

## **It was Time to Escape Again**

It was time to escape again. Wait. Start over. At the beginning. No, slightly forward. To that southwest corner of Connecticut before he was a corrupted boy, where country clubs and white church steeples dominated the landscape, swimming pools behind patrician gates and stone terraces and green lawns with fountains and statues and garden parties with dark skinned help from Bridgeport and Norwalk. This is the angst into which he had been born (where he must return if he were to move on). Always on the run from this place—children from whining broods fighting for parents' attention, who, more concerned with tennis whites on mauve clay, swung their racquets with vengeance but in style, splashing rye and gin at court side with coddled lips and blood shot eyes. Junior Leaguers who showed off their razzmatazz, posing for photographs to appear on society pages of local rags wearing cocktail dresses with hemlines a dollar bill above the knee, naked pumps in pastel colored espadrilles and beads with Jacqueline Kennedy hairdos married to Yale Republicans—the William Buckley kind—there was no such thing as New Republicans nor the Religious Right -- just working-class Democrats with jobs in the trades -- electricians, plumbers, those who installed garage doors, cleaned swimming pools, tuned foreign autos -- who laid bored housewives, whose husbands took their fantasies onto the Pennsylvania Central to Grand Central on weekdays to work on Madison or Park or Wall Street, then afterwards conspire to hang out in their favorite bars like cattlemen to stare, with white devil eyes, at flirtatious temptations, mistresses to-be, arrogant and self-righteous in their knowledge they deserved it, slaving away as they did, in that sweat filled city of untucked button-downs and dangling dark ties wrinkled gray flannel suits all so that their better halves could spend summer days fawning over

bronzed club pros from San Juan or Johannesburg giving them group lessons or private whatever they preferred while their little beasts commingled as competing tribes of savages like sharks after fishes at poolside, under the unwatchful eyes of lifeguards, themselves spoiled sons and daughters of wealth who only half-disciplined their charges as if that too were a game, who wore long hair and protested war when both still meant something—a time when the generations were alienated from each other for a reason. Never trust anyone over thirty. James was thirteen then, what did he know about anything?