could rub shoulders with an equally strong contempt and suspicion of the flesh. In other words, that A***'s excesses could go hand in hand with my moderation and decorum. Far from being enraged by my obstinacy or taking offence t my incessant urging, A*** found it all quite amusing. This was a good sign. Certainly the variety of my pleas was astonishing; one finds oneself suddenly capable of deploying the treasures of rhetoric, imagination, and persuasion in order to convince someone to have sex—a very common ambition, and not so interesting when one thinks about it in the cold light of day. But voilà, the price that I seemed to attach to my conquest, measured in terms of the energy and ingenuity I was expending, was high enough to be flattering. What must have at first seemed like a blaze of concupiscence was, over time, taking on real form.

Our daily telephone conversation were no longer anything but a game: a hypothetical reconstruction of our relationship if A*** were to succumb to my desires. We were presenting each other with illusions, visions, and tableaux. The object of this display was to figure out how to get along without drama, how to deal with the overcrowding engendered by a relationship that we hoped would not be temporary, but rather truly invested with stable affections, tastes, habits, and lifestyles—all of which differed radically, even more each day. We discussed everything down to the most trivial details. Would we live together? And if so, how would we divide up the household chores? Would we sleep in separate beds, thus shielding ourselves from the boredom of a complacent conjugality? And if not, what type of bedding would we choose? A*** was pushing for the classic pairing of sheets and covers, I for the more rational duvet.

The slow workings of this fiction, which didn't shy away from ridiculous or insignificant detail, were taking on the meticulous traits of familiarity. I was winning A*** over to the possibility of such a relationship. Its incongruity, its danger was dissipating in the soothing quietude of our constructed fable. Repetition and habit tend to diffuse excess. A*** was no longer systematically imagining the worst, no longer predicting disasters at every turn; the scenarios were becoming less catastrophic. Our union, by dint of simulation, was no longer inconceivable. The game of "and if" wore down A***'s reluctance; every day, we already belonged to each other in our imaginations. My desire was gaining power through a trick, was gaining life through a fiction.

(c.1952-53)

The midnight birds remind me of day though they are out in the night beyond the curtain I can't see

Somehow bedrooms don't carry tradition I and the boxed radio is off. But what am I reading

inward performance

Has relevance. Allows me to hear while something speaks. As for the bed straightened by visible hands only it is huge when I feel down in darkness