

This role pleased me indeed. I was presumptuous enough to think that this was how my life was meant to be, that it had in some way been inevitable that I should end up rubbing shoulders with the truly wealthy in such exalted settings. Erica vouched for my worthiness; my way of carrying myself—I flattered myself to believe—suggested the impeccability of my breeding; and, for those who inquired further, my Princeton degree and Underwood Samson business card were invariably sufficient to earn me a respectful nod of approval.

Looking back now, I see there was a certain symmetry to the situation: I felt I was entering in New York the very same social class that my family was falling out of in Lahore. Perhaps this accounted for a good part of the comfort and satisfaction I found in my new environment. But an even greater part of my happiness in those days was due to being in the regular company of Erica. I could, without exaggeration, watch her for hours. The pride of her stance, the slender muscularity of her arms and shoulders, the failure of her garments to cloak the memory of those naked breasts I had seen in Greece: all these things filled me with desire.