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“Silence (for John Cage and John Lennon)”

THE idea could be seen as perverse, but that is a value judgment. With the world going the way it was, any system or apparent logic was worth considering. Her ideas and decisions were at least amusing and at best solutions. To appease the unnamable gods which occupied this apartment house alongside the three women. Leanne, in Apt. D, a brunette, rode her bike ten miles in any weather, every day: a Capricorn, looking for hills. In Apt. W, Joanne, a blond Taurean, did vitamins, a humidifier and moderate exercise. In Apt. G, Libran Suzanne smoked cigarets, never exercised, was freckled under coppery curls, overweight. Joanne was the one who *cared*: knowing Le needed a man, she introduced one; hearing Su was ill, she brought over juice and soup. Jo and Su were independent, they were artists in love with the stubborn struggle, the ideals. Le, born rich, had married rich and divorced rich; they laughed at her unfinished arty projects, \$100 haircut, long weekends in Bucks County with a non-verbal lover. After all, they didn't need constant support like Le— but she, shallow and ambitious, sought Jo and Su for their energy and activities, their ideas. Le would show up at parties in elegant tweeds, lots of makeup, traditional gossip. Jo and Su worked at their arts, taught a bit, lectured a lot, invited Le who didn't show, she was in some Switzerland of the mind with her lover . . .

The other two invested in art, went to concerts in SoHo, museums, thought about a loft in Tribeca, wondered about a cottage in Easthampton or maybe the Vineyard. That's how it went for years, till Su had the idea. It was the time of the New Moon. Su bought a white flower, wrapped it in a bit of silver foil, put it in water. The time to begin projects. One friend she loved, one she despaired of. How it worked: if Jo did something lovely for Su, like soup for a flu, Su would thank Le for the act, very sincerely. Le would look blank but say, Sure, any time. If— well, Le was the only thing alive in her place; Jo had plants and a terrific video system and a fireplace; Su had cats, dogs, birds and one roomful of plants, arranged around her doll collection. The three women were born the same year and each had been through the EST training. With, of course, different results. But all winding up in this place, a building with a history, Bacall and Streisand and Panna Grady and more: books and movies about it, the aura. When Jo called Su with tickets to a play, Su went, they had a grand time, and then Su wrote a thank-you note to Le. After the first weeks, Su decided to put a pin into her Mme. Pompadour doll, it would be her Le doll— each time she thanked Le for something which Le had not done, another pin— no reason, no blame. Then Su realized the system could work in other ways: when someone came to make repairs and the work wasn't done properly, in went a pin. Also, if anyone near her did something personally negative or even extremely, unusually positive, Su would tell Le and the doll. Le continued unchanged, like a Noh-mask, through it all. Would the game move outside the apartment house next. What would happen if John Lennon were

shot down by a stranger in the street outside the building where he— after all, he was a tenant, too, wasn't he? and in that moment, Yoko had become another Single Woman, in the building, in the City, hadn't she? The rooms were quiet, the park was quiet for a full, amazing ten minutes. The City. They were all connected, really. No difference, no blame. They had all chosen to live there at this time in history. Su gave the doll to Yoko. Who then decided to move over to the East Side. Well before Easter. Maybe by the next New Moon.

2009 Wood Coin: Is Art in the Heart or Does Art Lie Apart

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