

See Sato in the Funny Papers

To Sato Murasaki, as to Debbie Dieter Haas, art is grown-ups' play.

Like Babe Ruth, each would confess to some continuing astonishment at being paid to have fun. Naifs, like the Babe, they are sort of sorry, but lack the comprehension to feel real sympathy, for those who find creation agonizing. Exuberance is Sato's way with an orchestra, Debbie's at the easel.

Certain athletes, paid to play football or baseball, think of relaxation as a game of pool or round of golf. Sato, when he has time to while away, likes to draw in pen and ink and to practice calligraphy. Debbie, pausing in her studio, fools endlessly with a harpsichord, at home sings *lieder* in a harsh, true voice, and has written songs. They sound like bad Kurt Weill, she will concede with a fine big laugh, but they are not meant to be performed or published. They are for recreation, though she may spend weeks working one out, before she sets it aside.

Where the recreation is in that might conceivably be understood best by someone who enjoys passing time with difficult puzzles.

Debbie and Sato have discovered one another almost instantly, not as a couple—that one is an early-middle-aged man, the other a somewhat older woman, is almost irrelevant to their games. What they are is fellow players, like new friends equally matched and equally enthusiastic at tennis or chess, who want to play together every chance they get.

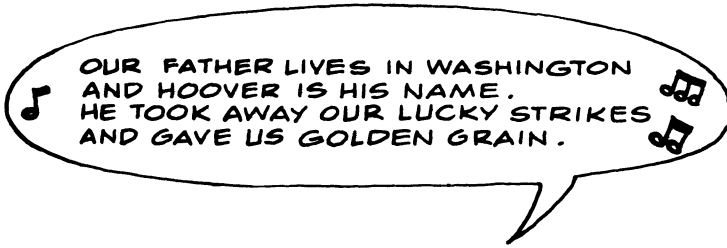
Yet to call our conductor and designer well-matched is not to say they are similar: Sato is inventive, faceted, light. Debbie is more scrupulous and more thorough. Sometimes Debbie will absorb, absorb, contributing mostly her happy concentration of attention to the game.

To be an audience is grown-ups' play, too, for those who will have it so, and if there be transcendental possibilities it is possible that some pass as truly into ecstasy from exhilaration as do others from high, holy seriousness.

I have been thinking, Debbie, that a life, after all, is only one of those solemn comic strips we all love secretly, except that instead of a handsome doctor or soldier or meddling old woman, to make sure it comes out all right, we have natural irony to make sure it comes out oddly. So you could draw, and I could letter—my calligraphy is disgraceful for a Japanese, but all right for an American, I believe.

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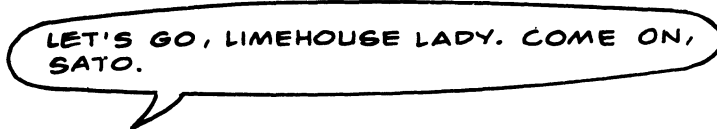
So you must draw, for 1932, when we begin, a very thin hobo named Red. Have him sit with three others on stumps in front of a whitewashed chicken-house on a California prune and walnut ranch. They sleep in the chicken-house with their bedrolls. They are helping Sato's stepfather with the harvest. Give them a fire to cook on, and show small-boy Sato hiding to watch them cook. Red has a cigar-box banjo. Can you leave me space to letter what he sings?



The natural irony is that Sato is curious about fathers, and believes Red, the hobo, to be singing about his own.

Golden Grain was tobacco, which came in small cloth sacks. Bull Durham tobacco still comes in such sacks, I believe.

Using Golden Grain, Sato's mother rolls twenty cigarettes each morning for Sato's stepfather. She has been an artist's model, but you would make her fingers longer and more beautiful than any artist has ever drawn them before. She finishes the twenty perfect white tubes, of paper and tobacco, and Sato's stepfather puts them in a pigskin case, with his four initials on it in silver. *O.O.G.J.* He has a flask to match, which his parents gave him along with the case when they sent him from the East to go to Stanford University. He has strong hands with blond hairs upon the fingers.



There is no way to show that his voice is a strong, caressing baritone, so I would letter another speech, aside:



LET'S GO, KIDS. IF THE OLD MAN KNEW I WAS GOING TO VOTE FOR ROOSEVELT TODAY, HE'D RECRUIT A FIRING SQUAD FROM THE NEW YORK RACQUET CLUB, AND THEY'D SHOOT ME DOWN WITH THEIR PURDY DOUBLES.

IN THE SQUASH COURT ?

WEARING WHITES. READY, AIM, SERVE.

WE HAD LUNCH AT THAT CLUB, SATO, BUT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER, WHEN WE WENT TO NEW YORK TO MEET OOG'S PARENTS.

DID WE, MOTHER ?

She is so beautiful. Today Sato plays squash at that club sometimes, but that is a much later installment and a more ordinary irony. Sato's stepfather has his own Purdy double. It is beautiful, too, in its way. Sometimes he will shoot ducks for them when food is short, cinnamon teal which come off the shallow lake in front of Oog's dog in the tule weeds. Small ducks. They are beautiful, too. And the dog, as well.

FETCH, JIMBO, FETCH. GOOD BOY.

Now I would have to letter a synopsis, "What has happened in our story so far":

... IN 1930, THIS FAMILY HAD GONE BACK TO THE LAND, AS SO MANY DEPRESSION FAMILIES DID, EVEN QUITE ELEGANT ONES. THE RANCH THEY WENT BACK TO HAD BELONGED TO SATO'S REAL FATHER, A JAPANESE TRUCK FARMER NAMED MURASAKI, WHOM THE BOY DID NOT REMEMBER....

SEE HOW TALL AND STRAIGHT
ARE THE TREES HE PLANTED?

YES, MOTHER.

MUST HAVE BEEN A HELL
OF A GUY, LIMEHOUSE.

... MURASAKI HAD BEEN MUCH OLDER THAN SATO'S MOTHER,
WHO WAS SENT FOR AND ARRIVED FROM JAPAN AT AGE
THIRTEEN. MURASAKI WAS MURDERED.

I believe.

THE YOUNG GIRL-WIDOW RENTED OUT THE RANCH, AND TOOK
BABY SATO TO SAN FRANCISCO, WHERE THEY LIVED WITH HER
BROTHER-IN-LAW, A COMMERCIAL ARTIST, AND SHE
BECAME A MODEL. ...

THERE IS NO SHAME IN THIS . IT
IS A PROFESSION, LITTLE SISTER.

BROTHER OF MY HUSBAND,
I OBEY.

I think she was very popular, young, exotic and exquisite. In one painting she had eight arms, but even with eight chances, the painter did not get the hands right. It was an innocent art in San Francisco in the 1920s.

SATO'S STEPFATHER HAD A BLOND MUSTACHE, A STRONG
NOSE, A BASQUE BERET, AND A SET OF STONE CHISELS. HIS
NAME WAS ORRIN OWENS GANSEVOORT JAY.

CALL ME OOG.

HE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED AS A CHILD AND RETURNED AFTER RANSOM WAS PAID. HIS PARENTS COULD NEVER AGAIN TRUST AN OFFSPRING WHO CAUSED THEM THE WORRY AND COST THEM THE MONEY OF HAVING BEEN KIDNAPPED.

I believe. He was never serious as a sculptor, and meant to study architecture. He was a man's man, all his life, perfectly created of received male wisdom, which he transmitted to Sato with such easy conviction that it came out as precept rather than cliché:

... BEFORE BREAKFAST IS BAD FOR YOU .

... POTATOES EASTER SUNDAY .

... DON'T MIX .

... A BATH WITH YOUR SOCKS ON .

... A TEN-DOLLAR DRUNK WITH A FIVE-CENT CUP OF COFFEE ?

... IF YOU WOULDN'T USE HER TOOTHBRUSH .

... SLOPE OF THE PASTEREN BEFORE YOU BET .

... HIM WITH TOMATO JUICE .

... BY HIS HANDSHAKE .

... MARIGOLDS .

... BOSS OF THE LITTER .

... ANY TEN CARD FACEUP .

... GLAZE WITH EGG WHITE AND WATER .

... BACON SLOWLY AND DRAIN THE GREASE .

... BY YOUR SHOESHINE .

... LIKE EATING AN EGG WITHOUT SALT .

Oog was certainly welcome to ten-year-old Sato's part of Murasaki's ranch, and to anything else the boy had.

SATO, THAT VIOLIN IS BIGGER THAN YOU ARE.

OH, THANK YOU.

OH, YOU'RE WELCOME, KIDDO.

Sato is not really a prodigy, but will still look ten years old when he graduates from high school. From the prune and walnut ranch, Sato rides the red Trailways bus every Wednesday, two hours to San Francisco, for his violin lesson. Even when Oog can no longer afford to hire the migrants to help with the harvest, he finds money to pay for the lessons.

SOLD THE DRAFTING SET, LIMEHOUSE. I NEVER USE IT ANYMORE.

That year, Red and the other hobos come by. Red is even thinner, with a thin beard over his ragged collar. Oog, with his beautiful wife and twelve-year-old Sato, are trying to make the harvest by themselves.

COME ON, OOG. LET US GIVE YOU A HAND.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY US.
JUST LET US SLEEP IN THE
CHICKEN HOUSE, LIKE BEFORE,
AND GIVE US SOMETHING TO EAT.

YEAH, OOG. LOOK, SATO'S SUPPOSED
TO BE IN SCHOOL.

They like Oog. Everybody likes Oog. They make wine with prunes that year, many gallons of it, and one evening when the walnuts are in, Oog is sitting on top of the chicken-house, singing soldier songs from the First World War, blond and strong and wonderful.

♫ THAT'S THE WRONG WAY TO
TICKLE MARY... ♪

The livelier people in the town nearby, where Sato goes to school, treasure his mother, come to Sato's recitals, and Oog is very, very popular with them. They want him at their parties, and often he goes, and is sometimes wretchedly ill next day from hangovers, I believe. But everybody has a good time with Oog when he is drinking, Lady too, who has some talent for gaiety.

It is only that the prunes and walnuts do not support very well a life of horses and tattersall vests and large, European dogs.

I DON'T THINK WE CAN REPLACE JIMBO,
LIMEHOUSE, BUT I'LL SURE MISS HIM .

SO WILL SATO.

OKAY. I'LL GET THE KID SOME KIND
OF DOG. OKAY BY YOU, SATO?

OOG.

Once the phone rings at night. Some men from the East have come to play polo on the peninsula. One of them is sick, and they want Oog to play. He has the polo boots and white breeches and helmet, still.

LIMEHOUSE, GOT ENOUGH MONEY IN THAT TEAPOT FOR BUS FARE, MY LADY?

GET YOUR THINGS READY, OOG.

She looks at Sato, and while Oog is busy, Sato slips away to get some money from a coffee can in his room without Oog knowing, money the boy has earned gardening. Sato is very proud to do this, and Oog goes to play polo.

He comes back, three days later, with another very virile, self-confident man, in a Buick station wagon, pulling a blue horse trailer.

They laugh a lot as they unload two polo ponies at the little ranch, and some mallets and balls and a saddle. The driver says Oog must practice now, and is in a hurry to leave. He gets quickly back in his station wagon and drives off.

Ten days later a green trailer comes behind a Packard convertible, with a different driver. There are reproaches. Sato stops practicing his violin and goes to the window to watch and listen. Oog is laughing it off and overwhelming the man, whom Sato hates, with charm. The man goes away, taking the beautiful, small horses on which Oog would have taught Sato to ride.

TOMMY WAS A NUT TO THINK WE COULD GET AWAY WITH IT.

THEY WERE NOT TOMMY'S HORSES TO LEAVE WITH YOU?

SO THE GENTLEMAN SAID.

WILL THERE BE TROUBLE?

NO.

In high school, Sato runs cross-country and hurdles, plays the piano at assemblies, and never asks for a date. There are no Japanese in town, except his mother and himself.

SATO! PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS.

COME ON WITH US TO BARBARA'S.
WE'VE GOT TWO NEW TOMMY DORSEY
RECORDS.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO DANCE?

Several girls in high school are nice to Sato, but he does not know what they would say if he asked one for a date.

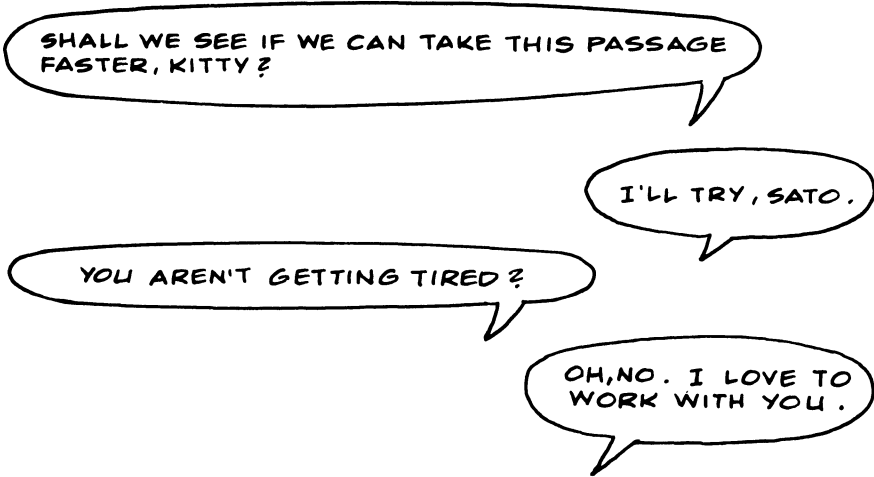
...THERE HAD BEEN OTHER JAPANESE FAMILIES IN THE TOWN ONCE, BUT THEY ALL MOVED AWAY WHEN SATO'S FATHER WAS MURDERED.

I'M READY TO FIGHT IT WITH YOU ANY TIME YOU SAY, BOY. SHALL WE TEACH THESE CALIFORNIA FARMERS SOME MANNERS?

THANK YOU, OOG. I AM NOT UNHAPPY.

Oog has a high temper, and Lady does not like him to get into fights. The next episode must be censored, not because of its unsuitability, but

because it is impossible to understand how it was done. *Why* is more apparent, though perverse or at least irrational, referring to the foregoing exchange between Sato and Oog. The stepfather takes the situation harder than the boy, and retaliates. He does this by seducing the town's most cherished virgin, a high school beauty named Kitty Hamilton. Kitty is the school's other pianist, and accompanies Sato at his recitals.



They do not date, but work together often, sometimes very hard. Oog apparently just makes up his mind that to seduce Kitty will pay back the town, as mirrored by the school, for prejudices against Sato. What is most illogical about this is that Oog's principles would never permit him to tell anyone of doing so.

One afternoon he takes Kitty for a drive around the lake, charms her into copulating with him, who can guess how?, and drops her off at home afterwards with a kiss and a laugh to remember.

Sato, of course, does not learn of this from Oog, nor from Lady who is uninformed and passive about Oog's infidelities, not that there are many, but from Kitty Hamilton.



COULD WE GO FOR A WALK AFTER SCHOOL?

OF COURSE.

They walk in the walnut grove, in bars of sunlight and bars of shade.

MY REAL FATHER PLANTED THESE TREES.

IT'S QUIET HERE, AND AWAY.

I COME HERE TO THINK. IT MAKES
ME FEEL STRONG.

SATO?

YES, KITTY?

WELL, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE GOT
TO TELL SOMEONE. I DON'T HAVE
ANYONE TO TELL THIS TO, SATO...
WHAT KIND OF A MAN IS YOUR
STEPFATHER, REALLY?

She tells him slowly, talking around and around what happened, until he understands clearly. He wonders if she is going to cry, but she doesn't. She seems more puzzled than hurt.

SATO GRADUATES IN 1940 AND GOES TO SAN FRANCISCO TO FIND A JOB TO EARN MONEY FOR HIS KEEP AT CONSERVATORY, WHERE HE WILL HAVE A SCHOLARSHIP, AND TO LEARN IRONY....

... WHEN HE LEAVES THE RANCH HOUSE, OOG BEGINS TO REBUILD IT. OOG IS A FINE CRAFTSMAN, AND HIS PLANS FOR REDWOOD WINGS, LARGE WINDOWS, AND A FLOWER GARDEN INSIDE AND OUT FOR LADY ARE ELEGANT....

... OOG'S PARENTS WILL NOT SEND MONEY, BUT AGREE TO PAY THE BILLS FOR MATERIALS.

IT WAS THE END OF THE DECADE, AND WAR HAD BEGUN IN EUROPE. 

But we would not draw the tanks and roaring guns and Stukas. We would draw instead a bureaucrat in Washington, who is already planning relocation camps for people of Japanese birth, to one of which Lady will be removed. He works in his shirtsleeves:

THERE. THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF 'EM IF IT DOES HAPPEN.

And as we are now seeing a little of what will happen after tonight's episode, we may also draw Buck Sergeant Sato, in combat uniform of the Nisei unit in Italy, almost four years later, bayonetting an octopus to remove it from the stand of a Neapolitan fish monger, for his infantry squad to feast on.

BANZAI! OCTOPUS!

GO FOR BROKE, SATO!

I THINK IT'S A SQUID.

And finally we would drag Oog, or Lieutenant Commander Orrin O. G. Jay, a PT boat captain, on leave in Melbourne. But I do not know what he is saying to his new Australian wife. But sometimes even Oog the powerful must miss his lovely, quiet, gay Limehouse Lady. I believe. All I know is what Lady says to Sato, on a day when he visits her in that dreadful camp.

**OOG, A GENTLEMAN,
LOVES US,
HIS COUNTRY,
HIS LOST HONOR.
CAN'T COME HOME.**

**YES, LADY. BUT IF I COULD
MEET OOG IN SINGLE COMBAT.**

YOU WOULD EMBRACE HIM, I BELIEVE.

Sato and Oog will not meet again. Can it be so late?

2.

Thank you, I can never resist port wine. To put such color in one's throat. Some drawings? May I see them? But I have no Oriental patience whatsoever, not a shred. Debbie, how monstrous. Tomorrow?

All right. We left Oog and Lady, building the house.

Sato, let me see, gets off the red Trailways bus in San Francisco with eleven dollars, his high school class ring, and a beautiful little calfskin overnight bag, with Oog's four initials on it. He carries his violin, too, and wears a white linen suit, sent by his artist uncle who is now living in Hong Kong.

He takes a room at the house of his music teacher, where he will serve meals, wash dishes, and practice. I apologise, Debbie, that this music teacher is a German, cruel and sloppy with a gray moustache, but we could put him in only once:

GOTT, SADO. DOT TRILL IS SCHRECKLICH.

Sato has washed out the white linen suit for the fourth time, and walked to every part of San Francisco.

SORRY, KID. TOO YOUNG.

DON'T LOOK STRONG ENOUGH.

JOB'S FILLED, EVERYBODY, CLEAR THE HALL, PLEASE.

NO JAPS, NO CHINKS, NO HARD FEELINGS.

WHY, YES. WE ADVERTISED FOR A SALESMAN. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN SELL?

Christine is shorter than Sato, with a cocky smile and a look of whimsical determination. She has light brown hair, and wears a tailored suit with the jacket open in such a way that the tailoring seems to frame her bosom, at which Sato stares.

STOP TYPING A MINUTE, CAROLYN, AND COME TALK TO SATO WITH ME. DON'T YOU LOVE HIS EYES ?

YES, CHRISTINE.

THEY'RE LIKE ALMONDS EXACTLY, AREN'T THEY? OH, YUM. SATO, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN SELL?

HERE IS MY HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT. I MADE ONLY A'S.

I'LL BET YOU CAN DO ANYTHING IN THE WORLD! DON'T YOU THINK SO, CAROLYN? ANGEL?

I'D BETTER FINISH YOUR LETTERS.

Carolyn is sad and attractive, willowy, soft, a little taller than Christine and a little younger. Christine, who is 25, looks unapproachably like a woman to Sato. Carolyn looks to be only an older girl. It may be the sadness, or it may be the pliancy of the green knit dress, with cable stitching on the arms and shoulders. Carolyn is not tailored.

SEE THAT SATO READS ALL THE MATERIAL. I'VE GOT LUNCH WITH BUD. BYE-BYE, ANGELS. SATO, LET ME GIVE YOU A HUG FOR LUCK. THERE NOW. 'BYE. LET ME HUG CAROLYN, TOO. OH, HERE I GO.

Now Carolyn gives Sato a sandwich from a paper bag. He sees, after accepting it, that there was only a single sandwich, but she will not take it back. She says she has just been divorced. She says she is frightened, living by herself. She says her ex-husband trains dogs for a living. She says she does not know if Christine is a real friend or not. She stands with her buttocks resting against the desk top, and her hands flat on it behind her. Sato in no way understands how he suddenly comes to be standing on his tip-toes kissing Carolyn. It is the first time he has ever kissed anybody besides his mother.



SATO, YOU CAN FIND SOME OTHER JOB. SOMETHING NICER. REALLY.



NO, I CAN'T.

Sato does not want any other job now. At one o'clock he stops kissing Carolyn because she says that Christine will be back now any time. Sato sits down to read about the Vito-Cycle Institute of America.



OH. I THOUGHT A VITO-CYCLE WAS SOMETHING TO RIDE.



NO, SATO.

Every human being! the material explained. Is born with a unique, personal, individual cycle of VITAL ENERGY, which begins at the instant of conception. This made Vito-Cyclic charts both more exact and more risqué than astrology. Computations, based on the calendric studies of the Ancient Mayans! gave us:

VITO-CYCLES FREE!
IT IS NOW POSSIBLE
FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR
PERSONAL VITO-CYCLES CHARTED IN
ADVANCE BY THE
VITO-CYCLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA.
FREE!

PREDICTS:

YOUR EBB AND FLOW OF ENERGY!
YOUR TIMES OF GREATEST EFFICIENCY!
TIMES OF BRAIN POWER! MAGNETISM!
FREE INFORMATION.

Just fill in Coupon.

Name _____ Address _____

This coupon ad appears in the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*. Sato's job will be to call on persons returning the coupons.

He is to have a drawing account of twelve dollars a week, if hired, and, of course, commissions.

WE DON'T REALLY... SATO, I KNOW
A MAN WHO HAS A STORE IN
OAKLAND. HE MIGHT NEED SOMEONE
IN THE STOCK ROOM. SHALL I CALL
HIM UP?

OH, CAROLYN, THANK YOU. I'D
RATHER WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO.

HERE'S CHRISTINE BACK.

HELLO, ANGELS. LET'S GET TO WORK.
ARE THE LETTERS DONE, CAROLYN?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SATO? SIT HERE
AND LET ME SHOW YOU A CHART. YOU
SEE? THESE REALLY DO HELP PEOPLE
SO WONDERFULLY. IT GIVES THEM
CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES...

Christine says this with the wiggliest part of her bosom pressed against Sato's triceps, as she stands beside the chair she sat him in.

... AND IT'S SO TRUE ABOUT CYCLES,
ISN'T IT? WE'RE ALL MANIC-DEPRESSIVES,
AREN'T WE, SATO?

Sato realizes Christine is so absorbed in communicating that the contact between bosom and triceps is inadvertent, so he sits rather rigidly, flushing—possibly with pride at having learned what a true manic-depressive he is.

NOW, BUD JAMISON IS OUR BACKER, SATO.
AND HE'S VERY EXCITED ABOUT MEETING
YOU. WE'RE TO GO RIGHT OVER TO HIS
OFFICE. CAROLYN. CAROLYN!

Carolyn stares sadly at them, and they get ready to leave.

BE A DARLING AND DO SATO'S VITO-CYCLE
CHART WHILE WE'RE GONE.

A. J. "Bud" Jamison is sales manager for a large, San Francisco metal fabricating firm. As Christine's backer, he pays Carolyn's salary, office rent, equipment rent, advertising, and, if he approves the new salesman, will pay for Sato's weekly drawing account. He is a heavy-browed, well-tanned man in a sharkskin suit with vest and watch chain, and his handshake hurts.

I LIKE THE CUT OF YOUR JIB, SATO.
YOU'RE YOUNG, BUT YOU'RE KEEN, ALL
YOU PEOPLE. NO OFFENSE.

NO, SIR.

CHRISTINE, WE'VE GOT TO PLAN THIS CAMPAIGN RIGHT. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

NOBODY KNOWS SALES WORK BETTER THAN MR. JAMISON, SATO.

LOOK, SATO. WHY DON'T YOU START BY WORKING CHINATOWN? GET THE HANG OF IT WITH YOUR OWN KIND OF FOLKS.

SIR...

SPEAK THE LINGO ?


JAPANESE, SIR, A LITTLE.

HEY, THAT'S GREAT! YOU GOT SOME COUPON LEADS ON SLANTYTOWN, CHRIS? NO OFFENSE, SATO.

CERTAINLY, BUD. WE HAVE DOZENS.

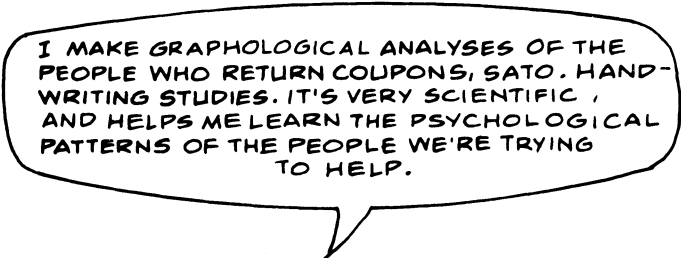
GREAT, GREAT. THAT'S HOW WE'LL DO IT, THEN. SATO, DO YOU KNOW THIS WONDERFUL YOUNG LADY WON'T TAKE A SALARY? LOOK AT HER... AH, UNDERSTANDS BUSINESS. I CAN'T GET OVER IT... WHEN YOU START SELLING, THAT'S WHEN CHRIS STARTS EARNING. NO TICKEE, NO WASHEE, RIGHT, MY BOY? COME ON, SHAKE

He has a great deal more to say. All great American fortunes are based on sales. As soon as Sato has a following, A. J. "Bud" Jamison will put other men under him to train, and Sato will be the youngest general sales manager in San Francisco.



THIS IS MY DREAM, SATO. CHRISTINE. COME ON HERE, BOTH OF YOU. TO OWN MY OWN BUSINESS, SEND MY OWN SALESMEN OUT. NOW. THREE PARTNERS, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THIS MEANS, PARTNERS.

Back at the office, Carolyn says she can't find any coupons returned from Chinatown addresses. Christine thinks they must be in a file drawer at home.



I MAKE GRAPHOLOGICAL ANALYSES OF THE PEOPLE WHO RETURN COUPONS, SATO. HANDWRITING STUDIES. IT'S VERY SCIENTIFIC, AND HELPS ME LEARN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS OF THE PEOPLE WE'RE TRYING TO HELP.



ORIENTAL HANDWRITING?

Sato doesn't know much about psychological patterns, but is relieved that he won't have to start calling immediately on Chinese, whose country is being devastated just then by Japanese.

Actually, he begins by making calls in part of the Fillmore district where American Indians live. A lot of them are Mohawks, families of men who have been brought out from the East for bridge and high-building work, though there isn't much of it now. The people are surprisingly nice to Sato, though they laugh at the idea of anybody having an extra dollar to spend on Three Months Preliminary Sample Charts. They've paid no attention at all to what they were sending for when they returned the coupon. They are people who regularly go through the newspaper and send off all the coupons with the word FREE in them, generally pasting the coupon to a penny postcard. It is one of the amusements of poverty to see what will come

back, and one of the more amusing things that comes for some is the manic-depressive general sales manager of the Vito-Cycle Institute of America.



We have just noted Sato's only sale. He plays for an hour, by ear and from memory, the migrant songs he heard on hobo Red's harmonica. The Mohawk women get their change together and give him a dollar in pennies and nickels. They decide Mary Ann, who is a baby, should have the three-month sample charts.



By the end of the second week, Sato begins to find it difficult to persuade himself to make calls at all, yet he has nothing else to do mornings. He keeps trying, and goes to the office afternoons. Christine is seldom there.

Most likely she is at home, doing graphology, for in the evenings, she has told Sato, she goes to classes. She is learning to be a psychoanalyst, and Sato understands that one reason he is not to come to the office in the morning is that Christine may be having a session with poor Carolyn.

... SHE DOES NEED HELP, DOESN'T SHE, ANGEL?
I KNOW YOU HELP HER, TOO. THANK YOU.

CHRISTINE.

On the second Friday, Sato feels that he has good cause to go to the office in the late forenoon.

WHERE'S CHRISTINE?

SHE'S GONE FOR THE WEEKEND.
TO BIG SUR, TO SWIM.

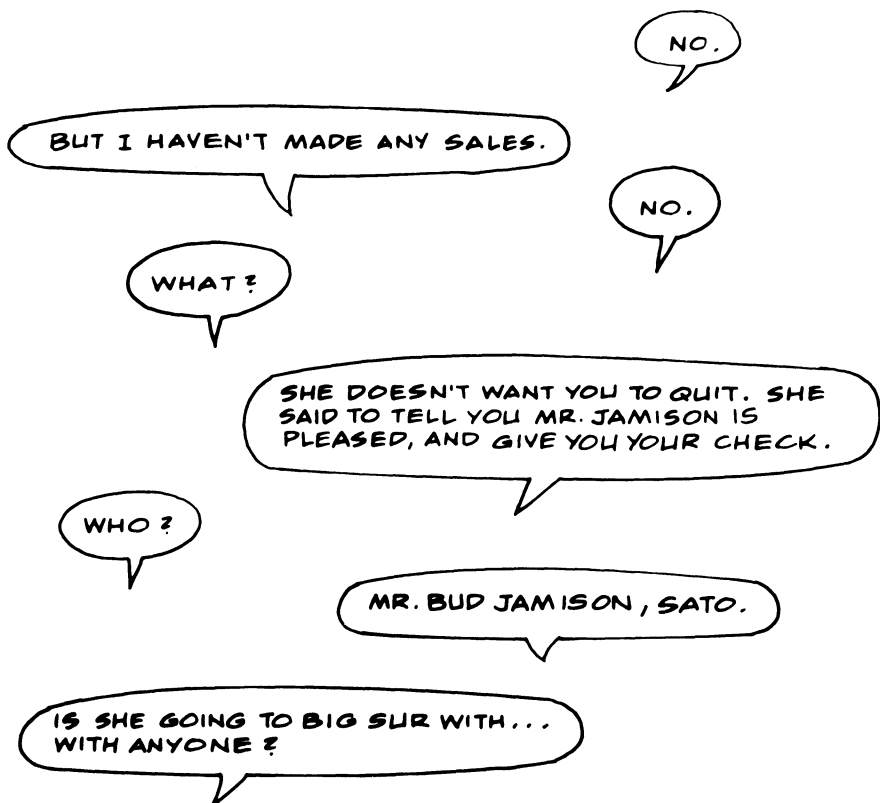
IT LOOKS DIFFERENT IN HERE.

I'VE GOT YOUR CHECK.

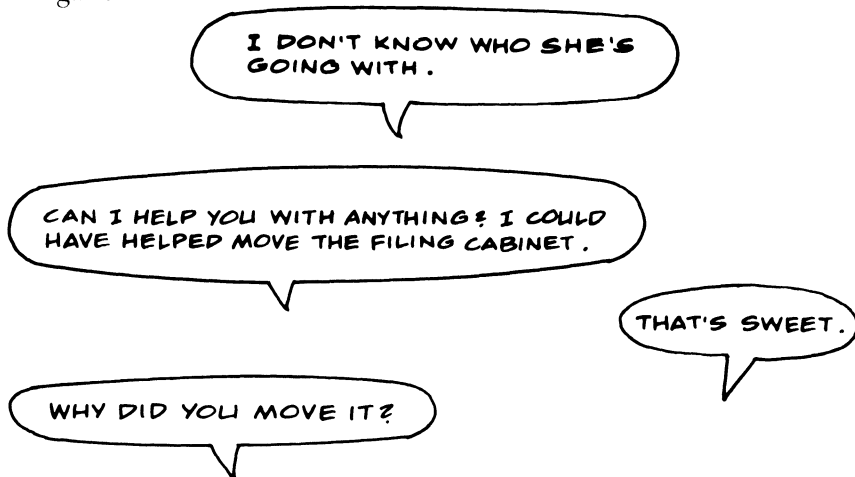
CAROLYN, YOU'VE CHANGED THINGS AROUND.

WE JUST MOVED THE FILING CABINET.
IT'S IN CHRISTINE'S OFFICE.

I CAME IN EARLY TO SEE HER.
TO SEE IF SHE WANTED ME TO QUIT.



Carolyn is wearing the green knit dress again, with the cable stitched arms and shoulders. Carolyn is leaning back on her palms, half-sitting on the desk again.



LOOK, SATO. AT MY FINGER. I HAD TO HAVE MY WEDDING RING CUT OFF. SEE THE LITTLE WHITE CIRCLE THE SUN COULDN'T REACH? I'LL WEAR THE GHOST OF A WEDDING RING ALL SUMMER LONG.

Again Sato fails to understand how he comes to be kissing Carolyn. Besides kissing, they rub together, fully clothed but with certain abandon. This is as much as Carolyn and Sato will ever do in making love, but comical as it may look, they feel very tender about it and towards one another.

It happens now most weekday afternoons. In the mornings, Sato conscientiously makes calls but never sales. At the lunch hour he goes to his room at the German (I am sorry) music teacher's house to practice. At about three o'clock he arrives at the office and eats Carolyn's sack lunch.

FRUIT IS ALL I WAS HUNGRY FOR TODAY.

PLEASE EAT, CAROLYN.

EXCUSE ME A MINUTE.

Carolyn goes to the ladies' room, takes off her lipstick, comes back, and latches the door with a complicated smile—it would have to include, somehow, resignation, invitation, desperation, and some fond mockery of Sato's innocence. She takes her position against the desk. We would not illustrate repetition, but only say:

IT IS DOMESTIC, AND LOVING,
AND THE DOOR HANDLE NEVER
CLICKS, THE PHONE NEVER
RINGS TO INTERRUPT THEM.

In the middle of the summer, Sato goes again to the office on a Friday morning. He has not seen Christine once all week, but has noticed different changes and combinations in the furniture afternoons, which Carolyn will not explain.

SATO, SATO! CAROLYN, COME QUICK.
HERE'S OUR ANGEL BOY. OH YUM. MMMMM...

...MMMMM, CHRISTINE. MMMM. CHRISTINE,
I'D BETTER QUIT. I CAN'T SELL, AND
I REALLY, MMMMM, REALLY TRY.

Carolyn comes in from the other room, the smaller office, which is always locked when Christine is out.

CAROLYN, LOOK AT HIM BLUSH! DID YOU
GIVE HIM THE NOTE FROM BUD JAMISON?

NO.

WELL, GIVE IT TO HIM, ANGEL. NOW.

HERE, SATO.

Carolyn gets an envelope from her desk drawer, and gives it to Sato. He opens it. Inside is a ten dollar bill, and a note:

VELLY GOOD JOB, NUMBER ONE SON.
HERE IS HONORABLE BONUS. BUD.

BUT... ?

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, SATO ? EVEN WHEN YOU AREN'T MAKING SALES , THE PUBLIC RELATIONS HELPS SO MUCH . THE INSTITUTE IS GETTING KNOWN TO PEOPLE THROUGH YOU

DARLINGS , WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU TWO ?

SATO , WHEN I GAVE CAROLYN BUD'S NICE LITTLE BONUS NOTE TO YOU , SHE SAID SHE WAS QUITTING !

CAROLYN , WHY DARLING ? TELL CHRIS .

DARLINGS , PLEASE , I DO SO NEED YOU BOTH .

SATO , SATO . IF CAROLYN LEAVES , I'LL NEED YOU HERE TO HELP ME MORNINGS . JUST YOU AND ME , YOU WON'T HAVE TO MAKE CALLS ANYMORE , BUT WE'LL DO SO MUCH TOGETHER , WON'T WE ?

Christine grabs Sato's wrist and makes a ballroom dancing move, a step and a half-twirl to place herself in front of and pressing backwards against him, with his captured arm now coming down over her left shoulder, his hand squeezed in both of hers and held tight just below that bosom. She looks at Carolyn, Sato cannot see with what expression, but knows his own to be pretty much popeyed. Carolyn bites her lip hard.

ALL RIGHT , CHRISTINE . I WON'T LEAVE . YOU KNOW I WON'T .

ANGEL .

Christine springs away from Angel Sato's manic-depressive grasp and into Angel Carolyn's, squeezes the sad young woman, and seizes a shiny new purse.

I KNOW. HERE, SATO. HERE'S THREE DOLLARS MORE. TAKE CAROLYN TO LUNCH, YOU CAN BOTH HAVE THE AFTERNOON OFF, OKAY? BECAUSE EVERYTHING'S GOING SO WELL.

They do have lunch. Sato buys Carolyn a dry martini cocktail, tastes it and feels rather drunk.

HEY, LET'S GO BACK TO THE OFFICE.

I CAN'T, SATO. NOT TODAY. I'D BETTER GO HOME.

PLEASE.

NO DARLING. I DON'T DARE. I'LL SEE YOU MONDAY.

It is the first time she has called him darling. It is said in a way very different from Christine's, which would be difficult to illustrate.

CAROLYN, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE OFFICE AND THE BONUS, AND CHRISTINE SAYING HOW WELL EVERYTHING IS GOING.

NO.

NO, WHAT ?

NO, DARLING SATO. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. CAN'T YOU GO PLAY YOUR VIOLIN NOW, PLEASE ? PLEASE ?

She leaves, and Sato decides to go back to the office, to get some coupons from the file for Monday morning's calls. He is determined to make an extra effort now that he has had a sip of martini and understands about public relations. People are already leaving the office building, heading home for the weekend. They come bursting out of the elevator. Sato rides up in it empty, to the fourth floor. Halfway down the corridor, a short, fat man is trying their office door.

HEY!

HEY YOURSELF, KID. YOU WORK HERE ?

EXCUSE ME ?

WHERE'S CHRISTINE ? COME ON, BUDDY. I'M WITH THE INSTITUTE. ARE YOU ?

I'M A SALESMAN.

SALESMAN FOR WHAT ?

THE VITO-CYCLE

YOU GOT AN APPOINTMENT HERE, TAN BOY ?

WELL, NO SIR, BUT ...

ALL RIGHT, BUZZ OFF, SHOELEATHER.
NOBODY WANTS ANY BICYCLES HERE TODAY. GET IT?

SIR, IS THIS YOUR OFFICE?

THAT YOUR BUSINESS, NIP? GO ON,
BEAT IT.

THERE'S NOBODY THERE.

BEAT IT, WILLYA?

The short fat man has begun to look very angry, rattling the locked door. Sato, who has a key to the door in his pocket, walks quietly away.

... MEANWHILE, AT THE LAKE.

MRS. OWENS JAY SOUTHAMPTON LONG ISLAND NEW YORK

DEAREST ORRIN:

JULY 4, 1940

INDEPENDENCE DAY!

SO SORRY I HAVEN'T TIME FOR A LONG LETTER, BUT YOU KNOW HOW THINGS ARE HERE IN THE SUMMER. YOUR REMODELING SOUNDS CHARMING, AND I HOPE WE SHALL BE ABLE TO SEE IT SOMEDAY. HOWEVER, YOUR FATHER FEELS THAT EVEN AT TODAY'S HIGH PRICES, \$4,386.72 IS A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY FOR THE LUMBER, GLASS, AND STONE FOR TWO WINGS AND A GARDEN. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR SUPPLIERS SEND THEIR BILLS DIRECTLY TO HIM, RATHER THAN SIMPLY SENDING THE TOTAL TO YOU TO DISBURSE. I KNOW YOU WILL UNDERSTAND. OUR SINCERE REGARDS TO YOUR WIFE AND HER LITTLE BOY.

LOVE, *Mother*

... THAT WEEKEND THE REMODELED RANCH HOUSE BURNS TO THE GROUND.

FOR YEARS THERE HAS BEEN A HIVE OF HONEYBEES IN THE ATTIC IN THE OLD PART OF THE HOUSE, A NEW SWARM GOING OUT EVERY SPRING, THE OLD ONE FILLING MORE AND MORE OF THE SPACE BETWEEN THE WALLS WITH HONEYCOMB. LADY REMINDS SATO OF THIS WHEN SHE PHONES.

WHILE LADY WAS AWAY IN TOWN, SHE EXPLAINS, OOG WENT UP TO THE ATTIC TO SMOKE OUT THE HONEY BEES.

THE BEES CHASED OOG OUT OF THE ATTIC... AS HE RAN, SOME OF THE CHARRED, SMOKING RAGS FELL OUT OF THE SMOKER AND STARTED THE FIRE. OOG WAS ROWING ACROSS THE LAKE TO CONSULT AN OLD MAN WHO LIVES ON THE OTHER SIDE AND IS AN EXPERT ON BEES....

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE, HE SAW FLAMES COMING OUT OF THE TOP OF THE HOUSE. LADY, DRIVING BACK, SAW THE FLAMES TOO.

WELL, LIMEHOUSE, I SURE GOT RID OF THOSE BEES.

ARE YOU BURNED, OOG? OH, ALL YOUR BEAUTIFUL WORK.

NEVER MIND. WE HAD FUN DOING IT. COME ON, WE'LL SLEEP IN THE CHICKEN HOUSE.

MIGRANTS, OOG?

WHAT ELSE, LADY?
WHATEVER ELSE?

This is Sunday morning. Sato goes immediately to the bus station. There is a picket line of strikers. The buses are not running. Sato walks back to the German music teacher's house, walking along Mission Street which is skid row. There are not so many hobos there now. They are going into the army and getting work at shipyards and aircraft plants.

Sato has read in the newspapers that midgets are getting work in aircraft plants, because they can go inside the bomber wings during fabrication, and rivet from inside.

Sato wonders if he is small enough to rivet on the inside of a bomber wing, but of course he has promised Christine that he will stay on with her.

When he gets to the office on Monday, going in the morning to pick up coupons because he was prevented on Friday afternoon, no one is there. He uses his key to get in. There is another new set of files in the outer office. Sato tries a file drawer, which is unmarked, but it is locked.

Carolyn arrives. She is not late for work. She has been in the ladies' room.

SATO! I'M SORRY THE DOOR WAS LOCKED.
CHRISTINE SAYS WE'RE TO LOCK IT, EVEN IF WE
JUST GO OUT FOR A MINUTE. THERE ARE SO
MANY ROBBERIES...

I'LL BET I SAW ONE.

WHAT?

CAROLYN! I SAW A ROBBER TRYING TO
GET INTO THE OFFICE ON FRIDAY. HE SAID
HE WAS WITH THE INSTITUTE...

SATO, WHAT DID THE MAN LOOK LIKE ?

SHORT AND FAT, WITH A VOICE LIKE
A MOVIE GANGSTER. RATHER TOUGH, I BELIEVE.

THAT WASN'T A ROBBERY, SATO.

WHO WAS IT THEN ?

SATO, DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON?

SOME KIND OF PHONY-BALONEY.

KISS ME, DARLING.

Jobs are scarce in the summer of 1940, for girls like Carolyn, who is not a fast typist, nor gracious on the telephone, nor a midget. They are interrupted in their tender swaying by, of all things, the telephone. It is a long distance call for, of all people, Sato, who can hear what comes over the phone as Carolyn answers.



MY NAME'S ERICKSON, MISS. I'M THE
INSURANCE ADJUSTER FOR THIS TERRIBLE
FIRE HIS FOLKS HAD

MR. MURASAKI'S TIED UP, MR. ERICKSON.... SHHH, DARLING.



DO YOU SUPPOSE HE COULD CALL ME? YOU SEE, HIS ROOM WAS RIGHT UNDER WHERE THE FIRE STARTED, SO NOTHING WAS SALVAGED.

I'LL TELL HIM, SIR. I'LL HAVE HIM CALL YOU. GOOD-BYE,...



TELL HIM I'D LIKE A LIST OF VALUABLES.

YES, YES. GOOD-BYE. YES. GOOD-BYE.

CAROLYN.

Oog reaches Sato that evening at the German music teacher's house. He wants Sato to call Erickson, the insurance adjuster, and reminds Sato that Oog's double-barrelled Purdy shotgun was in Sato's room. Sato has always loved to take that gun down, and clean and oil it. A wonderful piece of machinery, and although Sato owns one himself today, he does not believe it to be the equal of the one Oog had.

I THINK I PUT IT BACK DOWNSTAIRS IN THE GUN RACK, OOG.



NO, KIDDO, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER.
SHE'S ALL GONE.

WAS IT VERY VALUABLE, OOG?



'BOUT SEVEN HUNDRED BUCKS' WORTH,
SATO, BUT I DON'T WANT YOU BLAMING YOURSELF.

THANK YOU, OOG.



I KIND OF INTENDED FOR YOU TO HAVE
THAT GUN SOMEDAY. BUT WHAT THE HELL,
THEY COME AND THEY GO.

I KNOW. THANK YOU.



SOME DAY I'LL GET YOU ANOTHER. WE'LL
GET IT FITTED TO YOU. IT MIGHT NOT BE A
PURDY, BUT IT WON'T BE TOO LONG FOR YOUR
ARMS, EITHER.

THAT WOULD COST A LOT, OOG, WOULDN'T
IT? ANYWAY, THERE'S YOUR OTHER
SIDE-BY-SIDE, WITH THE BROKEN STOCK ...



IT'S ONLY MONEY, FRIEND SATO, MY BOY. LISTEN, WE'RE GOING TO GET SOME BACK FROM THESE INSURANCE PEOPLE, ON THE PURDY AND A BUNCH OF OTHER STUFF, TOO.

Next morning, Sato decides to go to the office early again. He will make a list, including the things Oog has reminded him of, and get Carolyn to type it for him. Then he will phone Pete Erickson, the insurance adjuster. He gets off the elevator. He starts down the corridor, so preoccupied he has his hand on the knob of the office door before he sees in front of his nose:

**THESE PREMISES SEALED
BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

HEY, NIP. YOU, SALESMAN! HOLD IT, GODDAMN IT, RIGHT THERE.

STOP KID. WE JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOU.

Sato runs from the short, fat man and a much larger man who is almost as fat. Sato moves very well, gets around the corridor corner, pushes the call button for the elevator, and then, knowing it won't be there in time, moves through a heavy door marked EXIT, out to where stairs run up and down. Sato swings down, three or four steps at a time, rather exhilarated, and would keep going strong except that there is Carolyn on the street floor landing, very distraught.

SATO, OH, IT'S YOU. I HEARD, HEARD, HEARD SOMEONE COMING... OH, BUT THIS DOOR IS LOCKED. SATO, WE CAN'T GET OUT.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, CAROLYN. IT'S ALL ALL RIGHT. COME ON. WE'LL GO BACK UP AND TRY THE SECOND FLOOR.

Hand in hand, tiptoeing in step, trembling together, they begin to steal back up the steps. Booming voices from above:

LITTLE SON OF A BITCH IS DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE.

YOU GO DOWN. I'LL TRY UP.

IF YOU GET HIM, WHAT WE NEED'S HIS GODDAMN KEY.

CAROLYN, SHHH, THEY DON'T KNOW YOU'RE HERE. GO BACK DOWN AND WAIT. SHHH.

NO, SATO, LET'S TRY TO GET BACK UP. LOOK, I'VE GOT A KEY TO THE LADIES' ROOM. WE CAN LOCK OURSELVES IN AND HIDE ALL MORNING.

This is about the naughtiest thing Sato ever heard in his life. The short fat man gets them.

OKAY, SWEETHEARTS, COME ON. HEY, SERGEANT. I GOT THE NIP, AND THE LITTLE TOMATO'S DOWN HERE WITH HIM. WHAT A PAIR OF SWEETHEARTS.

YEAH? THE SECRETARY?

COME ON, DAMN IT. GET DOWN HERE.
I OUGHTA KICK THE CRAP OUT OF YOU,
SHOELEATHER.

DON'T, SATO. HERE, MR. ADEL.
HERE'S MY KEYS. THE FILES AND
CHRISTINE'S OFFICE AND EVERYTHING.

AWRIGHT, SISTER. THAT'S BETTER.
COME ON, NOW. UP THE STAIRS.

He moves up ahead of them with the keys. As Carolyn and Sato get to the second floor EXIT landing, they lean together, very quietly, against the brass bar which opens the door. It isn't locked. They fade through it, and away, Sato snapping the snap lock on the door, then both running across the building to the other elevator bank, into a down car, out, into the crowd on Geary Street, and away. They run for several blocks, and stop, finally, in a store entrance.

WHO ARE THEY, CAROLYN? POLICE?

THE TALL ONE MUST BE. THE SHORT ONE
WHO TOOK MY KEYS IS MR. ADEL. HE'S THE
BACKER FOR THE GRAPHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

BUT WE'RE ...

THE VITO-CYCLE INSTITUTE. AND THERE'S THE GENETIC REBALANCE INSTITUTE, AND PERSONALITY RESEARCH, AND THE INSTITUTE OF POSTAL PSYCHOANALYSIS. FIVE, SATO. CHRISTINE'S GOT FIVE OF THEM.

WHY CAN'T SHE? HAVE ALL THE INSTITUTES SHE WANTS?

AND ALL THE BACKERS, SATO? BESIDES MR. ADEL AND "BUD" JAMISON, THERE'S MR. FARKINS AND MR. NARDOLINI AND MR. GELBER, WHO LIKES TO BE CALLED UNCLE PETE...

BUT WHY IS THAT WRONG?

YOU LIKE CHRISTINE.

I LIKE YOU, CAROLYN.

SATO, WHAT'S WRONG IS THAT NONE OF THEM'S SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT THE OTHERS. EACH ONE PAYS OFFICE RENT. EACH ONE PAYS CHRISTINE FOR MY SALARY. SHE MAKES FIVE COPIES OF THE PHONE BILL... THOSE POOR MEN. EACH OF THEM WANTED TO HAVE HIS OWN BUSINESS. AND THEY ALL THINK CHRISTINE'S A WONDERFUL PARTNER BECAUSE SHE WON'T TAKE A SALARY.

WAS EVERYBODY PAYING TWELVE DOLLARS A WEEK FOR ME, TOO?

NO. IT WAS JUST BUD WHO SAID SHE HAD TO HAVE A SALESMAN. AND SATO, SHE, SHE COULD MOVE MONEY AROUND IN DIFFERENT BANK ACCOUNTS. SO IT LOOKED LIKE EARNINGS... BUT NOW I THINK SHE'S CLOSED THEM ALL AND HAS THE MONEY.... IT WAS MR. ADEL. GETTING SUSPICIOUS.

WHY, CAROLYN? WHAT WENT WRONG?

THE FURNITURE. SUDDENLY ALL THE BACKERS STARTED SENDING OFFICE FURNITURE. THEY'RE SALESMEN, SATO, AND THEY LOVE BARGAINS, AND THEY'D WANT TO SURPRISE THEIR CLUTE LITTLE PARTNER, AND THIS STUFF WOULD COME. DESKS, AND FILES AND THREE WATER COOLERS. WE WERE GOING CRAZY. EVERY DAY OR TWO, ON THE FREIGHT ELEVATOR, LIP WOULD COME SOMETHING, AND WE'D HAVE TO HIDE IT IN THE INNER OFFICE, AND TRY TO HAVE THE RIGHT THINGS OUT ON THE DAY THE ONE WHO SENT THEM MIGHT COME BY.

SATO, I'M AS DUMB AS THE BACKERS. I SENT IN A COUPON, FOR THE INSTITUTE OF POSTAL PSYCHOANALYSIS. I DON'T KNOW WHY. AND THEN I CAME, AND MET CHRISTINE, AND SHE SAID SHE'D HELP, IF I WOULD WORK FOR HER . . .

... BUT I'D HAVE QUIT WEEKS AGO, IF I HADN'T BEEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.

Picture Sato's confusion: a young woman towards whom he feels tenderly, has said she loves him. But at the same time, he is forced to realize that he has not been earning his conservatory keep as a Manic Depressive General Sales Manager and Public Relations Angel at all, only as a paid pelvis rubber. Christine has needed all the hold she could get on Carolyn.

They walk quickly away—but who is this, waiting when they get there at the door of Carolyn's room?

ANGELS! OH, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE BOTH HERE. LOOK WHAT WE HAVE. IT'S A BOTTLE OF SHERRY, FROM BUD! BUD JAMISON! HE KNOWS EVERYTHING, AND HE'S GOING TO TALK TO THE OTHER MEN AND STRAIGHTEN THINGS OUT.

CHRISTINE! HOW CAN HE?

YOU'LL SEE. JUST GIVE HIM TIME. DID YOU THINK CHRISTINE WOULD DO ANYTHING DISHONEST? OH, PLEASE. IT'S JUST A MISUNDERSTANDING. BUT YOU TWO, YOU HAVE TO HIDE A LITTLE WHILE NOW AND NOT TALK TO ANYBODY. NOT ANYBODY. WON'T THAT BE FUN?

NO, CHRISTINE.

CAROLYN. CAROLYN, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING. PRIVATELY. (whisper, whisper, whisper.)

ALL RIGHT, CHRISTINE.

Only later can Sato guess what the whisper was: if Carolyn lets things get to the point where there's a criminal action, Sato will lose his conservatory scholarship. Sato will make this guess because of what Christine says aloud to him:

SATO, DO YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO CAROLYN'S DIVORCE IF SHE GOT CHARGED WITH DOING SOMETHING AGAINST THE LAW? SHE'D GET NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL, FROM THAT DOG TRAINER.

THAT DOESN'T MATTER, SATO, BUT...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, CAROLYN.

SATO, ANGEL. WE'RE IN YOUR POWER. DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH US.

Sato nods. He will do as Christine wishes, but he has not quite figured out yet what the whisper meant, so he is actually quite bitter and miserable—but of course, naturally inscrutable.

AT YOUR SERVICE, LADIES. YOUR ORIENTAL OSCULATOR.

HEY, CHRISTINE! TWELVE BUCKS A WEEK FOR A JAPANESE JIGGLE-O?

WHAT I WANT WITH YOU?
STUN YOU WITH YOUR OWN PERFUME.
SPREAD YOU.
COVER YOU.
PENETRATE.

I
AM
SATO
SON OF OOG!

ALL RIGHT, CHRISTINE.
DON'T WORRY CAROLYN.

The buses are still on strike. He prepares to flee San Francisco in Carolyn's car. It is a little Ford closed coupe, which she began paying for before her divorce, but doesn't know how to drive. She has tried to sell it.

GOOD-BYE, SATO, DARLING.

MAYBE I CAN SELL THE CAR FOR YOU,
CAROLYN. UP AT THE LAKE.

OH, IF YOU COULD. IT'S WORTH THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, SATO. BUT I'LL SELL IT FOR TWO HUNDRED. I STILL HAVE TO PAY NINETY-FIVE DOLLARS TO THE CAR DEALER.

ALL RIGHT. IT'S A NICE CAR, CAROLYN.

NO, IT'S NOT. IT'S TAKING YOU AWAY.

GOOD-BYE, CAROLYN. MAYBE I CAN GET A JOB. PLEASE DON'T CRY.

Sato leaves San Francisco, and tomorrow we will meet a new character, Pete Erickson, the tough insurance adjuster.

GIMME THAT CRUTCH, FAKER.

BREAK!

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR SO-CALLED ACCIDENT.

Sato is still very young. In the final installment, he will be told to grow up. Sato is a good boy, and always does as he is told, I believe.

3.

But these are wonderful, Debbie. Oh, I like your bureaucrat. He's so hardworking and righteous. Your Kitty Hamilton! I'm afraid she wasn't really that delicate, but how sweet. And this is Christine, of course. And Carolyn, yes, that's very much her expression, those big, sorrowing eyes. And the car, you must have looked it up? Carolyn's car!

Limehouse Lady did not live very long, after she was released from that camp. But those are her hands, at last. It's long ago now, Debbie. You haven't tried Oog yet, have you? I can't describe him, and I have no photograph.

Sato arrives at the lake, and, to his surprise, he finds employment right away.

THIS IS PETE ERICKSON, THE INSURANCE ADJUSTER,
SATO. PETE, MY STEPSON.

LOOKS LIKE HIS MOM. LISTEN, SATO,
OOG TELLS ME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR WORK.

YES, SIR. FOR A MONTH, UNTIL SCHOOL
STARTS. I'VE BROUGHT THE LIST YOU ASKED FOR.

YEAH, OKAY. LISTEN, WANT TO GO TO
WORK FOR ME? DRIVE ME, AND LEARN A
LITTLE ABOUT ADJUSTING CLAIMS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, OOG?

SURE. GIVE IT A TRY, WHY NOT?
WATCH YOURSELF AROUND THIS GUY,
THOUGH. HE'S A BEAR CAT, AREN'T YOU,
PETE?

IF YOU SAY SO, OOG.

HUGS LIKE A BEAR, CLAWS LIKE A CAT. YOU'RE SOME PIECE OF WORK, PETE.

Pete has square shoulders, big forearms, rough skin, and a rough tongue. Sato likes him. It is comfortable, after a summer spent with women, to be in a man's world with Oog and Pete.

OPEN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT, SATO.

MY GOSH!

ALL RIGHT. CLOSE IT. THAT'S NOT FOR SHOW. I GOT A LICENSE, AND I'VE HAD TO USE IT. YOU KNOW HOW?

OOG TAUGHT ME TO SHOOT.

YEAH. YEAH, HE WOULD. ALL RIGHT, YOU KNOW IT'S THERE. I KNOW IT'S THERE. THAT MAKES TWO OF US. LET'S HOPE THERE WON'T BE A THIRD REAL SOON--BECAUSE YOU AND I DON'T TAKE THAT THING OUT UNLESS WE MEAN TO FIRE IT. SIMPLE ENOUGH?

Pete Erickson has a blackjack scar above his left eyebrow and a gun butt scar on his jaw.

HELPED CRACK A RING OF INJURY FAKERS IN PITTSBURGH, SATO. THEY HAD RACKETEER CONNECTIONS. THAT'S WHY THE COMPANY TRANSFERRED ME WAY OUT HERE.

ACCIDENTS, DESTRUCTION, LIABILITY. PETE AND SATO TRAVEL FROM ONE DISASTER TO THE NEXT.

Pete always wears the same brown tweed suit, thin at the elbows, and scuffed shoes. Once Sato sees him hit a man, who has scuttled his own cabin cruiser, and with two valuable dogs locked inside.

IT'S NOT AN EASY LIFE, SATO, BUT YOU SLEEP GOOD. LISTEN, ABOUT THOSE DAMN HONEYBEES. OOG USED TO TALK A LOT ABOUT SMOKING THEM OUT?

WELL, I REMEMBER HEARING HIM SAY HE WONDERED IF IT WOULD WORK.

Lady, Oog, and Sato are staying in tents on the ranch now.

ASKING ABOUT THE FIRE SOME MORE, WAS HE, KIDDO?

YES HE WAS, OOG.

LET HIM ASK. IT'S NOT YOUR MAN PETE WHO WORRIES ME.

DOES SOMEBODY ELSE WORRY YOU, OOG?

JUST MY FATHER, LIMEHOUSE LADY. MY BELOVED OLD MAN. HE'S GOING TO THINK THE INSURANCE CHECK IS ALL HIS, BECAUSE HE'S PAYING THE BILLS FOR THE REMODELING. LADY AND I ARE GOING TO PUT IT AWAY FAST, SATO, WHERE MY NOBLE PARENT WILL HAVE A HELL OF A TIME FINDING IT, TILL WE DECIDE ABOUT REBUILDING....

WAR'S COMING, KIDDO. I'M STILL YOUNG ENOUGH, YOU'RE JUST OLD ENOUGH. IT MIGHT NOT BE THE TIME TO START REBUILDING.

...SATO DRIVES PETE FOR TWO WEEKS. BUT ON THE SECOND FRIDAY, PETE TELLS SATO TO TAKE THE AFTERNOON OFF. HE'S GOT A LITTLE TRIP TO MAKE. THIS IS SOMEWHAT PUZZLING -- SATO'S BEEN ON ALL THE LITTLE TRIPS UP TO NOW....

... THEN, ON SATURDAY MORNING AT THE RANCH SATO HEARS THE FAMILIAR, COUGHING ENGINE OF PETE'S CAR AND GOES OUT OF THE TENT TO SEE.

Pete gets out of the car with his briefcase.

HI, SATO. YOU'RE ONE OF THE MEN I NEED TO SEE.

HELLO, PETE. WHAT ABOUT?

LOOK, KID. I'M SORRY. THERE JUST ISN'T ANY NEW CASE WORK COMING UP. HERE'S YOUR TEN BUCKS, THANKS, AND I GUESS I WON'T NEED YOU ANY LONGER. SORRY.

THAT'S OKAY, PETE.

DID THAT CROOKED BROAD IN FRISCO EVER SEND YOU YOUR LAST TWELVE BUCKS ?

NO. I GOT A LETTER FROM CAROLYN, THOUGH.

CAROLYN. THAT'S THE ONE THAT'S YOUR GIRL, HUH? WHAT'S SHE GOT TO SAY ?

SHE'S STILL HIDING, PETE. AND NEEDS MONEY BADLY. I WISH I COULD SELL THAT CAR FOR HER.

SO SHE CAN BLOW TOWN, HUH?

I WANT HER TO HAVE A CHANCE. SHE DID ALL SHE COULD FOR ME.

WHATDYA WANT FOR THE CAR ?

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS.

PRETTY GOOD DEAL. IT'S WORTH MORE.

SHE'D HAVE TO PAY NINETY-FIVE DOLLARS STILL TO THE DEALER. BUT SHE'D HAVE ENOUGH LEFT TO TRAVEL HOME.

TELL YOU WHAT, SATO. I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. I KNOW PEOPLE THAT NEED CARS.

Then Oog comes driving up fast, gets out, and does something abrupt and graceful with his hands, seeing Pete. Pete jerks his head. He and Oog walk down to the lake shore and sit on an overturned rowboat.

Sato joins Lady in her tent. She is ironing Oog's only white shirt. He lost twenty in the fire. After a time, Oog comes in smiling, and bows to her. He has papers for Lady to sign. She does, and he says he will now go to town with Pete, to cash the large insurance check before the bank closes at noon.

WE'LL HAVE CHAMPAGNE AND FRESH SALMON, KIDS. WE CAN GRILL IT ON THE CAMPFIRE.

Oog leaves.

LADY.

SATO. I THINK WE WILL NOT HAVE ANOTHER HOME HERE.

LADY, I THINK NOT, TOO. DID OOG BURN IT BECAUSE HIS FATHER WOULDN'T GIVE HIM MONEY?

I THINK HE PLANNED TO EVEN AS HE BUILT IT, SATO.

DO YOU FORGIVE HIM?

HE IS A STRANGE MAN. HE LOVED VERY MUCH
YOU, AND ME, AND THE WORK HE MEANT TO DESTROY,
I BELIEVE.

I AM NOT SATO, SON OF OOG.
NOT SON OF OOG.

They almost expect that he will not return, but he does, for one last, rollicking weekend. But perhaps even Oog does not know yet it is to be the last. Let us believe this.

WHERE DOES A BUBBLE GO WHEN IT BREAKS KIDS? THAT'S NOT
A RIDDLE, IT'S THE ONLY PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION I KNOW.

OR MAYBE IT'S NOTHING BUT THE ... RIGHT WAY TO
TICKLE MARY.

DRINK UP, LADY. DRINK UP, SATO. IT'S ALL BUBBLES,
ONLY BUBBLES, AFTER ALL.

On Monday, Pete Erickson sends for Sato to come to see him, and to bring the title to Carolyn's little Ford car.

HI, PETE. THAT'S A NEW SUIT, ISN'T
IT? HEY, THAT'S NICE.

YEAH. YOU BRING THE CAR TITLE?

None of Oog's powerful graces, none of the airs which graces imply, about Pete, the working stiff, the tough, the undissembling. Sato knows where he stands with Pete, doesn't he?

SURE. HERE IT IS. DID YOU FIND SOMEONE TO BUY IT ALREADY?

THAT'S RIGHT. ME.

PETE. THANK YOU. THAT'S WONDERFUL.

Pete is busy writing down information from the title, and a surprising thought bubbles up behind Sato's naturally inscrutable face, as Pete finishes and gets out his checkbook.

... MAYBE ...
MAYBE I AM SATO, SON OF PETE?!?

SHALL I TAKE THE CHECK AND MAIL IT TO HER?

NO. I'LL MAIL IT.

YOU'RE PAYING THE TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR THE CAR, PETE?

NINETY-FIVE BUCKS, SATO. STRAIGHT TO THE DEALER. HIS ADDRESS IS ON THIS TITLE.

SHE SIGNED THAT TITLE FOR ME TO SELL FOR TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS, PETE. I CAN'T TAKE LESS.

NINETY-FIVE DOLLARS'S WHAT'S DUE ON IT. LOOK, KID. YOU JUST HANDED ME THE GIRL'S ADDRESS. YOU WANT ME TO PHONE IT IN TO SAN FRANCISCO ?

YOU'D PHONE THE POLICE ?

IF I HAD TO. BUT THIS CAR DEALER WOULD HAVE THEFT COVERAGE. CAR'S UP FOR REPOSSESSION, PROBABLY. NO, I'D JUST PHONE THE INSURANCE BOYS. THEY'D HANDLE IT FOR ME. . . .

DON'T SIT THERE LOOKING RIGHTEOUS AT ME, SATO. YOUR BROAD'S A DEADBEAT, YOUR MOTHER'S AN ALIEN, YOU'RE WANTED FOR QUESTIONING.

AND YOUR STEPFATHER'S AN ARSONIST.

YOU CAN'T PROVE THAT.

YES, I CAN. BY A SHOTGUN HE DIDN'T FIND SATURDAY MORNING WHEN HE GOT WORRIED AND WENT TO REDEEM IT FROM A FRISCO HOCK SHOP. I GOT TO THE HOCK SHOP FIRST, ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON. HE SAID IT BURNED UP, DIDN'T HE ? SO DID YOU, BY THE WAY. WELL, I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THAT GUN TO TURN UP ON THE FENCE SHEETS -- I BEAT OOG THERE, AND I RISKED MY OWN DOUGH REDEEMING IT, SATO.

WHY ? IF YOU KNOW OOG'S GUILTY, WHY DON'T YOU GET HIM ARRESTED ?

OH, I DON'T KNOW. I KIND OF LIKE THE MAN.
ANYWAY, HE'S LEAVING HERE, YOU KNOW. HE'S GOING
INTO THE NAVY. I GUESS THE COUNTRY MIGHT BE
NEEDING HIM WORSE THAN THE COUNTY JAIL.

WHAT DO YOU CARE? IT'S YOUR JOB, ISN'T
IT? TO PUT HIM IN JAIL?

AAH, GROW UP, SATO. WHERE IN HELL DO YOU THINK I
GOT NINETY-FIVE BUCKS AND A BRAND-NEW SUIT, ANYWAY?

I think we will leave Sato now, walking in the grove of walnut trees, by the lake, where once he walked with Kitty Hamilton.

I AM SATO, SON OF NO MAN!

I THINK IT'S A SQUID.