

LIGHT WARRIOR

My name means Light Warrior when you bring it home to the present day through Latin and Gaelic. I am a significant person, maybe a saint, or larger than life. I hear that you judge a saint by her whole personality, not just her work. I'm beginning to see my work as my shadows, less and less necessary, done with less and less care. I see my existence as similar to that of a sundial's when I simply stand, and slowly the notion of movement is suggesting itself to my consciousness and action is also appropriate in the realm of the saint, the character who begins her life in the windows of a church, in the religious air of her own imagination until history lines up with her nature, and the path becomes clear—the storms of identity erupt and implode and gather again and one of life's soldiers realizes her whole basis for living has changed and now she is impelled forward in a new film. I had thought I lived in a world of darkness and confusion and I was the single, glowing and true thing. I sought only the companions who would confirm this interpretation of the mystery that shrouded my life. I couldn't move from there, nor would I have chosen to do so. I was in classrooms and offices, bars, hospitals, state schools for

the incurable, and I briefly flickered with a ray of hopefulness, yet as a cab driver I continually drove to these places bound to break down and so the hope for change, and the desire for an environment where I could become helpful was always quickly extinguished and I imagined it was the way the world was, or the way I was.

Like many others I became an artist. I choose not to dwell on that cultural accident. Let's say I have always been brilliant in the realm of play.

In neighborhood games I always crashed right through the lines of kids' hands. As the light fell in the suburban summer night I was a winner. They would call "3" and myself and another kid would feint and lunge in the middle for some object on the ground and it had to be grabbed and brought back to a team without the player having been sullied, and it was true—I had not been touched by my opponent.

There was something scummy about adolescence, it wasn't sex, it was how I hated myself when I was confused, how loathsome the act of waiting for something was. But when I was very young I had a mission, it was clear. A girl in school wanted to borrow my Joan of Arc comic book and I replied I would have to ask my father which struck everyone as an odd reply.

My oddness, my embarrassment also confirmed my specialness. My father had entrusted me with a Junior Classics comic book about Joan of Arc, the first woman I aspired to be. It was an instruction manual, and if the girl, Joan Salinger, had sidled over to me in the school yard and said, "Let me

have it, Eileen—Light Warrior,” I would have silently passed her the honor.

I have waited all my life for permission. I feel it growing in my breast. A war is storming and it is behind me and I am moving my forces into light.