

## The Foot

The victim to be haunted is female. And beautiful. This makes a difference. She has the habit of confidence, but also a greater adjustment to achieve. In the intact body there is a constant stream of impulses bombarding the cortex from the nerve-ends in the muscles, which bombardment is evenly balanced on both sides/ but when the body is no longer intact a neuro-muscular imbalance results which throws additional strain on the sensitised cerebrum and upsets the previous state of equilibrium. It is difficult to estimate at this relatively early stage how far her habit of confidence will counter the despair at the adjustment to be achieved and therefore weaken the imbalance in the stream of impulses reaching the cortical areas.

The victim is female and very beautiful, as far as can be judged at present with her eyes closed peacefully in analgesic slumber unaware of pain. It is easy to forget the full extent of beauty when the eyes are shut and the neuroblasts asleep to agony/ Eyes open can bring beauty alive with awareness of pain terror despair or anger, not to mention desire and liquid tenderness or even the alluring invitation down the pathways to the womb the tomb the cavern the ebb and flow of time linked to the sun-devouring moon the monster chasm of death and timelessness that draws man like a magnet; from the moment he is conscious of a fall a wrench of umbilical tissue rough manhandling tumbling lying in soft cloud sucking at heaven severed weight of body on stumbling legs and fall, fall through the days and minutes. Eyes open can bring archetypes alive but now they are closed on a white ashen face sheathed in pale lanky hair like dead nerve fibres that conduct no pain along pale lanky limbs except for the right leg amputated above the knee. Pity. A thousand pities bombard the cortex from the nerve-ends in the stump-

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neuroma where the axons proliferate excitedly and send back messages of pain) that find at present no decoder in the central image of a limb no longer there we have however no room for pity in the haunting game.

It is a proven scientific fact that women have a higher pain threshold than men. Which makes the task more difficult but interesting. Men are a challenge. Yet even within this distinction the threshold varies from subject to subject and from time, to time for there is rhythm in the haunting game as in any other according to stress fatigue drugs general constitution previous equilibrium distraction violent activity including sex and the psychiatrist recommends electroencephalic treatment despite statistics proudly quoted out of nineteen cases eight improved six relapsed after improvement three unchanged two worse as if they proved anything and some are unduly sensitive he says in his report. In every case the treatment improved the patient's attitude towards the pain so that he or she was less distressed by it. Xrue, and annoying but there are ways to recreate distress. Often the treatment altered the nature of the pain he proudly adds and thus in several amputees the position of the phantom limb and its concomitant pain were altered rather than relieved. Yes, there are ways.

Still, they do make the task more and more difficult. In the old days they believed merely in conditioning methods, an empty name forth, attempt to raise the threshold simply through the refusal of those in authority to admit the existence of the phantom pain. As if one could refuse to admit the existence of a ghost. They have to admit it now. Unfortunately they also study it, which does make the task more difficult, even though they do not wholly understand it yet. Why, for instance, the ghost pain haunts at such an unpredictable rhythm, leaving an amputee in peace for twenty years and suddenly appearing, inexorable, excruciating. Or why it materialises in the phantom shape of the foot only, or the hand, not the whole limb, although the limb is also a phantom and the real pain in the stumpy aches in every neurone. And yet it is obvious that to be effective pain must attack the most active therefore vulnerable part of the central memory-image, the extremities

weight curler  
 11111111 with earth air and water,)the soles that bear the whole  
 11111111·xslslence as man transmutes bis structural archetypes from  
 , m l,•d lo lying to upright position and learns the shapes of time food  
 11.,,i.1 dark play by lingering breasts limbs balls cuddly animals. But  
 1licre are other reasons. Ghosts must preserve some mystery.

If they can. Certainly knowledge is advancing. White sun, for instance, or audio-analgesia to be more precise can annihilate us if only for a while. But leucotomy is the great enemy, resorted to quite openly in cases of intractable□phantom pain. Nice word, intractable, in view of  
 ( the way we phantoms/nfiltrate ourselves down the pathways of pain, down the spinothalamic tract to be precise, not that I'm partial to  
 • words, they can be enemies too, but I like words that bring alive my  
 ( task my journey down the pathways of pain, down the spinothalamic tract into which they now however introduce electrodes in a stereotactic procedure to produce a phantom pain and out where exactly to coagulate. Very dangerous. Obviously, since the phantom is not the real one but electrically raised. The result is only too often spasticism in the other limb on the same side and loss of upward conjugate gaze. Eyes open can bring beauty alive with awareness terror pain despair or anger not to mention the alluring invitation down the pathways to the womb and all the rest. A thirty-year-old woman not as attractive but still desirable and successfully haunted by an excruciating phantom in the foot no longer there was very agitated and importunate says Mr. Poole the surgeon but after a leucotomy she became calm, the importunacy vanished and she only referred to the pain when asked if it existed. It is true he innocently proudly adds that she then said it was excruciating. Ghosts must preserve some power.

If they can. There are still ways of lowering the threshold. Severe mental deprivation or retardation for example raise it and the highly intelligent undoubtedly suffer more than the plethoric unimaginaive like thejast one a man plethoric unimaginaive. That was a hopeless attempt.jt's best to haunt the intelligent.jhey are not used to responding fully with their bodies and the shock is greater.

But it also makes the task more difficult in other ways, though inter-

•sting. The present victim is not only beautiful, pale of course, ashen pale in all that hair ashen pale from lack of v.iolent activity including sex but intelligent. She thinks about me, thus creating my shape, to-J  
 gether with its pain, thus giving me existen□e as a foot, the prettiest foot I have ever been and perhaps was before the leg was lacerated wrenched and crushed in all that,twisted car metal because it's hard to tell whether I once was her real foot or not, so completely do I now achieve identification as her phaQtom foot slim long and gracefully arched and well sprung above a most shapely big toe. That's where I manage to hurt most. But she thinks intelligently 'fbout me, in the fut]  
 knowledge that I am not really there attached to the long space that is her phantom leg also not there. She winds me round with other thoughts like boring details of hospy;al routine that loom larger than life or intrinsic worth and wrap;each phantom fibre of m0ke a medullary sheath at times. But at times only for I have my rhythm and several other amputees to haunt which would tend to prove that I never was her personal real foot in a full schedule with necessary rest-periods to withdraw my atoms in quiescence before gathering them up into the neuroblasts that will create me anew within her brain along the spinothalamic tract and the efferent fibres down to the neuroma in the stump where the axons of the severed nerves proliferate wildly and send back false messages to the cortical areas that will soon when the strong tranquilliser dies build up from them the central image of a limb no longer there but wrenched and lacerated crushed and cut now cleanly, surgically away, if cleanly it can be called with such a tumorous antheap in the stump. And now she thinks about me, giving me]  
 strength, existence, and creating my shape, her slim long phantom foot, her unendurable phantom pain.

She cries quietly. I find this very exciting. The imitation neurones 1:..J am now composed of agitate their dendrites like tremulous antennae interlacing intermingling or the frictioning legs of flies that swarm as the cell bodies dance through the synapses and I want her to scream.

But she cries quietly. She is not only beautiful but brave, pale of course ashen pale in all that ashen hair like dead nerve fibres that con-

conduct no pain themselves but sheath the white face crisped in a cramp  
 agony of sharp nails driven into the into the bones of the metatarsus and the  
 ball of the foot that only wily exists within the white matter of the mid-brain  
 as a yin I, with its hcr\_face/4nd as crisped in its creation of my shape  
 with its e

"ii, nurse. It's very bad. But give me another injection. I must learn  
 to deal with it.

Not if I can help it.

-That's right, dear. I wasn't going to. It's time for your percussion  
 soon.

-Ohno.

-Oh yes. You know it'll do you good.

-But it's agony. And it doesn't help at all.

Alas it does, it is the death of me, although it hurts her real pain in  
 the stump neuroma.

-It's agony at first, love. Like wearing the padded cast the day after  
 the operation. But then the pressure gradually deadened the pain,  
 didn't it? It's the same with percussion. You'll see, in time. Like tapping  
 a bad tooth.

-Temporarily perhaps. But it doesn't cure the tooth does it. And the  
 tooth exists, and is sick. Why should banging my stump with a mallet  
 stop the pain in a foot I merely imagine?

Her intelligence will be the death of me, despite the lower threshold  
 it creates to help me.

-And why do I get pain in the imagined foot anyway, and not in the  
 whole leg? I imagine the leg too. And the stump hurts like hell. But  
 that's different, it's real pain, so it's bearable, however acute.

-Yes dear, **Kriow**:--

-Do you, nurse? Pain is so personal.

-Subjectiva dear, that's right. You'll be coming on nicely once you  
 recognise that.

-My foot is an object. Outside myself. It exists.

-In your mind, love. Only in your mind. Mr. Poole explained it to  
 you, didn't he?

-Oh yes, I know. The central nervous system can't get rid of its body-  
 Image/it's got so used to it after all those years. Twenty-two years to be  
 precise. As if that helped. Only twenty-two. Why did I have to go with  
 Denis in his crazy car? I didn't even like him. It's so unfair, it's-

-Now my dear, don't upset yourself. You'll only make it worse.

-It hurts, it hurts, I can't bear it, nurse, please give me something, I  
 can't bear it.

She cries much more than quietly, she shouts, she sobs, she  
 yells, she gasps. I find it very exciting, the imitation neurones I am  
 composed of agitate their dendrites like mad ganglia that arborise the  
 system as the cell bodies dance along the axis cylinder within the fibres  
 of the foot that isn't there, moving backwards now, tugging away from  
 the interlace antennae away from the selves from the  
 submicroscopic umbilical cord anchored into soft tissue, caught into  
 bone, straining, straining of freedom birth and terror of time and space  
 as the impulses race down the fibrils and create me, shape me and I  
 ache strongly, I swell to huge existence that possesses her wholly and  
 loves her loves her loves and hurts her unendurably until the cortical  
 area can only respond by switching off the supply of blood along the  
 nerves going out of the spinal cord so that she faints.

She looks so beautiful, so white and ashen pale in all that ashen hair  
 like dead nerve fibres that conduct no pain themselves but sheath the  
 white face peaceful now with conjugate upward gaze vanished beyond  
 the slit eyelids to face the darker phantoms of the womb the tomb the  
 cavern the ebb and flow of endless tides linked to the sun-devouring  
 moon monster of chasm death and timelessness that draws the human  
 soul like a magnet from the moment of the first fall wre OSbof umbilical  
 rough manhandling tumbling lying in soft cloud sucking at  
 heaven severed from weight of body on stumbling legs and fall through  
 days and minutes. Eyes open can bring archetypes alive and love that  
 draws me to her like a magnet as she wakes and there there, love, lie  
 quietly you'll feel better now.

-Yes. Thank you nurse.

As if she had done anything.

-Nurse.

-Yes, love?

-Is it true that children amputated before the age of four don't get phantom pains? Mr. Poole told me.

They do like to remind us of our powerless spheres. I feel exhausted, impotent.

-Well, if Mr. Poole told you, it must be true, mustn't it?

-That doesn't follow. Mr. Poole says a lot of things to patients to cheer them up. But like all doctors he's so busy he forgets we're individuals. For instance the other day, during percussion, he said-

-That reminds me, it's time. Are you all right now dear?

She retreats as usual into her obsession with Mr. Poole the surgeon the knife-man the castrator. She drowns in Mr. Poole, dipping her nerve-ends in soft surrounding tissue as in watery oedema, wrapping each phantom fibre of me with a medullary sheath of myelin that winds me round with thoughts of Mr. Poole and all that Mr. Poole has said in molecular detail to relieve soothe stimulate and occupy. I do not mind however at present being thus wound round cut off castrated as a phantom limb for I have temporarily spent my energy in possessing her so hugely hurtfully and I must rest recuperate my atoms while the rubber mallet knocks at her stump neuroma for ten minutes of time until with each knock several hundred unmyelinated nerve-fibres degenerate and after days weeks months curl up and die. But the real pain in her stump does not concern me, being as she so wisely says real therefore bearable. I merely take advantage of its existence in the early stages to increase my shape my hugeness my hold on her, I borrow its pain returning it with impulse interest. I draw my main strength though from the central image of me, so that after months of intimate relationship I am able to create myself out of this central image without recourse to the pain in the stump which may have vanished almost entirely after years or recur just intermittently according to stress and strain but unrelatedly to my sudden visitations. Ghosts have their own rhythms, must preserve independence, mystery.

I am beginning to miss her. It's always a bad sign when I start analys-

ing my methods of self-creation self-absorption more like. She is hc, -st•ll absorbed away from me in Mr. Poole, who is gentlemanly with silver hair and sexy eyes he knows just how to use to arouse the right degree of emotional involvement in his patients. He comes into the women's ward saying why haven't you brushed that lovely hair young lady and where's your handbag sweetie there take out your compact and a little lipstick too I like my patients to look<feJninine even the day after there that's better I thought you were so pretty, on the operation table but a little pale as if anyone could look pretty in an oxygen mask. Even the men respond from submerged rivalry for his good, looks frustration father-dependence and castration fears well founded<sup>o</sup>. as he taps their stumps with a rubber mallet in percussion therapy talking softly of problems pains and phantoms and get quite annoyed when Dr. Willett does it instead.

When is she coming back? Is it ten minutes or ten days since I last possessed her? I am losing track of time, always a ghostly failing when out of sense out of mind. She doesn't think of me. She is absorbed in Mr. Poole's silvering hair sexy eyes and soft words like young lady very pleased with you which flow even through the neurilemma across the myelin sheaths of every fibre and send impulses down the unsolid structures of the fibrils past the nodes where somehow they transmute into unformulated other words my little girl my love my sweet good little girl that float their chaotic particles around the entire autonomous system back up the spine into the thalamus with no more than a mild thermal sensation in the phantom foot as I grow jealous at a distance in lost space and time. I should have gone with her. But he would have observed me. And I was tired. And now I am restless at her absence from me.

He is explaining to her in a suave and sexy voice that the phantom pain is related to a central excitatory state with emphasis on the inter-nuncial pool of the spinal cord or in other words my dear the higher sensory centres, with resulting summation of abnormal stimuli and a persistence of the pain pattern due to higher-level involvement. What is summation she asks to hide her confusion at the word involvement.

I'm sorry darling oh he calls everyone darling it's his therapeutic way you're so intelligent I forget you're not professional that too is his therapeutic way with her it merely means the total sum, you know, all the abnormal stimuli working together at once. And internuncial well you've heard of a nuncio haven't you, a messenger or ambassador of the Pope, it's the same with the nerves, they send messengers who gather together in the internuncial pool, like a typing pool you know, that's why I'm called Poole, ha, I receive all the nerve messages of all my patients and I sort them out and soothe them, like the pool of Lethe darling, so that they don't hurt any more, you see. For a while at least.

Until your next visit.

-You seem intent on building up an emotional dependence in me. If you go on like that I'll get the phantom pain every time I'm due to see you.

-Now don't be too intelligent, sweetie, or you'll make it worse.

-Why abnormal stimuli working all together? What's abnormal about me?

-Not you, darling. You're a normal healthy lovely girl and you will soon be leading a normal healthy lovely life if you're good and do as I say.

The words flow through the myelin sheaths of every nerve and send impulses up and down the unsolid structures of the fibrils past the nodes where somehow they transmute to a normal healthy love life not quite formulated as they float in scattered particles slowly around the autonomous system back into the cerebrospinal and drown in the internuncial pool before reaching the thalamus. She lies calm serene almost euphoric on her bed her open eyes alive with liquid tenderness and the alluring invitation down the pathways to the womb the ebb and flow of time linked to the sun-devouring moon white chasm of heaven and timelessness that draws me like a magnet from the moment I am unconscious of my rebirth in desire to recreate my shape her phantom foot and devastate her beauty with my aching hugeness as an intractable phantom pain.

She shall love me want me need me despite her intelligence or even

because of. She shall desire me to recreate my shape her phantom foot in her mind for the soft-voiced sexy-eyed attention of Mr. Poole the knife-man the castrator of that shape once in intimate touch with earth air water mother belly and bearing the whole weight of her existence in upright position on that shape of bone flesh fibre skin deeply engraved within the cellular composition of the left mid-brain at the level of the superior colliculus six millimetres lateral to the aqueduct of Sylvius in the region of the pain pathways. She shall cherish her symptoms.

How strong I was on that first day when she came to from dreamless anaesthetic nothingness and wanted to get up convinced her leg her foot were there after all the surgeon having somehow mended soothed plasticised remade the crushed and lacerated limb that now just dully ached through the still slumbering nerves. I watched her wake, so beautiful in her pallor sheathed with pale gold like myelin round dead fibres that conduct no pain. And the astonishment hope wonder in her sleepy siren's eyes that seemed to surface from deep waters moving with the sun-devouring moon great chasm of death and timelessness to which an must return drawn like a magnet from the moment of the fall the wrench of umbilical placenta through manhandling tumbling lying in soft tissue sucking at the day that streams its minutes into weening separation weight of body on crumbling legs and fall through months and years. Even then I knew in a split atom of time bombarded by her beauty that it would have to be the higher-level involvement for my pains and I felt awed but strong with resulting summation of abnormal stimuli my shape quite hypertrophied though slim still in her mind and gracefully arched the prettiest foot I have ever been and perhaps was before her leg was lacerated crushed in all that twisted car metal.

The optic thalamus in the cerebral cortex was working hard and suddenly awake she saw me clear as I stretched my imitation metatarsus long gracefully arched towards the malleolar prominences on either side of her slim ankle up the shapely shin the rounded knee the dimple in the flesh of the popliteal fossa behind the knee till suddenly she threw back the bedclothes saw the stump bandaged into gaping void.) and gasped, then started moaning like an animal or a woman about to

come, it was very exciting. I had existed so strong so hypertrophic! I almost ceased to be. But her terror her suffering as I galvanized my impulses into the free nerve-terminations, pain fibres afferent proprioceptive and she screamed, oh, I knew then that the viscerosomatic element of her inner eye would always help me despite her intelligence or perhaps because

111.

Words are my enemies. The words of Mr. Poole and Dr. Willett but especially Mr. Poole soft-voiced and sexy-eyed with his demands for lipstick hairbrushing self-confidence vanity and his explanations that soothe strengthen her understanding. She winds me round with words that formulate new thoughts of her mother her boyfriends and her job past present future which wrap each fibre of me like a medullary sheath at times. But only at times for I have my rhythm and although too engrossed obsessed too highly involved now with her to haunt other amputees I need my rest-periods. Not too long however. I am beginning to need her more than my rest-periods, to ache for her recognition of my existence, of my shape as a foot that belongs to her ineradicably and intimately within her cerebrospinal system bombarding it through all its impulse-bearing tracts with an intractable pain. The real danger of words is that they create thoughts which lead to other thoughts and these if stimulating and distracting and absorbing enough may smother me altogether or knock me out like a percussion mallet until my imitation unmyelated nerve-fibres degenerate curl up and die. If she starts thinking constructively about her future for instance. But there are ways. The words of Mr. Poole do have a side-effect that helps me, building up as she so intelligently said an emotional dependence from visit to visit the intelligent recognition which can in no wise prevent. For his soft-voiced and sexy-eyed attention she too often desires to recreate my phantom shape her foot once in intimate touch with earth air water mother belly and bearing the whole weight of her existence in upright position on that structure of bone flesh fibre skin now pierced with sharp nails driven into the metatarsus and the ball of the foot that only

exists as an image deeply engraved within the left midbrain as greyish white as her face and as crisped in its creation of my shape she cherishes with its concomitant phantom pain./

You are cherishing your symptoms)hy dear says Mr. Poole severely nevertheless gentle tap on the stump the neuroma almost circumscribed mature now non-proliferating healed and she has never heard the phrase before.

It means, darling, that although the phantom pain is undoubtedly real to you, the causes are more psychogenic now than physiological, what we call a functional pain. Don't look so insulted, sweetie, I'm not saying you're deranged nor that you're malingering. Malingering is very rare in this field. But some patients, who are depressive or hysterical, unconsciously prolong their symptoms even for years and years, and suffer genuine agonies that in the end can only be dealt with by sympathectomy, which is not as you might think darling, don't look so frightened, the removal of sympathy but the removal of certain nerves or rather ganglia in the sympathetic autonomous nervous system, a small local operation. But you don't want more surgery do you, or, for that matter, a leucotomy, that's much more drastic.

-What! Never.

-Well, there you are. That's by way of a playful threat darling since you're not in fact either depressive or hysterical but a normal healthy girl who's had a nasty shock and a nasty operation. Would you like another course of electroencephalic treatment? That gave you some relief, didn't it?

-No.

-Well, there's a new thing called white sun, a nice poetic name for audio-analgesia, it's fed into the ear over such a range of auditory stimuli it swamps all the receptors in the brain-

-Shut up!

-I was hoping you'd say that. All right darling, calm down. You want to deal with this yourself. You're a good brave girl. doing very well with the new artificial limb, I hear from physiotherapy. That's quite comfortable, isn't it? Doesn't hurt? Good. And are you occupying your mind?

-Yes.

-Good. what with?

-Oh, thoughts. Ideas.

-Now that's not so good. You mustn't get ideas. What thoughts? You should do something. Prepare for ordinary life. We'll be discharging you soon and you must think of that.

-You just told me thoughts are not so good.

-Smart girl, you'll be all right. Do you have a job you can go back to?

-I was a model.

-Oh. I'm sorry sweetie, you did tell me and so did your mother. Yes. I

forgot for a moment.

-You have so many patients.

That's no excuse.

a matter of fact

I

To whom, darling?

Just write. You know, novels.

As I thought, perhaps, I could write.

-Oh yes. Love stories you mean? Or spies? Why not, there's a lot of money in it. As long as you don't get too excited yourself, tension brings back the phantom you know.

-Well, I wasn't exactly thinking of love stories no she isn't exactly thinking of love stories or spies although I love her and I spy on her through the symptoms which she cherishes a little for the soft-voiced and sexy-eyed sympathy of the internuncial pool in the spinal cord in other words my dear my little girl my love my good sweet little girl the higher sensory centres with resulting summation of abnormal stimuli and persistence of the pain pattern she cherishes due to higher-level involvement fear of sympathectomy and white sun swamping all receptors in her brain. She is thinking of me to write about in order to get me out of her system as they call it not sympathetic or parasympathetic autonomous but cerebrospinal out of her midbrain on topaper instead of aching there fifty-three and a half centimetres away from her stump now circumscribed mature and non-proliferating with a phantom lower leg between though painless but undoubtedly projecting out the pain of sharp nails driven into the metatarsus and the ball of

the foot that only exists in the higher sensory centres near the optic thalamus with which she sees me in her inner eye visio-erotically lateral to the aqueduct of Sylvius in the region of the pain pathways until I exist again so strong so hypertrophied and so sensuously detailed that I galvanise my impulses up the free nerve-terminations of her pain fibres afferent proprioceptive and she starts moaning like an animal or a woman in joy ineffable.

I shall not let her get rid of me with words that recreate my shape my galvanising atoms of agony on mere paper to be read by careless unsuspecting millions vicariously and thus dispersed. I shall possess her and I possess her again obsessing her absorbing her growing strong on her distress that excites me and recreates my shape as her sweet phantom foot with its associated pain intractable unendurable and cherished.

She writes however. She has a biro pen and a small exercise book Denis brought her. He got off with a broken arm worn in a sling for a while and looked like Napoleon short podgy oddly continental with a thin straight wisp from his receding hair down over his brow but constantly smoothed back and patted down as he says how are you dear and the brow contracts a little with guilt concern embarrassment fear removing the sympathy and any love that might have been with two legs. She uses him but not so much as well she might and he brings her fruit and flowers and books she wants about amputation syndromes not magazines full of models and the biro pen and the small exercise book that stays closed and empty for some time as I continue to possess her again and again growing huge on her distress that excites me in increasing rhythm and recreates my shape and my obsession with her aching my desire. Despite the increasing rhythm however or because of I need the rest-periods to withdraw my atoms after detumescence before gathering them up into the neuroblasts that will formulate me anew within her brain along the spinothalamic tract and the efferent fibres and she opens meanwhile the small exercise book and in thin impersonal strokes she writes the words she hears like white sun swamp- ing all other receptors in the brain so that the white page slowly engraves itself with the victim to be haunted is female. And beautiful. This



timelessness that draws her like a magnet from the moment of the fall wrench of umbilical muscle rough manhandling tumbling lying in soft tilsst•c sucking .it heaven severed weight of body on crumbling legs and r,1111 lu•o11gh days and minutes. Eyes open can bring archetypes alive 111d Inve I hnt draws \_me like a magnet from the moment of my rebirth in It•slo1o1o recreate my shape her phantom foot and devastate her beauty wit li my aching hugeness as an intractable phantom pain.

Yes, there are ways to recreate distress, less often perhaps, which is the way of intimacy and even haunting has its rhythm decreasing increasing according to stress fatigue drugs general constitution previous equilibrium distraction violent activity including sex and writing. I shall learn to be more discreet, play hard to get perhaps but only play. I cannot live without her and I know her weakness now, I know she needs my love my presence my shape her slim long phantom foot with its concomitant hugeness as a phantom pain.

She cries quietly now. I find this very exciting.

## The Needle Man and the Scent Maker

The Scent Maker has a feeling, tpat the Needle Man will be in an angry mood. Relatively angry, for a sage.

The waiting room is almost as smelly as it is dark, for there are human beings, and the waiting is long, and the day is *hot*, and the plane trees on that side of the house shut out the dazzling sun. The waiting room is chilly and dark, but the chill and the dark seem only to preserve, dankly, each individual hot smell which the human beings bring from outside, in hidden recesses. The Scent Maker closes his eyes.

'Dear God I thank you and the Needle Man that I can still smell the bad smells. But dear, dear God and please Needle Man let me not lose the good smells for ever. And ever Amen.'

The Needle Man isn't even there yet, '*Il accouche*,' his secretary has said as if he were Zeus, and the Scent Maker sees him in a mind's eye bubble, giving birth out of his head or thigh to a dreamy female in auze and little else, other than the perfume she advertises. The mind's :ye bubble bursts. The Needle Man is famous as the best midwife in the region. He does it with needles. He is much in demand therefore, and a difficult birth can scatter his schedule for days.

Tyres growl suddenly up the gravel of the drive and screech to a stop. In the dark room the round and the long, the bilious and the sanguine, the young and the old faces, placid from waiting, light up with varied hopes of loving attention. Doubt flickers also. Is it the doctor, or merely another patient?

He storms through to his consulting room with a wild bonjour thrown at the circle of reproachful or expectant eyes. A well-dressed woman is already on her feet and follows him in, clanking shut the big double doors, first one and then the other.