

Paul Nagy

The Vane Sisters

Nabakov is singing in his head
as he gets on the city bus.
At the next stop,
the Vane Sisters sit down across from him.
He glances around the edges of this book
at the stranded mermaids.
In the sway of the bus,
he watches their movements—
hands smoothly grasping the bars,
bodies tightly shifting their weight—
and they are both liquid and magnetic to him.
As the three jolt back and forth
inside the diesel-powered box,
stopping and starting,
he notices Cynthia's maroon lips
and Sybil's fine dress,
lacy, with golden buttons.
In between the puffy squeaks
of the air brakes,
he squirms behind his pages.
Their dark and handsome laughter
fills his burning ears;
when he catches Cynthia's wink,
slow and stretching,
he drenches with perspiration, and
when Sybil begins combing at Cynthia's hair—
sisterly parting it with her nails—
He pulls the line.
When they reach the next stop,
his funny, hurried gait takes him
to the back door of the bus
and off into the night.