

## Memory of young Jon by friend

"When I moved to Park School in ninth grade, I met a tall, bespectacled lad named Jon Hyman. He was even more on my wavelength than Jeff Pressman had been. For one thing, he was capable of tripping over a chalk mark on the sidewalk. For another, we were both into geopolitics. And we were fascinated by science. When the Scientific American recommended taking apart a pocket watch and putting it back together as an exercise in philosophical thinking, we made a mess on the Hyman's dinner table as we tried to get the microscopic parts of \$4.98 timepieces to balance while we managed to delicately lower the top plates into which each wobbling pinion had to fit. Both of us failed in this act of finger-flagellation.

"To top it all off, in class we made nuisances of ourselves by frenziedly passing notes. But these were not the comments on the latest classroom mammary developments that ordinary males shuttle back and forth. Ours were more phallic—specifically, they were designs for rocket reentry vehicles that could avoid being burned up while penetrating the delicate folds of the upper atmosphere.

"About the only thing I think we failed to share was my obsession with poetry. . . .

"But Jon more than made up for his poetic failings with a mathematical gift that was breathtaking. Plus, his parents seemed to represent my every goal in life. His father had all the warmth of a rock carving on Mount Rushmore. But he was a Harvard grad who headed the law school at the University of Buffalo. And his wife was a Radcliffe alumna with far more than the usual ice-cream-scoop of cerebral neurons. What's more, she was extremely attractive, warm, always smiling, and—though she didn't believe in this kind of stuff—could probably heal by the mere laying on of hands.

"Jon's sisters were two of the most gorgeous and vivacious creatures you've ever seen. And, to top it all off, the whole family lived on the backside of my block. So, like a barnacle gluing itself to a ship, I made the Hymans my second substitute family.

"My immersion in the Hyman homestead left its footprints all over me. It shaped my political attitudes, sculpted my tastes in music (for example, I learned that holding an LP by the edges was an indispensable symbol of intellectual status), and reshaped pieces of me like putty. Except, of course, for my nose, which even with the aid of plastic surgery had proven beyond redemption."

*How I Accidentally Started the Sixties* by Howard Bloom

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