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**FORBIDDEN
SCIENCE**



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FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

"It is unusual for scientists to keep diaries and even more unusual for them to make them public..." remarks Jacques Vallee in this exposé of the methods of science as it deals with the challenge of anomalous phenomena. Widely recognized for his pioneering work in UFO research, Dr. Vallee reveals what he uncovered as a young scientist when he became involved in the mystery of unidentified flying objects at the height of the U.S. Air Force investigations in the mid-sixties.

From the extraordinary Socorro landing of 1964 to the notorious "Marsh Gas case," Dr. Vallee details behind-the-scenes conversations and heated debates among researchers. He describes the hopes and fears he felt every day as new sightings were reported and as he and his colleagues struggled to develop research methodology for this new phenomenon.

Going beyond his best-selling Alien Contact trilogy, *Dimensions, Confrontations* and *Revelations*, **Forbidden Science** is also the richly personal story of a young Frenchman fascinated with the stars and the sky. Vallee becomes an astrophysicist and computer scientist in the nascent French computer industry, leaving France in 1962 for the United States to pursue work in the early computer languages—and work with other scientists on the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects.

When the Air Force funded a major university to evaluate sightings of UFOs in 1967, Dr. Vallee and his mentor, Professor J. Allen Hynek, were part of the first briefing. Day by day he details in this beautifully written journal how "the problem" became not just a proliferation of sightings, but a complex, layered public relations challenge. Debates developed not only on the study of these new

(continued on back flap)

phenomena, but on the way they were explained to the American people. Dr. Vallee reveals the process by which major American scientists already had been led astray by the intelligence community as early as 1953, for reasons that had little to do with the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

Behind closed doors, and without the knowledge of the public, secret data and classified recommendations were evaluated and debated by faceless analysts. "The problem" was never studied at the high intellectual level which a phenomenon refuting so many known scientific values would seem to demand. In the midst of a swirl of media attention and public hunger to understand UFO sightings, Dr. Vallee recorded in his diaries not the cold, official face of science but the human side of research, as a few people eagerly tried to meet the challenge of the unknown.

Moving beyond the question of the possible reality of unidentified flying objects, a mystery he does not claim to explain, Dr. Vallee asks, *If science refuses to deal with such topics, then what is science for?* **Forbidden Science** questions how we use scientific research to describe anomalous phenomena in the physical world and challenges us to face our assumptions about ourselves and the tenuous concept we call reality.



Dr. Jacques Vallee is a leading researcher on the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects world-wide. Born in France, he studied astrophysics, and received his Ph.D. in computer science in 1967 from Northwestern University. The real-life model for the French scientist played by

Francois Truffaut in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Dr. Vallee's books have sold well over a million copies in many languages.

North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California

FORBIDDEN
SCIENCE

FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

Journals 1957-1969

Jacques Vallee

North Atlantic Books
Berkeley, California

Forbidden Science: Journals 1957–1969
Second edition, November 1992

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FOREWORD

It is unusual *for scientists* to keep diaries and even more unusual for them to make them public. While we know much about the intimate lives and personal motivations of musicians, movie stars and literary figures, the day-to-day life of scientists remains carefully veiled, as if science somehow arose spontaneously by a process which superseded the mere activities of mortals.

Like most of my colleagues, I have followed this rule of silence for the last thirty years, never expecting that these Journals would be published before my death. But I have finally decided that I had no right to keep them private any more. Although they contain many passages that are very personal and some that are painful, they also provide a primary source about a crucial fact in the recent historical record: the appearance of new classes of phenomena that highlighted the reality of the paranormal. These phenomena were deliberately denied or distorted by those in authority within the government and the military. Science never had fair and complete access to the most important files. This fact has been alleged before, but never proven. The present book proves it.

Publication was not considered when the pages of these Journals slowly accumulated in the form of copybooks, loose pages, letters and marginal notes. I simply regarded it as a useful intellectual and spiritual discipline to review for myself the events of each period, if not those of each day. At first this exercise helped me cope with the uncertainties and the rapid changes in my life as a student in France. Later, when I moved to the United States, the Journal became a confidant and, more importantly, an adviser, a crystal ball, a tool to interrogate the future and to explore its potential.

It turns out that the thirteen years covered here, from 1957 to 1969, saw some of the most exciting events in technological history: the first space adventures, the rise of the computer, the electronic revolution, the invention of advanced software, the flight to the moon, the first detailed images of other planets. As a young scientist I was a minor contributor to

some of these events, an avidly interested observer of others. These developments which changed our world are well-documented in countless books. Behind the grand parade of the visible breakthroughs in science, however, more private mysteries were also taking place. The paranormal, with its claims and counter-claims about telepathy, dowsing, astrology, healing and other effects, was a matter of sharp debate and secret passion among believers and skeptics. And there were even more exciting events taking place: all over the world people had begun to observe what they described as controlled devices in the sky. They were shaped like saucers or spheres. They seemed to violate every known principle in our physics.

Did these objects constitute the first signal of imminent contact with alien civilizations from outer space at a time when we were designing our own space probes? Governments took notice, organizing task forces, encouraging secret briefings and study groups, funding classified research . . . and all the time denying before the public that any of the phenomena might be real.

What the media and the scientific world were told by those responsible for public welfare had little to do with what was happening. Anyone reviewing that period and looking solely at the official story will have no chance of coming to grips with the truth about the unfolding drama. In fact, *the major revelation of these Diaries may be the demonstration of how the scientific community was misled by the government, how the best data were kept hidden, and how the public record was shamelessly manipulated.*

Witnesses of the strange occurrences numbered in the millions. But the study of their observations had been forcefully driven underground. It had turned into a fascinating discipline in a hypocritical modern world that claimed rational thought and open inquiry as its highest standard: *it had become a Forbidden Science.*

No reminiscences of that era can be credible unless they are supported by the daily record of conversations, meetings and research results made by a participant in the actual events. I kept such a record and I was such a participant, first as a direct witness to the phenomenon in 1955, then as a French Government astronomer, and later as a computer scientist who played a significant role in detecting and publishing some of the major patterns behind the mystery and in arguing for its reality. In that phase of my work I was a close associate of Dr. J. Allen

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Hynek, the man who was scientific consultant for the U.S. Air Force on the UFO problem for nearly a quarter century, specifically from 1947 to 1969.

Several factors make it important to bring these notes, however personal and fragmentary, to the attention of the public. Only one book was published by a professional historian who took an interest in the field, but it is marred by distortions and errors of omission. And there is a growing misunderstanding of the actual role played by Dr. Hynek in the study of unidentified flying objects.

Allen Hynek liked to remind us that beyond today's science there would be a twenty-first century science that would have to take into account phenomena that seemed paranormal to us simply because of our parochial mental attitudes and the limitations of what he aptly called our cultural provincialism. I hope to bring him back to life here, along with Dr. James McDonald and other figures of that era.

The record stops twenty years ago, as I arrived in California where I now live with my family. I have augmented it with an Epilogue that brings the reader up to the present. Indeed, many important events that have taken place in the intervening period throw new light on the theories I formed before 1969. Some of these theories have turned out to be quite accurate; some were wrong, and the true facts were only revealed later. Other facts are still hidden. When they eventually come to the surface, as they must, it is my hope that this statement of the early years of our research into *Forbidden Science* may serve to highlight their true significance.

I fully recognize that this is only one man's perspective on a series of very complex events. Because this book is a compilation of diaries, it contains opinions that are no longer mine and judgments I now regret, along with much evidence of mistakes I made along the way. I owe many thanks to Janine, to Richard Grossinger and especially to Lindy Hough at North Atlantic Books for their guidance in editing, pruning and streamlining the text. However it was not appropriate, of course, to change the record. At this late date I can only beg the forgiveness of those who may feel that my pen, often "hurriedly dipped in the inkwell of frustration," was overly rash.

Jacques Vallee
San Francisco, January 1992.

Part One

SUB-SPACE

1

Pontoise. Christmas Eve 1957.

Never again will I wait for Philippe near my house on Saint-Jean street. Such is the sudden realization that fills my mind, and these words seem to match the color of my wall covered with red ivy, the color of my whole childhood.

Philippe is a high school classmate, an old friend. When I lived here in my parents' house, my house, he used to come and pick me up every morning precisely at ten to eight, on the way to school. I would already be in the street, walking ever so slowly, to give him time to appear at the turn beyond the grocery store. This went on for years, when we were eight, when we were fifteen. The perspective of things changed gradually without our noticing it.

Now life is separating me from all the things I have known. I suddenly realize that this little town where I grew up is no longer my town; that I do not belong in the streets along which I walked in years past. Philippe is going away to study for a bachelor's degree in physics, my other friends are scattered far and wide. As for me, I am eighteen years old now. I am already forgetting the speeches of Cicero and the art of scaring away the neighbor's cat with my slingshot. Only last week, in Paris, I parted with my first mistress, a tiny girl from Brittany who cried at the movies.

I am trying to enter the life of a scientist, of a man who peels apart new concepts like the skins of an onion to remove each layer. Yet on the other side, on the side of my ivy-covered wall, I have a hard time giving up the slingshot kid.

This anguish of a Christmas night filled with the books of old and the tree of tradition, this anguish is born of sorrow. There was a need for something that would mark the transition. Indeed everything will change again: my father will not live long. A certain pain in my brother's voice, a pain he could not hide over the phone, was the signal.

I will not be very demonstrative when the end comes. But this is Christmas and the bells, the obsolete bells of nearby Saint Maclou, ring at midnight, urging me to write.

Consider the whole existence of a man, with all of the ramifications that implies in the existence of others, in their minds, in their consciousness: How can all that be annihilated by more or less simple chemical degradation of the cells? I understand why people still need to erect a God to store within it this kind of dilemma. Never again will I wait for Philippe. And soon I will no longer see my father, my old father, walking from one room to another in my old house. And my old house on Saint-Jean street must disappear forever as well, with all the stars that are above and the trees around it. How am I expected to find a grave big enough for all that?

Paris. 10 January 1958.

I spent New Year's Eve at the Mexican cafe, our Headquarters on *Place de la Contrescarpe*. It is a tiny square on the eastern edge of the Latin Quarter, surrounded by quaint shops and picturesque buildings, home to tramps and winos. The whole gang was there, including Granville and the Baron, my friend Claudine and others, unavoidable others. Now classes are starting again at the Sorbonne.

My brother is a medical specialist. He has discussed our father's illness with his colleagues in Pontoise: there is no hope.

Paris. 20 January 1958.

A frozen impression, a strange release: My father is dead. Oddly, I don't have the feeling of having "lost" anything, of having less substance. On the contrary, I have this absurd sense: I have come closer to a certain reality. But here is the sorrow, to have lost in potential what I gained in knowledge. The new emotions I have just gained are useless.

After I watched him die, and kissed him, I went out into the street. The first snow had fallen, in fine heavy layers, pure perfection against a great blue silent sky. I was astonished at the sudden beauty of the world.

In today's society there can be no harmony among people like my father, my brother, and me. We disagree viscerally on too many subjects, from morality to music, or the war in Algeria. He was a stern conservative and we yearn for change. That's normal, and also cruel. The Norm

excludes any tears: it rules, that is all.

Will things go the same way for me and my children? Probably. Unless I find what I am looking for: well-defined substance, unbounded potential within myself. Is that possible?

Back in Paris, at the student house where I live, I am pretending that life carries me along normally. I have not taken anyone into my confidence. I want to keep all my strength for the future.

Paris. 15 February 1958.

The French Astronomical Society has just published an account I sent them of an unusual sighting of the first *Sputnik*. It's an observation I made last year in Pontoise, from the terrace behind the house. The event took place three months ago on Sunday, 24 November 1957 at 5:54 p.m. Watching the object, probably part of the booster rocket, I found it similar to Jupiter in apparent size and luminosity as it passed through Cassiopeia. It got lost in the Southeast in less than two minutes.

Having heard that the booster of *Sputnik* had broken up into several pieces I waited for any other object that might follow on a similar orbit. Indeed at 6:10 p.m. I saw a faint luminous trail with the naked eye. It was rising between the first two stars of the Big Dipper, in the direction of Polaris. I looked at it with a telescope given to me by my uncle Maurice, my father's brother. This instrument is an antique World War I artillery refractor with a magnification of 25 which enabled me to see a small orange point at the tip of the trail. I lost it after about 15 seconds, but the trail remained clearly visible in the sky and it drifted to the zenith at 6:30 p.m. I sent an account of the whole thing to the French Astronomical Society and to Paul Muller, head of the artificial satellite service at Paris Observatory in Meudon. Now it turns out that another amateur astronomer saw precisely the same thing from Joinville, and our two observations appear together in *L'Astronomie*.¹

Paris. 20 March 1958.

The world is changing. This city has been shaken by sudden political upheaval. History is accelerating. I can feel it turning from its usual elusiveness to the consistency of a liquid or a jelly. The Fourth Republic is threatened from the Right, as a result of the lingering, impossible war in Algeria where a large, conservative and increasingly militant French

population remains. My friends among the students expect things to turn nasty. Trucks covered with greenish-brown fabric are in evidence throughout the Latin Quarter; jeeps equipped with radio transmitters drive up and down the Boulevard Saint-Michel. I have just seen half a dozen trucks filled with gendarmes parked in front of the Pantheon. They seem to be expecting a full-scale riot.

French democracy may be about to pay for all the mistakes it has made over the years, especially this stupid war. Like my fellow students, I am outraged at all the lies spread by the bureaucracy, the censorship, the denial of the tortures committed in North Africa by the French Army: our country is engaged in the same kind of actions that we were taught would forever designate the German Nazi to the shame of the whole world. We wonder what this means for us. What kind of future are we studying for?

Paris. 27 March 1958.

I just wrote a letter to my mother, who is now alone in that big house my parents have rented in Pontoise for the last sixteen years:

I got back safely last Sunday on that excellent train. I was back exactly at 9:30 p.m. Some thirty cops were stationed at the subway entrance. They had machine guns and everything that is necessary in order to kill people. They were systematically stopping anyone who looked like an Arab.

My work goes along well. I am studying hard for the Analysis exams, and now it's only a question of spending more time with the books and the homework problems. My goal is to pass the written part in June.

I will make arrangements to spend more time with her at Easter. It makes me sad to imagine her alone in Pontoise. She has always looked at the world through the eyes of a great lady. She is quick to assess people's character, quick to rescue the lost child, to feed the poor beggar, to get angry at injustice. She comes from an industrious family of Protestants whose various branches extend all over Europe. Her parents went broke when the flood of 1910 wiped out their fur and pelt trading business. She raised her thirteen brothers and sisters by herself, and there was no opportunity for her to finish school. But her heart is as big as the whole

world and her mind has the direct intuition that needs no schooling.

Recently I came across a picture of us taken when I was about eight years old, on the terrace in Pontoise. My father is dressed in his Sunday best, a three-piece suit and a tie. My mother holds my hand. I lean against the wall, without a care in the world.

Paris. 16 April 1958.

Normal work has become impossible, life is suspended. The Government has fallen. Socialist leader Guy Mollet warns of "a crisis of Regime" and calls for a new Popular Front, while powerful appeals to a neo-fascist "Comite de Salut Public" (Public Salvation Committee) are heard from the Right. All this is drowned in idiotic commentaries by our well-informed media: "the crisis will be long and painful," a political journalist has stated in all seriousness; "the President expects to solve it rapidly." The President in question is Monsieur Coty, a nice old man who has never done anything rapidly in his life. I have heard another politician, Le Troquer, adding ponderously that "depending on the circumstances, the crisis may be long or short." Only one thing seems clear to me: if the Assembly does not come to some decision soon, time will work in favor of an overthrow of the regime: we will either get General De Gaulle, or a new Popular Front.

Paris. May Day 1958.

The crisis has entered its fifteenth day. Fights have started. This afternoon I found myself on rue Mouffetard returning from a demonstration in protest of the execution of a young Algerian. The Latin Quarter was full of sunshine. Around us the market was bustling with activity, with its open-air displays of fruits and vegetables, the stalls selling meat and fresh fish, flowers, ham and sausages. Suddenly, frantic screams made us whirl around: A struggle was erupting. Foolishly, we were tempted to watch and we came closer. A dozen men were engaged in a brawl in the narrow street. One of them, a fellow in his forties, produced a heavy stick and started swinging, but others jumped on him and the stick rolled away. As he freed himself, a gun in his hand caught the sun. Stunned, his assailants took a hurried step back. We did the same, with that sick feeling: who would catch the first bullet? I was less than ten feet away. He turned and rushed ahead into the crowd.

Someone yelled: "The cops!" The participants scattered down the side streets.

Soon the entire area was surrounded, from the Gobelins to rue d'Ulm. Police buses blocked every corner, machine guns and radio transmitters in evidence. I saw a car and two motorcycles coming down the medieval streets of Contrescarpe. We ran away from them towards Place Monge. A helicopter flew low over the rooftops. Now there is a rumor that the man was a provocateur, that he worked for the police, who were seeking an excuse to come into the area in force.

A huge black bus full of cops-, unable to wedge its way down the narrow street to the church of Saint-Medard, was forced to drive backwards all the way up rue Mouffetard under the catcalls and the jokes of the shopkeepers, the peddlers, the old women of the market.

The Latin Quarter, which has seen many a revolution down through history, remains effervescent tonight. The helicopter keeps flying in narrow circles.

Paris. 12 May 1958.

Things are getting worse. A very bland politician named Pflimlin is attempting to form a new Cabinet. The Far Right seems ready to take drastic action to overthrow him and seize control. In our section of Paris there is an intense war of the walls. Graffiti of both sides, childishly, cover every fence, every available space. When we walk back from our evening coffee at Contrescarpe we can't resist scribbling over the rightists' slogans. Thus "Vive Le Pen" becomes "Vive Le Penis!" But we worry about the future, even as we confidently sing "Fascism shall not pass!" People look at the empty sky, naively expecting it to fill up at any time with paratroopers from Algiers in full battle gear, red berets on their heads, machine guns at the ready.

Paris. 13 May 1958.

The Prime Minister seems to have gained the upper hand: "It is an insult to suggest that I would permit Algeria to be lost," he says. "Algeria shall remain French."

In the meantime, back in Algiers, an anti-Government demonstration initially scheduled for the middle of the afternoon has been delayed by two hours to allow it to gain strength by merging with a rally planned for

the same evening. The general strike is beginning. French troops have been ordered to remain in their quarters.

10:10 p.m. The creation of a Public Salvation Committee has just been announced. Predictably, it is headed up by rightist General Mas-su. The French who live in Algiers are taking to the street to greet Soustelle, an ultra-conservative politician. The University is in such turmoil that normal studies are out of the question, many classes have been called off, others are constantly disrupted by demonstrations and political meetings.

Paris. 14 May 1958.

It is 9:40 a.m. Telephone communications between Algiers and Paris have been cut off by the Government. Maritime shipping traffic is being detoured to Tunisia. Several people have been arrested in Paris. In the Latin Quarter the excitement I witness is unprecedented. There is an air of insurrection in every gathering.

Yesterday I joined a demonstration in the courtyard of the Sorbonne. Fine speeches were made, announcing great imminent movements on the part of "The People" and "The Masses." But it was hard to find two individuals in the crowd with the same interpretation of current events. Pflimlin, who is still in charge of the Government, has banned all political gatherings. De Gaulle is rumored to be in Paris, in an office located on rue de Solferino.

Paris. 15 May 1958.

Like every French citizen I am staying close to the radio to follow events in Algiers minute by minute. The Soviet Union has launched its third *Sputnik*, but in the current political frenzy no one seems to care that a major new step in the conquest of space has just taken place. The satellite weighs a ton and a half, and the booster rocket is in orbit along with it.

General Salan has stunned the country by delivering a speech which ended with "Vive la France! Vive l'Algerie Francaise! Vive De Gaulle!" In Paris the government called this statement an "optical illusion." But De Gaulle has answered the call by announcing that he was indeed ready, "as in 1945, to assume the widest responsibilities." What we are seeing is the unfolding of an obvious conspiracy to bring the General back to

power, and to bury the Fourth Republic.

Paris. 27 May 1958.

It is 1:40 p.m. Planes carrying paratroopers and units of the Special Forces are said to have landed near Paris. The French fleet is in Algerian ports. De Gaulle is definitely in Paris. Pflimlin vanished during the night. Has President Coty met with De Gaulle? There is talk of an insurrection in the Southwest.

Pontoise. 29 June 1958.

I have learned that I flunked General Mathematics. This throws my life into further uncertainty. Yet passing this examination is a crucial requisite for me. Without it I can do nothing. All the recent political turmoil in Paris, the demonstrations, the strikes, have not helped my studies; neither has the life I have led, these last few weeks, with Claudine. She creates a feeling of impossible nightmare. As dawn arrives, a weak whitish daylight leaks into her room through the curtains. We wake up in the low bed. I lose all sense of time. Since the first day, there has been an invisible barrier between us.

It was on Monday evening that I found out that I had failed, after a huge scuffle to fight my way through the crowd of students and to get near the posted results. I spent Tuesday night with Claudine. This time I found her less tormented, more accessible. On the bedside table there was a love letter in fine handwriting, addressed to her: "My Darling Claudine ..." I did not read it, but I was indiscreet enough to glance at the signature: it was from another woman who lives in the Midi.

Paris. 21 July 1958.

Finally, De Gaulle is here. What seemed unthinkable has happened quite naturally, in spite of all the **Leftists** who were clamoring that his return would surely trigger an insurrection, a terrible civil war. In fact, after a few days of disorder, during which madness did rule and newspaper headlines became huge, all the political parties have simply resumed their old intrigues as if nothing had happened.

I saw Claudine on rue Monge.

"Do we say hello?" I asked her.

In response she simply gave me her hand.

"You would come and have a drink with me, if you were a true friend," I added.

We went to the corner bistro and we had a cup of coffee. We were very close again, very tender. The next morning we took the train and went to Pontoise, where I now spend every week-end visiting Maman. My brother was there; his children cheered up Claudine.

On Friday we had dinner with my friend Granville, who studies for a degree in pedagogy. I was rather somber at first, but I soon found it funny to watch our strange bohemian group. We looked like the survivors of a wreck, a band of drifters united by their uncertain destiny. Claudine was terribly out of place in her red party dress. Granville had plastered some sort of white powder over his face. I was wearing a dirty old jacket. I had been painting my walls all day, fixing up as best I could the little room into which I will soon be moving, at the other end of Paris. My fingers were still spotted with paint. To make things worse we decided to eat at a fancy Chinese restaurant, where the waiters looked down on us in disapproval. Yet I felt this pantomime was a fitting way to bring to a close my two years of wandering in the old Latin Quarter, two years devoted more to the vibrant streets than to serious study on the hard benches of the Sorbonne.

When we got out of the restaurant we danced on the sidewalk like three idiots, not caring about tomorrow. Yet later, on the Metro, Claudine held my hand in a strange, serious, almost desperate way.

Paris. 7 August 1958.

My friend Marcel was right the other day when he asked me: "Why is it so damned important for you to study science?" He was right, but only in asking the question. It would be a drastic limitation to dedicate myself exclusively to the study of science, like a priest dedicating himself to God. I will indeed study science, but I will do it with the knowledge that an appreciation for art, fantasy and sensitivity is not a "negative trait" that I ought to suppress within myself.

During my first year at the Sorbonne I was frequently discussing these lofty topics with a girl who had befriended me. One day she brought a small package: "This is for you," she said. "It was among some books my grandmother left when she died. I think you should have it." It was *Histoire et Doctrines des Rose+Croix*, by Sedir (1932). I lost sight of the girl,

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but I have treasured the book ever since, and it is with me now, a source of inspiration and a tangible link to the deeper questions I long to explore.

I want to look behind the scenes of our human existence. Unfortunately I have found no one who is able to answer my questions about forbidden things: What is research? Does it consist simply in tiring our minds while looking for impossible solutions? Could one find the ultimate secret by simply giving up the search, satiated with the pointless, superficial agitation of life, and looking instead at the infinite void beyond it?

When we discuss love, sex and destiny Claudine cautions me: "You're only nineteen. At twenty-two you will run the risk of discovering that you have already known what most men only experience at thirty or even, for most of them, never."

Funny how she still uses the formal *vous* with me. Perhaps it is true that I have been here, inside this particular body, for nineteen years. But in reality I feel that I have always existed. My brother is a **hard-boiled** physician, an agnostic and a cynic. But for his attitude towards life to be justified, the ancestral terrors I hear blowing through my soul would have to stop, the universe would have to become limited, time finite. Everything would have to die and go away.

Paris. 8 August 1958.

Who will tell me what death is?

My father has ceased to think, to hear and to see. In the last few hours before he died he thought he heard music. He asked my mother if it was a piece by Bach playing on the radio. But do I feel any call from him? No: nothing but the whispers of eternity itself, which I cannot hush within me. Night beckons to me in a similar way, can I deny it? I can almost hear the night, falling in fine drops around me, when I am holding Claudine's sleeping body against mine; and the starry night calls out to me too, a living mystery filled with other worlds. What is this attraction of nothingness we feel, beyond the fabulous amount of matter radiating in the dark sky? So much substance, metals, energy, explosions, just to create the tiny point of a star in my eye! Nature is multiplying these orgies of time and distance beyond the understanding of my poor human spirit, and to prove what? The existence of Nothingness?

Claudine, I sought the answer in your own life, in a tenderness that re-

ained beyond reach. This strange privilege you afforded me, giving me your body without letting me touch your soul. . . . What were you afraid of?

2

Paris. 25 August 1958.

Now I have my own room in Paris, close to Porte Champerret. It is one of the small rooms on the seventh floor of the building, under the roof, which in more elegant times used to be allocated to the chambermaids of the bourgeoisie. The elevator only reaches to the sixth floor, then I walk up one more level up the servants' stairs. This is a tiny place, barely ten feet long and seven feet wide, into which the slope of the roof cuts an angle. But it is mine. I am in bed at last, lying under a blue blanket. It is 10:20 p.m.

At first it was nothing but a dusty mess, to be truthful, my little *mansarde*. I was thrilled two months ago when Claudine told me it was available, because I have no money and I certainly cannot afford an apartment or even a studio. I have made some improvements: a few electrical connections, a movable lamp. I cleaned up the floor, I installed a small water tank above a wash basin (there is no running water, no sewer: I carry the waste water and empty it in the lavatory down the hall). I put up shelves for my books. I nailed a piece of plywood to the wall and I painted it black to serve as a chalkboard for math problems.

This part of the city was unfamiliar to me, but it is now coming alive through many tiny scenes, as I wait for the 84 bus every day, or as I take my breakfast at the *Cafe des Sports*.

On Wednesday I found a letter from Claudine, so unsure of herself. So direct: "*Pas ma fete a moi.*" Not my day. Write to me, she was asking.

Is there another level of life and awareness? I have long been aware that I could pass almost at will from the plane of normal consciousness to • . . another plane. There are dozens of examples: all those circumstances when something like an electronic relay suddenly seems to close deep inside me, when time starts flowing at a different speed, when new angles

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