

THREE

A change in lighting.

The fingers of the left hand, still affixed to the chair, have become slightly more cramped. Otherwise, same as before.

There on the floor, beneath
That thing,
We did what we could, the four of us, to occupy
Our time. We stood,
We sat,
We watched, we listened, each of us
Alone,
As alone as you can be
In a vast quiet hall where three
Other people
Are equally alone.

Sooner or later, each one of us would wander
Over to the closed
And barricaded newsstand. Each of us, in turn, would peer
Through the steel
Accordion fence, eyeing the postcards, the paperback
Romances,
The chewing gum, the candy, the pornographic
Magazines, the maps of the city and the nation, the cigars
Sold singly
And in packs of five. The braver among us might try
To reach
Inside the scissors-like fence and touch
The nearest display, a rack
Of souvenir
Key rings and bottle
Openers and fat-barreled pens, all adorned
With the train
Station's logo. But sooner
Or later, the figure at the gate—whichever one of us
It happened
To be—this covetous
Window shopper
Would start to feel like a fool, and playing out
The theme in the pitch

And voice of his or her own body manner, would let go
Of the steel fence—kick it—
Or shake it one last time and then
Walk quickly away...

For we each, in our turn, had come
To the same realization—it wasn't just the beckoning
Merchandise that lay beyond our grasp—it was the very life
The newsstand
Served, a life of choices and variety, a gaudy
And delectable life where guilty
Vacationers
Return home
With corny gifts, and pre-occupied commuters
Nibble
As they wait in line—a life of small,
Tangential
Urges and easy
Satiations—this entire life, for us, for the duration
Of that night
Had become inaccessible, out of reach—
Not
For sale.