James arrived in the city in the late afternoon. A strange light fell across the highways on the buildings, putting his soul into a kind of mood, a perfect mood of repose, giving him a command of the world, a temporary comfort against its extremities. He had said to that man he had briefly encountered, on that beach, gazing out to the ocean, that he would no longer be a man of extremes. He would be averaging, centered.

James lived far away from the city, having left decades ago, away from the madness, thrust into the outskirts, a feeling in a world where memory was running low, energy depleted. our of the main city, hating its, loving both the remoteness and the driving, the endless travel. But he had returned for a reckoning. It was an estranged father affair,

He thought of this sisters: Estelle and Midge, strange name choices from a rootless culture without history. An early screaming against the world from a crazy father who would be found screaming in the streets, in bars, lost for days. Estelle and Midge, carbon copy siblings, always grammatically entangled, lost in translation. They lived in apartment. He decided to go here first, endless dusk that was the city and waited downstairs, parking a few streets away, leaving to pass houses of various shapes, this Mondrian life. This life of angles. He thought of this mother, the great soprano from the past, creating a shadow that could not escape, cold woman, a therapists dream. But it turned out she was not the problem.

Daniel and Tanya had met in the past, somewhere unknown, a club maybe, a party, the perfect party, exchanging of glances and etique, perfect back and forth. “we had a rhythm. People don’t understand. It was like all the times I was on the stage, there was never a part, of the wife of Daniel Hall. The greatest part. Lowering grip on reality, but if one tighten’s one grip enough, then reality itself begins show shape around you, covering you, enclosing you and pushing out the world. Tanya had tried to explain this. She had cited the usual suspects: Balkariev, how to walk through a room to leave just right amount of weight. It had mad little sense to Daniel, but to Estelle and Midge, lines within their mothers sketch, fell into it and they would walk across the room.

There were such strange side effects of growing up in such an environment. The insults, the barbs were obtuse, needing reference. “You are so out of focus, James”, it was true and the city the lived in, mid sized, the usual affair, the business district, the café’s the coast, the river, the beach. Just like everywhere else, full of a coteirie of the self important, and falling through the cracks. And so James had done just that, moving away to university,

His father had not always been mad. Just like the rest, not born made, but weaving, weaving every into it, in small certain steps. The absolute certainty of forward movement. There are, or course, a thousand views of a city and his life, his assured life, married to the soprano was one of them, lost in the noise of information these days, carved out of the world. He had promise, a future, some from something or nothing, the lineage was vague at best, finding themselves in a large house, with a shrieking soprano.

James arrived at the large terrace house. Immaculate condition, in a suburb long past potentiality and knocked at the door. Midge answered. Or was it Estelle? It was hard to be sure, they stood in different ways, so different in appearance and yet the same. Estelle-Midge nodded to him and walked in. A greeting full of difficulty, after so many years. He came into a kind of drawing room, decorated perfectly. Tanya was reclining on the couch, as if being painted. She looked at him, as if he come in from stage right.

James had spoken about it to a therapist. The theatre matriarch. The singer without being a mother who he would cath watching her as a young child, as if wondering which part he would choose, as if, somewhere unknown in the house of his childhood, there were a list of parts to be chosen. It was not his insubordination, his indecision made him just so enigmatic in the face of this mother, who knew exactly where to stand how to stand, as if there were a camera crew in the room, deciding how it should all play out. He had a theory and therapist, nodded, James thought it novel, but knew he was speaking to someone who had heard it all before.

“The thing to understand” James explain, “is that there is no order between my sisters and I. Logically, speaking, mathematically speaking, even, we are a set. There is no older or younger. There is no power. There is a just a disappointment in the air” Inevitablity this would leave to an analysis of James’ mother as a kind of theatrical singuality, who would cast her children on her life as a kind of mood board. James thought it deep and meaningful. He was an almost mathematician, a failed logician, who had thrown it all away.

He entered stage left in the room, and walked toward one chair, and then changed his mind to sit somewhere else. It was a classic rookie director move, noticed and disapproved of. James could not be sure if it was rebellion and indecision. And so now, with Estelle and Midge coming just enough into focus for me to differentiate them, the three of them sat in a first scene relief, there bodies and clothes juxtaposed against their moods and the art in the room and their bodies at a certain time in life.

This was not the kind of family that called meetings, it was more of of expectation of his location which he met. There was a seriousness that settled on them. It was Daniel who must be spoken.

“It’s the manifesto, that ridiculous manifesto”, Tanya began dramatically.

“His life’s work”, chimed in Estelle, ironically. Midge rolled her eyes.

The manifesto had a starting point. An exactitude in history. Daniel Hall had started some thirty years earlier. James was a teenager at the time, wandering like a madman through an empty house, deciding on what to do, and his fater, again it was dusk, it was a family that would never survive the afternoon, he realised this, and heard screaming echoing through the house, a strange pitch, dissonance against the voice of his mother who mercifully was not around at the time, and James had not rushed to see the source of the sound, because no one really ever does that kind of thing in actuality. Instead he stood at the top fo the stairs, seeing, the room down below covered paper, and his father scribbling madly, and his assistant not sure what to say, out of place, desperately wanting to be somewhere else. So James had stayed a silent spectator and his father had just kept screaming, “yes”, “that’s it”, “of course”. For if one is mad enough, the world will reveal it to you.

Thus began the years of wild scribbling, in a house big enough to accommodate them, midge and Estelle floating above, lost to the din and James thrashing around in it, and Tanya who took herself out of the drama, leaving him to his madness, trying at times to incorporate it into her work.

Almost no one had ever read Daniel Hall’s manifesto. Was it a political work? Was a he a polyglot or fool. Impossible to tell. Not quite everyone of course. There were exception of course, because there was something about it that led to madness. At one point, just after turning sixteen, Midge had waded into the endless sea of papers in Daniels office. She had left, disconcerted, gone quite for months, deeply troubled about something she could not articulate, not bring herself to annunciate. And then found tried to hang herself, the drama.

Or was that Estelle. But that was not really the point of course.

None of them, including Midge and Estelle even knew now, morphing. The fact that it was the most dramatic moment in the house was a source of great consternation to Tanya, who would never hold another soiree, another murder mystery night, tainted by drama that she was not. From that moment, Tanya was rarely seen in the house and midge and Estelle, into normalcy, thrown out full formed into their own lives, their own marriages no numbering an even four between them, but normalcy, and their children. It was mystery.

Eventually it all became unworkable, the house on the hill that was full of paper, and Daniel Hall enacted his own self exile, rushing and later living in the business district, a cavalcade of black vans, all hired to perfection gleaming new building, eccentric CEO who was hands off on the business arrived at work one day. Daniel ran a mainframe company. Storage. Its vintage start was early eighties rooms full fo tapes running. The increasing automation, lower cost, gradually turned in the building into raw electricity. When their where papers, when the imagination could be captured, he would scream at reporters, theatrical reporters that yes, he was creating a manifesto. It was of course assumed that this would be some kind of technological revolution.

It was a breaking point of information. IN the mid eighties some time, there was an unmistakable precision, James could feel it, like the community dissolving, turning to sand and falling away into dissolution. And it was his father’s undead manifesto.

Of course it would not have mattered. Another eccentric.

END

His mother called, dramatic, worldly, iron fisted, a politician without a state, theatrics.

“Oh god, James, the problem with you? You are too many people?

His father ina moment of lucidity – you know for many years, I tried to understand how it all ticked but we are on a horizon, meeting point, we are the event horizon. Meant to die. We time travel in our disruption.

James reached into his lit cigerettes, dishevelled packet and lit one and passed it to his father. He raised his eyes, said nothing, and together they looked down at the maddening crowd, and looked down across the maddening crowd. Running, screaming, escatic terrified.

And he was dead. In an out of life just like that. An instant to an instant. The device had almost fallen from his father’s hand and the machines were silent. He felt his fathers cooling, blood becoming still. and reached over and took it, holding it close, pressing down the button again, and propped himself up. He felt the red sniper lights circle him and pressed down the device button again and the LSD flowed below . And the sniper lights danced in patterns, always patterns he could not discern and he smiled in that futility of knowing, waiting for the world to go blank.