



affecting the pose of East coast collegians  
in button-down Oxfords, insignia-ed blazers, tweeds, khakis, jeans,

penny-loafers  
without socks was, of course, *de rigueur*.

fascinated with re-establishing traditions<sup>4</sup>, the selection of mascots<sup>5</sup>

an undefeated gridiron squad diverted  
suspicions that an epidemic of intestinal infection could be



others eagerly moving off  
to apartment or house  
curfews and restrictions falling away

many drawn further into the fraternity clans  
many steadfast independent

half pre-med,  
the other half pre-law,  
or so it seemed

some seriously drawn into their courses  
the readings, the labs, the classes  
the competitions academic  
others not

the social  
the not so social

those who made pilgrimages nearly every weekend  
for the company of a steady girlfriend back home or another school  
others staying put so to attend to their studies  
or so their story went

but, all still quite self-absorbed, that is now clear.

No one of us can say what caused that all to change  
with any precision

but by our last year, that there was a change  
is beyond question

in the times

in us.

Was it a realization, slowing growing

As graduation approached, anxieties were rising

soon to be deemed the Tet<sup>20</sup>

200,000 more troops to be drafted  
threatened our President

frantic searches began for a place to be hiding.<sup>21</sup>

from the flames  
of our cities burning  
as King was shot down<sup>22</sup>

we could no longer escape

as the Blacks began raging.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>

Vietnamese (North and South) casualties (military and civilian) were estimated at 1.5 million.

<sup>21</sup> By the time of our graduation, alternatives to active military service were limited to enlistment in a -graduate student deferments for those going on to medical, law or graduate schools, service deferments for Peace Corps or VISTA volunteers, draft exemptions for conscientious objectors, or asylum as an émigré to a foreign (like Canada). By 1969, a lottery system was instituted by the Selective Service System, and most deferments and exemptions were eliminated.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in April 1968.

<sup>23</sup>

to keep any semblance of your system alive; if you desire to have a nation called the United States. For after those few hours the ends of the earth shall come together around your throats and you shall be totally destroyed. No longer do we say to ourse

-- Statement by the Afro-American Society delivered at the memorial service for Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 5, 1968 in Hartman Oval..

Boys turned to men

as we filed up to the block

for a handshake and grin.

So now we return, after 40 years, almost to the day<sup>24</sup>

to be in the place  
where our lives took a turn  
from comfortable complacency  
to unsettling concern

to revel in memories  
of a time now past  
of rare and deep friendships

to reflect on our lives  
the chances passed  
or taken

the choices made.

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<sup>24</sup> On Sunday, June 9, 1  
commencement) began at 9:45 a.m.