

down the buildings, of losing his town to the same Poles, of hating the Poles and leaving everything behind, of the bombing of Dresden. When I think of it, I feel such a pang of regret that I never recorded it all down and that he is assuredly lost now and that we never skimmed the surface of what he could have told me. I think of riding in my grandfather's MG. I think of the times that I have squeezed an old person's hand and they haven't let go. One time a woman squeezed my hand and wouldn't let go and she was young but I despised it. But when an old woman squeezes my hand, I wait to see if she will let go and I hope she doesn't let go. Now I sat on the hill among these old men, I had no concept of time, perhaps it was 11, or perhaps it was 3 in the afternoon. I looked back at the one who had been speaking with me, I had already begun to mentally call him "Herbert" for some reason, he seemed to be very aware of me and was uncomfortably darting his eyes back to me, and even looked at me imploringly, as one who is helpless and impatient. "Herbert" held his hands like a praying mantis, not tightly though, but at the sides of his chest, while the others held their arms limply at their sides. Their skin was filthy.

I ventured away, to eat blackberries again, still keeping an eye on the flock. I don't know how I had gotten into this habit of eating so frequently. I was dependent on this nervous habit all of the sudden, or maybe the blackberries just weren't hitting the spot. I couldn't get enough. I realized this and I stopped immediately, then meandered slowly up the hill again. I sat in the midst of the Jobsian derelicts. I watched the man with the ripped sleeve, he put the metal tube to his mouth and made noises with it from time to time, it was a piccolo. It seemed to have three holes along the top and one near the thumb, which he covered with the flap of skin between thumb and forefinger. He played short, quick songs, all of which seemed very off-key and absurd, like free jazz sped up. Some of the other men took out piccolos of their own, though they didn't make any effort to play them, but were content to flutter their fingers over the holes and only chime in after each song, saying, "Dune." After a few minutes of this, the man with the ripped sleeve seemed to enter an extended piccolo tirade, playing for what must have been twenty minutes, thirty minutes, perhaps more, breaking occasionally to breathe, but then getting right back to it, hammering out the trills, piping