

LOGAN AIRPORT

Walking through corridors. The same corridor endlessly repeated. The architecture sags, following the contours of faulted basements. Each step through the labyrinth throws you further off-balance. Cheap construction is everywhere in evidence. Obese pillars, identical dowels turned out in series on the same lathe. Unsurfaceable cinder block; cement walkways stained grey by the rains. The long unbroken ribbon of glass spreads in a single sheet extending for a quarter mile in either direction. It reflect the glare from a sun that is not our sun, a universe that is not our universe.

Multitudes of identical rubber mats mark the units of distance along your path. A double-ply shatterproof glass door opens and you enter the hall to confront a mechanical doll in blue uniform seated behind a bone-white counter of abnormal length. Signs in gargantuan letters stand poised above her head:

ALLEGHENY AIRLINES

AMERICAN AIRLINES

DELTA AIRLINES

It ought not be said that her face is entirely without expression. What it does express cannot be translated into recognizable terms. Neither love nor hate nor any obvious sentiment reveal their presence. She looks much as she is supposed to look. She looks as if she were receiving instructions from the omniscient forces.

We are in a world governed by attendants wearing starched unwrinkled blue green gray red uniforms and who do not share in our humanity. Although not machines, their souls are made of a substance essentially different from our own. Along with the over-groomed and over-simplified personnel, you notice a handful of passengers milling about the waxed micaceous floor. They contribute to the sense of desolation that is produced by too small a number of persons in a cavernous space designed for large crowds.

And if, in addition, it is impossible to state which are the living, and which the dead?

It is time to ask for help: the Trans-World Airlines plane landed on schedule, but your friend was not on it. A short stubby girl, her head crowned with scalloped curls, her age fixed by company policy to within a shade of 21, nods in the direction of Traveler's Aid. In the metallic

clip of her voice you hear the distant resonance of a cosmic tapedeck.

" You go out that door take the airport bus travel in cloverleaves around various dreary immense piles of porous concrete until , if you are lucky, the bus stops before an amorphous block of stone, metal and glass identified as the International Airport. You are advised to step down there. The bus costs a dollar. "

Her delivery is that of an automaton skilled in obedience: facial movements, arm wavings, language, vocal levels , swaying of the head and neck, have cooperated in mechanical synchronism. Hired for sex appeal, there is nothing even remotely human let alone sensual about her. She is one of the Airport's many appendages. And you hold her culpable for the theft of the dollar. You set out on a search for another opinion. You wander the endless carpets, like rivers of raspberry sherbet, coursing through these sterile canyons.

Information booths have been spaced every hundred yards or so. Their design is such as to permit the general public to ask if they might have been designed to anticipate the control panels of future jumbo jets. From their switchboards, zombie-eyes of frosted hue blink on and off.

The black youngster behind the counter models a smart uniform destined eventually to be worn by the cafeteria help in space stations. He sits alone and presses buttons with futile gestures , communicating information with the lifeless air with which he came into the world. Word for word he recites the same statement beeped to you a moment ago by the young lady at Allegheny Airlines.

Each of them transmits on a different sound track from the same speaker system. You make a silly fuss about the dollar, although you don't know why you bother. At the sound of your voice, the person next to you in line turns faintly hostile. The Information Officer smiles at your little joke: what an amusing idea that one, to walk!

" It is not advised. The International Airport is so far away. " He shakes his head, a condescending twinkle in his eye: "And you may get lost! " You walk away turn at right angles grope towards the pleated rubber mat before the exits. The doors slice open and you re-enter the little village of pavements ramps pillars towers bare cinder block walls tarmacs alleys roads.

One cannot determine the origins of the winds , nor their contents distilling onto our flesh. They have the taste of acid in them of distant refineries sterile wastelands without a trace of vegetation. This landscape, (which it would be foolish to disobey), has intimidated the 30 or so persons collected at the Bus Stop into silence. Not a one had had the slightest suspicion before coming here that an airport could be such grim business.

Overhead on the high ramps cars race like bullets. Planes scream in birth torment. We are nowhere; the planes are going nowhere. There must however be some relationship between these nameless labyrinths and those bellowing birds the stink of slaughterhouses in their wakes. Their insensible alienation sharpened by their inflexible sense of direction, they perambulate in geodesics about the globe. Rocking clouds dangle in the skies like synthetic rubber bubbles hanging from the high ceilings of bankrupt factories.

Natty buses hump along the concrete roads, idiotic like the go-carts on an asylum golf-course. An Avis bus, a freak vehicle, spins down the road, weaving between columns and clumsy at the turns. The people seated inside have pleated their flesh bent their bones in obedience to postulates of truncated space-time; the buggy is too long too squat its face smashed in its puff roof pointlessly straddling a beer-bellied frame like a dunce's cap. A Budget moving van, a Hertz bus, and yet another grotesque vehicle used for transporting luggage follow in regular succession . There can no longer be any doubt that we are in a world ruled by robots , electro-mechanical servo-goons energized by distant dynamos.

The realisation that you are never going to get out of here is just beginning to make itself felt. Maybe - if you had the money for a plane ticket. Which you haven't. Under the circumstances it makes just about as much sense to continue on to the International Airport to inquire about your friend. The bus pulls over to the curb and comes to a halt.

We pile on together: a middle-aged Blue Cross office worker with a heart condition; his wife; two women, violinists, their instrument cases covered with leather and slung over their shoulders; a blond secretary; a soldier in the army of some anonymous nation. You shove a dollar at the driver make your way to the back of the bus stop at the first available seat. Somehow you manage to squeeze yourself between the flabby body of a businessman and a globe-trotting youth, his back-pack resting on the

floor between his legs, the filth of 6 nations under his armpits.

The secretary does not have the exact change for the bus. She has no intention of giving the bus driver a five-dollar bill for a trip that she believes will only take five minutes. Were she to learn that the trip will last forever, she might withdraw her objections. Then again it might not make the least difference. What she really wants is to get the soldier to make change for her. He doesn't feel like being helpful. Or perhaps he hasn't got the change. Or perhaps he does have the change but doesn't want to part with it. Or it may simply be that he doesn't hear her request. His basic attitude, inferred from his posture, seems to be that there must be very little intersection between civilian and military life.

You rise from your seat walk over offer her the money. It is vehemently rejected. You are of no interest to her; any dealings with you beyond the absolutely unavoidable might compromise her standing in society the respect of her friends her job. The soldier belongs to a different category. She will do anything to please him.

All the driver wants is the bus fare.

You return to your seat shove yourself between the oblate banker to your right and the unwashed vagabond to your left. You find yourself staring with exaggerated interest at the advertising filling the sequences of cardboard rectangles at the border between the walls and ceiling. A toothpaste ad - or might it not be propaganda for the toothbrush? From the mouth of a bent tube a white turd bulges gleaming onto the horizontal obsidian bristles of a plastic green armature.

At the far right of the field reclines the snoring head of some Caribbeañ . To his left , the carousers at two different parties. They chant the same message to a notated fragment of song:

" MY BEER IS RHINEGOLD THE DRY BEER!"

The sybarites are portrayed in simian caricatures, as if the consumption of Rhinegold beer somehow makes it easier to wallow in animality. To the right of the Rhinegold song the taxpayers of this municipality have paid for an inducement to the public to visit its closest Off Track Betting center and gamble on the horses. Above the retouched photo-montage of a foolishly happy country gentleman in foolish Harris tweeds leading his confused

horse by the reins, one finds a cautionary note in the tiniest print: the address and telephone number of Gambler's Anonymous.

But how can we have come so quickly to 96th and Broadway?

You leap off the seat rush through the door of the Uptown IRT , terrified lest they slam shut, like Siegfried's sword slicing you in two . Out of the doors of the 7th Avenue local into the bowels of hell! You move through a contaminated nightmare garlanded with steep runways iron bars, gassy pools of blackish density punctured by bitter sunlight. Slimy homunculi cast shadows long as solemn sub- dominant Ninth chords moted with billions of transgalactic vermin. The denizens of this underworld move quickly with familiar domesticated gestures of terror, making way silently as you pass, though you remain invisible to them. The roar of traffic overhead is deafening in its relentlessness. With a leap, like a rat ejected from its embankment by the floods, you burst from the loins of the subway onto New York's Upper West Side!

CUCHIFRITOS

PINA COLADA

RIJOS E FRIJOLES

You stroll up the Broadway's West Side at the height of the blazing afternoon past aggregates of immigrants derelicts street vendors harried musicians students persons on the lam executives working folk huddled in doughnut shops over dirty coffee counters. New York's excitement is ever sordid; persons without needle marks on their arms have them on their brains. Flesh flicks and Chinese restaurants. People pushing and shoving and stepping all over one another. That's New York!

A shabby newspaper kiosk shelters in the pocket of a bank building's enclosing wall . Though it is summer and mid-day, a naked light bulb burns perpetually, like a lighthouse beacon. The New York Times, The Village Voice, Daily News and other traditional rags rest on piles falling in complete disarray about the sidewalk. One finds papers from every country in the world; you buy a dozen. Framed in a rickety casement, a flabby dwarf, like driftwood washed up from distant shores, squats atop a steep tripod. Weighted down by the years, he wears a green cap and, although shrewd, has little time for imagination. The Rhinegold sits , in the form of the Nibelungen ring,

securely tucked up his anus. You retire into a cafe, order a coffee, sit down at a table and begin to read. On the front page of every paper there is a picture of some street or landscape inclined at a steep angle. You study these carefully. Inclined streets are more meaningful; descended with urgency, climbed with purpose, they bestow on one a sense of accomplishment.

...climbing after midnight in the company of friends along Circle Road , the hairpin turn winding about Montreal's West Mountain, urging ourselves via steep pathways lined with Gothic estates , ponderous monuments to supercharged dreams descending in summer noon down the hills of San Francisco humming with traffic crowds restaurants shops stalls and residences scattered like loess on eroded mountainsides skating volcanic flows vomited from deep recesses of Earth tumbling down the slopes of Montmartre over the causeways of the Sacre - Coeur through canyons and gullies to the plains of Clichy Pigalle Barbes rue de la Goutte d'Or revving a motorbike over the peaks of the Massif Centrale down through the Rhone Valley, Valence, Avignon, Aix, Marseilles through Provence to the Pyrenees bathing in rejuvenating streams of Mount Canigou carrying me through Collioure Port Vendre Banyuls Cerbère Mediterranean sunscapes over Moorish castles weaving the knotted macramé of medieval streets of Barcelona .

We hiked up Tibadabo mountain to the magnificent vistas at the summit . The carnival park, somber artifact from the future in antiquated Spain, was closed for the summer holidays when , searching for the friend who was supposed to have met us at the El Prat de Llobregat airport, we climbed up to it on a broiling August afternoon. Had I not been as tight as any other American tourist we might have spared ourselves the labor by spending a few hundred pesetas on the Funicular nervously fingering the porcelain crucifix dangling from a chain around her neck nestled on her bosom , the shy barmaid from the redlight district seated beside me looked out over slopes dense with vegetation.

Or are we not in reality inching our way up the Butte Montmartre ? There is some support to this hypothesis : with some astonishment we regard an unruly conclave of two dozen French university professors sitting and standing about our trolley car gobbling away like indignant turkeys. Crouching under the seat at the far corner of the car, one

can make out the contours of the sinister Orson Lime; he has hidden himself well. He comes to us via the Ferris Wheel in the Vienna Prater courtesy of Flughafen Wien Schipol Gatwick Logan Newark Rijkavik Charles de Gaulle. His glare is all malevolence; he plays the blue zither.

The polemic proceeds apace. The acrimonious gibberish of the schoolmasters fills the tiny cell. They speak a pastiche of greekisms, concepts coined in British and German universities, and low Paris argot. They are analyzing the syntactic form of the construction of the question of whether a truly engaged Marxist would worry about whether the psycho-analysis of literature is more important than the psycho-analysis of life; and various forms of the contrapositive. Not only are they prepared to kill for their beliefs, they have already done so: two professors from tiny villages in the Gironne, both decorated with the Legion d'Honneur, lie stretched across the stalls of the ferris-funicular, their skulls bashed in with paving-stones from the Barricades of May '68.

Russian soldiers stand about the car, scratching their bald heads. They stick their Kalashnikovs through the windows and amuse themselves shooting down seagulls arriving over the Seine from the Danube. The soldiers keep their distance from the squabbling professors. They listen with great respect; they have been brought up to revere French culture, which always relates to revolution. Orson Lime emerges from his hiding place to peddle morphine about the compartment.

The diapered baby howls "Buvez Cinzano" from a green poster covered with scatological graffitti. Context is all; I lay my hands on the shoulders of the Spanish barmaid rip her blouse from neck to waist bury my head between bared breasts leaping like nubile lambs, the scent of Sardinias a la Planta mixing with the pungency of cooked wine. There is commotion and clatter. We hear the din of approaching riot but ignore it. The car wrenches itself around a tight corner, creaking like an old invalid, slams to a halt shuddering in staccato volleys proceeding from front to back. Lights blink on and off: the Metro has completed the gruesome route from Pigalle to Etoile. The doors fly open; aromas of jet-liner exhausts fill the compartment.

In the turmoil and confusion you made your apologies tore your head from the barmaid's bosom flew through the door to the platform collided with a wild dishevelled hag flailing an accordion. Long knotted tresses teeming with mites covered a ravaged and debauched face. The many

layers of rags draped about her carcass shook with rage .
Knocking over two bankers, a retired general and 3 North
African rug merchants you dashed up the stairs to emerge
onto the Place de l'Etoile. Then you rushed across traffic
to the arcades of Le Drugstore where, from a secret booth
known only to yourself and a few intimates, you placed a
free call to Boston's Logan Airport.

Like kayaks bucking the rapids 3 Citroens, beige ,
blue and red cut through the traffic gyrating the Arc de
Triomphe rose against the fierce currents entering by all
directions made their way to the Parc Monceau. Behind the
steering wheel of each coupé sat a young architect, each a
recent graduate from some college in California. They were
late for a conference, an important meeting, the purpose of
which being to determine the quickest and cheapest way to
pave over the Parc Monceau, setting for much French
literature, some gorgeous scenes out of Proust for example.

It was unfortunate, though inevitable, that the park
would be at the ideal location for the parking lot and
shopping Mall necessitated by a shrinking economy in a
world of limited options. The Mall was expected to be
completely modern, the height of modernity, indeed an exact
copy of the one the architects inspected just the year
before in Hyannis on Cape Cod.
No cause for alarm! The Mall would also be distinctively
French , the contours of the proposed complex following
the lines of a
pentarhomboidal dodecahedron , the alleyways between the
buildings anointed with charming names like "Chausée Mozart
' , 'rue Michel-Ange , "Place Cervantes ' , 'Impasse Proust

Buses cars jeeps trucks motorcycles bicycles
Velosolexes horse-carts joggers pedestrians stride the 12
lanes of the Champs-Elysees in all directions growling
blazing hissing wrestling murdering slamming shouting
spitting cursing. The grinding of metals sound like the
howls of dogs pushed through meat-grinders. 3 motorbikes
and their drivers , mashed to a bloodied paste by savage
truckdrivers, are being swept against the sidewalks of the
grandiose boulevard. The traffic, waved to all points of
the compass by the gendarmerie , fans out in long
strings like gobs of chewing gum from the mouths of
spiteful children.

A tap on the shoulder from behind. You turned around
to confront a rotund individual in drab suit and tie,
crunching maniacally on the stem of a pipe the ashes from

which dripped down your shirt front. His wire-framed glasses lenses round and huge, stood poised to fall off the rim of his nose. Bull neck and protruding belly lay hidden beneath the crests and furrows of his flowing red beard. A small though heavy box, some kind of high-tech gadget, was tightly gripped between his flaccid palms.

Garrulous and obnoxious in turns, it developed that he was an internationally recognized physicist, speaking a highly educated broken English with a foreign accent that was unmistakably non-French. For the last two hours he'd been searching for the physics labs in the neighborhood of rue Pierre Curie and the rue d'Ulm.

"Id moast be in dis' place, No? Nearly datza big brick house over dere - vat you 'tink? " He pointed to the Arc de Triomphe.

You tried to explain to the nerd that the distance from the Place de l'Etoile to the Rue d'Ulm is not less than 6 miles. Predictably he erupted in hysterical fury. The do-hickey, I learned, was a bomb. I transliterate:

" State of the art: a 'quark' bomb ! Quark bombs consume everything in the quarter acre around their detonation point! The blast area hangs on as a Black Hole for the next 25 billion years . If the bomb explodes during our conversation, the entire Champs Elysees will be sucked into the vacuum! It could have been defused in the labs on the rue d'Ulm. Now it's too late. - Vat in hell you me expect to do!?" , he screamed.

You then advised him to run to the Parc Monceau and make a gift of the bomb to the gathering of architects. As a Black Hole, the Parc Monceau would at least never have to suffer the indignity of becoming a shopping mall! When he returned you invited him to join with you to take in a film at the Cinemathèque in the Palais Chaillot.

The auditorium darkens; the film begins . A middle-aged man walks a 10-speed whitegreen bicycle up Chestnut Street on Boston's Beacon Hill. The time of year is late September; leaves, brown and yellow, fall about him in the frail mists. He leans against a knobbly lamppost stares up at the sky counts the doors and windows of a jetliner passing directly overhead. The plane is bound for Logan Airport. Later that evening he will be riding his bicycle over there to meet a friend. The bicycle is turned around as he prepares the descent to Charles Street.

On the way down he stops to chat with a brittle dowager who has poked her head through an opened window, its panes fashioned of antique colonial glass. A crooked finger supports a custom-decorated Chinese teacup filled with anisette . Six cats pile over her head and shoulders.

They are fatter than laughing Buddhas but they are not laughing, They regard the cyclist with profound mistrust. Two of them have eyes missing one is part reptile another is burnt to a crisp the rest have lost their tails. Carrying on a conversation with this woman is difficult as she refuses to understand any language other than the one invented by Jonathan Edwards and brought to perfection by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Bidding her a fond farewell the cyclist leaps onto the handlebars to tumble down the long steep street to certain death at the other end.

The woman will chain her bicycle to the back fender of a delivery van after its driver assures her that it will not be moving for the rest of the morning. She will descend a staircase and enter the pastry shop below ground level which at that time will be maintained by a Norwegian married couple of glacial mien. Her waitress, a girl in her mid-twenties, buries her scalp beneath a haystack wig lifted from a department store mannequin, mannequin eyes of Carrera marble, Carrera marble breasts pointed like guided missiles. Disdain on her brow, her mouth indifferent; with a deft swipe she will shear off a slice of cheesecake placed it on a crinkled paper plate, pushed it over the counter in the woman's direction.

After paying she will move on draw coffee from an urn at the far end of the counter sit down behind a square table set in the most obscure recess in the crowded room. Hardly will she be seated when a suspiciously distinguished Old World gentleman, rendered ever so much more suspect by a top hat and frayed hand-me-down ruffled suit, will reach over from his table to hers, and pass her the morning edition of the Boston Globe. A felt pen will have been used to encircle a message in the Classified Ads with a thick smear. It was in this way that the woman will learn that her friend would be on the first plane arriving at Logan Airport that afternoon at 4.

Her further instructions are explicit. She is to finish her snack without making herself conspicuous, then move to the part of the room indicated by the tip of the umbrella of the elderly refugee. This duly noted, she will toss a grateful nod in his direction for having, at last, given her the information sought these long months. Glancing through the ground-level windows of the pastry shop just long enough to see the delivery van dragging the bicycle through the streets of Beacon Hill, the woman will stand up and make her way to the Ladies' Room down a narrow staircase illuminated by a large and dull red lightbulb.

The lounge without a doubt this must be the right place you notice the violinists seated together on a bench violin cases and bodies ineluctably locked in a disjointed Cubist embrace. Your passage is blocked by yet another turnstile. It requests a quarter; a roving secret agent gives you one and you pass into Logan Airport. With a grimace you collect 3 suitcases jostle with the crowds irritably descend the escalator to the lower levels freedom. Anxiously you await your friend. There is so much to tell ! You reach the bottom of the escalator enter another lounge sit down to wait.

I could not be there to meet her. For three hours I found myself trapped underground between Government Center and Kenmore Square , on the B-train of the Green Line . It was lamentable that a thrill murderer boarded the train shortly after I did and sank a shiv through the neckbone of a weary business executive - who may not have had too many reasons for living anyway. Then he pushed past me into the window seat next to me, brought out a second knife from the instep of a leather cowboy boot and regarded me with malevolent fascination.

Our society tends to think of aggressiveness as rather a good thing. In the case of this tragic youth it was linked with traits of a decidedly less desirable nature . He squirmed in his seat reamed his ears with the eraser end of a pencil threw out Christ's , damn's and shit's in quick succession with appalling vehemence smoked spat on the floor farted cried

cock sucker , mother fucker and son of a bitch . With the point of his knife he pryed loose a bit of wisdom tooth from the back of his mouth spat it out directly in front of me on the floor where else did I want him to put it? Interpreting my prolonged silence as a sign that I might possibly be afraid of him he said:

"YouZE SAW WHUT I JUST DUHN to dat UDDER GUY I bet? I mean like DIDn't youZE ...HUUUHNN? "

In the pair of seats just in front of ours a proper Bostonian from Beacon Hill sat with her entourage, half a dozen cats that crawled over her head and shoulders. In the crook of the index finger of her right hand she held an custom made Chinese teacup filled with anisette. I leaned forward onto the metal bar at the top of her seat and asked her for advice.

"Don't you know? " she crowed , " I've always thought that dealing

with unwanted bores was everyone's first lesson in life! My dear ", she went on, turning around to make me the present of a calico cat , "You must put the CHILL on him !!! "

Leaning back into my seat, I regarded him with astonishment, as one might contemplate a piece rotten meat on display in a grocery counter:

"PAWdon me - SIR! . Are you, by the most imprAWBable kAUHMbination of circumstAWHNces ahdRESSING mE? "

So I takes de cat up from dis here bozo's lap and GETOUTTADUH train at Borstun eUnervoosity , cause'uh duh Diffuhrentshel Geometry seminar . Dis here moron what's givin dis lecture or class or seminar or fucken COKEquilliUM ain't nothin' butta dumb mudder-fucker widduh fat ass ennuh bushel'uh beard all ovuh his rotten dirty little face. Dey flies him here over here fromuh shack up innuh Payruvhian Andes justuh givus dis here SHIT about Abstract Geoidiocy!!

Hey! You wanna know sompin'? He must be duh same meatball I seed gettin' offa Trans-fucken Woild Airlines dis morning at Logan! Well, hez some kinda big shot I guess, even dough his shit don't stink no better'n mine!

DEFINITIONS: Let M be a manifold, O and A two arbitrary points on the manifold, their coordinates specified relative to a stationary reference frame.

Let K be the collection of all infinitesimal displacements with origin at O .

Let X be the sub-collection of all members of K which, when extended, intersect A . We will say that M is geodesically proper if every such sub-collection contains at least one non-infinite member.

POSTULATE: The Earth, as defined through the researches of Erasthenes Strabo Columbus Magellan Lindbergh and others, is geodesically proper.

THEOREM: There exists a preferred direction along which any airplane departing from the airport in Lima, Peru at a positive velocity,

will arrive at Boston's Logan airport in a finite amount of time.

PROOF: I myself am here giving this lecture.

When I hears dat stuff what makes me vomit I breaks up his schtupid lecture cause I wanna drag duh asshole outta dis here lecture hall soz I can stomp all over his face!

" Haz it ever occoid to youze " , I yells, " dat youze don't make no discrimination between duh Lie algebras uv duh vector fields, and duh symplectic manifolds uv duh differential forms!! Huh, schtupid assed mudder fucker? "

Snifflin' likeuh goat in heat, duh honored goofball leers at me like I'm some kinna whore's douchebag! But he answers duh question. Ain't no jerk-off gonna come five tousand miles justuh scratch his balls when he could be sittin' at home fuckin' a llama!

" Sir! Only Mayans worry about things like that! We Incas, you see, are renowned engineers, not nit-picking mathematicians!!"

It was at this point that I ran out of the room. Not because I was offended mind you - though I must say it is a bit odd at a science conference to see someone ramming a switchblade through the ribs of a colleague over a mere disagreement in terminology - I left because I remembered that a friend of mine was due to arrive in less than an hour at Logan Airport and that I'd promised to meet her.

At the entranceway I ran into a man and a woman, a pair of specialists in dynamical systems from Moscow University, a man and a woman, and a departmental secretary, another woman. They beseeched me to drive them to Logan Airport: they were fleeing the country. We crossed Commonwealth Avenue, walked quickly to a parking lot near Kenmore Square and got into my car.

Having driven onto Tremont Street escape is impossible. Pyres of chain-linked 10-speed bicycles block all the streets surrounding Boston Commons. Angry university students (of which Boston shelters over a hundred thousand), crouch behind barricades erected at all the street corners. Next to them sit accumulated stockpiles of cobblestones tear gas canisters flares baseball bats Molotov cocktails. It all seems a bit odd for Boston.

Bombs burst trails of smoke obscure the view chants of solidarity rise up shouting cries of agony moans . Enraged students surround the car dent the roof puncture the tires set it on fire roll it down the street towards

the police phalanxes in riot gear deployed in defensive positions all along State Street.

The car explodes: the women the men the cat are incinerated in microseconds their interleaved ashes lifted by billowing winds and gently deposited over Greater Boston. Thick banks of ash accumulate around Logan Airport over the runways the planes the ramps the buggies the beings vehicles the buildings the lawns .

The mobile staircase is rolled across the tarmac to the entrance of the plane. You descend. The middle-aged woman at your back is bossy, bad-tempered. She pushes you along with the point of her suitcase. Just ahead of you stands an elderly minister of some eminently respectable sect its headquarters on Beacon Hill. He is in poor health and you don't want to collide into him.

Gripping the railing you examine the tracteries of ramps and runways stretching endlessly towards the horizon. Cars race up and down the roadways like frenzied cockroaches. Helicopters lift from invisible beaches to hover expectantly over the runways. Hyperboloid cooling towers dot the landscape . They give off a savage roar as the winds suck into them. Clouds swell ; disappear. Planes skitter off to the abyss.

Two pale suns are setting in the West. The clocks will never function again. Nor were they ever intended to.

Entering the lounge of the International Airport you sit down to wait.

