

STANLEY FRIED

## INTIMATE DISTANCE

This noise again. These people never notice all this noise around them. It is a dull. One's mind can only blink in and out from all this sound. Its spaces are limited. The mass washes on my senses leaving an enzyme rusting thought. No opportunity to repair in silence. Nothing appears through this. Only submission to what I would not know.

Static drops on my mind in distraction. People everywhere look about in a glaze of ruptured feelings. Sound comes from each interstice massaging an irritant upon each person so they might never know to feel without it.

The sound tears at me. People stare. I look. Everyone turns away. They smile; turn back. Nothing has happened.

This place comes from something old. It is dying. My lungs rotting with each breath of this foetid air. Each limb of this place awaiting death to end it. No one acknowledges. Everyone turns away. Connected to this dying element. No one watching it. Fearing to notice this thing happening. Seeing it notice them.

I am drowning in this noise. I want to leave. As soon as I stand, everyone will turn smiling to look at me. Their mouths shattering the air in fragments of movement. The light pulsing images fast breaking into moments. I would look away but they would see the gesture.

This chair. Its metal arms become legs. The seat and back; grey plastic grained white. I can feel the springs pushing to me sitting. A tear in the plastic in the front right corner of the seat. There is cotton torn through the tear: pulling out; holding to itself; releasing to my fingers; rolling in my fingers into small balls picking up my hand's dirt turning it grey through the white. I watch each piece drop to the floor. Shadows rest beneath each one.

My legs are under me on this chair. My head bending to the tear. I lean: my right elbow on the chair's right arm crooked. My hand to my nape. Fingers play on the hairs. I look up to see if anything has changed. It is the same. I turn again to the chair.

There appears a space through all this. Clearing. The people stand; sit; move from place to a place. They move a hushed move; without change. This passes in steady pace of endless starting. Continues slow. Nodding. Passing. Slow.

The sound through this static continues; pushing on me. The sound of a crack. I raise my head. I smile. Everyone looks

to one place. I nod. Everyone nodding.

A jar shatters.

I smile. No one moving. I watch. Must not be seen watching. Nod. Turn back to the chair.

The heads nodding; moving to follow me. It would be an implication to leave. I must not appear to know they are thinking about me. Even a scratch might be noticed. Sit here. Still. I must not even nod. This seat torn. I will not move. Look to this tear.

A pressure pushing.

Fight. Pressing. A motion.

Thrown.

Coldness. Dry. Bright through shadows.

Touched; I scream.

Probe on me. Pulling.

Slashed.

I cry out.

Points push.

Huge sound topples on me.

No center. Nothing holds me.

Light/shadow/sound/pushing:

angled jarred sensation every place at once of me; coming on to me.

It stays. No ending it.

Great patterns move about turning slow plodding huge to what I am.

I move in every place without escaping the motion of these forms.

A feeling they do not move.

I spin.

Slow wake of

dying in all of this.

I gasp.

Look up. No one watching. Nodding; passing; it stays as ever. I can not have spoken.

No changing. Continued blur of sound. Images break in this light. I close my eyelids.

They must not notice.

I look. No one is turned. I move; my face to the tear. My eyelids touch. A sense of light through their shade.

I strain for a moment to rest.