

## Prologue

*One last stop in the bathroom, before Peter and I leave to visit Fidel.*

*No.*

*Who is that woman in my mirror? I've never seen her before. Gray, thin hair, mouth enclosed by deep parentheses, wrinkling squint of blue eyes.*

*Blue eyes? That doesn't seem right. No. The old woman in the mirror, she is not me, that's not what I look like. I look like ... well, now I can't ... I had it, but it's gone.*

*Just a fraying of my apperception – the mind's self-reflection upon itself.*

*Why is that useless word available for instant retrieval, but recalling names or how long it's been since I saw my son Fidel or recognizing ... myself ... in the mirror? I never forget a face, but for you I'll make an exception.*

*Grow up Sandy, I smile at that soft face in the mirror. Sixty-three and still stealing jokes from Groucho. Wait, sixty-three? Sixty-four?*

*Only numbers. I was just trying to do my thing, and we kept going around the sun, and the numbers piled up. Whatever lessons my life had to offer, let's hope it's stored up here somewhere with me in the attic of my mind, all these dusty boxes.*

*How long have I been standing here? The stranger in the mirror looks back at me blankly. Maybe it's all that dope I smoked my whole life.*

*We're leaving to visit Fidel, and meet his girlfriend. Traveling is exactly what I need. The traveler's mind is washed in flowing water, I remember that from long ago.*

*I only hope my temporary confusions go unnoticed. Can't let anyone know there's a chink in my armor, that good old rule of mine. I don't care what other people*

*think, but I don't want Fidel to be embarrassed by my absent-mindedness, the sudden potholes that appear in the middle of what I'm going to say.*

*No, not true. I do care what people think. How could I not? Their judgments of my life story are as valid as my own. Maybe more so, now. As pieces of me disappear, other voices might take their place. Don't we need each other, to know ourselves?*

*My friends, enemies, strangers in line at the grocery store – do any of them know the truth of me? Or am I the sum of all their perceptions, like a cubist painting? What will people say at my funeral? My son, my husband, my dead mother – they would each describe completely different people.*

*Love melts the observer into the observed.*

*If only I could go back through my life, see it from a different point-of-view, reflected through someone else's experience, maybe I'd understand myself better. Risky, though. Do I really want to know? I hope I wouldn't be condemned by how I acted in my darkest times. Because that might be a problem.*

*I must not measure myself against who I was, or who I used to want to be. Because I'm still becoming something. Maybe I'm becoming this woman in the mirror?*

*Oops – all that and I forgot to pee.*