



The first meeting with Stillman took place in Riverside Park. It was mid-afternoon, A Saturday of bicycles, dog-walkers, and children. Stillman was sitting alone on a bench, staring out at nothing in particular, the little red notebook on his lap. There was light everywhere, an immense light that seemed to radiate outward from each thing the eye caught hold of, and overhead, in the branches of the trees, a breeze continued to blow, shaking the leaves with a passionate hissing, a rising and falling that breathed on as steadily as surf.

The second meeting took place a little past nine o'clock the following morning. It was Sunday, and Stillman had emerged from the hotel an hour later than usual. He walked the two blocks to his customary breakfast place, the Mayflower Cafe, and sat down in a corner booth at the back.

The third meeting took place later that same day. The afternoon was well advanced: the light like gauze on the bricks and leaves, the shadows lengthening. Once again, Stillman retreated to Riverside Park, this time to the edge of it, coming to rest on a knobby outcrop at 84th Street known as Mount Tom. On this same spot, in the summers of 1843 and 1844, Edgar Allan Poe had spent many long hours gazing out at the Hudson.

—Paul Auster. *City of Glass*.