

Zeitschrift: Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle
Band: 33 (1965)
Heft: 8

Artikel: The cowboy and the ring
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-570199>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 30.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The Cowboy and the Ring

By NEILL

When my eyes became accustomed to the dark, I smiled at the man next to me, wondering who he was. He grinned warmly back, and then turned his attention to the movie film.

In this town thirty miles from the Canadian border everybody knew or recognized others whether personally acquainted or not. Small towns in any western state are that way. Cities are far apart.

Here in this town, day by day, I wore my masque of smiles, and I was in love. I had loved Guy ever since he came to teach music and history at our high school two years ago. Right away he had singled me out to promote a friendship. We had met at first in church choir. I, like he, was unmarried. But in a small town, one does not drop clues about homosexuality. One fears the consequences of having guessed wrongly.

Two very respected bachelors, one a postal clerk for twenty years, the other a contractor, had moved together and set up housekeeping. A sly bit of gossip had fanned suspicion until it ruined their respective careers and they left the state.

The elderly bookkeeper at my firm often gossiped about the exiled son of a noteworthy family in our town. Whenever someone told a joke about «queers» it reminded her. He was known to have a male lover in New York where he had the tribute of being praised by the press as the leading choreographer today.

Apparently in the bigger cities one could be himself without too much stigma attached.

Each summer Guy absented himself to join workshops at summer school and do postgraduate work, but it seemed, we returned to each other with the joy of rich comradeship in autumn.

Though Guy seldom dated girls for functions during the school season, he always wrote of the girls he dated at summer school. So, when I say, I loved Guy, it was with the certain knowledge he was unattainable in the physical way I desired to know him.

Soon, during special moments of the film, the stranger and I commenced an exchange of glances. Once I whispered, «This movie's not as good as their last one.» His answer: «But I sure like Rock Hudson in any picture.» It was then he shifted his leg so the thigh and calf molded comfortably alongside my own. My college life had been at a church school. The orbit of my gay experiences had been confined—there had been no gay bars; no gay gatherings. Only haphazard experiences intersticed with deserts of sexual inactivity and loneliness. The shifting of his leg carried no conviction for me, though he continued exerting this pleasant pressure.

In the gay novels I hid from Guy's prying eyes, behind the acceptable facade of best sellers on my library shelf, I had read about opening lines: «Have you a cigarette?» As they light up their hands touch. In stories in One magazine, and Der Kreis, to which I subscribed, I learned of this leg touching routine. Though my flesh sang with sensual shivers, I was careful to return no promise with my own leg.

Oh, I had never lived! Would I ever live? Would it be nothing but a life of dreams without repletion?

With mounting thrills I glimpsed his handsome profile. His skin appeared leathery and deeply tanned, his smile noticeably white in the dim theater. When the movie ended, I left my seat slowly, certain I was living at last one of my dreams, confident I had ensnared him. A wonderful anticipation thudded in my veins. In the lobby we smiled once again, my words unsteady as I said: «I think she's the best actress!»

In the daylight he was overwhelmingly good-looking—very solid; son of sun and toil. The brown doeskin jacket he wore enhanced the bronze of his hands and face; the doeskin odor of him had titillated my senses for hours. How his skin fascinated me—that ageless leathery texture.

We moved with the surging crowd. Outdoors in the bright sun beating down on the pavements, I marvelled at the unique color of his eyes: gray-and-green-flecked eyes; compelling eyes. He wore fairly new Levis, so snugly fitting that they left no doubt about the extra-ordinary degree of his virility. Possibly he was a laborer new in town? He wore a broad black leather belt and ornate black cowboy boots embossed with a silver design. Definitely he was not local. Maybe he was a tourist going through Montana via Glacier National Park to the Calgary Stampede in Canada.

At the curbing, the signal light turned green. I gazed at him, then crossed over slowly, turning to see if he had followed. He stood where I had left him, but watching me still as if waiting to be asked, «Come on, let's have coffee, or a drink somewhere, it's such a hot summer day?» But I lacked the temerity of experience; words froze in me. His dancing eyes continued to spell-bind me. Deep in wonder, I studied the lines of his fine body, deliberating: had his leg been cramped in the narrow aisle, or had it been definitely an overture?

All the misdirected longings for Guy now channeled their hopes in possible fulfillment with this stranger. One bright mid-summer afternoon, more out of boredom than real desire to see a matinee, behold the Adonis of your dreams materializes, and he's not on the screen, but beside you in the flesh.

I speculated a moment too long; the stranger reached a decision about me. Had I worn my mimicry so long among the straights, the clues he sought in me were undetectable? He was moving on down the street, without looking back. Too many people I knew were swarming about me. Swiftly I followed. He turned the corner at the end of the block and by the time I reached that point, he had jay-walked to the bus terminal hotel.

After a discreet pause I ambled into the hotel lobby hoping he had lingered, anticipating my pursuit. I greeted the desk clerk who had known me since I was a child. What logical questions could I devise about a stranger? How could I match the curiosity aroused in the clerk? I lingered a long while in the lobby. I went away, I had coffee, I returned. Next I parked my car along the street waiting perhaps an hour for him to exit. Nervously I smoked. Finally I went to my apartment, prepared a light meal, tried to interest myself in TV, then a book and magazines. All the while my body burned. I was oblivious of what I ate or saw or read. My inner eye followed that virile body down the street, it sought his leathery smile and gray green eyes. The sultry summer night and the ache of desire forced me into the bathroom at last...

Near midnight, my body cooler, my hair still damp from my shower, I went for a stroll. Later, as my steps returned me to the apartment house, I noticed a man clinging to the street-light pole, at the same time vomiting miser-

ably into the gutter. When the person stood erect, I was shocked to recognize my stranger: his jet black hair tangled, his clothes quite untidy.

I approached him; clutching his stomach he stared at me, recognition flooding his features. «It's you, thank God. Some bastard's rolled me. He took me for every cent—and—and my amethyst ring,» he indicated with an extended naked hand. The disbelief on his face, coupled with a misery I couldn't realize, made him appear very boyish, and ridiculously tipsy. I exclaimed, «In this town! You must be kidding!»

«No,» he shook his head, and started to explain jerkily, «I was lookin' for ya all night. I went to the 'Y'—you wasn't swimmin', so I started round the bars, thought you might drop in. I—Oh God,» he moaned, and bending down, began to retch again.

«Well, come on up to my apartment for tonight,» I offered, tugging on his arm. I was less than a block now from my place. While he lolled occasionally against me as I rather hastily pulled him along, he mumbled on about his misadventure. His luggage had gone on ahead, and now he was broke. As soon as I had him propelled into my room, I sighed with relief, hoping no one had peered out into the night and taken note of me and my questionable companion. I suggested he shower. «I want ta,» he grinned foolishly, «but I'm so damn dizzy I'll probably drowned, and it's a long ways down to my boots.» I shucked off his jacket, then with his foot braced against my rump, I tugged off his boot. I nearly nose-dived to the floor when the second boot came off.

«Canya-undress-me—too?» he asked drowsily. My heart raced at the thought but I said, «Come on, fella, the shower's this way. I'll take your shirt off, but you can peel the rest down I'm sure,» I said as I maneuvered him into the bathroom.

Eventually I heard lusty singing in the shower. Probably it woke my neighbors. Much later, he strode across the tile onto the living room carpet, a big bathtowel knotted around his waist. He was splendid beyond description. «Thanks,» he grinned as he spoke. «I don't drink much. When I do, it hits like a ton a bricks. Show me my sack, will ya.» I pointed at my bed. He flopped on it as soon as the bathtowel dropped to the floor. Pulling the sheet up over himself, he murmured in a blurred way as he looked at me, «Yer so damn attractive,» and fell almost instantly into sleep.

*

I woke early. Already the day was sultry, but the cowboy slept deeply and quietly. I edged back the sheet to study that splendid body, knowing how foolish was I to think myself the first young man to adore it. Probably many women had enjoyed it and my hope to embrace it was quite far-fetched. He belonged no doubt to the straight world and could give my kind nothing more than comradeship. Sadly I dressed and went to prepare breakfast.

Later, when I touched his shoulder, his bright strange eyes opened on me. «Hi, bacon and eggs are served. You're welcome to use anything in the bathroom.»

While eating, I inquired, «Now, tell me, how did you get robbed?»

He shrugged and turned a palm up. «I took the back way out of some bar after I went to the can. I says, 'God, I gotta get home before I get sick' and

I thought, 'Don't they put up any lights in this damn town?' because I came out in a kinda grove-like place of trees. I saw this guy who'd been talkin' ta me and friendly while I was in the bar. I was all turned around and asked him which way ta the hotel. Next thing I know I woke up lying on the grass under one of them trees. I remember feelin' so sleepy, but anyway, I got rolled somehow.»

«Where were you going when your bus stopped here?» I asked, and immediately expressed sympathy when I learned he was enroute to the funeral of his mother. He looked astonished when I mentioned, «I thought you must be on your way to the Calgary Stampede.» His dilemma now involved getting funds to complete the trip; his relatives, I gathered, were not well-to-do; and he was the offcolor horse in the family, the drifter, the neer-do-well; it would require an embarrassing condescension to ask for money from them. Wondering if I ought to offer to loan him bus fare, I finally asked: «You have a steady job?»

«Oh yeah,» he answered. «I'm a construction worker. I had over 500 bucks in my wallet.» A reckless chap like that wouldn't carry traveler's cheques, I knew. He toyed with his fork, and spoke: «I guess I could wire my boss for advance wages, but damn, I've not been working for him long.»

«Oh?» I murmured, and finally decided, «Well, I've a hundred I can spare till my payday. I don't know how far you're going, but will it be enough to get you to the funeral and back to your job?»

«Hell yes!» He showed surprise. «I ought ta known you're special,» he declared. «The real good-buddy type.»

I wiped away the egg and toast crumbs from my mouth and stood up. «I'll go phone my boss I'll not be to work for a while. Meanwhile I'll cash a check at the grocery so you can still leave on the 9:20 bus.»

When I returned half an hour later I met Guy coming down my stairs. He tried to pass me without speaking. I clutched his arm. «Gosh, what's the rush? Can't you stay and visit?» He squeezed my arm. «Sorry, Keith. I left the books I borrowed. I've decided to go home for the summer. I've got to pack now.» I had anticipated a summer here with him. «But I thought you needed the swimming pool job? Well—okay—you coming over to say goodbye to me or I visit you?» He flashed a nervous smile at me. «You come visit me.»

«Okay, see you after work tonight,» I agreed and we parted. I found my guest sprawled out in a sofa chair, the phonograph on.

«Howdy,» he said, and gestured. «That a real good friend a yours just come boundin' into the room?»

«Oh yes,» I answered. «Sorry, if he surprised you. He comes and goes without knocking.»

The cowboy regarded me steadily with his lovely eyes. «He was in the second bar last night, talked to me some.»

«Well,» I asked, «did you tell him what happened to you?»

«Nope,» he said grimly, «he just beat it outa here like a fireman on call. But I jest remembered somethin'—he was the fella I met who told me how ta get ta my hotel.»

As we left the apartment I said, «You realize we don't even know each other's names?» He grinned and answered, «I'm Dick Tucker, most guys call me

Tuck.» «And I'm Keith Kramer,» I told him. As I drove Tuck to the bus depot to check out of his room, I asked, «You seemed quite angry about losing the amethyst ring? A keepsake, or just awfully expensive?»

«Naw. Ya see, it's sorta special, a gift from my buddy John who put some initials inside. Ya see, we married sisters. The four of us were kinda close till the war. A Jap Kamikaze got him.»

«Gee, that's awful,» I sympathized as we entered the hotel lobby. In Tuck's room, he turned to face me, his thumbs hooked in his levis back pockets. «Now about that money you give me, I want to write ya a promissory note on this hotel paper here, for ya to keep, with my address.»

I protested slightly, but it was good business. I watched him seat himself at the desk and begin to write. At last I found the courage to ask him something which puzzled me. My heart began to thump in my throat. «Tuck, you said you were looking everyplace for me last night... Why?»

He turned and regarded me steadily for a moment, then caressed my body full-length with his eyes. How I trembled in anxiety! «Well, it's kinda hard ta explain. You reminded me of John — you standin' there in the bright sun on the street — your hair and your fine features 'bout the same — so shinin', so beautiful, both you and John — and when I walked away, I seemed ta carry that grief of leavin' ya behind, right alongst with me.»

«Would I disappoint or disgust you, Tuck, if I told you about my behavior last night, too?» I asked, and continued to explain parking, waiting, hoping.

He turned back to the desk, completed the note, handed the paper to me. I read it, nodded assent. Tuck picked up his zipper bag of shaving equipment. We stared at each other — shyly, questioningly. Then he moved toward the street window, and looked down. «The bus's out front now,» he murmured. Next moment he crossed toward me, pulling me into his arms. Ah, how I had imagined that hard body locked against mine. He was just tall enough to incline his face slightly to kiss me. He was trembling, too. When he withdrew, he spoke deeply, «That's nothin' to do with John.»

«I'm glad,» I said. «When will you be back, Tuck?»

«I don't know. Probably Thursday, or Friday the latest,» he answered, moving toward the door. Then he paused and turned to ask: «How important is that friend of yours to ya?»

«Well, I've always had a crush on him, but he's straight so —». I did not know what more to say, without knowing why Tuck had asked. «I've never given him a chance to suspect I'm this way and —».«

«Come on, let's get downstairs,» urged Tuck. While I watched him buy his ticket, my thoughts whirled, and I moved outside to wait on the street near the rear of the bus. Presently Tuck was beside me. «I think I oughta tell ya, your friend made quite a play for me last night. Maybe you should quit playin' so dumb with him.» He gripped my hand. «Thanks for everything, buddy.»

As he boarded, I called, «To be sure, I'll meet this bus both days.» «You do that,» he answered back. I stayed to wave goodbye, that kiss still cherished on my mouth, the symmetry of his body frozen in my memory.

Though Tuck had been in my apartment but a few hours, the place seemed now unendurable without him. The bedcovers were flung back, the hollowed

imprint of his head in the pillow; his whiskers still clung to the sides of the bathroom sink. My heart raced as I touched the safety razor now to shave myself for the dinner-movie date I had arranged with Guy to celebrate this sudden summer departure.

I was to drive by his place about six, but in my haste to leave the gloomy apartment behind me, I arrived at Guy's place much too early. He had just stepped from the shower — muscular, starting to tan richly from those hours already spent at the pool. He was the ideal life-guard swim-instructor one sees in movies and advertisements. Dark hair formed at his chest and groin. His body might, without care, someday turn into stoutness. I found myself remembering Tuck's body so flawlessly developed, now I must study Guy's physique with fresh scrutiny. In a lame effort at distracting conversation, I teased: «Hell, looks like I got here in time to dress you,» though God knows how long I had desired to do more than that to him!

Teetering on one leg as he dried the other, Guy demanded, «So, valet, hand me my shorts!» Then he said casually, «That guy left yet, huh?» I nodded but my thoughts were in a turmoil. I felt defensive: what if Guy were «gay» and had kept me guessing all the time. Yet why should I believe the accusations of a strange cowboy? «He said you were in the bar last night?»

Guy faced me as he stepped into his shorts. That sight of him, so desirable made my jaws suddenly ache, a tautened feeling in my groin heightened the long loneliness. Suddenly I remembered the occasions Guy had been at my apartment visiting as I showered and dressed for some outing we had abruptly planned — to go to the zoo in a neighboring city, horseback riding, fishing, hiking, to a concert in the bg city. Furtively he had noticed my body. How many times we had touched in comradely ways! Always for us there had been good conversation, mutual interests and laughter.

«Well», Guy explained, «you know how dang hot it was last night. I took a walk. You know it's kinda fascinating, any Main Street after midnight in a town or city. I wondered whose kids I teach had folks who were in bars so late. This cowboy I'd never noticed, except he dropped a silver dollar — bang! right off the counter, down onto the floor and it rolled right at me as I came into the bar.»

Guy's change of summer plans made me uneasy. He had planned camping and fishing trips for us, the rainbow trout are plentiful in the mountain reservoirs, planted by local ranchers from government hatcheries. Perhaps I had a wild hope that being alone this summer with Guy, he would realize his need for me. Could our comradeship offer more than those girls he had written about? His plans, his goals, financial status, all this he had formerly discussed with me. Why this mysterious change in plans?

«How would you know a guy like that, Keith, and he ends up staying at your place last night?»

My heart lurched. Hesitatingly I told a white lie. «He worked for us once, long ago, on the ranch before the folks sold out and moved to the coast.»

Selecting a shirt with French cuffs, he said, «I see you're wearing cuff-links, will you get me a pair from that box on the chiffonier?»

I opened the little cedar box, there among tie clasps, an agate ring, and several kinds of cuff-links, I saw gleaming, an amethyst ring. With incredulity

I casually touched it, anxious to discover if initials were engraved within. Then... I swung about on him, accusing, « You took his money! »

Guy gazed at me with a penetrating look, opening his mouth as if to protest or explain. Without waiting, I leapt at him, and we crashed to the floor. I began to punch him with my fist, in the face, and at random on his body. Perhaps he was so hurt, surprised or frightened by my assault that he was slow to retaliate.

That body I had longed to embrace, I now held and struck with violence and righteous hatred. Some of my punches were damn dirty and I deserved the same in turn. With great force his body suddenly turned to steel under me, those muscles hardened from swimming flung me off long enough for him to gain an advantage. His fist now glanced across my jaw and smashed into my nose. Blood spurted and the pain stunned my efforts. Next his legs gripped me in a fierce scissor hold and he had my arm bent back under me.

Objectively I would have admired his tactics, so quick, so certain and neat. I stared up at him now with open hate, perspiration flooding my body. Words dammed up in my throat, to loose recriminations and invectives, but the sudden image of him whom I had so long worshipped, now wearing such shabby feet of clay and appearing so despicable, made me crumple, and I started to sob, with tears a man tries to hold back in dignity but which come out strangled and humiliated.

He released me, then rose to his feet and backed away.

I sat up, massaging my tortured arm. I commenced to rise, and the pain in my groin halted me so I continued to kneel still on one leg, to catch my breath before forcing myself upright. Without a direct glance at him, I moved away toward the window. Then, as I groped for my pack of cigarettes, I noted my disheveled clothes and soiled shirt. I stuck a rather smashed cigarette between my lips, then fumbling for my lighter, I decided it must have fallen to the floor in the scramble. Just then a hand and a light appeared near me. Automatically I leaned toward the light, and as soon as I had taken a couple of drags, I lifted my eyes, now dry, cold and accusing.

I can't accurately describe Guy's face—it was contrite, brimming I think with words of explanation. Intensely I felt his nearness and animal beauty. His heavy splendidly chiselled features, his big-boned harmoniously developed body confronted me; his lips moved wordlessly. He swallowed and stared at me. I gazed back at him as frankly, trying to assess my own feelings while I re-evaluated him.

«Keith?»

«Look,» I said, loudly, anger still in my voice, «nothing you can say will change what you've done.» My back was still toward him. His continued silence finally tempted me to turn and examine his reaction. He was looking down at his interlocked hands. «I couldn't face the summer with—with you. It—it was a chance. I grabbed at it—I'd be able to pay the bills here and clear out. I wasn't gonna come back,» he declared.

I could not hide my surprise.

«When he paid for our beers, God, what happened to me? I saw all that money. And he rubbed his leg against me...» When I heard Guy say that I felt a flash of jealousy. How dare Tuck so indiscriminately gad about rubbing his leg against people. I heard Guy's voice saying...» It would be easy, I'd be able to get away...» But why!» I shouted, «Why? Damn it!» Fiercely I gripped his shoulders.

His face looked grim, his voice sounded bitter. «You're a certain way,» he shrugged, «and I'm a certain way.» What tragic irony! He thought I wasn't queer, and I had thought he wasn't! I laughed mockingly, gutturally. He winced at my mockery and said, «We'd be together all summer, and I—well, I'm not stone, I can't fight it any more when I'm with you, you dumb sonofabitch,» he cried and shoved me forcefully away from him.

«Well, what the hell you think I am? Stone, too!»

For a while we listened to each other breathing roughly. Then in a careful voice Guy said, «How could a fella ever tell about you? You bigoted, stuck up, informed, studious old monk. The few times I ever tried to steer a conversation into sex, you shunned it like I'd poured ice water down your back. Is there ever anyone you don't slam? Critical, cold, judging—so damn sure of everything. I kept fearing I'd make some slip—a word, a gesture, I'd touch you and want to keep touching you, so near your face when we'd bend over something we worked on. What if I kissed you—if I forgot, if I just quit fighting it—I'd get a chill of fear—you'd destroy my teaching career with your vengeful disgust.»

«My God,» I said. «Christ,» I asked, in amazement, «do I act that ruthless?» Frantically I tried to feature myself as he characterized me. I had returned from my half-completed seminary training to a clerical life, in my parent's business. My attitude was very jaundiced. I despised my family, I hated these small town people. I loathed my church which failed to come to grips in a solvable way with homosexuality. I acted like a jilted old maid. I thrived on cruel wit, avant-garde ideas that shocked staid adults and incited youth to rebel against organized religion, against moralities and any restrictions which prevented them from being totally individualistic. I was clever, brilliant, but ruthless in my entertaining way. I was noted for my repartee.

To the outsider, Guy, I had kept my rebellion harnessed. He was clean-cut, idealistic, and full of wholesome ambition. I couldn't bear to hurt him because I did not hate him as I did the others. However, I never spoke of love; Guy did not know about my needs. But I granted him what I deprived my parents and community: discriminately I gave him friendship, discreet in its indulgence of fun and of warm comradeship.

Now I faced my falseness: I believed I'd given what I dared to friendship with Guy. Actually I had no faith in love between men. Those drifters I had known intimately, lacked mating instincts of mind and motive God had purposed in men and women; they wanted lots of sex. What I felt was crushed with censure by family, by community, and by church. The gay «married» couples I had known, and read about in books, perpetrated promiscuities far worse than the adulteries of heterosexuals. It had not entered my mind that homosexuals could be uncorrupt, and if given the chance, shine as noble and connubially faithful beings.

Had I been so involved in hateful judgment I had provided no faith for myself to live by? I wanted sex—oh God yes, but not the surrender to love. Idealistic and vulnerable, called to the religious life, but rejected by its standards, I, self-pitying, must set hopeless goals, so I could seek only that which was safe and aborted.

«Look, Keith, that cowboy was lonely, and cruising. He wanted me. And—I didn't know just what I wanted. You see, he's a drifter, he'd have blown that money anyway—on drinks, poker . . . and when he passed out in the park . . .»

No, No, I tried to shut out the words. I couldn't bear to have him slander that cowboy who had wanted only me. He was looking for me, I wanted to shout this to Guy. At the same time I was hearing this, a part of my mind was also rather numb with the knowledge of the wasted hours in the past two years—the wishing, the waiting, the wanting of Guy. The quixotic irony—he had been in the wings, on the periphery of my life, wishing, waiting, wanting, also.

Opening his wallet, Guy said, «If you can reach him, I'll return the money.»

«Okay,» I agreed. «He'll be on the bus Thursday or Friday night.» Then I walked out of Guy's place. I didn't want to see him ever again. Nothing could be the same, I believed.

The image of the cowboy persisted: I remembered his liquid stride, his leathery smile, the strange green-glittering eyes. With a racing heart I was at the bus terminal Thursday. Triumphant I expected to hand him the money. I wanted a night, an hour of fulfilment with him. He was not aboard the Thursday bus. Definitely he would be there Friday.

But, he was not. My disappointment was bitter. What, after all, I rationalized, had we in common? Not education, not hobbies or pursuits. The passion I sorely needed requited when we first met at the matinee, soon I would have hoped for more than that. Now the passion itself was gone.

Through the late afternoon heat I walked to the swimming pool. It closed at five. I sat on the entrance steps, soaking up sunshine. Eventually Guy would emerge. This intrusion of the cowboy had created a significant crisis in our lives. Realization dawned on me how much Guy had both feared and loved me. Were I now to resist cancelling out his theft, I must at the same time face up to my own crime—the shabby facade of believing in nothing. To freshen my own perspective I must believe in us. He had robbed to get free of me. How could I let everything end here when so much had been sacrificed?

There he was. I stood up and smiled at him. «Hi,» I greeted. «How about walkin' ya home?»

Gruy grinned warmly and fell into step beside me. We must have walked at least two blocks without speaking. «Did you—» he suddenly began, «—did you do anything with him that night?» he asked softly.

«Nope,» I answered. Guy quickly asked: «What'd he say about the money?»

«Did you really expect him to show up?» I snorted. «You said he was a drifter, huh? I'll mail a check less the hundred he owes me. I don't owe him any explanation, I guess.»

When we entered his apartment, the first thing I noticed was the amethyst ring gleaming on the coffee table. I went over and picked it up.

Gently Guy touched my arm. «Keith, I forgot to give you the ring. What are we gonna do about that?»

«Well, in a way I would very much like to keep the ring — a sort of memento — we might never have found about us,» I said, giving him a direct glance. «But as it is I think the ring has done its good and it might be better to return it together with the money.»

Guy put his arms around me, and we kissed. Presently the long drouth for us ended. Unnoticed, the ring fell away to be discovered later where we had surrendered ourselves . . .

Hotel „Flora“

KERKSTAAT 366
bei der Utrechtschestraat

Einzel- und Doppelzimmer
Uebernachtung mit Frühstück
Alle Zimmer fliessend Wasser

AMSTERDAM-C.
Telefon Nr. 23 76 23

Single and Double rooms
with breakfast
All rooms running water

Directie: Mevr. ANNIE WALDEN

CANNES - FRANCE

Hôtel P.L.M.**

3, Rue Hoche

Propriétaires : Jean et Charly
ex-Casanova

English spoken — Man spricht Deutsch

TUSCULUM

die exclusive Bar im Zentrum von Hamburg

Täglich ab 19 Uhr geöffnet

Hamburg 1, Kreuzweg 6 - Telefon 24 26 07

ISOLA-CLUB BASEL

Gerbergässlein 14 (im Stadtzentrum)
geöffnet jeden Mittwoch von 20.30—24.00
jeden Samstag von 20.00—01.00

Samstag, 18. September geschlossen.

DER GEDIEGENE TREFFPUNKT IN BASEL

Seelsorgerliche Hilfe und Beratung

Freiestrasse 134, 8032 Zürich — Tel. No. Privat (051) 47 78 53

Homoeroten, die das Bedürfnis nach einem seelsorgerlichen Kontakt oder Gespräch haben, können sich vertrauensvoll an diese Stelle wenden, wo sie sich mit einem Seelsorger aussprechen können, der sich speziell mit der Homophilie und Homosexualität beschäftigt. P.A. Rademakers