

All Over America

All over America, and maybe the world,
they get up on some soon-to-be-bright
Saturday morning (it's always Saturday morning)
and begin the plans...That's how it starts.
Little nuggets of unpolished thought that
begin to glitter more with each added detail.
Out come the tools, the hammer and saw
and the nails -- 12 pennies of bright steel,
too big for the job (but they hold better),
and wood, 2 x 4's, orange crates,
or maybe none at all.
"Where's the card table?"...
Crayons or what's-so-magic-about-them markers,
and cardboard for signs.
The construction's almost done
before it's started,
and then put in place.
And they sit on the curb-side,
in the heat of the day,
re-adjusting wind blown signs,
holding down the paper cups with stones,
marking down the prices (from 10 cents to 5)
drinking up their wares,
and waiting
for the customers
that never,
ever,
come.

May 1, 1983

At What Point

At what point does love begin?
Does a lover know it a minute later,
that that point in time was it?
"A minute ago I fell in love" she could
say.
At what point do lovers fall out of love?
Does the lover know it years later?
"At that point in time, two years ago,
I fell out of love" she says.

December 8th 1994

Back Over There

I want to be over there on your side
Here I become you.
Here at this point , this point in the story.
Take over.
I want you to speak for me and help me,
back over there, to get the message.
Talk out loud.
Scream at that miserable man.
Or just whisper, I'm in here now with you.
I want to see your needs are met, so
talk in a language I can understand.
That's all I want, and then I'll go
back to me and tell you everything I've
learned.
But is that what you really need?
I've got to pin it down myself.
I'm not sure I can
without some word from you.

December 8, 1994

Boys throw stones at frogs in sport,
but the frogs do not die in sport,
They die in earnest. Plutarch

STONES

As a boy of 9 or 10, I lived, for a time, in a small
Huckleberry Finn town along the Wisconsin River,
where logs came down the river and paper went out by rail.
The air was filled with the fumes of sulfur, so thick, at times it
choked even the grass yellow.
Our house was on a hill halfway between my two favorite
playgrounds,
the river and the rail yard.
On this day the earth had tilted just enough to start me off toward
the trains.
Where the tracks fanned out to 20 or more from the one that led
into and out of town.
It was here that the
flare carrying,
coal dust covered,
rolled-up sleeved,
railroad men could shuffle those boxcars into trains
like the decks they used to kill time when the yard was empty.
I wandered through the yard that smelled of crude oil and creosote,
skipping on the ties and tightrope walking the rails.
Reading the names on the boxcars,
B&O, Southern Pacific, and Soo Line.
Some were open and empty, except for brown paper wrapped
shavings
and metal bindings.
Others were packed full and locked with a seal so thin it seemed
incapable
of doing the job.
Still others had no seal but were closed, and all it took to see the
“treasures of the Soo Line” was to lift the latch,
and slide open the big corrugated metal door.
And on that day I did.
It rumbled open with a shout,
and through its mouth spewed and flowed a hundred surprised and
fluttering pigeons that drove me back.

I knelt for a stone and threw it into the swirling mass.
One fell bloody and quivering at my feet.
I was as stunned as the bird.
Why didn't it just right itself and fly to join the others?
I cupped it in my hands and held its head and neck erect,
but my hands had no special healing power,
and my tears that fell upon the bird, baptized it in the cruelest
way.
I covered it with railroad gravel and
stepped between the ties
did not touch the rails,
and walked
back home
slowly.

October 1983

the cement truck

the cement truck
threw-up
all over the
road
this morning.
and now we know
who loves
cathy k.

Montclair State 1966

DICK MEETS JANE

SEE DICK.
SEE DICK WALK.
WALK DICK WALK.
SEE SPOT.
SPOT IS A DOG.
SPOT IS DICK'S DOG.
WALK WITH DICK, SPOT.
WALK SPOT WALK.
SEE JANE IN THE PARK.
SEE JANE'S DOG.
JANE'S DOG IS PUFF.
SEE PUFF RUN.
RUN PUFF RUN.
SPOT SEES PUFF.
SPOT LIKES WHAT HE SEES.
DICK SEES JANE.
DICK LIKES WHAT HE SEES.
SPOT BREAKS LOOSE.
(DICK LET GO).
RUN SPOT RUN.
RUN TO PUFF.
RUN VERY FAST.
HEAR DICK YELL.
"STOP SPOT".
SPOT DOES NOT STOP.
DICK IS GLAD SPOT DOES NOT STOP.
RUN DICK RUN.
RUN AFTER SPOT.
SPOT WAGS AT PUFF.
PUFF WAGS BACK.
SPOT SNIFFS PUFF.
SNIFF, SNIFF, SNIFF.
PUFF SNIFFS TOO.
DICK RUNS TO SPOT.
JANE RUNS TO PUFF.
DICK SAYS, "HELLO".
JANE SAYS, "HELLO".

MAY 3, 1986

e=mc²

in england,
they
spell color
with an
o
u
r
and drive
on the
wrong side of the
road
2

Montclair State 1966

Gorgeous Girl

(to Nadja)

"I'm 'Gorgeous Girl', I can be any animal,
anything, run fast and fly," is her chant.
And the game is started.
"OK, you're an eagle looking for food," we say.
And she soars above the living room,
glides through the dining room, and lands on her prey
in the kitchen.
And the eagle gets tired of the game and we all applaud...
"I'm-Gorgeous-Girl-I-can-be-any-animal-anything-run-fast-and-fly."
"Be a mean old teacher," we say.
And we're almost sorry because she is so mean,
and we can't have any fun,
and all we do is work, work, work and we laugh.
Then, even "Gorgeous Girl" gets tired,
and has to be tucked in and kissed.
"What do you want to be when you grow up?" I ask.
"First a nurse, then everything."
(Impossible) I almost say.
And the big-people-thought gets tangled up with
Gorgeous Girl's acts,
and I see that she can be anything and everything,
if just for one brief moment,
or maybe for a whole act...
"OK." I say to a nearly sleeping Gorgeous Girl
who can be any animal, and anything, run fast, and fly.

February 6, 1983

Miss Grace Eggersdorf

"Miss Grace Eggersdorf" could still be read on the rusted mailbox beside the grassy lane that led to her house.

The trees had long ago crept in so close,
that the old house could hardly breathe,
and her garden, circled half heartedly with chicken-wire,
snatched at every ray.

The house was wooden, and the wood was dark,
any hint of paint had long ago disappeared.

It was a perfect witch's house to the boys who didn't know her.

She even looked the part.

Her gray hair pulled back in a bun from her weathered face.

Her near toothless mouth cackled when she spoke or laughed.

She was as round as she was tall, and wore rubber boots and a printed cotton dress,
that hung loosely around her weight as she worked in her garden.

She and the plants drank from the creek,

and the well worn path to it was more than 80 years old when I first saw it.

The cool breath of earthen floors and kerosene met you on the path,
even before you entered the house.

The smoke touched ceilings and walls of the room were warmed

from the cast-iron stove that heated the tea that was later set

on the wooden table by the window that watched the woods and garden.

Birds, one and two, then more, flitted in to eat seeds at a feeder just outside the
window.

"That's Alice", she said of one.

"And that's Charley, Oh, he's such a bully" with a cackling laugh.

We watch the birds awhile and I ask about the garden.

"Oh, the rabbit family gets most of it. I haven't the heart to chase them away."

"I don't mind really, they leave me all I need."

In the dark of the room, on the opposite wall, a map of the United States,

dotted with push-pins, each marking the location of an old friend or student of hers.

Hung above her bed so she could think about them all before she falls asleep, she
said.

I lean in closer, find my pin, and smile.

She died a few months after the visit. The house has been torn down.

The garden is gone and the bird feeder's empty, and I wonder if all those "pin-people"
feel as sad as I do, that the gentle old teacher is gone.

April 25, 1994

Grey

This morning, early,
I took the "grey" out of the
raspberry thicket.
Dead canes in a pile,
I "greyed" the air,
and then the red-brown earth
with the ashes left behind.
Turned with a spade, the grey leaves
shed by the maples before winter,
and watched the mixture turn
red-brown
again.

April 1984

John Hendrickson and John Deere

*We make up lines to fill in the spaces,
For our childhood memories, that have left only traces.*

He was always old. Mustached and white haired.
His hands (farmer hands) were large, but not crude.
The Canadian winters had knocked most of the humor out of him,
and fields cleared of pine forests and rocks had slowed him down.
When I (age 7) first remember him, he took me out, on a late spring day,
to one of those fields, on an iron wheeled tractor named John Deere,
that coughed so rhythmically, you could count the heart beats.
He showed me the levers (one to make it go and one to make it go faster),
helped me, from the iron seat, steer it across the field in a straight line
dragging an iron toothed harrow, (weighted down at the corners
with four large field stones) and just before the small creek
that cut through the field (spoiling its symmetry)
we swung old John Deere around by his huge steering wheel
and started back across the field.
Then somewhere in the middle, Grandfather jumped off...
"Turn it off when you get tired!" he yelled, as he turned and walked toward home.
Did I remember how to turn it off? I know he'd showed me.
The iron cogs of the tractor wheels kept coming up over the back,
and disappearing down over the front of the fenders.
I was still moving, but was I going straight?
I leaned on the wheel and brought it around at the end of the field,
right along side that line that separated the rough and smooth earths.
Grandfather was out on the dusty road home.
He never looked back, and disappeared behind a collection of old sheds and farm
buildings that stuck out from the woods.
I was by myself with a great weight,
greater than that of the tractor's.
Yet the sky never seemed bluer, or the air crisper.
I smelled the earth that I was smoothing,
and listened to the tractor's pulse.
I don't remember if I finished the whole field,
but I still feel the little taller I felt when I climbed down off the
silent John Deere,
and started home,
following my grandfather's foot prints in the smooth earth.

March 1983

the magician

at 4 this morning
the magician woke me,
and i listened
to the tingling sounds
of his magic
as he bounded from house to house
changing
empty milk bottles into full ones

Montclair State 1966

Mushrooms

Mushrooms for their own sake growing,
Only-in damp corners of box-fields.
With sides of woven woods. Trees,
(young ones) first crawl, then stand,
and weave new sides,
smaller boxes,
more damp corners for mushrooms...
for their own sake growing,
new mushrooms.

August 6, 1981
At Blackmer Farm
Woodstock, Vermont

NIGHT FLIGHT

Coasting in on slow time.
Smooth descent on a
clock-tick pulse.
Stea-dy....Stea-dy....Stea-dy
Hot awake
Body worn
Stea-dy....Stea-dy....Stea-dy
On sale (on sail)
(Bowl) the man down.
With this ring I thee (Web).
Stea-dy....Stea-dy....Stea-dy
Simon Web....Stea-dy...
Joana Law....Stea-dy...
David Penn....Stea-dy...
1947..1947..1947..1947..1947..
Stalled in a head wind.
Blown off course.
Low ceiling.
Landing gear down.
No runway.
No lights.
No one waiting.

July 7, 1989

Night Lights

From the house window, looking down, I see
the mail post, painted white.
It throws off the front porch light,
And seems to wander about the yard on its own free will,
touching the tops of the cricket grass.
Edges fade to dark, but blaze back when headlights pass
and sweep the ceiling of the room (wrong way around).
I sit with poetic embers still aglow, although with some strong
protests at joints of branch and trunk.
The sparks, like warning shots across the ashen brick wall,
stage a 21-gun-salute....a shooting star.
I wish I could write by starlight alone,
no crutches from the moon or bounced light of planets.
But it's no use, I have to stop or
turn on the light and flood the room with bolts
too strong for thought or reason.
So I stop.

December 18, 1984

Outside-Inside

Outside the room, whose eyes look out where
meadow and woods clash in the needled air,
battle for their own sake.

(though woods will win)

The wind has whipped the frightened sky gray, and
like a panicked crowd, swarms through the trees and
punishes them for standing tall by tearing off an arm or two.

(but they will grow new ones)

The meadow grasses flinch in waves and try to dodge
the splintered spears thrown by the woods.

(and the wind has taken sides)

Inside the room the amber flames of the autumn fire
dart out and paint the scene with a fluid flickered light.

(though the fuel is nearly spent)

Sometimes the fire's pops and sparkles overwhelm the
restful rhythmic tick and tock of the old clock.

(but slow and steady wins)

The steady light of the shaded lamp falls on the desk and paper,
where the muse driven movements of my pen record the scene.

(and I watch in awe)

November 19, 2001

Poems

Chipped teeth on granite curbing.
Poem-letters like ice, break off
and melt.

Seurat-bits placed in seeming
togetherness, next to one another,
like rain-drops walked through.

Rhymed-Fence-Words solidly planted
at the ends....until,

Stopped:

Absolutely still,

Quiet, Still.

August 5, 1981

At Blackmer Farm

Woodstock, Vermont

as i walked barefoot
through the ground glass
and hot coals,
wearing only my
hand-painted tie
with the picture of charles de gaulle
kissing (french)
the queen of england,
with l.b.j. waiting his turn
(to kiss charles)
in the background,
and drinking the original
boiler water from an 1896
stanley steamer.
i wonder if
somebody,
somewhere,
at the same time,
was doing the same thing
as
i

Montclair State 1966

Red next to yellow
could kill a fellow,
but red next to black
is O.K. jack.

Snake bite warning

A snake next to rock
A rock very hot
Shadows cross long
And the snake is soon gone

A cloud next to blue
An onliness true
With others again
Blown in with the rain

Me next to you
All colors for two
Lips next to ears
Hold secrets for years

We next to earth
Spun from our birth
And watch all around
Then dust next to ground

Moth next to green
Leaves all that is seen
Though it's not to blame
Moth next to flame

July 24, 1989

across the tree crowded space

across the tree crowded space
between.
between, the source of the sound
and me,
my mind wanders,
playing in this void,
and wondering,
wondering, what it's like
back there,
where
i am.

Montclair State 1966

Street Stars

I sit
high in the Apuane Mountains,
on a grape arbored terrace,
in an ancient village.
The garden fountain is turned off for the night.
Clouds have blocked the moon and stars.
No wishing stars tonight.
But down in the valley,
below the line of mountains,
The street stars have come on.
Like specks of fire,
pulsing embers,
some move among the constellations.
Clustered sparks.
No cloud burst can wash them away.
In my lamp light
I look for patterns,
but no Ursa Minor there,
and wonder,
if far below,
my light
(a substitute until the wind has blown the sky
cloud free)
is their wishing star tonight.

Sommocolonia, Italy
June 20, 2004

Boys throw stones at frogs in sport,
but frogs do not die in sport,
they die in earnest.

Plutarch

As a boy of 9 or 10, I lived for a time in a small
Huckleberry-Finn-town along the Wisconsin River.
Where logs came down the river, and paper went out by rail,
and the air was filled with the fumes of sulfur,
so thick at times, it choked even the grass yellow.
Our house was on a hill, halfway between my two favorite
playgrounds, the river and the rail-yard.
On this day the earth had tilted just enough to start me
off toward the trains, where the tracks fanned out to 20 or more,
from the one that led in and out of town,
so those
flare carrying
coal dust covered,
roll-up sleeved,
railroad men could shuffle those cars into trains
like the decks of cards they used to kill time when the yard was empty.
I wandered through the yard that smelled of crude oil and creosol,
skipping on the ties and tight-rope-walking the rails,
and reading the names on the box-cars.
B&O, Southern Pacific, and Soo Line.
Some were open and empty, except for brown paper wrapped shavings
and metal bindings.
Others were packed full and locked with a seal so thin it seemed
incapable of doing the job.
Still others had no seal and were closed,
and all it took to see the "Treasures of the Soo Line"
was to lift the latch and slide open the big corrugated metal door.
And on that day, I did.
It rumbled open with a shout
and through its mouth spewed and flowed a hundred surprised and
fluttering pigeons,
that drove me back.
I knelt for a stone and threw it into the mass.
One fell bloody and quivering at my feet.
I was as stunned as the bird.

Why didn't he just right himself and fly to join the others...
I held him in my hands and held his head and neck erect...
but my hands had no special healing power,
and my tears, that fell upon the bird,
baptized it in the cruelest way.
I covered it with railroad gravel and
stepped between the ties and
and did not touch the rails,
and walked back home
slowly.
September 1983

The Bull Dog

In the rain,
stopped sideways by the edge of the road,
sat idling, a tractor trailer.

A Mac truck.

The driver holding
his black umbrella over the dog.

A bull dog.

Every step was coaxed out of its ancient body,
back toward the open cab door.

Too high.

Too heavy to lift.

Too far to jump.

The two old friends performed their practiced
trick.

Front feet up,
back feet lifted,
and in.

October 2003

The Flowers

What do they know about life?
They just stand there,
feet in the soil,
reaching for the sun.
Impossible dream, the sun.
They grow so tall, then quit.
Shrink back down and die
on the soil where they stood.
The blooms are gone, the colors faded.
But they have left behind the next try
who will stretch, with feet in the soil,
to reach the sun.
Impossible dream, the sun.
What do they know about life?

December 1994

The Ad

(in two voices)

FOR SALE: CHARMING OLD COUNTRY HOUSE

Our home, we built 40 years ago

6.4 ACRES

on land we cleared

WITH GARDENS AND ORCHARDS

and planted with flowers and fruit

ON A SMALL PRIVATE POND

that we watered and cared for.

THE HOUSE, 4 BEDROOMS, 2 BATHS

Had three children,

LARGE KITCHEN AND

four counting the baby we lost.

FAMILY ROOM,

Raised them and let them go,

then stayed on 'til dusk.

SMALL OFFICE ADJOINING

When he died at his desk

GARAGE.

and they drove him away,

MUST SELL.

I could no longer stay.

July 14, 1982

Martha's Vineyard

The Old Barn

I looked at the old barn, and not knowing
its history through and through,
I wondered how it got the gash in the door, or
when it lost the shingle on the side.
I walked around it and looked at it as if I had
not seen it every day of my life.
It was there long before I got here,
and I swear it never changed.
But who is B.G. and the L.M. he or she loves?
And on what kind of day did the tattooing
take place on its weathered skin?
On what day --- What day exactly,
did the barn door hinge begin to rust?
Or the hornet begin to build his nest under the eave?
I mean was it a Friday?
Was it spring or winter?
Who drove the nails on the day the barn was born?
Or who painted it the first time? Or second, or the tenth time?
I drew out my pipe, and loaded it.
I struck my match across the
wind rough grain of the door, and
without intending to, left my mark.

David Mair April 28, 1984

The Pond

The pond
from tangled,
high,
clefted
grasses,
Spring fed.
Voices below bounce
from cool water,
pond water,
flat and still,
that spills, slowly --
slowly spills out
onto once-meadow-now-marsh-grass
below
the pond.

August 6, 1981
At Blackmer Farm
Woodstock, Vermont

to "b"

as we talked
i wished
we
were one,
and
in the space
where you were,
i am.
and
we are
one.

Montclair State 1966

A Visit Home

(in a new house)

Packed-up-tight-together, the family's in the car
(with the cats all-at-home, locked up in the cellar
with food, water, and litter, of course)
"TO GRANDMA'S AND GRANDPA'S OR BUST"
We don't bust...
and walk with "car legs" up unfamiliar street-lit steps,
(in the wee hours of the morning -- my father says)
with our stirred-from-their-sleep children wrapped up against the cool.
Greeted with warm hugs, smiles, and rooms...unfamiliar rooms
with familiar furniture placed in new patterns.
We tell everything-all-at-once to each other, until we (the travelers)
begin to lose the thread of the conversations,
and fall-face-forward,
sound asleep
in beds with landscapes all their own.
Then morning light breaks through into a room not home,
With breakfast smells that tug you awake, later than usual.
And breakfast-talk joined into, has lost some of the freshness of last night.
And old likes and dislikes surface, bubble up like
morning-coffee-water on the stove,
but never boils over and puts out the fire.
They "rest their eyes" more often now.
And the talk of health is shrugged away,
and we are aware of that, and are concerned.
Some meal or other is always being prepared or discussed.
And the kitchen "busy-talk" flutters out into the rest of the house
where we join it later.
And the scene you see and feel before you
cannot be held...time still.
So it's sponged-up and stored for later use.
But it always comes out changed and even the photographs,
we take as we leave, won't help much.
But, the house is not so unfamiliar and
the folks are more familiar...
And we ride home to let the cats out of the cellar,
and develop the photographs.

November 28, 1982

Dialogue #1

"John..." A hand is shaken through the open car window. "How have you been?"

"Fine...just fine...You just now arrived, Mr. Allen?"

The answer is obvious, but given. Other questions of family health are answered.

"Could use your help again this year, John. I presume the old place is still standing."

"Was the last time I went by, about...a week ago. You did lose most of the old pine near the front of the house. Lightning. A month ago I think it was.

"Oh no. The one near the well or toward the lane?"

"Near the lane. I gathered up most of the branches. About six feet from the ground's all that's left. I thought I'd wait to see if you wanted the rest off or not."

"I'll have a look...It's getting harder every year to open it up. One of these years I'll just sell the whole damn place...Anyway, listen, can you find some time today to help me with the shutters and the plumbing?"

Some shuffling of feet and a bit of chin rubbing fill the pause.

"Well...I suppose this fence can wait another day...There is one thing...ah...well, do you want those fields around the house mowed again this year?"

"Why certainly, otherwise the woods will creep in on the house. Why, is there a problem?"

"Nothing, really." From left foot to right and back again. "Well, you know how it is, the winters up..."

"Oh, I see. Shall we say another hundred?"

"That would help alot." Thoughtlessly dusting off a patch on the Mercedes with a loose work glove, then realizing what he was doing, brushes at the metal with his bare hand.

"Then, I'll see you," looking quickly at the car, "within the hour?"

"That'll be fine."

The car starts up the gravel lane, then stops.

"And bring your saw. I have a feeling I'll want that tree taken out."

John nods, as the silver car slowly disappears into the woods. He gathers up his tools, and smiles to himself.

August 6, 1981
Blackmer Farm
Woodstock, Vermont

Dialogue #2

[Two men in their mid thirties, Jerry and Steve, come out of a brownstone and walk down the steps.]

J: Which way?

S: After that meal, let's take my 10-block-walk, maybe, they'll have the dishes cleaned up by then.

J: Chauvinist.

S: So tell me about this new material you're working on.

J: That's too general a question.

S: What do you mean?

J: Did you ever notice two old women meeting in a park...restaurant, or super market? One says, "So what's new in your life?" and the other one begins to rattle on about the most God-awful dribble.

S: My God, Jerry, aren't you being a little narrow? It's a traditional opening line. It lets the other person get started and go where he wants with it. What am I supposed to ask you. "What are your feelings toward Alan on page 26 when he says, 'No, I didn't water the plants!'" and I haven't even read the play.

J: Funny you should mention Alan on page 26.....[with a laugh].....

O.K., let's not come down too heavy on this point. What I mean is, most people are not sincere or interested...

S: I was.

J: I know. I'm sorry.

S: Now I see what Carol meant when she said about "letting the tiger out of his cage tonight."

J: I suppose, I have been working on this play for quite awhile. You know the old word game; economy of word, poignancy of thought, ambiguity of meaning. I guess it's hard for me to go into soft focus.

[The two meet and pass a neighbor of Steve's]

S: [To the neighbor] How are you?

N: Not bad, and you?

S: Just great.

[The two men continue walking side by side. After they're beyond being heard by the neighbor]

S: Another piece of insincerity, that exchange. Is that what you're thinking?

J: I thought we got over that.

S: No, I think you have a point. The art of conversation is at a miserable low, present company excluded. [laughs]

J: Well, thank you. But really, you do see my point. Most of the time it's the old "one upmanship" game, each one taking turns telling their version of the same story.... [changes voice] I had the plumber and you should have seen the mess he left me [changes voice] I had a plumber who left his dirt foot prints all over my rug [changes voice] In he came, and walk right over my freshly waxed floor, I mean, really. [back to his own voice] It isn't so much so much the "dribble" that comes out that bothers me, it's the thought that each "player", so to speak, probably has something fascinating that they could share.

S: So now the problem is how to extract it. [pauses] You remember "Old Newhouse", I forget which class it was, but his concept of a conversation starter was to make some outrageous statement like, [changes to an old man's voice] "So you're a Republican, eh. As Christian, how can you possibly justify that politician position?" [back to his normal voice] That either stopped them in their tracks or the place just exploded.

J: It wasn't such a bad idea, modified a little. I always found if I could get a person talking about something he was interested in, to end a sentence in a preposition, he would be much more talkative and interesting. My God, there's nothing worse than listening to plumber talk politics.

S: Or a politician, talk politics.

J: Good point.....I was talking to my mother the other day, and as I was sitting there, I realized that outside of conversations about what Aunt Fanny did or whether I'm getting enough rest, we never really[searching for a word] communicated. So I played a little word association game with her, although she didn't know it. She had been through hell during the war, I think you know.

S: Yes, I remember.

J: So I said something like, "I came across the word 'Szczecin' in a crossword the other day..." Szczecin is where she was born in Poland, "and I wondered what the summers were like there?" Slowly, she unraveled the most fascinating tale. First about Polish summers, then the beach, and trips to the mountains, and when ever conversation would sag, I would load in another word association, like winter, or farming, or whatever.....[realizing they had completed the walk, and were once again in front of the apartment steps] My God, we're back already, and I've monopolized the conversation. I didn't even get a chance to ask you, "What's new in the stocks and bonds game?"

S: Too general a question, Jerry. [with a laugh]

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