

Elea Carey

an excerpt of

One Time

THIS is the chronicle of a brief affair and, as such, it doesn't have a very strong story line. I am trying to figure out something that happened to me—how it came to be, who I was while it was going on, and what I am meant to be now that it's over.

I am the man in the story, such as it is. Sometimes I refer to myself as “he.” I might do this as a way of creating distance, talking about things that are too difficult to hold close. But other times I find that that voice actually brings me closer to whatever it is I'm describing. The “he,” the third person, is like an all-purpose camera lens that will zoom into something microscopically close and hover over its pits, faults, and crystals, or one that will widen to take in an entire landscape and make things in the distance feel less consequential than they really are.

When I describe the lovemaking, what the bodies did together, folded and stretched, I tend to use the third person.

I am concerned that there is too much of that kind of description here. I am concerned that this is self-indulgent, a form of bragging: “Look what I did.” My love life up until the times I describe was the most basic and simple. I had had three lovers. Only three! Warm women, and friendly, but uninspiring. Alone with them, I often felt distracted.

And then this happened, this handful of weeks. A sudden teetering on the edge of everything. So perhaps I have a right to brag, or at least to marvel. But more important, I now believe that what lovers do together tells everything about them.