

from The Augustine Notebooks

OCTOBER 11

"No way, sugar," she said, looking at him steadily. "No way at all. Not on your life."

He shrugged. He sipped from the glass of lemon-fix without looking at her.

"You must be crazy, it's true." She looked around at the other tables. It was ten o'clock in the morning and, at this time of year, there were not many tourists left on the island. Most of the tables in the courtyard were empty and on some of the tables waiters had stacked chairs.

"Are you crazy? Is it really true, then?"

"Forget it," he said. "Let it alone."

A peacock had wandered in from the marketplace which was next to the nearly empty courtyard where they sat at their table drinking the lemon-fixes. The peacock stopped at a spigot near the edge of the courtyard and held its beak under the dripping tap. As it drank, its throat rippled up and down. Then the peacock walked slowly around some empty tables and headed in their direction. Halprin threw a wafer onto the flagstones. The bird picked it to bits there on the flagstones and ate the pieces without once looking up at them.

"You remind me of that peacock," he said.

She stood up and said, "I think you might just as well stay here. I think you've had it anyway. I think you've lost your mind. Why don't you just kill yourself and get it over with?" She waited a minute longer, holding her purse, and then she walked away between the empty tables.

