

来自荒野的缪斯

薇拉·凯瑟短篇小说选

A Wagner Matinée

I received one morning a letter, written in pale ink on glassy, blue-lined note-paper, and bearing the postmark of a little Nebraska village. This communication, worn and rubbed, looking as if it had been carried for some days in a coat pocket that was none too clean, was from my uncle Howard, and informed me that his wife had been left a small legacy by a bachelor relative, and that it would be necessary for her to go to Boston to attend to the settling of the estate. He requested me to meet her at the station and render her whatever services might be necessary. On examining the date indicated as that of her arrival, I found it to be no later than tomorrow. He had characteristically delayed writing until, had I been away from home for a day, I must have missed my aunt altogether.

The name of my Aunt Georgiana opened before me a gulf of recollection so wide and deep that, as the letter dropped from my hand, I felt suddenly a stranger to all the present conditions of my existence, wholly ill at ease and out of place amid the familiar surroundings of my study. I became, in short, the gangling farmer-boy my aunt had known, scourged with chilblains and bashfulness, my hands cracked and sore from the corn husking. I sat again before her parlour organ, fumbling the scales with my stiff, red fingers, while she, beside me, made canvas mittens for the huskers.

The next morning, after preparing my landlady for a visitor, I set out for the station. When the train arrived I had some difficulty in finding my aunt. She was the last of the passengers to alight, and it was not until I got her into the carriage that she seemed really to recognize me. She had come all the way in a day coach; her linen duster had become black with soot and her black bonnet grey with dust during the journey. When we arrived at my boarding-house the landlady put her to bed at once and I did not see her again until the next morning.

Whatever shock Mrs. Springer experienced at my aunt's appearance, she considerably concealed. As for myself, I saw my aunt's battered figure with that feeling of awe and respect with which we behold explorers who have left

瓦格纳^①的日场

一天早晨我接到一封信。信是用很淡的墨水写在又滑又脆、印着蓝道的便笺纸上的，打着内布拉斯加州一个小村庄的邮戳。这封信被揉搓得破破烂烂，看来似乎在某人并不怎么干净的大衣口袋里放了不少日子。信是我叔叔哈沃德写来的，告诉我他妻子的一位单身汉亲戚给她留下了一小笔遗产，她得来一趟波士顿敲定这笔钱怎么安排。叔叔要我去车站接她，看她有什么需要，尽力帮她的忙。我查看了信里提到的抵达日期，结果发现竟然就是明天。这种拖延真是我叔叔的一贯作风，明天我要是出一天门的话，就整个把我婶婶给错过了。

乔治安娜婶婶的名字在我面前划开了一道既深且宽的回忆的鸿沟，以至于当信从我手中落下的时候，突然间我感到对于眼前的生活环境而言我成了个陌生人，在我书房熟悉的布置中间，我反倒觉得浑身难受，与它们格格不入。简言之，我又变成了我婶婶认得的那个傻乎乎的农场里的小瘦猴，被冻疮和胆小害羞给折腾得够呛，两只手因为给玉米脱粒而皴裂酸痛。我又一次坐在了她起居室里那架风琴跟前，用我僵硬通红的手指头笨拙地摸着琴键，她就坐在我旁边，为干脱粒农活的人们做帆布手套。

第2天一早，我和房东太太打了招呼说会有位客人，然后上火车站去。火车到达的时候我费了点儿劲才找到我婶婶。她是最后下车的乘客，似乎直到我把她带进马车坐好的时候她才真正认出我。她搭了日班的客车赶来；这一路她的亚麻罩衫被尘土搞得黑乎乎的，而黑色的女帽则给弄成了灰色。我们一到我住的公寓，房东太太就立刻送她上床休息，我直等到次日清晨才又见到她。

我婶婶的样子无论给斯普林格夫人带来了多大震动，她都很周在地掩藏了起来。对于我自己来说，我是怀着一种敬畏看待我婶婶历经沧桑的形象的，这种感觉，正如我们注目在弗朗茨——约瑟夫地^②被

their ears and fingers north of Franz-Joseph-Land, or their health somewhere along the Upper Congo. My Aunt Georgiana had been a music teacher at the Boston Conservatory, somewhere back in the latter sixties. One summer, while visiting in the little village among the Green Mountains where her ancestors had dwelt for generations, she had kindled the callow fancy of my uncle, Howard Carpenter, then an idle, shiftless boy of twenty-one. When she returned to her duties in Boston, Howard followed her, and the upshot of this infatuation was that she eloped with him, eluding the reproaches of her family and the criticism of her friends by going with him to the Nebraska frontier. Carpenter, who, of course, had no money, took up a homestead in Red Willow County, fifty miles from the railroad. There they had measured off their land themselves, driving across the prairie in a wagon, to the wheel of which they had tied a red cotton handkerchief, and counting its revolutions. They built a dug-out in the red hillside, one of those cave dwellings whose inmates so often reverted to primitive conditions. Their water they got from the lagoons where the buffalo drank, and their slender stock of provisions was always at the mercy of bands of roving Indians. For thirty years my aunt had not been farther than fifty miles from the homestead.

I owed to this woman most of the good that ever came my way in my boyhood, and had a reverential affection for her. During the years when I was riding herd for my uncle, my aunt, after cooking the three meals—the first of which was ready at six o'clock in the morning—and putting the six children to bed, would often stand until midnight at her ironing-board, with me at the kitchen table beside her, hearing me recite Latin declensions and conjugations, gently shaking me when my drowsy head sank down over a page of irregular verbs. It was to her, at her ironing or mending, that I read my first Shakspeare, and her old text-book on mythology was the first that ever came into my empty hands. She taught me my scales and exercises on the little parlour organ which her husband had bought her after fifteen years during which she had not so much as seen a musical instrument. She would sit beside me by the hour, darning and counting, while I struggled with the "Joyous Farmer." She seldom talked to me about music, and I understood why. Once when I had been doggedly beating out some easy passages from an old score of *Euryanthe* I had found among her music books, she came up to me and, putting her hands over my eyes, gently drew my head back upon her shoulder, saying tremulously, "Don't love it so well, Clark, or it may be taken from you."

When my aunt appeared on the morning after her arrival in Boston, she was

冻掉了耳朵和手指，或是在上刚果河被摧垮了身子的探险家时的感受一个样。我的乔治安娜婶婶原先是波士顿艺术学校的音乐老师，那还是 60 年代后几年时候的事。有个夏天她去探访格林山^③里一个她祖先世代居住过的小村子，结果却燃起了我叔叔哈沃德·卡彭特青春梦想，——那时候他还是个懒散的、游游逛逛的 21 岁的小年轻。她回到波士顿继续自己的工作，哈沃德紧追不舍。这一段热恋的结果是她与他私奔了，而且为逃开她家人的责难和朋友的批评跟着他一直到了内布拉斯加的边疆区。卡彭特自然是不名一文。他在红柳县取得一块定居地，离铁路有 50 英里远。他们自己丈量了土地，靠的就是坐马车横越大平原，在车轮上系一块红棉布手帕，数轮子转了多少圈。在红土山坡上他们挖了个地窖子，住在这种地洞里头，人们常常要回复到原始的生活方式才行。他们喝的水是从野牛喝水的水洼里取来的，一点可怜的生活补给常常遭到四处掠抢的印第安人的威胁。30 年来，我婶婶没到过离家 50 英里以外的地方。

我童年时从她身上受益良深，对她非常敬爱。我骑着马替叔叔放牧的那些年里，我婶婶忙完了一日三餐——头一顿早上 6 点钟就得做好——把 6 个孩子弄上床睡觉之后，常常在她的熨衣板旁边一站站到半夜。我就挨着她坐在厨房里的桌子边上，她听我背诵拉丁语的变格和变位。有时候我对着一页不规则动词头一沉打起了瞌睡，她就轻轻推我一把。全亏了她，在她熨熨缝缝的时候我才头一次读到了莎士比亚，而她那本神话故事的旧课本也是落在我一无所有的手里的头一本神话书。她在起居室的那架小风琴上教我音阶和练习曲，这是她丈夫在他们到这儿的第 15 年上买给她的，这些年里她从没见过一件称得上是乐器的东西。她会在我身边一连坐上几个小时，一边缝缝补补一边给我打拍子，而我在旁边与“快乐的农夫”^④较劲。她极少和我谈起音乐，我明白其中的缘故。有一回我正顽固地敲敲打打《尤莉安德》^⑤里几支简单的曲子——谱本是我从她的音乐图书里翻出来的，已经很旧了，——她来到我身边，伸手盖住我的双眼，温柔地拉过我的头靠在她的肩上，用颤抖的声音说，“别这么喜欢它，克拉克，不然它会被从你手中夺走的。”

我的婶婶在她到达波士顿的第 2 天早上露面时，似乎仍然没

still in a semi-somnambulant state. She seemed not to realize that she was in the city where she had spent her youth, the place longed for hungrily half a lifetime. She had been so wretchedly train-sick throughout the journey that she had no recollection of anything but her discomfort, and, to all intents and purposes, there were but a few hours of nightmare between the farm in Red Willow County and my study on Newbury Street. I had planned a little pleasure for her that afternoon, to repay her for some of the glorious moments she had given me when we used to milk together in the straw-thatched cowshed and she, because I was more than usually tired, or because her husband had spoken sharply to me, would tell me of the splendid performance of the *Huguenots* she had seen in Paris, in her youth.

At two o'clock the Symphony Orchestra was to give a Wagner program, and I intended to take my aunt; though, as I conversed with her, I grew doubtful about her enjoyment of it. I suggested our visiting the Conservatory and the Common before lunch, but she seemed altogether too timid to wish to venture out. She questioned me absently about various changes in the city, but she was chiefly concerned that she had forgotten to leave instructions about feeding halfskimmed milk to a certain weakling calf, "old Maggie's calf, you know, Clark," she explained, evidently having forgotten how long I had been away. She was further troubled because she had neglected to tell her daughter about the freshly-opened kit of mackerel in the cellar, which would spoil if it were not used directly.

I asked her whether she had ever heard any of the Wagnerian operas, and found that she had not, though she was perfectly familiar with their respective situations, and had once possessed the piano score of *The Flying Dutchman*. I began to think it would be best to get her back to Red Willow County without waking her, and regretted having suggested the concert.

From the time we entered the concert hall, however, she was a trifle less passive and inert, and for the first time seemed to perceive her surroundings. I had felt some trepidation lest she might become aware of her queer, country clothes, or might experience some painful embarrassment at stepping suddenly into the world to which she had been dead for a quarter of a century. But, again, I found how superficially I had judged her. She sat looking about her with eyes as impersonal, almost as stony, as those with which the granite Rameses in a museum watches the froth and fret that ebbs and flows about his pedestal. I have seen this same aloofness in old miners who drift into the Brown hotel at Denver, their pockets full of bullion, their linen soiled, their

有从睡梦中醒来。看上去她并不明白她已经到了那个她度过青春岁月的城市，那个她在后半生时间里都一直梦萦魂牵的地方。一路上她坐火车晕得厉害，她除了记得自己有多难受之外就什么也记不起了，因此说起来好像她从红柳县的农场出发，中间经过了几个小时的噩梦，醒来时已经到了我纽伯利街的书房里。我当天下午为她安排了一项小小的娱乐，为的是报答她曾经给予我的某些让人心醉神迷的时刻。那时候我们常常一起在麦秆搭顶的牛棚里给奶牛挤奶，要是那一天我干得特别辛苦，或者是她丈夫对我说了什么重话，她就会对我讲起她年轻时在巴黎看过的《胡格诺党人》^⑥演出的壮丽场面。

下午2点敲响乐团^⑦有一场瓦格纳节目的音乐会，我打算带婢婢去听；不过我跟她谈天的时候却渐渐怀疑起来她是不是会喜欢这个。我提议我们趁午饭前去艺术学校和公地公园^⑧走走，可她却显出非常羞怯的样子，不想来这一次冒险。她心不在焉地问了我许多关于城市变迁的问题，可是她一心担忧着的却是她忘记了让人拿撒过一道奶油的牛奶去喂一头衰弱的奶牛，“老麦吉的奶牛，你知道的，克拉克，”她对我解释道，显然已经忘记了我离开家已经有多久。更让她心烦意乱的是她忘了告诉她女儿地窖里有桶新开盖的鲭鱼，要是不马上吃掉就会放坏了。

我问她以前听过瓦格纳的歌剧没有，结果发现她没有，但是她对每一出剧的情节都非常熟悉，以前她还有过一本《漂泊的荷兰人》^⑨的钢琴总谱。我开始觉得，最好应该不必惊醒她就送她回红柳县去，不禁后悔自己提议去听音乐会。

但是，当我们走进音乐厅的时候，她稍稍摆脱了些冷淡消沉，似乎头一次认识到身边的环境。我心中有些忧惧，担心她在意起自己式样古怪的乡下衣服，或者，突然间步入一个她已经睽违了四分之一世纪的世界，她会痛苦地感到窘迫不安。可是我又一次发现自己对她的判断是多么浅薄。她坐定了，环视四周，目光中没有透露丝毫情感，甚至像岩石一样冷峻，几乎不亚于博物馆里的花岗岩雕像^⑩凝视雕凿在自己基座上那些起伏不定的泡沫与浪花时的目光。我曾经在一些老淘金者身上见到过相同的漠然神色。他们茫然走入丹佛的布朗饭店^⑪，口袋里装满金条，亚麻布的衬衫沾满灰土，面容憔悴，胡子拉

haggard faces unshaven; standing in the thronged corridors as solitary as though they were still in a frozen camp on the Yukon.

The matinée audience was made up chiefly of women. One lost the contour of faces and figures, indeed any effect of line whatever, and there was only the colour of bodices past counting, the shimmer of fabrics soft and firm, silky and sheer; red, mauve, pink, blue, lilac, purple, écru, rose, yellow, cream, and white, all the colours that an impressionist finds in a sunlit landscape, with here and there the dead shadow of a frock coat. My Aunt Georgi-anā regarded them as though they had been so many daubs of tube-paint on a palette.

When the musicians came out and took their places, she gave a little stir of anticipation, and looked with quickening interest down over the rail at that invariable grouping, perhaps the first wholly familiar thing that had greeted her eye since she had left old Maggie and her weakling calf. I could feel how all those details sank into her soul, for I had not forgotten how they had sunk into mine when I came fresh from ploughing forever and forever between green aisles of corn, where, as in a treadmill, one might walk from daybreak to dusk without perceiving a shadow of change. The clean profiles of the musicians, the gloss of their linen, the dull black of their coats, the beloved shapes of the instruments, the patches of yellow light on the smooth, varnished bellies of the 'cellos and the bass viols in the rear, the restless, wind-tossed forest of fiddle necks and bows—I recalled how, in the first orchestra I ever heard, those long bow-strokes seemed to draw the heart out of me, as a conjurer's stick reels out yards of paper ribbon from a hat.

The first number was the *Tannbauser* overture. When the horns drew out the first strain of the Pilgrim's chorus, Aunt Georgiana clutched my coat sleeve. Then it was I first realized that for her this broke a silence of thirty years. With the battle between the two motives, with the frenzy of the Venusberg theme and its ripping of strings, there came to me an overwhelming sense of the waste and wear we are so powerless to combat; and I saw again the tall, naked house on the prairie, black and grim as a wooden fortress; the black pond where I had learned to swim, its margin pitted with sun-dried cattle tracks; the rain gullied clay banks about the naked house, the four dwarf ash seedlings where the dish-cloths were always hung to dry before the kitchen door. The world there was the flat world of the ancients; to the east, a com-

碴；站在熙来攘往的走廊里，他们却如同依然在育空河^⑫上冰雪严封的宿营地一样孤独。

日场的绝大部分观众都是女性。想辨清她们面目与身材的轮廓是不可能的，实际上，任何线条的质感都已经消融了，只见数不清的衣裙汇成一片斑斓的色彩，各种或轻柔或致密的衣料泛着微光，也许是绸缎，也许是丝罗；鲜红、绛色、粉色、蓝色、淡紫、深紫、浅褐、玫瑰红、黄色、奶白、纯白，包罗了一个印象派画家在日出景色中能找到的所有颜色，掺杂着男子长大衣深色的暗影。我的乔治安娜婶婶端详着它们，似乎它们是挤在调色板上各色颜料的试样。

乐师们出场就位的时候她浑身微微一动，透出企盼的心情；她满怀兴趣地朝扶栏下望去，看着这群衣着一模一样的人，也许这是自她离开老麦吉和她那头衰弱的母牛以来跃入她眼中的第一件她完全熟悉的事物。我能够体会到眼前这些细节是怎样沉入了她灵魂的深处，因为我还没有忘记当初它们是怎样沉入了我的灵魂。那时我刚摆脱了在绿色的玉米田里无止无休的耕作，在那里干活就好像在磨坊里踩踏板一样，从破晓直到黄昏，看不到一点儿变化。乐师们整洁的侧影，他们闪亮的亚麻衬衫，暗黑色的外套，那些形状可爱的乐器，后排大提琴与低音提琴光洁的共鸣箱上闪耀的一小块块黄色光斑，小提琴的琴颈和弓弦构成的那片随风晃动，摇摆不定的密林——我记得头一次听音乐会的时候这些长长的琴弓是如何似乎把我的心也拽了出来，仿佛魔术师的魔杖从帽子里扯出绵绵不绝的纸带一样。

第一支曲子是《汤豪塞》^⑬序曲。号角吹奏出“朝圣者合唱”的第一段乐曲时乔治安娜婶婶紧紧抓住了我的衣袖。我这时头一次明白了，对于她，这打破了30年的沉寂。随着两个主题的斗争，随着狂放的“维纳斯堡主题”^⑭引发的弦乐部一阵咆哮喧嚷，往昔生活的徒劳，岁月的消逝，对于它们的感受在我心中铺天盖地而来；它们如此强大，我们无力与之抗争。我眼前又浮现出大草原上那座高高的、赤裸裸的房子，黧黑而阴森，像一座木头建成的堡垒；我学游泳的那个黑色小水塘，四周遍布着被太阳晒干的牲口脚印；暴露无遗的房子周围被雨水冲得沟壑纵横的粘土堆；还有厨房门外四棵老也长不大的白蜡树苗，那是我们晒餐巾的地方。那里的世界像古代人的世界一样，

field that stretched to daybreak; to the west, a corral that reached to sunset; between, the conquests of peace, dearer-bought than those of war.

The overture closed, my aunt released my coat sleeve, but she said nothing. She sat staring dully at the orchestra. What, I wondered, did she get from it? She had been a good pianist in her day, I knew, and her musical education had been broader than that of most music teachers of a quarter of a century ago. She had often told me of Mozart's operas and Meyerbeer's, and I could remember hearing her sing, years ago, certain melodies of Verdi. When I had fallen ill with a fever in her house she used to sit by my cot in the evening—when the cool, night wind blew in through the faded mosquito netting tacked over the window and I lay watching a certain bright star that burned red above the cornfield—and sing "Home to our mountains, O, let us return!" in a way fit to break the heart of a Vermont boy near dead of homesickness already.

I watched her closely through the prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, trying vainly to conjecture what that seething turmoil of strings and winds might mean to her, but she sat mutely staring at the violin bows that drove obliquely downward, like the pelting streaks of rain in a summer shower. Had this music any message for her? Had she enough left to at all comprehend this power which had kindled the world since she had left it? I was in a fever of curiosity, but Aunt Georgiana sat silent upon her peak in Darien. She preserved this utter immobility throughout the number from *The Flying Dutchman*, though her fingers worked mechanically upon her black dress, as if, of themselves, they were recalling the piano score they had once played. Poor hands! They had been stretched and twisted into mere tentacles to hold and lift and knead with;—on one of them a thin, worn band that had once been a wedding ring. As I pressed and gently quieted one of those groping hands, I remembered with quivering eyelids their services for me in other days.

Soon after the tenor began the "Prize Song," I heard a quick drawn breath and turned to my aunt. Her eyes were closed, but the tears were glistening on her cheeks, and I think, in a moment more, they were in my eyes as well. It never really died, then—the soul which can suffer so excruciatingly and so interminably; it withers to the outward eye only; like that strange moss which can lie on a dusty shelf half a century and yet, if placed in water, grows green

是扁平的；向东，一片玉米田一直延伸到日出的地方；向西，一片牲口栏直到日落之地；中间，是被平和静谧所征服的土地，征服它却比战争中的征服所付出的代价还要大。

序曲终了，我婶婶放开了我的衣袖，但一言不发。她坐在那儿定定地盯着乐队。我真想知道她从这之中得到了什么。我知道她当年是个出色的钢琴手，而且她所受的音乐教育比四分之一世纪以前绝大多数音乐教师的都更为丰富。她常跟我谈起莫扎特和梅耶比尔的歌剧，我还记得多年前听她唱威尔第的歌曲时的情形。在她家那会儿，如果我生病发烧，她总会在晚上坐在我的吊床边——凉爽的晚风透过用图钉钉在窗上的已经褪了色的窗纱吹来，我躺在床上凝望着某一颗在玉米田上空炯炯闪亮的明星——而她唱起了“回到我们的群山中去吧，啊，让我们归去！”^⑮那歌声真个能让一个已经快被思乡之情折磨死的佛蒙特少年心碎。

乐队演奏《特里斯坦和伊索尔德》^⑯前奏曲的时候我一直留心瞧着她，想猜出这一片弦乐与管乐沸腾的喧嚣对她意味着什么，可只是白费劲。她默默地坐在那里看着小提琴的弓弦向斜下方挥动，好似夏天一阵疾雨飞落的雨线。这些乐曲对她当真还有意义吗？她的心灵是否还能够理解这股曾经在她从这个世界隐遁之后撼动过世界的力量？我迫不及待地想知道，但是我的婶婶一直沉默地坐在她达利安的高峰^⑰上。乐队演奏《漂泊的荷兰人》中的选曲时她始终保持着这种静默，但她的手指却在黑裙子上机械地敲打着，似乎自己回忆起了当初演奏过的钢琴音符。这双可怜的手！多年来各式各样的劳作已经把它们拉伸扭曲得几乎成了一对动物的触角——其中一只上面有一道细细的、破旧的箍，那曾经是一枚结婚戒指。我轻轻按住这双不停摸索的手中的一只让它停下来，此刻我记起昔日里它们为我做的一切，眼睑不由颤抖了。

男高音刚刚唱起“大奖之歌”^⑱不久，我听见一声急促的抽鼻子的声音，忙转过脸看我的婶婶。她合起了眼睛，然而脸颊上却闪烁着泪光。很快我觉得我的眼睛里也涌出泪水了。那么，它其实不是真死了——那能够忍受如此惨酷的、无止无休的煎熬的灵魂；它只是外表上枯萎了；就像那种奇特的苔藓，可以在尘封的架子上呆上半个世

again. She wept so throughout the development and elaboration of the melody.

During the intermission before the second half, I questioned my aunt and found that the "Prize Song" was not new to her. Some years before there had drifted to the farm in Red Willow County a young German, a tramp cow-puncher, who had sung in the chorus at Bayreuth when he was a boy, along with the other peasant boys and girls. Of a Sunday morning he used to sit on his gingham-sheeted bed in the hands' bedroom which opened off the kitchen, cleaning the leather of his boots and saddle, singing the "Prize Song," while my aunt went about her work in the kitchen. She had hovered over him until she had prevailed upon him to join the country church, though his sole fitness for this step, in so far as I could gather, lay in his boyish face and his possession of this divine melody. Shortly afterward, he had gone to town on the Fourth of July, been drunk for several days, lost his money at a faro table, ridden a saddled Texas steer on a bet, and disappeared with a fractured collar-bone. All this my aunt told me huskily, wanderingly, as though she were talking in the weak lapses of illness.

"Well, we have come to better things than the old *Trovatore* at any rate, Aunt Georgie?" I queried, with a well meant effort at jocularly.

Her lip quivered and she hastily put her handkerchief up to her mouth. From behind it she murmured, "And you have been hearing this ever since you left me, Clark?" Her question was the gentlest and saddest of reproaches.

The second half of the program consisted of four numbers from the *Ring*, and closed with Siegfried's funeral march. My aunt wept quietly, but almost continuously, as a shallow vessel overflows in a rain-storm. From time to time her dim eyes looked up at the lights, burning softly under their dull glass globes.

The deluge of sound poured on and on; I never knew what she found in the shining current of it; I never knew how far it bore her, or past what happy islands. From the trembling of her face I could well believe that before the last number she had been carried out where the myriad graves are, into the grey, nameless burying grounds of the sea; or into some world of death vaster yet, where, from the beginning of the world, hope has lain down with hope and dream with dream and, renouncing, slept.

纪，然而一但放进水里依旧能够返青。她在乐曲的整个发展和华彩乐段当中都不停地啜泣。

趁下半场开始前的场间休息我问过我的婶婶，发现“大奖之歌”对她并不陌生。若干年前红柳县的农场里来过一个年轻的德国人，是个四处流浪的牛仔，还是个孩子的时候他在拜罗伊特^①的合唱队里头和别的乡下男孩儿女孩儿一起唱过歌。礼拜天他在帮工的房间里坐在他那张铺着方格花布的床上擦皮靴，擦马鞍，一边唱着这首“大奖之歌”；帮工的卧房门就对着厨房开着，而这时候我的婶婶正好在厨房里忙她的活。她缠了他好久，终于说服了他加入当地的教堂，虽然在我看来他适于加入教堂的惟一条件只不过是他的那张孩子气的脸，还有就是因为他能唱这支神妙的曲子。这以后不久，他趁国庆日进了城，一连大醉了好几天，在费罗牌戏^②的牌桌上输光了钱，和人打赌骑一匹上了鞍的得克萨斯烈马，摔断了锁骨，就此不见了。我的婶婶用一种喑哑的嗓音支离破碎地把这一切告诉了我，好似她此刻正因为疾病而虚弱不堪。

“嗯，不管怎么样，我们现在有了比那个老《游吟诗人》更棒的东西了，是不是，乔治安娜婶婶？”我向她问道，努力想把气氛弄得欢快点儿。

她的嘴唇在颤抖。她匆匆掏出手绢捂住嘴，透过手绢她喃喃问道：“那么你离开我之后就一直在听这些了，克拉克？”她的问题是一种最温和的、却也最令人痛苦的责备。

下半场演出演奏了4支选自《指环》^③的曲子，以齐格弗里德的葬礼进行曲^④作结。我的婶婶静静地，却几乎一直不停地抽泣着，就好像暴雨之中一只不停向外溢水的浅底水盆。她时不时抬起朦胧的双眼看看灯光，它们在暗色的玻璃灯罩下闪亮，并不刺眼。

乐声的洪波不停倾泻下来；我不知道她在这闪烁的流水中发现了什么；我不知道这股洪流载着她走了多远，漂过了哪些幸福的岛屿。她颤抖的面庞令我确信，在最后一支乐曲奏响之前，她已经被带到了遍布着垒垒冢墓的所在，带入了大海灰暗的无名墓园；或者，被带进了某个更加辽阔的死亡的世界，在那里，从创世之日起，一层层希望上堆积起新的希望，梦想上堆起新的梦想，却都被抛弃了，陷入沉睡

The concert was over; the people filed out of the hall chattering and laughing, glad to relax and find the living level again, but my kinswoman made no effort to rise. The harpist slipped the green felt cover over his instrument; the flute-players shook the water from their mouthpieces; the men of the orchestra went out one by one, leaving the stage to the chairs and music stands, empty as a winter cornfield.

I spoke to my aunt. She burst into tears and sobbed pleadingly. "I don't want to go, Clark, I don't want to go!"

I understood. For her, just outside the concert hall, lay the black pond with the cattle-tracked bluffs; the tall, unpainted house, with weather-curved boards, naked as a tower; the crook-backed ash seedlings where the dish-cloths hung to dry; the gaunt, moulting turkeys picking up refuse about the kitchen door.

当中。

音乐会结束了；人们说说笑笑，从大厅里鱼贯而出，因为得以放松一下，得以回到现实生活中来而感到快活。但我的亲人没有起身的意思。竖琴手给自己的乐器套上绿色的毛毡套子；长笛手们把吹口里的水甩干净；乐手一一退场了，舞台上只剩下那些椅子和乐谱架，好似冬天里的玉米田一样空空荡荡。

我跟婶婶说了句话。她痛哭起来，呜咽着恳求道：“我不想走，克拉克 我不想走！”

我理解她。对她来说，就在音乐厅门外，便是那个黑色的小水塘，陡峭的岸上遍布牲口的脚印；那座高高的、从没油漆过的房子，木板因为风吹日晒已经翘了起来，像一座碉堡那样寒碜；用来晾餐巾的那几棵佝偻着腰的白蜡树苗；还有那些在厨房门外拣食着垃圾的瘦骨嶙峋的、掉光了羽毛的火鸡。

Coming, Aphrodite!

I

Don Hedger had lived for four years on the top floor of an old house on the south side of Washington Square, and nobody had ever disturbed him. He occupied one big room with no outside exposure except on the north, where he had built in a many-paned studio window that looked upon a court and upon the roofs and walls of other buildings. His room was very cheerless, since he never got a ray of direct sunlight; the south corners were always in shadow. In one of the corners was a clothes closet, built against the partition, in another a wide divan, serving as a seat by day and a bed by night. In the front corner, the one farther from the window, was a sink, and a table with two gas burners where he sometimes cooked his food. There, too, in the perpetual dusk, was the dog's bed, and often a bone or two for his comfort.

The dog was a Boston bull terrier, and Hedger explained his surly disposition by the fact that he had been bred to the point where it told on his nerves. His name was Caesar III, and he had taken prizes at very exclusive dog shows. When he and his master went out to prowl about University Place or to promenade along West Street, Caesar III was invariably fresh and shining. His pink skin showed through his mottled coat, which glistened as if it had just been rubbed with olive oil, and he wore a brass-studded collar, bought at the smartest saddler's. Hedger, as often as not, was hunched up in an old striped blanket coat, with a shapeless felt hat pulled over his bushy hair, wearing black shoes that had become grey, or brown ones that had become black, and he never put on gloves unless the day was biting cold.

Early in May, Hedger learned that he was to have a new neighbour in the rear apartment—two rooms, one large and one small, that faced the west. His studio was shut off from the larger of these rooms by double doors, which, though they were fairly tight, left him a good deal at the mercy of the occupant. The rooms had been leased, long before he came there, by a trained nurse who considered herself knowing in old furniture. She went to auction

阿佛罗狄忒来啦！

—

在华盛顿广场^①南厢一所老房子的顶楼里，唐·海德格已经住了4年，没人来打扰过他。他独住一个大房间，这间屋子只有北墙接着外头，他就在这上面修了一扇拿好多块玻璃拼起来的花窗，从这儿向外俯瞰，除了天井和其它建筑的屋顶围墙之外就再看不见什么了。他的房间让人打不起精神，因为阳光根本没法直射进来；南边两个屋角从来都被阴影罩着。其中一个墙角里头是壁橱，放衣服用，贴着墙板；另一个角里有一张大沙发，白天坐，晚上就是床铺。房间正面离窗户远一些的那个墙角里有个水槽，又摆了张桌子，上边两盏煤气喷灯，他有时候在这儿给自己弄饭吃。狗窝也安在这个永远不见阳光的角落里，为了安慰它，这儿常扔着一两块骨头。

这是条波士顿种牛头梗犬^②，性子暴躁，对此海德格解释说，它老捞不到什么好吃的，太瘦了，这难免影响到它的神经。它名叫凯撒三世，以前在一些很高级的私人狗展上得过大奖。和主人一齐出门到大学广场去遛达，或者在西街上闲逛的时候，凯撒三世可总是容光焕发的。透过杂色的皮毛外套，它粉扑扑的皮肤非常显眼，亮晶晶的，像刚搽过橄榄油，脖子上戴着嵌黄铜钉的项圈，那可是在最时髦的鞍匠铺买来的。海德格走起路来老弓着腰，总穿一件旧的条子花纹毡大衣，头上一顶走了形的毡帽压住乱蓬蓬的头发。他或者穿黑皮鞋，可都已经变成灰色，或者穿双棕色皮鞋，却已经发黑了。不到天寒刺骨的时候他从不戴手套。

5月头几天里海德格知道了他要来位新邻居，就住在他后面那套房里——那套房子有一大一小两个房间，都朝西。他的画室和那间大屋子中间隔着两道门，虽然都关得蛮紧，可那边的动静还是照样一个