

The Angle

Volume 1974 | Issue 1

Article 2

1974

The El Greco Profile

Michele Micalizzi

St. John Fisher University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Micalizzi, Michele (1974) "The El Greco Profile," *The Angle*: Vol. 1974: Iss. 1, Article 2.

Available at: <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol1974/iss1/2>

This document is posted at <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol1974/iss1/2> and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at . For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjf.edu.

The El Greco Profile

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"At last she went forth into the New York she despised and feared. She had examined it again and again - this move to the city. There was no question though that it was unavoidable, essential to the whole maneuver. Her things had already been sent on ahead and so she could go ahead with it, while they told her she had everything quite under control."

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: 1974.



The El Greco Profile

by Michele Micalizzi

At last she went forth into the New York she despised and feared. She had examined it again and again — this move to the city. There was no question though that it was unavoidable, essential to the whole maneuver. Her things had already been sent on ahead and so she could go ahead with it, while they told her she had everything quite under control.

Defying the inclement weather, she decided to walk the few blocks to the Ardsley so they could talk without risk of being overheard on the crowded subway. On the way, they discussed the bizarre people of this huge city. Three newly ordained *avant-garde* types approached her, two boys and a girl, the girl's eyes round and wild, her bralessness revealed something. She could not help from shrinking as she passed them and with delight remembered, "Your withdrawal from people must not continue."

When she entered her apartment (Number 19 and already paid for) the phone was ringing. She ignored it, and hurried to unpack, her head screaming. Where had it all begun, she wondered, those voices in her head? All they wanted was some token acknowledgment, but she had given them everything without even bothering to fight, and they had almost destroyed her. Was an

identity as important as all that? She closed her eyes and knelt, leaning her meager body against the bed with its faded chenille spread and plushy fringe.

She had always tried to keep some pose of self-assurance, to remain free from their prolific innuendos. Somehow it never worked out and she shuddered, remembering those days, yet desperately needing to go back. She hummed lightly to herself, fingering an imaginary keyboard. "LIKE A POEM THAT DOESN'T RHYME, I COULD GET BACK TO THE PLACE BUT NOT THE TIME." She had chased illusions then, or so they had all told her. Perhaps she still was chasing them, but now she could see through them. Not the things they saw with their myopic vision, but the shreds of reality that had promised to elude her till now.

As long as she could remember, she had lived in Springville, Connecticut. Hardly anyone was aware the town even existed, a small community isolated from the larger world outside. It was only right that she should have been born there. Her mother had died when she was too small even to remember the woman whose picture stood on her dresser, an icon, to receive the devotion of an entire household. Whenever she looked at the picture, she felt no longing for the person, no tugging of heartstrings for the mother she never had. Instead, she

felt an oblique curiosity, a need to understand what kind of woman could ever have married her father.

She remembered putting that picture away once, by no means an act of defiance on her part, and he, he had discovered her, this iconoclast living in his house. He had asked for no explanations, had offered no understanding; instead he had accused her of some sacrilegious offense, threatened her with banishment from a family that had never existed for her anyway. Obediently, she returned the relic to its former place and vowed never even to glance its way again, but the vow had to be broken; as if by some mystical force, her eyes were drawn to it until she hated the smiling face, the string of pearls that hung tightly around the smooth, white neck.

When she was very small her father hardly seemed to notice her. She didn't notice him either; he was only the man she saw at dinner and intermittently on weekends. Most of her time she spent with her grandmother, who scolded her about the mess she made in the house, or the germs that would infest her tiny frame if she forgot to wash her hands before a meal.

Unlike other children who hate to leave their mother's arms, she had looked forward to starting school. But she found it difficult to make friends. She wanted them to like her, to include her in their games but they never did. Sometimes they said hello to her, and

Michele Micalizzi is a junior majoring in communications. A freelance journalist in her spare time, she plans a career in newspaper work.

she would smile at them, embarrassed that they had noticed her, but she walked to school alone and returned home the same way, envying the laughing children who walked in groups. Her grandmother never seemed to worry that she spent so much time alone; it was as if she were grateful that no one else intruded into her immaculate household, threatening to contaminate its inhabitants.

Disaster struck when she was only eleven. Remembering that first Dies Irae, ten years later it was easy to laugh. An icy winter day, she had left school alone and had gone to the library, quietly chosen the books she wanted while the librarian bestowed on her the, "Aren't you a nice little girl?" smile. With an arm full of books she walked along humming to herself, dreading the usual interrogation from her grandmother. She had not said she would be at the library. Why did she insist on worrying a tired old woman to death? She saw some classmates on the next corner and slowed her pace. She hated to have to walk past them, to search for something to say that would always come out sounding stupid and insincere. But they stood there on the corner and she knew she would have to pass them. Why did she dread them, why did a smart girl like her have to search for things to say, why wasn't she quick or witty, or at the very least walking with somebody else? As she came up to them, she slipped on a patch of ice and fell. The books flew in all directions, while she lay there on the ground trying to think of something to say. But they said it for her; they laughed, called her names and ran around kicking her books while she pleaded with them. They kept at it until she began to cry. Then they ran and as she stooped to pick her books up, she noticed through the tears that the palm of her hand was bleeding. With the tears streaming down and the snow crunching under her red galoshes she ran, and when she came to her own door, her grandmother was there. She never asked what had happened; instead she told her that when her father came home she would be punished for putting a hole in her new leotards.

Later, up in her room, she remembered thinking: they are the

enemy. They dislike me because I have no one, because I am always alone, and it's not supposed to be like that. I understand this because I'm smart, because I pay attention in school and read a lot.

After that, at the end of every school day, she would bolt out of the building, her thin legs shooting out from under her, begin the run home before she would be overtaken by the passing groups of children. Now, far away from it all, she wanted to cry for that little girl who had never had a chance.

The early years had been easy. She'd grown used to the times spent alone, to her grandmother's droning voice, to her father's absence. As a small child there was no need for them to acknowledge her. To her grandmother she was the child sent to see that there would be no peace in her old age, a penance like four Hail Mary's or a rosary a day for the rest of her life. In the way that the old often do, her grandmother accepted her punishment, only to find solace in reminding her of it constantly. "You know," she would say, "I thought I'd raised my family and God knows those years were hard enough. Little mouths to feed and no money ever coming in." She would suck in her breath until the cords in her neck strained against the wrinkled skin. "And now this. If only your Grandfather was here. He was always stronger." She could only stand there and wish lightning would strike her dead, then they would all be happy.

The memories of her father were almost the same. He was too busy for her, busy with work, busy earning money to take care of them. And that was enough; she should have been grateful. But at twelve, she knew what he really felt; he needed to be alone with the empty visions of her mother, to relive a past she was not a part of.

The great change began when she was thirteen. At first, their recognition overwhelmed her. She hadn't known it then, but human dignity rested not on respect but on small glimmers of recognition, your initiation into the race of mankind. She had that acknowledgment then; she was one of them. It had come at last like some precious gift, and as with all precious things, she cherished it. With what innocent expectations she had been ready for

them. She had never thought of disillusionment, of anticipation without reward; she wanted only to embrace a world that she had long been out of step with. To her this was the long-awaited prophecy fulfilled: she was no longer the interloper; she was a member of the family. She saw the change as if it were some drama, knowing that her lines must be perfectly rehearsed, the critics would be watching for failure on her part. Each day was a scene to be acted out according to their script. At breakfast the three of them would discuss the possibilities for the day ahead, and she wondered if it was genial formality or some urgent attempt at parental control. They knew exactly what she would do from the time she left the house until the time she returned. Of course, she knew what they would be doing too, but then was there any room for opposition on her part?

She was in the junior high now and had suddenly been able to make friends, Penny with the square face and straw-colored braids. They sat together in almost all her classes and before long they talked to one another. Penny had only recently moved into the neighborhood and she was glad to have a friend. It was like being given a second chance; whenever she thought about it her feelings overwhelmed her, to have been given another chance in a life that is lived only once.

Friendship with Penny really began the day she went home after school with her. Most startling, she thought, is that this isn't even in the script. For a brief moment, she was seized by uncontrollable panic. How was she to respond when there was no one to give her a cue? Hadn't she better call home first? Penny suggested. Ah, Penny, what wisdom comes from the mouths of babes. As simple as that. She had called her grandmother. At first, her grandmother had searched her head for the lines in the script too, and when she realized that they had been omitted, she made a mental note and gave her permission. It was really very simple.

That was the first time she had ever been inside someone else's home, a singular event for sure. Penny's house was warm with life,

like the ruffled yellow curtains in the window. Her mother looked like all the other mothers she had seen on T.V., the ones in the milk ads especially, with toothy smiles and Toll House cookies for their children. She wondered then what her mother would have been like, then wondered why she had thought that at all. Penny had a baby sister too, with fat yellow curls and pink cheeks, they called Amy. Of course, there was a Mr. O'Connor, a short balding man who smiled a lot like the rest of the family.

At Penny's they played with the baby; once they even watched her while Mrs. O'Connor went down to the store. Sometimes they went up to Penny's room to lie on the bed, telling each other their dreams and hopes for the future. She always hated to see five o'clock come, knowing that her father would be there to pick her up. He always asked what they had done and she told him openly; his silence gave consent. Once, though, they had gone to Penny's room and from under the bed Penny had taken a book. Penny closed the door and talked to her in a low, excited whisper. In the book were pictures of people having sexual intercourse. A hot flush spread over her face, because she knew her father would punish her, really punish her, if he knew about the book. The pictures seemed endless, page after page; she hadn't known there were that many ways to do it. Penny began to whisper to her, while she slowly unbuttoned her blouse. She had never seen Penny even partially undressed. Now she was awed by Penny's large breasts, which somehow, didn't seem to belong to her. She had watched her own breasts develop, but they were small and insignificant. Penny's voice seemed to trail off into her head somewhere; all she thought of was her father, how angry he would be. The thought saddened her, because she wanted them to like Penny, but now she knew her father would never permit that. She wouldn't tell him but somehow he would know.

After that, they hardly ever went to her house, the new discovery was much too close there. At fifteen, she wasn't ready to lose her only friend. Then the second disaster. Penny had talked for a long time about having a party. They had spent hours discussing who



they would invite, what they would do. One morning when she met Penny at her locker, she knew there would be another surprise. Penny was animated with excitement. "Look," she said, "I've decided to have the party next Friday. My parents are going to Lockwood to see my Aunt. They're taking Amy along. I told my mother I was going to have a few girlfriends over. I didn't tell her about the guys, but she'll never know the difference. They won't even be home till at least eleven."

She felt the weak smile spreading over her face. "Penny, if they find out, they'll be angry!"

For a minute, Penny seemed angry with her, then she smiled. "What are you worrying about? I told you, they won't find out." All she could think was, "But my father! my father!"

After dinner that night she mentioned the party to her father. A pajama party. What would he say? She had never spent a night away from home. He said it would be all right, and he talked of trust, of what it meant to be a young *LADY*. He would permit her to go as soon as her grandmother had a chance to speak to Mrs. O'Connor. Her

grandmother was mending, and looked up long enough to nod her silent approval. How easy that was, how remarkably easy, she thought. Penny was right. What am I worrying about?

She kissed them both goodnight, excusing herself and telling them she had homework to do. Later, her father came up to speak to her again. "I've never been able to talk to you," he said. "If your mother were here, she would be able to tell you these things." She knew he felt awkward. "You're getting older. You're becoming a young woman." His voice grew softer. "Boys they-'uh'-like to take advantage." His gaze shifted to the floor. "You mustn't let them. Because any chance they have, they'll use." Her mind flew to Penny's book. She knew he was afraid. "That is the only thing on their minds, the only thing. They don't care about the girl. They only want to satisfy themselves. After they do, the poor girl's forgotten. Ruined, wasted. I'm telling you this because the only answer is to avoid them. You're young. You have lots of time to date boys. You're too young to think about marriage. Remember, you have a good home here with us. We work

hard for you. Don't shame us."

Like some debriefing before a crucial battle. Clear and to the point. When she didn't answer, he nodded, she didn't know why, and left the room. He hadn't said they loved her, that they were trying to protect her, only that they wanted no shame. They would live happily ever after, the three of them. Like some holy trinity. She knew she was back on the outside again, had really always been there. The truth had always been too clear to her. This is the world I live in, she thought, and there is no hope for change. I can no longer fight them, I'm growing tired. I am their prisoner and it is only a matter of time. How much longer will I be able to hold off the fusillade? I have known for a long, long time that they are the enemy and they are after me. They have always been after me, but I have refused to recognize it. They are afraid of me, as if I were sent by the devil himself. They have kept me to themselves not to protect me, but to surround me. Some day, they will take me by force. She climbed into bed, knowing the real measure of inevitability.

When they arrived at Penny's, Mrs. O'Connor told her that her grandmother had called, and remarked how very lucky she was to have people who cared about her. Some children never knew what it was to be loved. She wanted to laugh then, to laugh out loud, to fall on the floor of the sunny kitchen and laugh and laugh and laugh. She wanted to tell Mrs. O'Connor what a stupid lady she was, a T.V. mother. She didn't laugh, though; she merely smiled and ran up the stairs after Penny.

"I've invited all the guys, ya know." She watched Penny comb her long yellow-white hair. She had stopped wearing braids a while ago, it must have had something to do with the party. "They're all coming." Penny winked at her as if they shared some delightful secret. "I can't believe we'll have the place all to ourselves. There's at least one guy for every girl. Hey, what's the matter? You been quiet all day?" Penny didn't wait for an answer, but kept right on as if a flood of words was waiting to pass like a waterfall over the brink of her lips. "I don't feel well," she heard her own hollow

voice. "I think I'll get home a little early today." "Just so you're all right tomorrow. It's Friday." She winked again.

It was the first time in a year and a half that she had even considered leaving Penny's early, but it wouldn't really matter any more; she knew that they had already stopped being friends because Penny was wearing makeup now, and tight sweaters, and the way she parted her hair made her look like some old photo of Veronica Lake. Besides, Friday was Penny's debut, and when it was over, she would be someone else. It was one of life's many transfigurations. And like Melpomene, she would be forgotten, abandoned by her only friend. In memory of the old days she ran home after school, alone and afraid.

There she thought of excusing herself from dinner, but remembered Friday. If they even suspected the slightest hint of sickness, they would never let her go. To have to go through this ordeal again! No, the purging would take place tomorrow. She had years and years ahead of her and she was quite ready to begin them now.

She said good-bye to her father at breakfast. She was going to Penny's directly from school. He asked her to call him after dinner.

They met in front of Penny's locker, seven girls besides herself and Penny. She sensed the excitement and saw that it was her own obituary. They walked to Penny's swinging their overnite cases and making glib plans for the night ahead. Walking beside them, she felt outside of herself, seeing, smelling, remembering all the years that had brought her there. At once happy and sad, she knew she didn't belong with these girls, chattering about boys and makeup and dates; she would never belong there. The years on the outside should have prepared me for this, she thought, but that brief interlude where I felt a gleaming of hope has permeated my mind to the point of incoherence. It will go on until my thoughts are a maze endlessly crooked before me. I will no longer feel aloud, or think long enough to sort things out. I will hear only the endless whimperings echoing from deep inside.

At Penny's house, some of them went to curl their hair, others to

help get things ready. She went into the kitchen for paper cups and refreshments. On the counter was a note from Mrs. O'Connor: There was plenty of food. Please be sure to lock all the doors.

Perhaps it was her own wish that the night bring disaster; maybe it was all part of a mind that had separated itself from the body. What thoughts to think at sixteen, when she should have been like all the others.

She realized that she couldn't stay for the party, and that it wouldn't make much difference anyway. Pleading a headache, she went down to the basement. Penny said she was sorry, she would see her over the weekend. She had hoped at least they would have asked her to stay, or expressed some sympathy. She went out of the door, the overnight bag heavy on her quivering arm.

I can't go home, she thought, not to them. They expect disaster and failure. Then following the familiar path to the library she knew she had come full circle. She pushed open the heavy oak door and took gulps of the musty air. It was reassuring to know that she belonged there in a place where no changes occurred. She walked up and down the aisles, between shelves of books that towered high above her head. She reached for a volume in front of her, and noticed her birdlike hand, bent from years of clutching, desperately holding on.

She sat on a bench in the park in a circle of late-afternoon sunshine. She savored this silence, thought about determinism and free will; it gave her some semblance of control. She sat like that until the sun had disappeared and her fingers were numb with cold. She glanced at her watch and marveled that still it was too early to go home. She would wait until eleven. At least they would think she had been there. She walked on toward the center of town. She went into a diner to eat, but instead bought a candy bar and left. Shivering, she wondered if this was punishment, to wander the earth like Cain.

In the park she searched for the bench she had sat on before. Happily she found it, and it comforted her to think she had a place there

in the darkness. In a pool of light from the street lamp a cat lay sprawled, emerald eyes blinking. She called to it in a soft voice and it sprang into her lap. Its fur was coarse and its ribs stuck out against her fingers. She wondered if it had a home. Taking it to them would have caused a scene. Because neither one of them liked animals, she had never had a pet. Suddenly the tears came, rolling down her face like salty sweat. In her lap the cat purred contentedly and she saw that it had no tail.

It was almost eleven. Her house was ablaze with lights, and her father answered the knock. "Where have you been? Don't lie to me! I want to know where you were."

"I've been at Penny's, at... at the party." She waited.

"You're lying to me. You weren't at the O'Connor's! I waited for your call." That was it. She'd forgotten to call him. She'd promised. "We were so busy, I just forgot."

"You were busy all right, parading around town in one of their cars."

She tried to make sense out of it. What was he saying!

"You have nothing to say, just that self-righteous look. Mrs. O'Connor called me. She came home and found the house filled with boys. You weren't there and she was worried. You never told me there would be boys, that there was no parental supervision! And you, sneaking around like some common slut! I should have known this would happen, for the whole town to see. It was against my better judgment. You're all inter-

ested in one thing. Well, not my daughter." He stopped abruptly and she saw the sweat on his forehead. There was no point in explanations; she knew she hadn't the smallest shred of credibility left. "You're forbidden to see that girl. I want you in this house after school. My daughter will not be parading around with those filthy animals."

She ran up the stairs, choking on her sobs. Certainly, she had expected this, but not the horrible, twisted contempt on his face.

Life slowly melted into a cloud of carmine, and she was carried into the center of the scarlet whirlpool. Objects around her changed and became larger than life. They had distorted faces that leered and called her, "Whore! Whore!" At first they came and went, but then they never left her and she tried to crawl inside herself. Soon they were even interrupting at school. In the beginning her teachers hardly seemed to notice but before long she was reprimanded for daydreaming. Each day she could feel herself slipping away, ever so slowly. She cried out, and no one heard. Her words had such a long way to travel.

She couldn't take hold of her mind. How was she supposed to learn formulas and titles? She read and the words would be there for the minute, then would float away.

Somehow she managed to make it through the school year. Her teachers questioned her, but they were busy and she had no answers for them. At home they weren't concerned; they hardly bothered to talk to her. She tried to remember

all the things she had ever learned before and she would discuss them with herself. She mustn't slip away. Soon there were other voices besides her own. Sometimes she thought she recognized them as voices from the past, fuzzy though, and she couldn't be sure. Still they were her friends and when she was being sucked into the vacuum they reassured her. They never scolded or reprimanded; they liked her. When she waited, she called them and they came, happy to see her. They told her things to make her laugh; they knew she was sad. Sometimes they even danced and though she could not see them she heard the calypso music. The whirlpool became friendlier, the distortion disappeared, but she knew that was just their attempt to placate her. They wanted her to give in to them, and then they would destroy her. They were her father's emissaries. She knew he was one of them. When he spoke to her, she did not hear the sounds, but saw the distorted face with the exaggerated features. She watched the mouth, almost as long as her arm, moving grotesquely, making non-sounds. She wanted to be rid of them, to move far away, to be surrounded only by her friends. They had affectionately named her Moon-calf. It was the first time she had ever had a name. On her eighteenth birthday they brought her a present. Although she could not see them, they let her see their gift. It was a Manx cat. She cried because it reminded her of the cat in the park, so they told her, in their soft, highpitched voices, that it was the



same cat. She could tell by its lucent body that they were right. When she stroked it, it sang in a beautiful tenor voice. Her father and grandmother didn't acknowledge her birthday; to them, she would always be ageless.

She never thought about the passing of each day, plunging softly through the blue swells of Nex. She spent most of each day in her room, playing with the Manx cat and cajoling the voices to tell their funny stories. Her grandmother came to knock at the door when she heard the laughter from within as if she were committing some carnal act there on her bed. Her grandmother did not permit her to leave her room unless she was fully clothed, not even pajamas were permissible. She wondered who would even care, but she knew this woman was not really her grandmother; she was Hecate, sent from the Underworld. She knew they were all suspended in time. From her window she watched the seasons create a visual order for her. It pleased her to see some Actuator still in charge of the earth, some Acephalous Being invulnerable to the demons. Clocks and calendars measured time. But whose time was that? Surely not hers. No one else knew what her time was. How foolish, she thought, to trap time in numbers and words. The only things trapped are ourselves and times goes on around us while we are here and long after we are gone. We are the ones trapped by time, whisked from the unknown, searching for who we are. Only some of us are never given enough time. Sometimes she thought coherence was returning, but it came only to laugh at her, then disappeared again into the labyrinths of her mind. Each day she grew more restless, knowing that she had ascended to some surrealistic tower, where she was trapped forever. Claustrophobia pressed against her and hot fluid seared her veins. She knew she would explode; soon she would be nothing but a splattering of protoplasm. Until her voices showed her how to press the burning match to her skin to release the enormous pressure inside. She thought of suicide, of blissful sleep without pursuit, was certain that was the only way to

The Angle, Vol. 1974, Iss. 1 [1974], Art. 2
escape her father. No matter who she wanted to be, she always remained herself, whoever that was. She looked in the mirror and saw a girl with copper hair and pale skin but she meant nothing to her.

In the New York apartment she groped back to the afternoon when she had started her long journey. She had gone to the window in her room and was suddenly overwhelmed by the desire to be outdoors. The room had been her tomb for longer than she could remember. To leave it was the only thing she wanted. She spoke and the voices said they would be pleased to go with her. They decided to take the Manx cat too. She had no memory of what happened after that. Later they told her that she had been found on the curb in front of the library. The police had taken her to the hospital. The doctors had helped her, told her she didn't have to go back there; she could live by herself . . . some day.

The telephone's incessant ringing added to the raging storm in her head. Ten years tired, she thought, and only twenty-one. The mirror on the dresser beckoned her. Once she had been told she had an El Greco face. Now she wondered if she wasn't merely gaunt.

Inertia, however, was not to be replaced by depression; she was going to finish unpacking. She continued putting her things into the musty corners of the chiffoniere. Who was it who said you could tell a person by his mannerisms? Certainly not Dostoevski? She giggled. What was there to tell about someone as nondescript as she.

She came to the final carton, by far the most precious of all her belongings. She snipped the string and opened the cardboard flaps. Camus lay on the top, he had the answer to identity, perhaps to hers. She tossed it on the bed. D. H. Lawrence and Robert Browning, proof that love is not necessarily lovelier the second time around. And, yes, *Madam Bovary*, scarlet letter in hand. Could she, the eternal virgin, identify with her too?

She had never been able to look at herself detachedly, if only because someone had been looking at her so closely. Her father, with his

vigilant eye, his fear, had filled the house till they all choked on it. She shivered to think she had finally escaped them, their glances, their gawking and silent whispers. She had escaped, but not until the analysts had wrought their magic on her, not until she had had to die first merely to be born.

She had spent hours and hours on the couches of nameless Merlins. And they all asked why, such a nice girl, whatever went wrong? But they gave her back her mind, helped her see again, read words. They brought her books and she read; they taught her to recapture time. They gave her the chance to fight her father again. She knew then that he was sick, she only an innocent child he had contaminated. Over and over they told her about human inadequacy. They began to break the depressions. They questioned her about her fear of people, but what had they expected? People had done this to her, her own people. They had pretended to love her and by that bond had held her fast to them with shackles that had finally grown intolerable. And she? She had wanted only freedom, freedom from the limits of their obsessive concern. They believed this to be her defense against a world that no longer had any sense of morality. They were insane, and she had spirited herself away; the darkness had fallen over her and she could no longer fight them, so, incapable of lashing out at them from the dark, she had the voices to console her.

But then neither fury nor bitterness burned her. She wanted only to slip from this world into the next—a better world perhaps that would be her world alone, where no one would impinge, where there would be no calumny. How naive she had been, thinking she could retreat peacefully forever. She had even thought of suicide, but had somehow appeased the voices calling her to come to them. Instead, she had decided to make the long-awaited return to the person she might have been. No, she was not quite through with this world where people did one thing and meant quite another. She could not relinquish herself, not yet. She was through being exiled and humiliated, she said out loud, and not a single voice replied.