

XIV

Saturday

At around nine o'clock the insistent ringing of the doorbell awakened me—at the door was a short little someone in a big hat—and quietly, almost inaudibly, I could hear him asking for the real estate agent Delgado. —No, he doesn't live here!—I slammed the door. The end. Period. Dot.

And then I could not get back to sleep, so I put on a record with Beethoven's Fourteenth Quartet. Bach? No, not Bach. . . . Actually, I don't like Bach . . . they, modern music, will one day notice through their glasses that Bach was not the right signpost and that he led them to bankruptcy. You adore him because all you can afford is mathematics, the cosmos and purity—oh, that astronomic, pale face of yours nags and torments! You gain the heavens but you lose the earth, you eunuchs! In love with Abstraction, you have forgotten that song served to enchant the female, and nothing will be able to get you out of the Music as such, to which you have devoted yourselves for lack of anything better. The end. Period. As for Beethoven, I have had enough of his symphonies, his orchestra is incapable of drawing me in for good and holding me at bay—but the quartets of his last period, where the sound is difficult, on the borderline and even beyond it. . . . Oh, you Fourteenth Quartet!

If I listen to you so moved, it is probably because you are abundant in sensual delight as much in form as in the violence perpetrated on this form in the name of . . . I wanted to say in the name of the Spirit, but I will say in the name of the creator. For, O crowning glory of the quartets, every moment your four instruments sound in their union, reach for the most intoxicating harmonies, and wind around in voluptuous modulations; and yet, now and again, a severe and even brutal hand violates that delight and forces you to terrifying sharpness, sudden jumps, a hard economy of expression straining for metaphysics, an ascetic expression stretched between the highest and lowest registers, listening with rapt attention to a more distant and higher realization. Suddenly, it got quiet. The record ended. Period and point.

I have to go have coffee.