

# **A FIELD GUIDE TO LOST THINGS**



**PETER JAEGER**

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***if p then q classics***

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*With a passion unknown to any writer before him, Proust took as his subject the fidelity of things that have crossed our path in life. Fidelity to an afternoon, to a tree, a spot of sun on the carpet . . .*

Walter Benjamin

*Upon the sort of screen, patterned with different states and impressions, which my consciousness would quietly unfold while I was reading, and which ranged from the most deeply hidden aspirations of my heart to the wholly external view of the horizon spread out before my eyes at the foot of the garden, what was from the first the most permanent and the most intimate part of me, the lever whose incessant movements controlled all the rest, was my belief in the philosophic richness and beauty of the book I was reading, and my desire to appropriate these to myself, whatever the book might be.*

Marcel Proust





**Acacias** I walked towards the *Allée des Acacias*. On certain days when I had missed her in the *Allée des Acacias* I would be so fortunate as to meet her in the *Allée de la Reine Marguerite*, where women went who wished to be alone, or to appear to be wishing to be alone.

**Afternoon Sky** Sometimes in the afternoon sky a white moon would creep up like a little cloud, furtive, without display.

**Agate Marble** I kissed the agate marble, which was the better part of my love's heart, the part that was not frivolous but faithful. I read over again a page which, although it had not been written to me by Gilberte, came to me, none the less, from her, that page by Bergotte upon the beauty of the old myths from which Racine drew his inspiration, which (with the agate marble) I always kept within reach.

**Air** Her hand, at the same time, sketched in the air an indelicate gesture. "Now,

don't stay here all day; you can go up to your room if you are too hot outside, but get a little fresh air first; don't start reading immediately after your food." The fresh air made one hungry. Then after patterning everywhere the violet velvet of the evening air, abruptly soothed, they would return and be absorbed in the tower. "You'll come away more 'up in the air' than I am!"

**All Manner of Birds** All the hats now were immense; covered with fruits and flowers and all manner of birds.

**Almonds** I felt suddenly, as I rose again, a bitter-sweet fragrance of almonds steal towards me from the hawthorn-blossom. I imagined that this fragrance must lie concealed, as the taste of an almond cake lay in the burned parts, or the sweetness of Mlle. Vinteuil's cheeks beneath their freckles.

**American Eye** "Upon my word and soul, you can see at a glance she's got the

American eye, that girl has.”

**Ampelopsis** Elsewhere, again, might be seen the first awakening of this Maytime of the leaves, and those of an ampelopsis, a smiling miracle, like a red hawthorn flowering in winter, had that very morning all ‘come out,’ so to speak, in blossom.

**Ancient Trees** I aspired already to be an author, and truly nothing can be finer, sweeter, more refreshing for a writer than the sight of this sombre mass of foliage formed by the ancient trees of the garden.

**Animal** But all the things in life that have once existed tend to recur, and, like a dying animal that is once more stirred by the throes of a convulsion which was, apparently, ended, upon Swann’s heart, spared for a moment only, the same agony returned of its own accord to trace the same cross again. He knew that this thought had jumped in after him and had settled down upon his knee, like a pet animal which he might

take everywhere. It’s a most engaging animal. It’s not often you see an animal so well-behaved at that age. The very words which the last convulsions of an inoffensive animal in its death agony wring from the peasant who is engaged in taking its life.

**Animal’s Consciousness**

I had only the most rudimentary sense of existence, such as may lurk and flicker in the depths of an animal’s consciousness.

**Animals** He now noticed, for the first time, roused by the unexpected arrival of so belated a guest, the scattered pack of splendid effortless animals.

**Ankle** Ah! if he could only manage to prevent it, if she could sprain her ankle before starting, if the driver of the carriage which was to take her to the station would consent (no matter how great the bribe) to smuggle her to some place where she could be kept for a time in seclusion, that perfidious woman.

**Ant Hill** Words present to us little pictures of things, lucid and normal, like the pictures that are hung on the walls of schoolrooms to give children an illustration of what is meant by a carpenter's bench, a bird, an ant hill.

**Apple Trees** It was while going the 'Méséglise way' that I first noticed the circular shadow which apple trees cast upon the sunlit ground, and also those impalpable threads of golden silk which the setting sun weaves slantingly downwards from beneath their leaves.

**Apricots** Apricots, because they were still hard to get.

**Aquatic Gardening** But farther on the current slackened, where the stream ran through a property thrown open to the public by its owner, who had made a hobby of aquatic gardening.

**Arm** I touch your arm. It's often quite boring enough to have to give a dinner-party, but if one had to offer one's

arm to Spartacus, to let him take one down! Mamma pinched my arm sharply and said in a loud voice: "Good morning, Françoise." M. Swann seized my grandfather by the arm and cried, "Oh, my dear old friend, how fortunate we are to be walking here together on such a charming day!" When he proposed to take leave of Odette, and to return home, she begged him to stay a little longer, and even detained him forcibly, seizing him by the arm as he was opening the door to go.

**Arms** Custom came to take me in her arms, carried me all the way up to my bed, and laid me down there like a little child. "Elevated...to the height of an Institute!" interrupted Cottard, raising his arms with mock solemnity. How readily would I have sacrificed them all, just to be able to cry, all night long, in the arms of Mamma! I would fall into the arms of my mother. In my new-found confidence and joy I wept upon his printed page, as in the arms of a long-lost

father. "Most fortunate for France!" he recited wickedly, shooting up both arms with great vigour. She had entered the room with her arms pressed close to her sides, even when there was no crowd to be squeezed through. She might perhaps be seized by the whim (which, it was possible, had never yet seized her) of falling into the arms of Forcheville. She would jump in beside him, and hold him in her arms until the carriage drew up at the Verdurins'. She would procure an invitation for him also, and to lull to rest in her arms the anguish that still tormented him. Yet he would have wished to live until the time came when he no longer loved her, when she would have no reason for lying to him, when at length he might learn from her whether, on the day when he had gone to see her in the afternoon, she had or had not been in the arms of Forcheville.

**Asparagus** "Françoise, if you had come in five minutes ago, you would have seen Mme. Imbert go

past with some asparagus twice the size of what mother Callot has." "It's a regular disease of asparagus you have got this year: you will make our Parisians sick of it." "I've still to dress the asparagus." Many years later we discovered that, if we had been fed on asparagus day after day throughout that whole season, it was because the smell of the plants gave the poor kitchen-maid, who had to prepare them, such violent attacks of asthma that she was finally obliged to leave my aunt's service. The light crowns of azure which capped the asparagus shoots above their pink jackets would be finely and separately outlined, star by star, as in Giotto's fresco are the flowers banded about the brows. What fascinated me would be the asparagus, tinged with ultramarine and rosy pink which ran from their heads, finely stippled in mauve and azure, through a series of imperceptible changes to their white feet, still stained a little by the soil of their garden bed: a rainbow-loveliness that was not of

this world. "What, Françoise, more asparagus!" "You know quite well that he can never grow anything but wretched little twigs of asparagus, not asparagus at all."

**Astral Body** It was now an astral body.

**Atmosphere** And yet he was inclined to suspect that the state for which he so much longed was a calm, a peace, which would not have created an atmosphere favourable to his love. What agony he suffered as he watched that light, in whose golden atmosphere were moving, behind the closed sash, the unseen and detested pair.

### **Atmospheric**

**Disturbances** "I never allow myself to be influenced in the smallest degree either by atmospheric disturbances or by the arbitrary divisions of what is known as Time."

### **Atmospheric Variation**

Thus it came about that a mere atmospheric variation would be sufficient to

provoke in me that modulation, without there being any need for me to await the return of a season.

**Atom** I could not discover in them one atom of pleasure.

**Autumn** I formed the habit of going out by myself on such days, and walking towards Méséglise-la-Vineuse, during that autumn when we had to come to Combray to settle the division of my aunt Léonie's estate. My sense of exaltation was due not only to admiration of the autumn tints but to a bodily desire. My walks, that autumn, were all the more delightful because I used to take them after long hours spent over a book. The beauty for which the firs and acacias of the Bois de Boulogne made me long, more disquieting in that respect than the chestnuts and lilacs of Trianon which I was going to see, was not fixed somewhere outside myself in the relics of an historical period, in works of art, in a little temple of love at whose door was piled an oblation

of autumn leaves ribbed with gold. We used to see passing up and down, obliquely raised towards the heavens, her handsome face with its brown and wrinkled cheeks, which with age had acquired almost the purple hue of tilled fields in autumn. When in Paris, if we stay indoors, being so near and yet prevented from witnessing the transformation scene of autumn, which is drawing so rapidly to a close without our assistance, we feel a regret for the fallen leaves that becomes a fever, and may even keep us awake at night.

**Avalanche** An avalanche of miseries and maladies coming, one after another, without interruption into the bosom of a family, will not make it lose faith in either the clemency of its God or the capacity of its physician.

**Balzacian Flora** Come with the primrose, with the canon's beard, with the gold-cup; come with the stone-crop, whereof are posies made, pledges of

love, in the Balzacian flora, come with that flower of the Resurrection morning, the Easter daisy, come with the snowballs of the guelder-rose, which begin to embalm with their fragrance the alleys of your great-aunt's garden ere the last snows of Lent are melted from its soil.

**Banks** We met him strolling on the banks.

**Beach** My grandmother, who held that, when one went to the seaside, one ought to be on the beach from morning to night, to taste the salt breezes, and that one should not know anyone in the place, because calls and parties and excursions were so much time stolen from what belonged, by rights, to the sea air.

**Beak** Its beak, as it disappeared below the rim, conferred the part.

**Bear** I did not understand very clearly why, in order to refrain from going to the houses of people whom one did not know, it should be

necessary to cling to one's independence, nor how that could give one the appearance of a savage or a bear. I make myself seem ill-bred, uncivilized, an old bear.

**Beard** "When his beard comes he'll be Mahomet himself."

**Beast of the Field** "He regards, or so they tell me, its author, one Bergotte, Esquire, as a subtle scribe, more subtle, indeed, than any beast of the field."

**Beautiful Features**  
Certainly my mother's beautiful features seemed to shine again with youth that evening, as she sat gently holding my hands and trying to check my tears.

**Belly** And even in the case of the poor kitchen-maid, was not our attention incessantly drawn to her belly by the load which filled it?

**Bird** At first the piano complained alone, like a bird deserted by its mate; the violin heard and

answered it, as from a neighbouring tree. I could hear the whistling of trains, which, now nearer and now farther off, punctuating the distance like the note of a bird in a forest. Mme. Verdurin, perched on her high seat like a cage-bird whose biscuit has been steeped in mulled wine, would sit aloft and sob with fellow-feeling. Offering to the bird in abundance the fruit or grain at which it appeared to be pecking. Was it a bird, was it the soul, not yet made perfect, of the little phrase, was it a fairy, invisibly somewhere lamenting, whose plaint the piano heard and tenderly repeated? You may see a bird flying across the pink; it draws near the border-line, touches it, enters and is lost upon the black.

**Bird-Like Eyes** She would utter a shrill cry, shut tight her little bird-like eyes, which were beginning to be clouded over by a cataract, and quickly, as though she had only just time to avoid some indecent sight or to parry a mortal blow, burying her face in her

hands, which completely engulfed it, and prevented her from seeing anything at all, she would appear to be struggling to suppress, to eradicate a laugh which, were she to give way to it, must inevitably leave her inanimate.

**Birds** I would contrive, with the infinite patience of birds building their nests. Its drops, like migrating birds which fly off in a body at a given moment, would come down out of the sky in close marching order. Swann watched them as they listened to the pianoforte intermezzo (Liszt's 'Saint Francis preaching to the birds') which came after the flute, and followed the virtuoso in his dizzy flight. The cries of the birds wheeling to and fro about it seemed to intensify its silence, to elongate its spire still further, and to invest it with some quality beyond the power of words. The three steeples were always a long way ahead of us, like three birds perched upon the plain, motionless and conspicuous in the sunlight.

**Black Cloud** Just look at that black cloud behind the steeple, and how poor the light is on the slates, you may be certain it will rain before the day is out.

**Black Eyes** Her black eyes gleamed.

**Black Night** What little daylight yet remained was failing, and it seemed as though a black night was immediately to fall on them.

**Black Sun** I saw these, in the hot light of a summer morning, blaze like a black sun.

**Blemish** She should incline towards me that face on which there was, beneath her eye, something that was, it appears, a blemish, and which I loved as much as all the rest.

**Block of Ice** A single word from Odette sufficed to penetrate through all Swann's defences, and like a block of ice immobilized it, congealed its fluidity, made it freeze altogether.

**Blood** By keeping the blood



there in circulation it would make less frequent the chokings and other pains to which she was liable.

**Bloom** “Besides, she doesn’t care for him in that way, she says; it’s an ideal love, ‘Platonic,’ you know; she’s afraid of rubbing the bloom off—oh, I don’t know half the things she says, how should I?”

**Blossom** For a long time afterwards it was not against a wall gay with spikes of purple blossom, but on a wholly different background, the porch of a gothic cathedral, that I would see outlined the figure of one of the women of whom I dreamed. In that moist and gentle atmosphere these heavenly flower-beds will break into blossom, in a few moments, in the evenings, incomparably lovely, and often lasting for hours before they fade.

**Blue Eyes** “I’ll leave you in peace now, I know when I’m not wanted,” she ended discreetly, and left Swann with the girl who had the

blue eyes.

**Blue Moustache** “I can quite see the good points there are in his portrait of my husband; oh, dear me, yes; and it’s certainly less odd than most of what he does, but even then he had to give the poor man a blue moustache!”

**Blue Sky** “May you always see a blue sky overhead, my young friend; and then, even when the time comes, which is coming now for me, when the woods are all black, when night is fast falling, you will be able to console yourself, as I am doing, by looking up to the sky.”

**Body** Already it had passed into his soul, already the little phrase which it evoked shook like a medium’s the body of the violinist. Françoise never went out of her room for an instant, never took off her clothes, allowed no one else to do anything for my aunt, and did not leave her body until it was actually in its grave. He had intended to leave time for her mind to

overtake her body's movements. He should not be present when the body was laid in its coffin. He slipped his arm round her shoulder, supporting her body against his own. Her frail and disordered body was still able to endure. If from those dreams the memory of her could no longer be eliminated, then her bodily imperfections would no longer be of the least importance, nor would the conformity of her body, more or less than any other, to the requirements of Swann's taste; since, having become the body of her whom he loved, it must henceforth be the only one capable of causing him joy or anguish. Like a solid body surprised at some unknown point in its revolution. Like the idealist philosopher whose body takes account of the external world in the reality of which his intellect declines to believe, the same self which had made me salute her before I had identified her now urged me to catch the ball that she tossed to me. Mlle. Vinteuil greeted her without rising, clasping her hands behind

her head, and drew her body to one side of the sofa. Mme. Verdurin's whole body stiffened. My body had turned about for the last time. My body lay stretched out in bed, my eyes staring upwards, my ears straining, my nostrils sniffing uneasily, and my heart beating. My body, conscious that its own warmth was permeating hers, would strive to become one with her, and I would awake. My body, still too heavy with sleep to move, would make an effort to construe the form which its tiredness took as an orientation of its various members, so as to induce from that where the wall lay and the furniture stood, to piece together and to give a name to the house in which it must be living. My body, the side upon which I was lying, loyally preserving from the past an impression which my mind should never have forgotten. My cheek was still warm with her kiss, my body bent beneath the weight of hers. No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my

whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. "Oh, you do make me so miserable," she cried, with a jerk of her body as though to shake herself free of the constraint of his question. She was screened from me by the stooping body of her friend. Some tiny trace of contrariety in his mind, or of weakness in his body—by inciting him to regard the present as an exceptional moment, one not to be governed by the rules, one in which prudence itself would allow him to take advantage of the soothing effects of a pleasure. The attraction which her body held for him had aroused a painful longing to secure the absolute mastery of even the tiniest particles of her heart. The body of Golo himself, being of the same supernatural substance as his steed's, overcame all material obstacles. The constant iteration had gradually remoulded her body. The figure of this girl had been enlarged by the additional symbol which she carried in her body. The

quick relief of its slender, allegorical body. The stiffened side underneath my body would, for instance, in trying to fix its position, imagine itself to be lying, face to the wall, in a big bed with a canopy.

**Bois** A month after the evening on which he had intercepted and read Odette's letter to Forcheville, Swann went to a dinner which the Verdurins were giving in the Bois. After dinner, if he had an early appointment in the Bois or at Saint-Cloud, he would rise from table and leave the house so abruptly—especially if it threatened to rain, and so to scatter the 'faithful' before their normal time. Gone to dine upon the Island in the Bois. He had long since emerged from the paths and avenues of the Bois, he had almost reached his own house, and still, for he had not yet thrown off the intoxication of grief, or his whim of insincerity, but was ever more and more exhilarated by the false intonation, the artificial sonority of his own voice, he

continued to perorate aloud in the silence of the night. He hoped that, some day, he might be able to hear the Island in the Bois, or the Princesse des Laumes mentioned without feeling any twinge of that old rending pain. He preferred to walk, and it was on foot, through the Bois, that he came home. He would imagine that Odette was Forcheville's mistress, and that, when they had both sat watching him from the depths of the Verdurins' landau, in the Bois, on the evening before the party at Chatou to which he had not been invited. I could feel that the Bois was not really a wood, that it existed for a purpose alien to the life of its trees. I had risen and left the house to go to Trianon, passing through the Bois de Boulogne. I think it was in the Bois, one evening when you came to meet us on the Island. I would guide Françoise in the direction of the Bois de Boulogne. If, when Odette wished to go for a walk, in the morning, along the Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne, his duty as a good husband had obliged

him, though he had no desire to go out, to accompany her, carrying her cloak when she was too warm. In the evening, when he did not stay at home until it was time to meet Odette at the Verdurins', or rather at one of the open-air restaurants which they liked to frequent in the Bois and especially at Saint-Cloud, he would go to dine in one of those fashionable houses in which, at one time, he had been a constant guest. It is an admirable street to live in because it's only a few minutes' walk from the Bois. Nature began again to reign over the Bois, from which had vanished all trace of the idea that it was the Elysian Garden of Woman. One evening, when, irritated by the thought of that inevitable dark drive together, he had taken his other 'little girl' all the way to the Bois. Swann had left before the coffee came in, to join the Verdurins on the Island in the Bois. That sense of the complexity of the Bois de Boulogne which made it an artificial place and, in the zoological or mythological sense of the

word, a Garden, I captured again, this year, as I crossed it on my way to Trianon, on one of those mornings, early in November. That won't bore you, will it, a quiet little dinner, now and then, in the Bois? The Bois had the temporary, unfinished, artificial look of a nursery garden or a park in which, either for some botanic purpose or in preparation for a festival, there have been embedded among the trees of commoner growth, which have not yet been uprooted and transplanted elsewhere, a few rare specimens, with fantastic foliage, which seem to be clearing all round themselves an empty space, making room, giving air, diffusing light. The different parts of the Bois, so easily confounded in summer in the density and monotony of their universal green, were now clearly divided. Then it befell the Maison Dorée, as it had befallen the Island in the Bois, that gradually its name ceased to trouble him. They walked the Bois bare-headed. This, the Bois, equally complex, uniting a multitude of little

worlds, distinct and separate—placing a stage set with red trees, American oaks, like an experimental forest in Virginia, next to a fir-wood by the edge of the lake, or to a forest grove from which would suddenly emerge, in her lissome covering of furs, with the large, appealing eyes of a dumb animal, a hastening walker—was the Garden of Woman.

**Bone** “As if it weren't ‘just the *andante*’ that breaks every bone in my body.”

**Bones** She would hold out for me to kiss her sad brow, pale and lifeless, on which at this early hour she would not yet have arranged the false hair and through which the bones shone like the points of a crown of thorns. What a lazy-bones!

**Bookworm** “What fun it would be to become a regular bookworm, to bury my nose in a lot of old papers!”

**Bosom** His jealousy was not satisfied that he had yet suffered enough, and sought

to expose his bosom to an even deeper wound. Pointing to her bosom. She received him, wearing a wrapper of mauve *crêpe de Chine*, which draped her bosom, like a mantle, with a richly embroidered web.

**Boughs** I would hasten eagerly to the spots where masterpieces of female elegance would be incarnate for a few moments beneath the unconscious, accommodating boughs.

**Brain** As soon as I asked myself the question, and tried to discover some subjects to which I could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value, my mind would stop like a clock, I would see before me vacuity, nothing, would feel either that I was wholly devoid of talent, or that, perhaps, a malady of the brain was hindering its development. At odd moments, no doubt, in the furthest recesses of his brain, where his determination had thrust it away, and thanks to the length of the interval, the three weeks' separation to

which he had agreed, it was with pleasure that he would consider the idea that he would see Odette again on her return; but it was also with so little impatience that he began to ask himself whether he would not readily consent to the doubling of the period of so easy an abstinence. From what I had been told of them I would arrange them in the order of their talent in lists which I used to murmur to myself all day long: lists which in the end became petrified in my brain and were a source of annoyance to it, being irremovable. He could not explore the idea further, for a sudden access of that mental lethargy which was, with him, congenital, intermittent and providential, happened, at that moment, to extinguish every particle of light in his brain, as instantaneously as, at a later period, when electric lighting had been everywhere installed, it became possible, merely by fingering a switch, to cut off all the supply of light from a house. I imagined, like everyone else, that the

brains of other people were lifeless and submissive receptacles with no power of specific reaction to any stimulus which might be applied to them. I set between them, far more distinctly than the mere distance in miles and yards and inches which separated one from the other, the distance that there was between the two parts of my brain in which I used to think of them, one of those distances of the mind which time serves only to lengthen, which separate things irremediably from one another, keeping them for ever upon different planes. I wished only to keep in reserve in my brain those converging lines, moving in the sunshine, and, for the time being, to think of them no more. I would read, or rather sing his sentences in my brain, with rather more *dolce*, rather more *lento* than he himself had, perhaps, intended, and his simplest phrase would strike my ears with something peculiarly gentle and loving in its intonation. If he is rather unpleasantly affected when

he tries to be paradoxical, still he has one of the finest brains that I have ever come across. Stimulate and fertilize my brain with a sense of bradding and blossoming life. The intelligence of the Professor's vigorous and well-nourished brain might easily have been envied by many of the people in society who seemed witty enough to Swann.

**Breast** The broad ribbon of the Legion of Honour across his breast, had made Swann give that name. But unfortunately the talker was now subordinated to another Legrandin, whom he kept carefully hidden in his breast, whom he would never consciously exhibit, because this other could tell stories about our own Legrandin and about his snobbishness which would have ruined his reputation for ever.

**Breezes** And a spotted necktie, stirred by the breezes of the Square, continued to float in front of Legrandin, like the standard of his proud isolation, of his

noble independence.

**Brightly-Coloured Cloud**

He seemed to have penetrated my father's skull, as if it had been a ball of glass, and to be seeing, at the moment, a long way beyond and behind it, a brightly coloured cloud.

**Brill** A brill, because the fish-woman had guaranteed its freshness.

**Brow** Any of us who happened to intrude upon her at one of these moments would find her bathed in perspiration, her eyes blazing, her false hair pushed awry and exposing the baldness of her brows. He passed his hands two or three times across his brow. Her friend took the girl's head in her hands and placed a kiss on her brow with a docility prompted by the real affection she had for Mlle. Vinteuil, as well as by the desire to bring what distraction she could into the dull and melancholy life of an orphan. She had the pleasure of receiving those kisses on her brow, those smiles, those glances; all

feigned, perhaps, but akin in their base and vicious mode of expression to those which would have been discernible on the face of a creature formed not out of kindness and long-suffering, but out of self-indulgence and cruelty. "There, now," went on my aunt, beating her brow, "that reminds me that I never heard if she got to church this morning before the Elevation." We would enter what he called his 'study,' a room whose walls were hung with prints which showed, against a dark background, a plump and rosy goddess driving a car, or standing upon a globe, or wearing a star on her brow.

**Bubble** It was still there, like an iridescent bubble that floats for a while unbroken. The scent of hawthorn which strays plundering along the hedge from which, in a little while, the dog-roses will have banished it, a sound of footsteps followed by no echo, upon a gravel path, a bubble formed at the side of a waterplant by the current, and formed only to burst—my exaltation of mind has



borne them with it, and has succeeded in making them traverse all these successive years.

**Buds** High up on the branches, like so many of those tiny rose trees, their pots concealed in jackets of paper lace, whose slender stems rise in a forest from the altar on the greater festivals, a thousand buds were swelling and opening, paler in colour, but each disclosing as it burst, as at the bottom of a cup of pink marble, its blood-red stain, and suggesting even more strongly than the full-blown flowers the special, irresistible quality of the hawthorn tree, which, wherever it budded, wherever it was about to blossom, could bud and blossom in pink flowers alone.

**Burning Hot Day** It was a burning hot day, and she had come home so unwell that the doctor had warned my mother not to allow her again to tire herself in that way.

**Bushes** I must have made a

rustling sound among the bushes, she would have heard me, and might have thought that I had been hiding there in order to spy upon her.

**Bust** The inner bodice follow, in complete independence, controlled only by the fancy of their designer or the rigidity of their material, the line which led them to the knots of ribbon, falls of lace, fringes of vertically hanging jet, or carried them along the bust, but nowhere attached themselves to the living creature, who, according as the architecture of their fripperies drew them towards or away from her own, found herself either strait-laced to suffocation or else completely buried.

**Buttercup** “Why, my little buttercup, my little canary boy, he’s going to make Mamma as silly as himself if this goes on.”

**Buttercups** For the buttercups grew past numbering on this spot which they had chosen for

their games among the grass, standing singly, in couples, in whole companies, yellow as the yolk of eggs, and glowing with an added lustre, I felt, because, being powerless to consummate with my palate the pleasure which the sight of them never failed to give me, I would let it accumulate as my eyes ranged over their gilded expanse, until it had acquired the strength to create in my mind a fresh example of absolute, unproductive beauty; and so it had been from my earliest childhood, when from the tow-path I had stretched out my arms towards them, before even I could pronounce their charming name—a name fit for the Prince in some French fairy-tale; colonists, perhaps, in some far distant century from Asia, but naturalized now forever in the village, well satisfied with their modest horizon, rejoicing in the sunshine and the water's edge, faithful to their little glimpse of the railway station. Nothing was left now but a few stumps of towers, hummocks upon the

broad surface of the fields, hardly visible, broken battlements over which, in their day, the bowmen had hurled down stones, the watchmen had gazed out over Novepont, Clairefontaine, Martinville-le-Sec, Bailleau-l'Exempt, fiefs all of them of Guermantes, a ring in which Combray was locked; but fallen among the grass now, levelled with the ground, climbed and commanded by boys from the Christian Brothers' school, who came there in their playtime, or with lesson-books to be conned; emblems of a past that had sunk down and well-nigh vanished under the earth, that lay by the water's edge now, like an idler taking the air, yet giving me strong food for thought, making the name of Combray connote to me not the little town of to-day only, but an historic city vastly different, seizing and holding my imagination by the remote, incomprehensible features which it half-concealed beneath a spangled veil of buttercups.

**Canal** I have seen a bit of a canal in one place, and then I have turned a corner and seen another, but when I saw the second I could no longer see the first. It must be pretty cold, still, on the Grand Canal. The snowy, rosy flight of the wing of a lightly poised coif, tremulously reflected in the greenish waters of a canal.

**Canals** To take another example, there are all the canals at Jouy-le-Vicomte, which is *Gaudiacus vicecomitis*, as of course you know.

**Carcass** When it was dead Françoise mopped up its streaming blood, in which, however, she did not let her rancour drown, for she gave vent to another burst of rage, and, gazing down at the carcass of her enemy, uttered a final “Filthy creature!”

**Cardoons** Cardoons with marrow, because she had never done them for us in that way before.

**Carnation** Half-way up the trunk of a tree draped with

wild vine, the light had grafted and brought to blossom, too dazzling to be clearly distinguished, an enormous posy, of red flowers apparently, perhaps of a new variety of carnation.

**Carnation or Hydrangea** “That little pink cloud there, has it not just the tint of some flower, a carnation or hydrangea?”

**Carnation Petals** He no longer based his estimate of the merit of Odette’s face on the more or less good quality of her cheeks, and the softness and sweetness—as of carnation petals—which, he supposed, would greet his lips there, should he ever hazard an embrace.

**Carnations** I noticed before his door a carriage and pair, with red carnations on the horses’ blinkers and in the coachman’s buttonhole.

**Carp** Now and then, crushed by the burden of idleness, a carp would heave up out of the water, with an

anxious gasp.

**Cat** If she had seen a cat at midnight, or if the furniture had creaked.

**Cat and Dog Life** As regards figures of speech, he was insatiable in his thirst for knowledge, for often imagining them to have a more definite meaning than was actually the case, he would want to know what, exactly, was intended by those which he most frequently heard used: 'devilish pretty,' 'blue blood,' 'a cat and dog life,' 'a day of reckoning,' 'a queen of fashion,' 'to give a free hand,' 'to be at a deadlock,' and so forth; and in what particular circumstances he himself might make use of them in conversation.

**Cattleya** Besides that moment (that first evening on which they had done a cattleya) when she had told him that she was coming from the Maison Dorée, how many others must there have been, each of them covering a falsehood of which Swann had had no suspicion. He must instantly

accompany her home, to do a cattleya.

**Cattleyas** And long afterwards, when the arrangement (or, rather, the ritual presence of an arrangement) of her cattleyas had quite fallen into desuetude, the metaphor Do a cattleya, transmuted into a simple verb which they would employ without a thought of its original meaning when they wished to refer to the act of physical possession (in which, paradoxically, the possessor possesses nothing), survived to commemorate in their vocabulary the long forgotten custom from which it sprang. But he was so shy in approaching her that, after this evening which had begun by his arranging her cattleyas and had ended in her complete surrender, whether from fear of chilling her, or from reluctance to appear, even retrospectively, to have lied, or perhaps because he lacked the audacity to formulate a more urgent requirement than this (which could always be

repeated, since it had not annoyed her on the first occasion), he resorted to the same pretext on the following days. However disillusioned we may be about women, however we may regard the possession of even the most divergent types as an invariable and monotonous experience, every detail of which is known and can be described in advance, it still becomes a fresh and stimulating pleasure if the women concerned be—or be thought to be—so difficult as to oblige us to base our attack upon some unrehearsed incident in our relations with them, as was originally for Swann the arrangement of the cattleyas. If she had any cattleyas pinned to her bodice, he would say: “It is most unfortunate; the cattleyas don’t need tucking in this evening; they’ve not been disturbed as they were the other night; I think, though, that this one isn’t quite straight.” Once he was left alone he would see again that smile, and her smile of the day before, another with which she had greeted him

sometime else, the smile which had been her answer, in the carriage that night, when he had asked her whether she objected to his rearranging her cattleyas. She found something ‘quaint’ in the shape of each of her Chinese ornaments, and also in her orchids, the cattleyas especially (these being, with chrysanthemums, her favourite flowers), because they had the supreme merit of not looking in the least like other flowers, but of being made, apparently, out of scraps of silk or satin.

**Cave** It seemed not so much the cave of Françoise as a little temple of Venus. Virgil depicts him as being received with open arms; or—to be content with an image more likely to have occurred to her, for she had seen it painted on the plates we used for biscuits at Combray—as the thought of having had to dinner Ali Baba, who, as soon as he found himself alone and unobserved, would make his way into the cave, resplendent with its unsuspected treasures.

**Celestial Geography** Like that scholarly swindler who devoted to the fabrication of forged palimpsests a wealth of skill and knowledge and industry the hundredth part of which would have sufficed to establish him in a more lucrative—but an honourable occupation, M. Legrandin, had we insisted further, would in the end have constructed a whole system of ethics, and a celestial geography of Lower Normandy.

**Chasm** In the midst of them parted, suddenly, a gaping chasm, that moment in the Bois.

**Cheek** He slipped his other hand upwards along Odette's cheek. I might be able, thanks to these mental preliminaries, to consecrate the whole of the minute Mamma would allow me to the sensation of her cheek against my lips. She stood there beside him, brushing his cheek. The exact spot on her cheek where I would imprint it.

**Cheek by Jowl** She had no desire to remain on friendly

terms with a person in whose house one might find oneself, any day, cheek by jowl.

**Cheekbones** The necessity, if he was to find any beauty in her face, of fixing his eyes on the fresh and rosy protuberance of her cheekbones, and of shutting out all the rest of those cheeks which were so often languorous and sallow, except when they were punctuated with little fiery spots, plunged him in acute depression, as proving that one's ideal is always unattainable, and one's actual happiness mediocre.

**Cheeks** A bright flush animated my aunt's cheeks. An infirmity of the skin had stained part of her cheeks and her crooked nose the bright red colour of balsam. He would fling himself upon this Botticelli maiden and kiss and bite her cheeks. I covered my old uncle's tobacco-stained cheeks with passionate kisses. I would lay my cheeks gently against the comfortable cheeks of my pillow, as plump and blooming as the cheeks of

babyhood. In the end they come to fill out so completely the curve of his cheeks. Pregnancy had swelled and stoutened every part of her, even to her face, and the vertical, squared outlines of her cheeks.

**Cherries** Cherries, the first to come from the cherry-tree, which had yielded none for the last two years.

**Chestnut Tree** I knew at that time, as though one's life were a series of galleries in which all the portraits of any one period had a marked family likeness, the same (so to speak) tonality—this early Swann abounding in leisure, fragrant with the scent of the great chestnut tree, of baskets of raspberries and of a sprig of tarragon. We sat in front of the house beneath the big chestnut tree. What had to move—a leaf of the chestnut tree, for instance—moved.

**Chestnut Trees** Sitting in the little parlour, where I would pass the time until dinner with a book, I might hear the water dripping

from our chestnut trees.

**Chestnuts** At one spot the light grew solid as a brick wall, and like a piece of yellow Persian masonry, patterned in blue, daubed coarsely upon the sky the leaves of the chestnuts; at another, it cut them off from the sky towards which they stretched out their curling, golden fingers. Even in the unwooded parts, where the horizon is large, here and there against the background of a dark and distant mass of trees, now leafless or still keeping their summer foliage unchanged, a double row of orange-red chestnuts seemed, as in a picture just begun, to be the only thing painted, so far, by an artist who had not yet laid any colour on the rest, and to be offering their cloister, in full daylight, for the casual exercise of the human figures that would be added to the picture later on. "Why, you're quite right; it is copied from...what shall I say, not chestnuts, no—oh, it's a delightful idea?"

**Chicken** A fiery glow which, accompanied often

by a cold that burned and stung, would associate itself in my mind with the glow of the fire over which, at that very moment, was roasting the chicken that was to furnish me, in place of the poetic pleasure I had found in my walk, with the sensual pleasures of good feeding, warmth and rest. Like Françoise at Combray when the chicken refused to die.

**Chickens** And, meanwhile, Françoise would be turning on the spit one of those chickens, such as she alone knew how to roast, chickens which had wafted far abroad from Combray the sweet savour of her merits, and which, while she was serving them to us at table, would make the quality of kindness predominate for the moment in my private conception of her character; the aroma of that cooked flesh, which she knew how to make so unctuous and so tender, seeming to me no more than the proper perfume of one of her many virtues. But who would have baked me such hot rolls, boiled me such fragrant coffee, and even—roasted

me such chickens?

**Christmas Tree** “I should miss the Christmas tree here.”

**Chrysalis** The process which had begun in her—and in her a little earlier only than it must come to all of us—was the great and general renunciation which old age makes in preparation for death, the chrysalis stage of life.

**Chrysanthemum** He could see it all; the snowy, curled petals of the chrysanthemum which she had tossed after him into his carriage, which he had kept pressed to his lips. He had in his study a cupboard at which he contrived never to look, which he turned aside to avoid passing whenever he entered or left the room, because in one of its drawers he had locked away the chrysanthemum which she had given him on one of those first evenings when he had taken her home in his carriage. He was jealous of those men of whom he had so often said, without much suffering: perhaps she’s in



love with them, now that he had exchanged the vague idea of loving, in which there is no love, for the petals of the chrysanthemum and the 'letter-heading' of the Maison d'Or; for they were full of love. She turned impulsively from him, plucked a last lingering chrysanthemum in the tiny garden which flanked the pathway from the street to her house, and as he went back to his carriage thrust it into his hand. These letters he had kept in the same drawer as the withered chrysanthemum.

**Chrysanthemums** But to suppose that she went to bad houses, that she abandoned herself to orgies with other women, that she led the crapulous existence of the most abject, the most contemptible of mortals—would be an insane wandering of the mind, for the realization of which, thank heaven, the chrysanthemums that he could imagine, the daily cups of tea, the virtuous indignation left neither time nor place. I should have

liked to be able to pass the rest of the day with one of those women, over a cup of tea, in a little house with dark-painted walls (as Mme. Swann's were still in the year after that in which the first part of this story ends) against which would glow the orange flame, the red combustion, the pink and white flickering of her chrysanthemums.

**Clear Day** On a clear day you can see as far as Verneuil.

**Cliff** Perhaps it is a castle which you encounter upon the cliff's edge; standing there by the roadside, where it has halted to contemplate its sorrows before an evening sky, still rosy, through which a golden moon is climbing. They must have agreed to meet at the foot of the cliff, but they wouldn't say good-bye together; it might have looked odd.

**Cliffs of Death** I tried to form a picture in my mind of how those fishermen had lived, the timid and unsuspected essay towards

social intercourse which they had attempted there, clustered upon a promontory of the shores of Hell, at the foot of the cliffs of death.

**Climate** Since the 'Méséglise way' was the shorter of the two that we used to take for our walks round Combray, and for that reason was reserved for days of uncertain weather, it followed that the climate of Méséglise showed an unduly high rainfall, and we would never lose sight of the fringe of Roussainville wood, so that we could, at any moment, run for shelter beneath its dense thatch of leaves.

**Climates** "Climates that breathe amorous secrets and futile regrets may agree with an old and disillusioned man like myself; but they must always prove fatal to a temperament which is still unformed."

**Close-Cropped Grass** While I waited for her I was pacing the broad lawn, of meagre close-cropped grass

already faded by the sun.

**Cloud** She poured out Swann's tea, inquired "Lemon or cream?" and, on his answering "Cream, please," went on, smiling, "A cloud!" 'Twas itself that projected towards him that truth whose glorious rays melted and scattered like the cloud of a dream the sense of loneliness which had lowered over him.

**Clouded Over** When we had decided to go the 'Méséglise way' we would start (without undue haste, and even if the sky were clouded over, since the walk was not very long, and did not take us too far from home).

**Clouded Surface** It presented to the mind's eye a clouded surface.

**Clouds** Reality must, therefore, be something which bears no relation to possibilities, any more than the stab of a knife in one's body bears to the gradual movement of the clouds overhead. "There are tints in the clouds this evening,

violets and blues, which are very beautiful, are they not, my friend?" Very soon, the clouds gathering in his brain, he could see nothing.

**Clouds of Gold** We made our way towards the Champs-Élysées through streets decorated with sunlight, dense with people, over which the balconies, detached by the sun and made vaporous, seemed to float in front of the houses like clouds of gold.

**Cloudy Halo** How small a thing the actual charm of Odette was now in comparison with that formidable terror which extended it like a cloudy halo all around her.

**Clover and Sainfoin** On hot afternoons, I would see a breath of wind emerge from the farthest horizon, bowing the heads of the corn in distant fields, pouring like a flood over all that vast expanse, and finally settling down, warm and rustling, among the clover and sainfoin at my feet.

**Coal** I understood that by making one's way, after luncheon, into the coal-grimed laboratory, the wizard's cell that undertook to contrive a complete transmutation of its surroundings, one could awaken, next morning, in the city of marble and gold, in which the building of the wall was of jasper and the foundation of the wall an emerald.

**Coast** He was walking with Mme. Verdurin, Dr. Cottard, a young man in a fez whom he failed to identify, the painter, Odette, Napoleon III and my grandfather, along a path which followed the line of the coast, and overhung the sea, now at a great height, now by a few feet only, so that they were continually going up and down. One day when, at Combray, I had spoken of this coast, this Balbec, before M. Swann, hoping to learn from him whether it was the best point to select for seeing the most violent storms, he had replied: "I should think I did know Balbec!"

**Cobwebs** Quimperlé, more firmly attached, this, and since the Middle Ages, among the rivulets with which it babbled, threading their pearls upon a grey background, like the pattern made, through the cobwebs upon a window, by rays of sunlight changed into blunt points of tarnished silver.

**Codfish** “Codfish!”

**Cold** I could no longer contain my joy when my father, in the intervals of tapping the barometer and complaining of the cold, began to look out which were the best trains. “It must be pretty cold, still, on the Grand Canal; whatever you do, don’t forget to pack your winter greatcoat and your thick suit.” The old lady herself, having folded up her *Débats*, asked a passing nursemaid the time, thanking her with “How very good of you!” then begged the road-sweeper to tell her grandchildren to come, as she felt cold.

**Columbines** He would stroke and fondle it, warm himself with it, and, as a

feeling of languor swept over him, would give way to a slight shuddering movement which contracted his throat and nostrils—a new experience, this—as he fastened the bunch of columbines in his buttonhole.

**Common Ground** The hedge with the pink hawthorn which my aunt Léonie wished to visit was on common ground.

**Community of Blood** She had for those invisible bonds by which community of blood unites the members of a family as much respect as any Greek tragedian.

**Complexion** When he sought to measure it, it happened sometimes that he found it diminished, shrunken almost to nothing; for instance, the very moderate liking, amounting almost to dislike, which, in the days before he was in love with Odette, he had felt for her expressive features, her faded complexion, returned on certain days. Whenever I thought of her, the memory of those bright

eyes would at once present itself to me as a vivid azure, since her complexion was fair.

**Coral** She would merely straighten her shoulder-straps or feel in her golden hair for the little balls of coral or of pink enamel, frosted with tiny diamonds, which formed its simple but effective ornament.

**Cornfields** As soon as a breath of wind gets up, and the cornfields begin to stir, I feel that someone is going to appear suddenly.

**Cornflowers** A few cornflowers that had fallen lazily behind, and decorated the ground here and there with their flowers like the border of a tapestry.

**Corpses in a River** His spirit carried them along, cast them aside, then cradled them again in its bosom, like corpses in a river.

**Côte d'Azur** He would have devoted to the reconstruction of all the insignificant details that

made up the daily round on the Côte d'Azur in those days, if it could have helped him to understand something that still baffled him in the smile or in the eyes of Odette.

**Countenance** He would go in search of her, and, when he opened the door, on Odette's blushing countenance, as soon as she caught sight of Swann, would appear—changing the curve of her lips, the look in her eyes, the moulding of her cheeks—an all-absorbing smile. When she reached her cousin, Mme. de Gallardon, with a stern countenance and one hand thrust out as though she were trying to 'force' a card, began with: "How is your husband?" in the same anxious tone that she would have used if the Prince had been seriously ill.

**Country** "Are you also her neighbour in the country?" Dr. Cottard, who, having been summoned to attend a serious case in the country, had not seen the Verdurins for some days, and had been prevented from appearing at

Chateaux. He could see Odette, in a dress far too smart for the country. He told himself that he would do better to rest for a little, that there would be time enough later on, and settled back into his corner with as little curiosity, with as much torpor as the drowsy traveller who pulls his cap down over his eyes so as to get some sleep in the railway-carriage that is drawing him, he feels, faster and faster, out of the country in which he has lived for so long. He would have liked to go away for a while to rest in the country. It's a country to be happy in. Méséglise was to me something as inaccessible as the horizon, which remained hidden from sight, however far one went, by the folds of a country which no longer bore the least resemblance to the country round Combray. Mme. Swann would have written to me, from a country house, that she would not be in town before February. Swann was extremely fond of the Princesse des Laumes, and the sight of her recalled to him Guermites,

a property close to Combray, and all that country which he so dearly loved and had ceased to visit, so as not to be separated from Odette. The association in his memory of her young and charming face with a place in the country which he had not visited for so long, offered him a combined attraction which had made him decide at last to leave Paris for a while. This reminded me that he had constantly seen me in the country. Wishing also to express in words, for his own satisfaction, the longing that he felt for the country.

**Countryside** But, from the top of Saint-Hilaire, it's quite another matter; the whole countryside is spread out before you like a map.

**Creature** And that condition is fulfilled so soon as—in the moment when she has failed to meet us—for the pleasure which we were on the point of enjoying in her charming company is abruptly substituted an anxious torturing desire, whose

object is the creature herself, an irrational, absurd desire, which the laws of civilized society make it impossible to satisfy and difficult to assuage—the insensate, agonizing desire to possess her. For then the creature in whose company we are seeking amusement at the moment, her lot is cast, her fate and ours decided, that is the creature whom we shall henceforward love. It was not very long since, from the idea that she was an excellent creature, comparable to the best women that he had known, he had passed to that of her being ‘kept.’ “No, but, don’t you see, the filthy creature... Oh, if you only knew the creature as I know him; isn’t that so, my love, there’s no one that really knows you, is there, except me?” When Odette ceased to be for him a creature always absent, regretted, imagined; when the feeling that he had for her was no longer the same mysterious disturbance that was wrought in him by the phrase from the sonata, but constant affection and gratitude, when those

normal relations were established between them which would put an end to his melancholy madness; then, no doubt, the actions of Odette’s daily life would appear to him as being of but little intrinsic interest.

**Creatures** “Why, they must have ‘countries’ everywhere, those creatures!”

**Cruel, Greenish Eyes** He seemed determined to remain unconcerned in the scene, which he followed vaguely with his cruel, greenish eyes.

**Currant** Until passion spent itself and left me shuddering among the sprays of flowering currant which, creeping in through the window, tumbled all about my body.

**Currant Bush** Scented also by a wild currant bush which had climbed up between the stones of the outer wall and thrust a flowering branch in through the half-opened window.

**Damp Climate** Swann