and I did it.

If I wanted to work a problem all day long, I did it.

If I wanted to look for information — secrets, complex and tantalizing messages — I could find them all around me: in the air. In a pile of fallen leaves some neighbor raked together. In box scores in the paper, written in the steam coming up off a cup of coffee. The whole world was talking to me.

If I just wanted to close my eyes, sit quietly on the porch and listen for the messages, I did that.

It was wonderful. *(Beat.)*

CATHERINE. How old were you? When it started.

ROBERT. Mid-twenties. Twenty-three, four. *(Beat.)*

Is that what you're worried about?

CATHERINE. I've thought about it.

ROBERT. Just getting a year older means nothing, Catherine.

CATHERINE. It's not just getting older.

ROBERT. It's me. *(Beat.)*

CATHERINE. I've thought about it.

ROBERT. Really?

CATHERINE. How could I not?

ROBERT. Well if that's why you're worried you're not keeping up with the medical literature. There are all kinds of factors. It's not simply something you inherit. Just because I went bughouse doesn't mean you will.

CATHERINE. Dad...

ROBERT. Listen to me. Life changes fast in your early twenties and it shakes you up. You're feeling down. It's been a bad week. You've had a lousy couple years, no one knows that better than me. But you're gonna be okay.

CATHERINE. Yeah?

ROBERT. Yes. I promise you. Push yourself. Don't read so many magazines. Sit down and get the machinery going and I swear to God you'll feel fine. The simple fact that we can talk about this together is a good sign.

CATHERINE. A good sign?

ROBERT. Yes!

CATHERINE. How could it be a good sign?

ROBERT. Because! Crazy people don't sit around wondering if

they're nuts.

CATHERINE. They don't?

ROBERT. Of course not. They've got better things to do. Take it from me. A very good sign that you're crazy is an inability to ask the question, "Am I crazy?"

CATHERINE. Even if the answer is yes?

ROBERT. Crazy people don't ask. You see?

CATHERINE. Yes.

ROBERT. So if you're asking ...

CATHERINE. I'm not.

ROBERT. But if you were, it would be a very good sign.

CATHERINE. A good sign ...

ROBERT. A good sign that you're fine.

CATHERINE. Right.

ROBERT. You see? You've just gotta think these things through. Now come on, what do you say? Let's call it a night, you go up, get some sleep, and then in the morning you can —

CATHERINE. Wait. No.

ROBERT. What's the matter?

CATHERINE. It doesn't work.

ROBERT. Why not?

CATHERINE. It doesn't make sense.

ROBERT. Sure it does.

CATHERINE. No.

ROBERT. Where's the problem?

CATHERINE. The problem is you are crazy!

ROBERT. What difference does that make?

CATHERINE. You admitted — You just told me that you are.

ROBERT. So?

CATHERINE. You said a crazy person would never admit that.

ROBERT. Yeah, but it's ... oh. I see.

CATHERINE. So?

ROBERT. It's a point.

CATHERINE. So how can you admit it?

ROBERT. Well. Because I'm also dead. *(Beat.)* Aren't I?

CATHERINE. You died a week ago.

ROBERT. Heart failure. Quick. The funeral's tomorrow.

CATHERINE. That's why Claire's flying in from New York.

ROBERT. Yes.
CATHERINE. You're sitting here. You're giving me advice. You brought me champagne.
ROBERT. Yes. *(Beat.)*
CATHERINE. Which means …
ROBERT. For you?
CATHERINE. Yes.
ROBERT. For you, Catherine, my daughter, who I love very much … It could be a bad sign. *(They sit together for a moment. Noise off. Hal enters, twenty-eight, semi-hip clothes. He carries a backpack and a jacket, folded. He lets the door go and it bangs shut. Catherine sits up with a jolt.)*
CATHERINE. What?
HAL. Oh, God, sorry — Did I wake you?
CATHERINE. What?
HAL. Were you asleep? *(Beat. Robert is gone.)*
CATHERINE. You scared me, for Chrissake. What are you doing?
HAL. I'm sorry. I didn't realize it had gotten so late. I'm done for the night.
CATHERINE. Good.
HAL. Drinking alone? *(She realizes she is holding the champagne bottle. She puts it down quickly.)*
CATHERINE. Yes.
HAL. Champagne, huh?
CATHERINE. Yes.
HAL. Celebrating?
CATHERINE. No. I just like champagne.
HAL. It's festive.
CATHERINE. What?
HAL. Festive. *(He makes an awkward "party" gesture.)*
CATHERINE. Do you want some?
HAL. Sure.
CATHERINE. *(Gives him the bottle.)* I'm done. You can take the rest with you.
HAL. Oh. No thanks.
CATHERINE. Take it, I'm done.
HAL. No, I shouldn't. I'm driving. *(Beat.)*