ring a thousand times, I'd taught myself in a matter of minutes how to use a Super 8 camera I'd found in a box under our bed.

We hadn't spoken since the arrival of the ambulance on Telegraph, which carried me and David Ebdus (the boy from the *Barb*) to Herrick Hospital. I hadn't had a camera then, to capture the eighty other patients who awaited treatment for birdshot, buckshot, blunt trauma. I'd returned the next day with the Bell & Howell Autoload to interview patients and gather the impressions of exhausted doctors. After Ebdus requested that I remain in the room, I recorded his measured reaction to the fact that he'd lost the use of his legs. I don't know whether his solemn expression was a genuine reaction to news that he expected, or an act of bravado performed for the viewers of my film.

I flooded the final few feet of the roll with a girl plucking splinters from the boardwalk as her father loaded the last of their dinner into a cooler. I followed them back to land.



I inspected each tire before getting into Sam's car. A pack of teens had been planting caltrops in parking spots, hoping to puncture tires on the jeeps patrolling the city. A helmet and a gas mask lay wedged beneath the passenger seat. I'd bought them at an army surplus store in Alameda after a helicopter circling a peaceful vigil in Sproul had released tear gas, which a sea-born wind then swept across the city. According to the *Barb*, teen swimmers a mile south of campus had been forced to call off their meet, at first blaming their bloodshot eyes and irritated skin on over-chlorinated water.

The car stuttered as I left the marina. The helmet rattled as I cleared the speed bump at the front of the lot, still trailing the father and daughter in the direction of campus. I flipped on my headlights to make out the road.

As we reached the other end of the freeway and the street leveled, a pair of headlights flooded my rearview mirror. I passed a streetlamp that illuminated the jeep behind me. All three members of our caravan took the following right, then a left. It wasn't unreasonable that we should all be headed for the center of town, but I couldn't shake the feeling of being followed. The *Barb* had published photos of National Guardsmen forcing unwitting violators of curfew out of their cars and onto the pavement, their fingers dovetailed behind their head while they inhaled the taste of dewy asphalt until sunrise.

Obeying the traffic sign, I came to an abrupt halt before the Santa Fe Railroad Line and watched the car ahead of me gain distance. The hum of the engine pulsed through my steering wheel as I looked both ways down the tracks Marchetti had refused to leave.

By sitting cross-legged in a cloud of steam, he'd no more meant to stop the train than end the war. Maybe he'd only aimed to hush the screaming in his head. The army mothers, the raging onlookers, even the newly shaved men aboard the train had been props in his film.

The jeep behind me blared its horn.

No one was there to admire my performance as I pulled Sam's car onto the tracks and turned the key in the ignition. To sell my frustration, I slammed my hands against the wheel before stepping out of the car to inspect the engine, my heavy breathing echoing against the raised hood. Another honk prompted me to lean over the edge of the hood and wave an apologetic hand.

The carriage of the jeep bobbed as soldiers tumbled onto the road. Through the white wall projected by the headlights of the military vehicle, I made out four armed silhouettes marching toward me, eight boots churning gravel.

The guardsmen came into focus as teenagers, no older than the youngest freshman prodding his forearm with a sharpened pencil to stay awake in Pluckett's class. One of the boys approached me, his brow overshadowed by the lip of his helmet.

"It always overheats," I said, before he could speak. "I think it's a problem with the water pump." He leaned over my engine as if he could verify my diagnosis, but his soft pout suggested he knew even less about cars than I did. "It's not even my car."

"How do you usually fix it?" he asked. This left me dumbstruck. I'd expected a citation, or an order to embrace the ground—anything time-consuming enough to

increase the distance between the men in the jeep behind me and the family in the car ahead. I searched for an answer, following his gaze back to the Jeep humming at the edge of the railroad track.

“I usually let it cool off,” I said. “Not that this is an ideal location.”

“Ma’am, it sure ain’t.” He turned to confer with his brothers, leaving me in the shadow of the hood. I drummed my fingers against the car, feigning impatience with Sam’s unreliable engine. The huddle broke, and the pouting boy asked me if I wouldn’t mind putting the car in neutral.

The line of soldiers assembled at my rear fender, filling my rear-view mirror, and pushed the car over the train tracks like beetles rolling a ball of waste. I steered. We landed under a streetlamp that illuminated the helmet, the gas mask, the camera resting at my side, but the pouter looked only at my face as he leaned through my lowered window.

“Try and make it home in the next half-hour,” he said. “And talk to your boyfriend about getting his car to the shop.”

I watched the boys climb into their jeep, the car clearing its throat before mumbling toward the University. I gripped my steering wheel. My hands hummed, although I’d turned the engine off, and I felt another wave of pity for Marchetti.

Maybe you couldn’t stop a train, but you could sit on the tracks. The crowd had at least slowed the steam engine, hadn’t it? Sam had caught that much on film, each moment protracted into hundreds of frames, each one a frozen image.

The headlights of the jeep wandered around the corner. I wondered if they had on hand a sack of salt. Word going around campus was that a group of students

bedecked in harlequin bed sheets had begun planting flowers on the unpaved median strips bisecting the roads surrounding school, leaving members of the National Guard no choice but to kneel and tug illicit sprouts out of the dirt. With begonias and petunias reappearing by roadsides after every curfewed night, the Guardsmen had begun salting the most fertile strips of land to wilt the budding contraband.

I turned the key and pulled onto the road, heading toward the intersection the Jeep had just cleared. I hoped to verify the rumors firsthand.

I wanted to find men in helmets fretting over flowers that could never amount to a garden. Both hands holding my camera still, I'd catch them plucking verdure from the earth, their legs dancing to avoid the clods of dirt dripping from the dispossessed roots. They'd flattened our garden and surrounded it with barbed wire, but this footage would be mine to cut and order as I saw fit. In the final film, maybe I'd run it in reverse.