

whistled, not long ago, so let's start down there, let's be clear. Our young man is not a vacuum, we must believe that if nothing else. You know we must. There is a young man with a mustache—and he smiled nicely, sometimes—and he's busy right now, he's busy fighting some long-haired boys. They are beating him, and he is not putting up much of a struggle. And this young man is not a vacuum.

He is old-fashioned, and he reads Somerset Maugham, and Somerset Maugham wrote that a writer cannot also be a gentleman. As it applies to us, this means that we cannot do the young man the justice of going back to his birthdate and examining fairly the evolution of his character (is there one) and emotional response (are there any). For one thing, we do not know it all—we never know it all, and why must we assume that there's a pattern to his life that culminates—or begins—with this ugly thing that's happening in a street in Georgetown in the northwest section of Washington, D. C.? Couldn't the pattern have begun only two years ago? Last week? Perhaps there is no pattern, perhaps only a shape to be defined.

Perhaps the shape emerged only this morning. The young man is gazing blankly into his bathroom mirror—doing the morning things, shaving, brushing his teeth—gazing blankly into his mirror. And he knows vaguely that he is uncomfortable with his face this morning—this is one of his “bad days,” a day when his face does not look quite right.

As humans grow older, the feature that alters most rapidly and drastically is the nose. Many people do not realize this, and spend a great deal of time disguising flab and wrinkles around their eyes and under their jaws, and wonder why they do not look twenty-five again. It is the nose that's wrong. It widens, loses its shape, flattens at the tip . . . and often it is the finest young noses that metamorphose into the most predatory blobs. The lucky ones are those with little pug noses, for these take longer to droop.

This young man is not lucky, and his nose has changed. He does not know it, but he senses something different in his face, and it makes him uncomfortable, because he is vain. He thinks it is a “bad day” for his face; but he also understands vaguely that his face will never have a good day again. This is absurd and it is important.

The other thing that makes the young man uncomfortable this morning is his Maxfield Parrish painting. It is blue, of course, and