Autobiography of My Hungers

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A year after moving to New York City, I was still incredibly lonely, though I had just moved in with my boyfriend, another writer. He worked long hours, and I, just out of graduate school and still unemployed, stayed home to read and write. We held hands during dinner each night, and afterward I vacated the apartment to explore the city while he did his own reading and writing alone. By the time I came back home, he was already asleep, and I crawled under the sheets, trying not to touch him, knowing that two people whose paths rarely crossed would eventually miss each other completely.

I was walking alone one afternoon, anonymous and silent through the bustling city streets, stimulated by the speed of other bodies. I cut through the traffic and sat on a bench at Central Park. This is how I met him, the widower, the businessman from Thailand.

We met every night that week, the length of his stay. We talked and laughed and kept each other company. Once we went to the movies. And twice we shared a meal and a bottle of wine. Each time at the conclusion of our date we simply shook hands.

On our final good-bye, he cried because he was returning to his country, a land full of memories of his dead wife. I
kissed his cheek and told him with a shaky voice that I understood. I knew what it was like to enter uninhabited rooms, to long for a lover and lie down with a ghost.