When Susannah and I were lovers, the fact that she was married seemed irrelevant to me, except it limited our being together. I knew she could not love me any more than she did, husband or no husband, that he could not matter in the same way, that if she made love to David in the morning and me at noon it subtracted nothing from the truth of our love. She did do that, at least once; she told me so. But not to make me jealous, or threaten me in any way, simply as a curious, unexpected event in her life that she knew I would be interested in. Entertained by. We were complete, we were a world and though this world of ours was tightly bounded in time and space, nothing could make it less than whole.

At the time when I met Susannah, I sold anesthesia equipment, blood gas machines and the like. I was at Children’s Hospital in Boston to replace a faulty gas chromatograph in a diagnostic lab, and I was passing through a waiting room and in a space off to the side of it, I saw this beautiful woman kneeling with four small children around her, one of them buckled into a contraption that was somewhere between a stroller and a wheelchair. Later I found out she was doing play therapy. I stood on the threshhold, uninvited, and watched her. She seemed to be as oblivious to her own beauty as the children were, but seeing her had cut the thread of my life and I could not move until its continuity was restored. After a minute she felt me looking at her and turned to look back at me; she didn’t seem offended or even surprised that I was standing there staring at her. It was as if we had an appointment. Finally she said, “Would you like to join us?”