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An Angel Entertains Theatricals

(Acquiring angels)

A woman, human, going about the world all in her arms and legs and trunk and her best head, and everything functioning apart from the little stumps where wings once were, found two angels, one of flesh, the other' stone; and she took these angels to her in a manner which might have suggested she would never let them go. But perhaps this was truer said of the stone angel. And because she was a writer she said, 'Everything I write for the rest of my life will contain angels.'

And it did, but it will not.

(Word made flesh)

She once thought there was one writer who had existed in the whole history of the world; that the desire to write was one idea, like any other idea, like the spreading of wings in the presence of a person; a moment, never to be repeated.

And how could it be that many people had come to this idea at the same time, come to it quite independently of each other? The woman preferred to think that one person wrote once, and that was writing. That is writing. And perhaps it was she and perhaps it was not. Is not.

And if it is, that is because there are words and flesh and they must be seen to be the same because they are the same; everything is linked, there is nothing that is not linked. And there is nothing quite like the contents of her head for making these things the same, for making them into angels, which are, anyway, almost nothing.

And like nothing they will not go away, and that is at once the greatest paradox and the most annoying thing in the world – that a thought is nothing but it cannot be destroyed.

And it is the same with angels.

(The afternoon of an angel)

He often asked her what she was thinking about, but it was impossible to tell. (Once he complained that the blurb on the back of a book of women's fiction said, 'What women are writing *about*' (his italics). 'It should say "What women are writing",' he said.) She said, 'I am not thinking about anything, I am just thinking.'

(A declaration of the independence of wings)

She was once a member of a choir aloft, this as a child dressed in the cast-off beliefs of her older siblings. Later she said she would write of angels for the rest of her life, because someone had to and it had fallen to her, from God, like a vocation; there was no question of choice in these matters, the physical matter of what angels are made of. Not that she would write of angels exclusively, but there would always be an angel hovering, like a motto in winged letters, its span of attention across the apex of a building.

But although she *said* this, there did come a time when she let herself be persuaded by certain people (people with an umbilical cord never severed from Heaven (or from Earth)), and also by the events in her life, the strangeness in her flat to do with electric lights and their own *a cord*, and also the painful beating of wings confined within her soul, attacking it from the inside as if it were her heart; a soul attacked by something approaching angles – persuaded that angels should not be in her possession, whether stone or flesh. And this started her thinking, and she thought, How everything is linked!

And it is; there is nothing that is not linked.

And like thoughts, they were not easy to put aside, these angels. Like the stacking of plastic containers – the obsessive collection of what will never go away, their everlasting lives in rubbish dumps – the angels were impossible to dispose of.

This despite the fact that everyone she knew wanted the stone angel for themselves – even the other angel, the one clothed in human flesh; he wanted it. But she found that if she were to part with the angel (stone), on account of the idiosyncrasies it left in its flight-path, the vapours, it could not be to anyone she knew, who would out of the blue give her reports of it, a description of the greenness of the moss growing on its one whole wing.

Also, they did not want it enough in that they do not now *have* it, these dilettantes, their half-souled attempts to possess it no more than a passing fancy for an angel. They did not want it as she had wanted it. Right from the beginning she had wanted the angel (stone) so much her determination to get it would have known no bounds. Nothing would have stood in her way.

And it did not.

(The angel of the Lord viewed at a sharp tilt)

There was one person who did not want the angel and that was the man who had first given it to her. Like certain saints he had entered the over-populated order of the recluse, and he existed in the Waitakeres where mists were his intimate friends. And even the inhibited presence of an angel – not speaking, eating, or asking anything of him – would have been an invasion on a scale of choirs visiting at Christmas together with the thronging crowds of their carols.

When she first laid eyes on the angel (stone), it was standing at the top of a flight of steps at the top of a steep incline; and it seemed to the woman, ascending towards it, that it was about to fall on her from a 45-degree angle.

(And a man she had just met had written, *'The angle of your hair will be an education,'* and another man, who gave her a quotation every time she saw him, said, *'Not Angles but Angels.'*)

And even though it did not fall on her, the angel, there was something of the calamitous, the divine, and also of the familiar about its particular slant. It was as if she had known it all her life and she threw out her hands, involuntarily, in a mirror image of its wings.

And its owner, her friend – who had taken the angel first from a Devonport cemetery which had been mown into rubble (as if someone had mistaken it for a lawn cemetery) to Grey Lynn, and then to the Waitakeres to mark not a death but the possession of land – said to her straight away, immediately, with no pause for thought, that she could have it. This as if she were a member of the royal family and, according to custom, anything she expressed a liking for must be given her. She could have the angel, and take it away with her, that day, back to town.

And although there was no need to, because of the manner in which it was given, it was the first object she had ever coveted in her life; had wanted more than anything, more than the moment of wanting itself; even that she would have given for it. On a scale of wanting, played on a piano pitching between the snowy lowlands and the sharp angles of the black-capped alps, the angel was at the extremity, where the air is thin and things are desired because they are necessities: words, flesh, angels. She embodied the angel and all the words in its wake.

And accordingly she drove it back to town, and walked in on a lunch party thrown by her flatmate on a Sunday (it hitting her between the eyes); and the Party was engaged to move the angel from the boot of the car. And mid-air there was some discussion about where it should land, on the terrace or at the bottom of the garden, and the woman was in favour

of the terrace where it could be seen from all angles, but her flatmate – also the owner of the house, the terrace, the garden and all the air above it reaching up into the sky, and also the earth beneath tunnelling through to Spain – was greatly of the opinion that it should reside at the bottom of the garden, among trees. Having proved herself not an ardent fan of the angel (a man), his nocturnal visits, this moving-in of an angel (stone) would perhaps be a constant reminder of his presence; or his actual presence, the object of it.

And so it was stationed at the bottom of the garden among all lunch-time admirers and was dappled by the sunlight of their various gazes. A garland of flowers encircled its inclined head; its gown fell to its bare feet, undisturbed by the wind; its right index finger, held aloft and pointing heavenwards as if to prevent the dead ending up in Spain, was but a flight-path, as the angel had at one time sustained the loss of its lower arm; also the tip of a wing.

Next morning it was found on its side, felled by the will of the other woman during the night. Its gown still hung straight down, demurely, unconcerned by gravity; the embodiment of softness in stone.

But this object, even though it is stone, substance, of the physical – it is, after all, an *angel*.

(The wings of a mosquito disturb an angel sleeping)

According to the Penny Catechism, which in 1968 was converted to decimal currency along with the sweeping changes the Caretaker Pope had instigated after Vatican II, his late-spring cleaning, angels do not sleep, nor do they think, nor do they procreate; they merely sing.

Once in a tent in the upper North Island, the woman and a man were plagued all night by swarms of mosquitoes – this after the locusts, the drought, and the floods of tears. While she slept fitfully, her face covered with a gin-soaked handkerchief

they had earlier thought might deter the insects, he held the naked flame of a candle against one mosquito after another, and watched them explode into choirs of black notes. She thought, sleepily, this might be a little cruel to the mosquitoes, and also inflammatory to the covering of her face.

But towards dawn the mosquitoes went back to where they came from and at last the man and the woman slept in the absence of these wings.

(A chronicle of the dark side of angels)

They were once both angels, only he was a white angel and she was a black one, the angel of death visiting like the seventh plague, the plague that came after the mosquitoes; and their various addresses (she knew three people in Auckland whose street number was 4/50, and whereas 666 denotes the devil, 4/50 was allied with catastrophe) – their various addresses were marked with a cross above the door.

She had seen many deaths in her life, including the deaths of those still living – to all intents and purposes they were alive, but to intent and to purpose, dead. And he had seen only birth, and he was white and she was black.

(A fortune-teller once gazing at the flattened city in the palm of her hand said her childhood had been like the Great Fire, and she had done cartwheels through this fire, which was how she had emerged only singed, blackened.)

The first catastrophe in the presence of the angel (stone), corresponding with the first time she wrote of angels ('... *thinking they were angels and dressing them accordingly in winged gowns*'), was that the moment it arrived at the little house she shared with another woman, the physical make-up of the house, its atomic structure, suddenly became impossible and it exploded, blowing the woman sky-high. And she landed in the flat (4/50) of the angel (a man), and he watched over her, a *Guardian* newspaper wrapped about her body on a parkbench,

while she slept off some sleep she had swallowed, and in the middle of the next afternoon he said, 'I know of a flat' – that recently vacated by his (religious) sister – and the woman moved into the flat (4/50), leaving the angel (stone) lying on its side in the dark recesses of the garden of the devastated house.

And then the angel (a man) began living at the flat too, with the stain of blood on its door.

The second catastrophe to befall her was that of the car which had transported the angel (stone) over the paths of stars being smashed in in the boot, right where the angel had once lain. It was written off, and she has written often of angels, archangels and the Angel Gabriel, and pondered how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, and pins will never be the same again; she will never touch them again without strewing a constellation of their comets and dashes across the hem of a skirt, all in their wings and their white robes, disturbed in their singing.

And the man who drove into the back of the car while it lay parked (the manager of a K. Rd strip club) had no insurance – instead, a Filipino bride. At least, that was the woman's interpretation of her accent over the phone, but perhaps the interpretation was given a little to excess, a gift to it. The Filipino woman said her husband was down at the shooting gallery (and every three minutes a shooting star passes every single point in the sky).

Eventually the written-off car was translated into a cheque and then, as if by magic, into a new car, red, which the angel (a man) thought was a good buy because it was such a bright colour. And one night while the woman was at work proofreading, earning the money to run to such frivolities as cars, the man drove another woman – recently arrived to visit her sister – around in it, and this was the third catastrophe.

(And if only she had known that *good buy* meant, *good bye* in Filipino!)

(The movement of land masses and an angel is a small mass of the holy days of lands)

It takes three people to lift it, or one angel (a man) who once had a job moving china dogs the size of dogs from the factory to the home of childless couples.

On the eve of a trip he had planned to the South Island, she asked him if he would move the angel (stone) from the little house where she had once lived, where it had been lying on its side for the winter. Here it had seemed quite peaceful, and her life also had been quite peaceful, relatively so, and the angel (a man), his life, of course, was peaceful. But she said she needed the angel to keep her company in the flat while he was away. And this perhaps heralded the ringing of a change of heart (*'The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. . .'*).

So he picked it up in one movement (a quick one) and moved it to the flat he had once found her, and found himself, and while she scrubbed it down on the doorstep, he played the piano, a slow movement learned at the age of ten, because it was covered in moss from the lawn, the angel.

And she, the prime mover of this escapade, cannot even lift an angel (stone).

And the next day the angel (a man) went to the South Island with a photographer on an expedition of photographs and interviews with writers – of capture; himself the movement of land masses, plate tectonics; and there he met a woman (the woman who was later to travel in the red car at night, also the owner of a green car, its opposite) and he wrote to the woman of this new woman that she was very interesting to talk to. And the woman written *to* knew straight away, immediately, with no pause for thought, that there was more to this woman written *of* than her conversation.

And it was as if, after moving the angel (stone) to the place where their existence was, he never returned to it; that there could not be two angels.

And there are not. There never were; there were not.

(The absence and difference of avoiding angels)

A man she worked with who gave her a quotation each night and once said, ‘*The banana is bent with care, it fritters its life away,*’ also told her Gregory the Great said, as he arrived in England and for the first time saw blond heads, ‘*Not Angles but Angels.*’ And this was very much to the point.

And an angel entertains theatricals, or was it they who entertained it with their pyrotechnics? (And after all, that was what the woman had come from, from fiery explosions all year round and at a Guy Fawkes’ night party, a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament, and all Party, backfiring on the young soul rebel.)

The angel has watched everything. There is no one knows more than the angel does, even one who has written of angels.

At first it stood just inside the bedroom in a direct line from the front door, so that anyone who came to the flat, the first thing they saw was the angel; they were greeted by an angel. And the woman and the angel (a man) skirted round it during the day and stubbed their toes on it in the middle of the night, but never did they think of moving it. It seemed to have more right to be there than they did, by its very nature, that it was heavy and also an angel; both these things.

And an angel of the Lord is a void and is also not a void.

And when he had gone she took the angel (stone) and moved it, symbolically, in the only way she could – walking it across the room, its heaviness, as if showing it how to put one foot in front of the other; giving the inanimate animation; also the spirit, limbs; and teaching your grandmother to suck eggs (which has been said). And it came to rest beside the other heavy object in the flat, the piano, which was against the south wall collecting dampness to add to its dampeners. And together they orchestrated a singing through the air of black and of white.

And the man she worked with who gave her a quotation a night, the next time she saw him, which was that night, the night of the worst day of her life (She cried, 'This is the worst day of my life!'), the night after the night of the red car – he said, '*The lights are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.*'

And the following night in her flat, she sat with a woman, a proofreader and also a viewer of ghosts in her past; and this woman screamed because the lights flicked off and then they flicked on and then they flicked off again, all unattended. And the woman (*the woman*) said it was nothing to worry about, that the wiring must be faulty. But when the other woman had gone she lay uneasily in her bed, and after that, every night, late, around twelve, the lights in the two rooms and the hall tapped out a message constructed of the presence and absence of light.

It was then that the woman decided to call in the services (Masses) of a Catholic priest.

(The Church of St Mary of the Angels and of the Madness of Wings)

Because of the writing off of cars and the sudden elopement of electric light switches and the general escapement of everything including the action of a piano, the woman concluded that she should no longer have this angel (stone) in her possession; she took heed of those who had warned her a long time ago of the mysterious properties of tombstones, no matter how angelic they might appear (also, no *matter*). And because it was Christian icon and she was once, if not Christian, Catholic, she sought the appropriate channel to unburden herself of it (also to unburden the angel of theatricals).

But the Catholic priest, when approached, said that this was the fruit of the nonsense of superstition.

(And she once wrote, '*How our lives bow to rhyme,*' believing her own life was lived according to the links in the

language used to describe it; and everything is linked, there is nothing that is not linked. And what if this rhyme happened to be a nonsense rhyme? What of that?)

And she had thought it was her very upbringing in the Catholic Church taught her there is no difference between sense and nonsense, between fact and fiction, that everything is the same; the inside of the head is the same as the outside. And that was something to be thankful for, for the small mercy of never doubting, to have never had The Doubt when it came to these matters of what is matter and what is not; that word and flesh, body and soul, are all towards the same point (angels dancing upon it). And the priest was the last person she thought would leave her dangling with this angel, its heaviness and the levity of its gaze towards Heaven.

But she is left with the angel (stone). Like a thought she once thought, it cannot be destroyed.

(A film, light from a flat surface, fills their bodies)

She went to a film, *Wings of Desire*, and it was a miracle in the tradition of Lourdes, Fatima, Garabandal. In the foyer three people came up to her and said, 'I just saw him,' as if he were an apparition (I *saw* him!), warning her in case she too should see and be knocked flat to the floor with the power of such a vision. And she had known anyway that he was there because she knows these things, and also she had seen his sister of the religious order in the service of this particular Church. And all through the film, embodied by this film, she felt the presence of angels.

And in the film an angel, invisible to humans, comes down from Heaven in the body of a man in a great coat, and he walks about Berlin helping people in need and others about to pass from this world to the next; a guardian angel, but touching none of it and touched by none of it. And this angel, he falls in love with a woman, a trapeze artist, the wearer of wings, and

because of this love he wants to become human. But perhaps the desire to become human was there before the woman, and it was the woman who walked into this desire.

And she once said to him, the reason they were there, together, was the propagation of the species, and the propagation of the species is why people fall in love. (She once met a woman, a banker from Iraq, who every time she said 'lot of', it came out sounding like 'love'. For instance she would say, 'There are a love people out of work in this country.' She had come to New Zealand wanting to acquire another citizenship, to turn this country she had never before set foot in, into the country of her birth. She said an Iraqi passport was useless; that everywhere you go, they ask you questions. Already, after fourteen months, she spoke like a New Zealander of the turmoil the country was in, and she was fast acquiring a New Zealand accent to go with her promised passport – apart from the words 'lot of', which she had entirely misconstrued.)

But what of the propagation of angels, and of the faith, and of the screenings of films?

He sent her a card, a little later, on her birthday and they talked on the phone and got very upset, she first, covering him with a veil of tears. And the card said he had thought of her watching that film with him; he was once an angel, and had become human.

But for her it had been the other way round, almost; that before she was human, had made herself become human, the propagation of the species, etcetera; and with him, she became infused with the language angels use, which is singing, and the billowing of a wing.

And the point where they passed each other is where so many angels dance.

(Guardian angels and newspapers blow about the streets)

A high wind on the morning a photographer photographing

writers came to the flat, blew outside their heads and inside their heads, causing a theatre of the flurry of tempers.

The photographer was looking for the person who took it into their head to write once, and he thought the camera would tell him, because the camera has no perspective on sense and nonsense. And perhaps it was the woman and perhaps it was not. And in the case of the latter, the way the photographs came out was understandable because they did not look like her – either that, or her appearance set off in another direction immediately they had been taken (*taken*). He had taken her former appearance away.

And just before his arrival, the photographer's, she had had a fight with the angel (a man), because of the wind, for no other reason. And they made it up, inventing a reason for the argument after the event (and it was always worth the trouble (of the argument) for the way their heads, afterwards, formed the intersecting subsets of breaths), while the photographer who was about to detect her unpacked his camera in the other room watched by the angel (stone); an eye observing an eye, and all ears for what was going on in the kitchen, especially the angel's ears, although angels do not hear (as she was taught), they only sing. But perhaps this angel (stone) sang in order to hear.

And because of what had happened, because of the wind, she couldn't keep her eyes off him (the laying on of eyes), and when the photographer photographed her, it was as if the camera received the image of a woman receiving the image of an angel (or was it the camera divining the writer through the woman, a forked rod?). And eventually the photographer said to the angel (a man), 'Go and sit on a rock and look out to sea.'

Which he did – sucked out the door first of all by the Mistral in the yard. And he looked all the way down to the South Island, not seeing, perhaps, but singing as is the wont of angels.

And the photographer and the woman were left alone in

the flat with the stone angel. And the photographer took 97 photographs, thereabouts, of the woman, some of them with the angel, and in these ones – in the presence of the angel, or of a tip of its wing – she did not look herself. And people said to her later, ‘That is never you!’ (And it never will be now, no matter how long she waits.) And she was pleased that it was some other woman who was photographed in the presence of the angel (stone).

And months later when a photograph of this other woman happened to appear in a newspaper together with the angel, her friend the filmmaker (a filmmaker, not the maker of the film *Wings of Desire*, although perhaps it was; that there was one person once who had the idea of putting images on celluloid and filling a room with them, and they did it, and it is done) wrote to her (he was going to Italy, the *whenua pai* of angels), and he said, ‘Your *angel* looks pretty real.’ (Her italics)

(Cherubim and seraphim and the dull little lives of the heads of pins)

After the Catholic priest, still she must relieve herself of the angel (stone). But was there any higher authority?

A man she knew, of Devonport, who had just won \$US6,500 for the drafting of a script (first draft, second draft, etcetera), obviously knew something of the drafting of patterns to be pinned, cut, and then cast, as in metal, by the blackness and light of thousands of angels.

Also, the woman who was in the flat the night the lights started to alight, she told her of a woman she knew, a woman of the spirit, who once propelled a poltergeist from her house (or was it sucked out by the sudden absence of ghosts, by comparison, outside?).

The woman of the spirit, on first hearing of this angel, the circumstances of the possession of it, or of its possession (and possession is nine-tenths of the law), said, Yes, it must go back

where it came from. And she told the woman to cover it in the meantime, while it was still in the flat.

And draped in a cloth it is suddenly human.

And the scriptwriter (who also is awarded \$40,000 a year to discover mistakes in the *Herald*, running after its loose pages as they blow about the street, crying, 'Here's one! Here's one! I found it!'), he helps her to walk the angel up the steps and into the boot of her car, and at this he proves very good, having a two-year-old daughter. And when he tries to get the angel to say 'Daddy', and it will not, he says, 'Why can't you fly, damn you?' The spirit is given limbs if it will not use its wings. (And after all, they have both of them written for a flat surface to come out and engulf people.)

And they prepare to take the angel (stone) to the Devonport Cemetery, which is where it came from according to the recluse in the Waitakeres (once she had taken the angel he wanted nothing more to do with her, with anyone, for a long time, but he wrote, 'Please, Anne, don't put her back in the mud!' And all along she had thought it was a boy.) And the woman of the ghosts, and the woman from the little house way back at the beginning, also the woman of the spirit and the man of the scripts – all said they would come on this pilgrimage of the delivery of angels.

But on the appointed day, first of all the woman of the ghosts rings and says she cannot face it. And then the woman of the angel itself, her back half-turned, finds she cannot face it either. Something has happened, another catastrophe, but this time, nothing to do with anything – at least, not with the physical, the flesh, or of the moment. Something past, or imagined; or perhaps it is the realest thing, the presence and absence of angels. And she rings the woman of the spirit, and the woman of the spirit is obviously relieved that there is to be no removal of angels today, because she has a migraine.

(A dancer she knew once and meets again quite by chance

in the Lizard Lounge, opens a green literary magazine lying between them on the table (in front of its editor who also sits there, an entrepreneur of the greenness of lizards and of the moss growing on the wings of angels) and reads about Hildegard, the visionary, something the woman has written, or the writer wrote once, and he says he knows of a theory that visionaries were also migraine sufferers, the vision the meeting place of pain and enlightenment. And he says that he, also, is obsessed with angels, but it is not a problem, it is a delight.)

And because the angel is not to be moved that day, it spends the night in the boot of the red car parked outside the house of a friend where the woman also sleeps. And in the morning they look to see if the car is still there, if it is intact, if it is still red. And it is all these things, and it is a miracle.

The next day the scriptwriter from Devonport rings her to arrange, once more, for the disposal of the angel (stone), but her phone seems to be out of order; it is engaged for a long time. And it is perhaps a matter for faults that she is talking to the other angel, the one clothed in human flesh. And it is another last conversation they will ever have.

And the angel does not get put back in the cemetery that day, and that night, the scriptwriter decides he would like it in his garden; that he wants it. The woman advises him not to, that it is dangerous for humans to get mixed up with angels. But he wants it more than anything. He is quite determined to have it, and in the end the woman agrees to let him have it, because there is something in the urgency of his desire for the angel that reminds her of herself, and she could not deny herself an angel.

And because the woman is about to go away for a fortnight and there is no time to move the angel to Devonport, it is loaded, temporarily, into the car of the woman she is lending her car to; moved from the roadworthy car into the car that

has no registration, that theoretically does not exist. And there is a moment of intimacy between these cars, back to back, and their exchange of an angel.

And the story of this angel is becoming so enormous that the woman wonders if it will ever come to an end. She has already written thus far – the writing of angels as she said she would do – before she knows the outcome. She is waiting for something that will be written to happen, although it has not always been this way – she has written of things not knowing they would happen and they happened. And she has written of things not knowing they were there and they were there all along; and that is perhaps where writers meet, and are one writer.

When she gets back to Auckland, they load the angel (stone) into the boot of the scriptwriter's car and he drives slowly over the bridge to Devonport, dragging the mass of the dancing upon pins. As she watches the angel go, she catches her breath.

And now she has no angels in her possession.

(A lateral thinker, the span of his wings)

(The Angelus rung at six and twelve and at six and twelve)

As a child she was sometimes disturbed in her sleep by the ringing of bells by the sisters of the Home of Compassion (*'The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary . . .'*); not often, but according to the way the wind blew, which everything was dependent on. And in the morning she would ask, 'Did you all hear the bells?' but no one else would have heard. Only the child of six heard them plainly. And at twelve they were dimmer, and at eighteen they were dimmer still, and at twenty-four, when she had gone, the bells, also, had gone.

On the subject of the lights chiming in the middle of her sleep according to some authority other than the national grid: this is nothing – nothing, light, the absence of it – compared to the real comings and goings of an angel.

And whereas there was once a queue of people waiting to move into her flat, should it be vacated – camping just outside in order to be first in the doors at a fire sale – now that it is to become empty, the woman first in line (the same woman who once screamed at the fickleness of the lights) her nose pressed against the glass, clasping her rug and her thermos of tea and her purse, and her picture appearing on the front page of the *Herald*, has decided not to move in because of *what has gone on here*.

What has gone on in this flat! The woman is amused; she finds this amusing. Also a little disturbing, like the massed choirs of mosquitoes, of sleep; that she and her past have now acquired the quality of the unknown quantity of ghosts. And when the woman next in the queue, due to move in, decides not to at the last minute, the fingers of the woman vacating slip from their grasp on the dwelling-place of angels.

And the next time she sees him is at the very moment of the blessing of the Holy Ghost to begin Midnight Mass – the meeting quite by chance, apart from they have perhaps both come to church with the express purpose of beholding a vision. And for a moment she believes she is looking into her own eyes. And they do not attend Mass, they leave Mass immediately, without thought, pushing their way through the crowd in the foyer, and instead they talk, bringing all the Weight of their past to bear on these small hours.

And among it all, among this talk parked in a red car at night, he tells her that the woman he once drove in this car and who now drives him in her car (green) (knowing nothing of mechanics for so long, apart from how they get you from A to Z, he is now an expert on the A to B of the car (red) and the car (green)) – her *sister* has moved into the flat. (*Her sister*.) And she says, ‘I wish you hadn’t told me that,’ and he says he visited once but cannot visit any more, the flat where an angel (stone) once resided.

(Angels, archangels and the Angel Gabriel)

Like the Angelus, she rings, every six hours, a publisher (he is difficult to get hold of apart from over lunch in the Lizard

Lounge while the angel (stone) reclined in the boot of a carbody without soul). When she finally gets through she asks him if he can retrieve the photograph of the angel (stone) and a strange woman on the particular day when the wind blew. This photograph has been replicated and sent to newspapers, and she is worried about bad luck.

And he did get it back, but he did not.

She was once infatuated with him, with the publisher, from a place where angels are, only he was not an angel, and she wanted an angel. And she had one – two; also the impossibility of the two angels co-existing, the angel (a man) and the angel (stone). The publisher tells her he is about to get married. He is marrying a human.

And the angel she loved – *loved* – he also now is human. And the woman is now human. All are human. It is far too late in their lives for the matinees of angels. They are done with angels, and this is the last word she will ever write on the subject of angels.