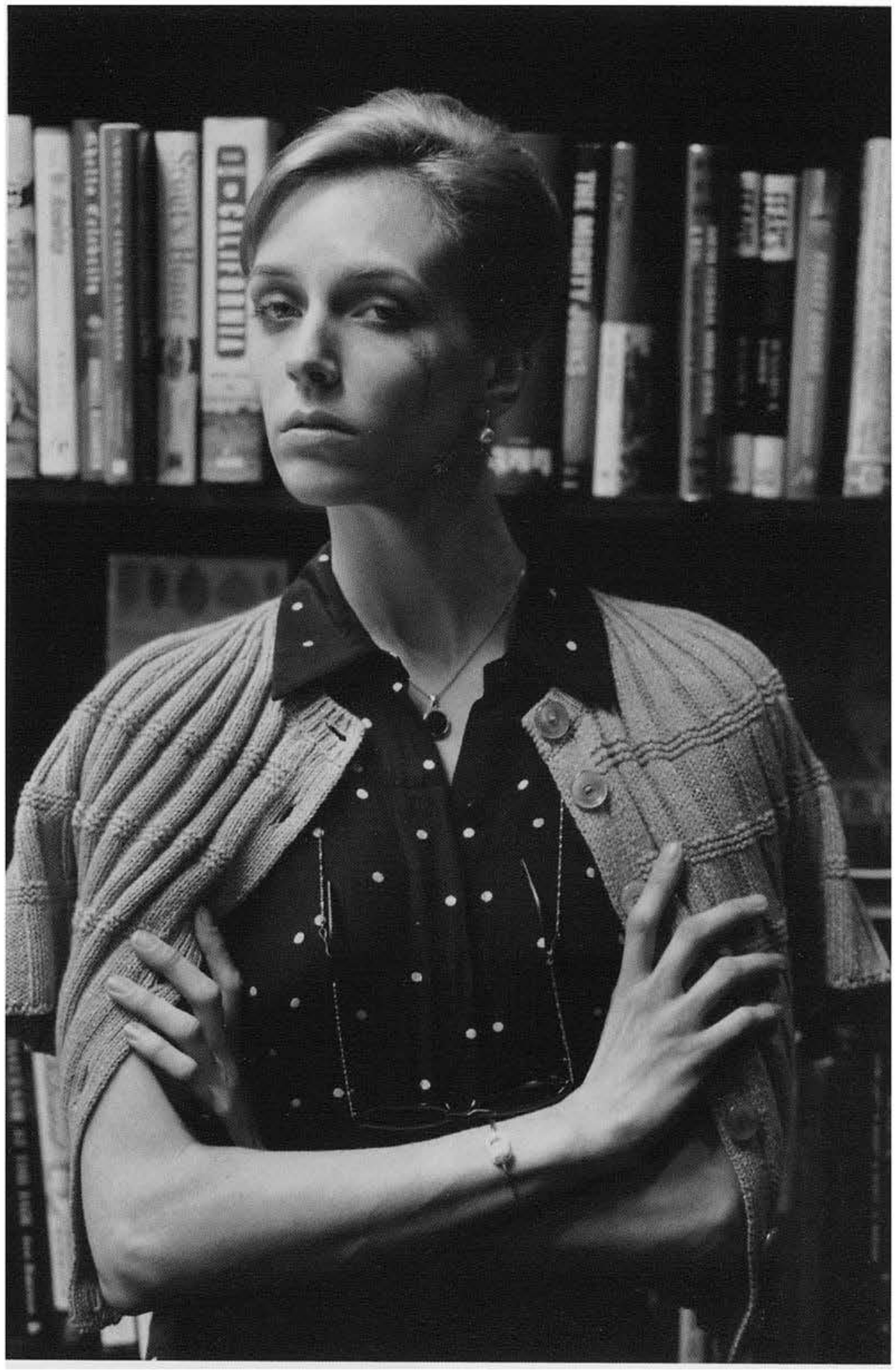
ANNABELLA'S FLAW

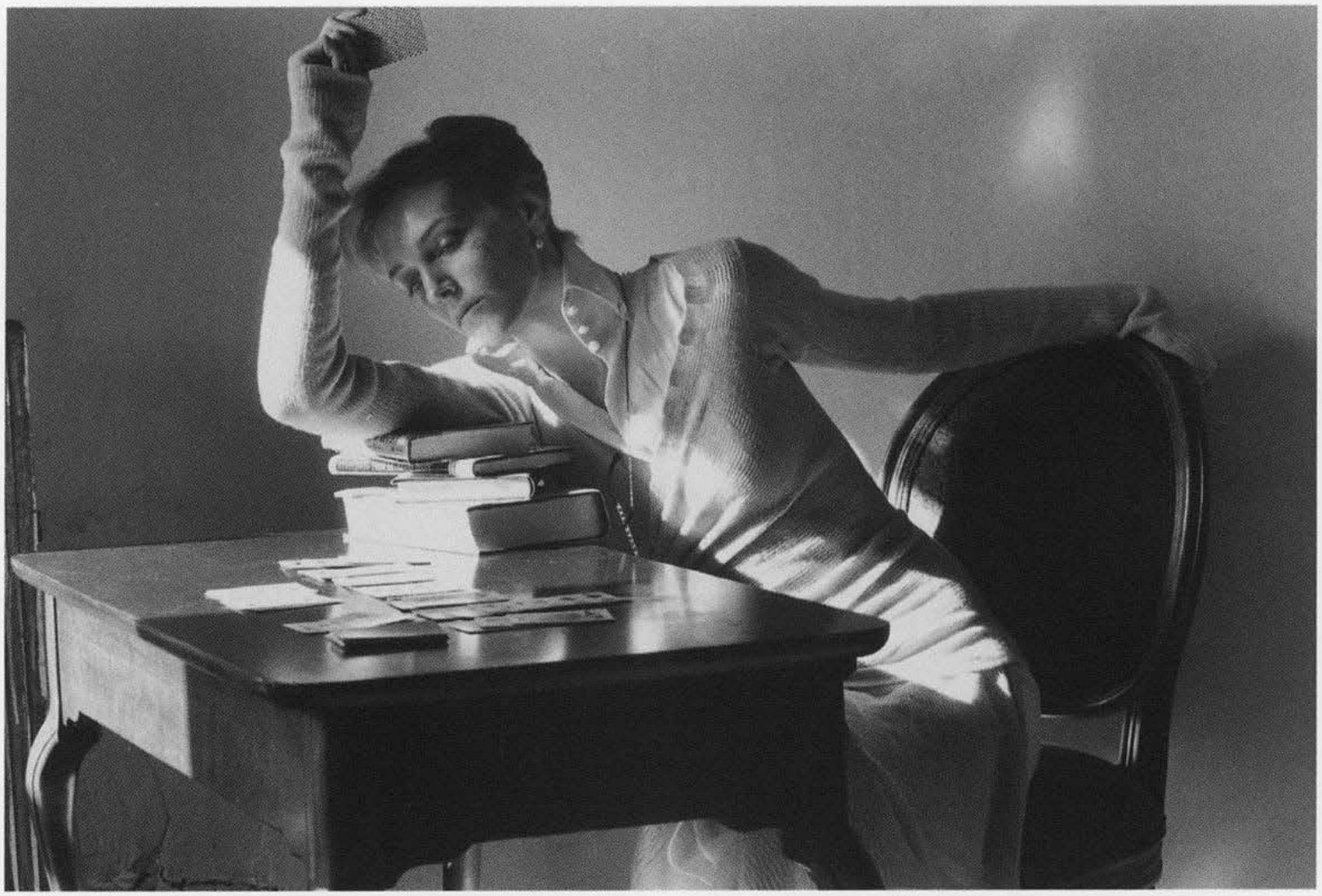
Annabella's Flaw



a fable by
Duane Michals

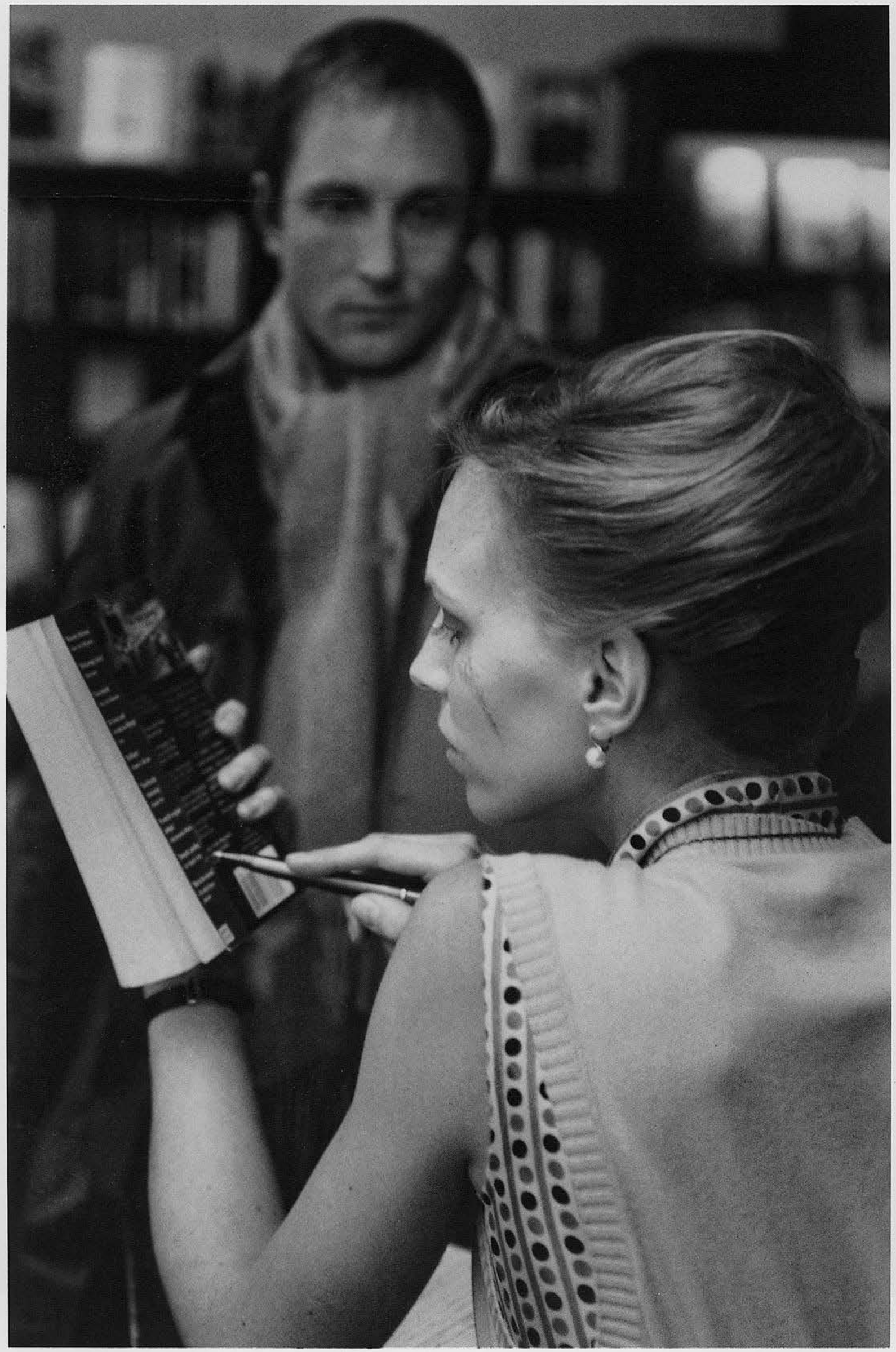
Annabella was shy
in the eye. When
cheek was torn by a
mistake, and this
Her mother Hortense
she loved her daughter
that she had been
for some sinister
a fearful Annabella
Her heart was pained
and seldom looked you
she was born, her
clumsy physician's
scar became her fate.
loved Jesus more than
and told the child
marked by the devil
unknown sin. In time
did not dare to seek repair.
by this darkening stain.

Annabella worked in a book store,
which was more of a home to her
than her flat. A room full of books
was her cocoon, Emma Bovary.

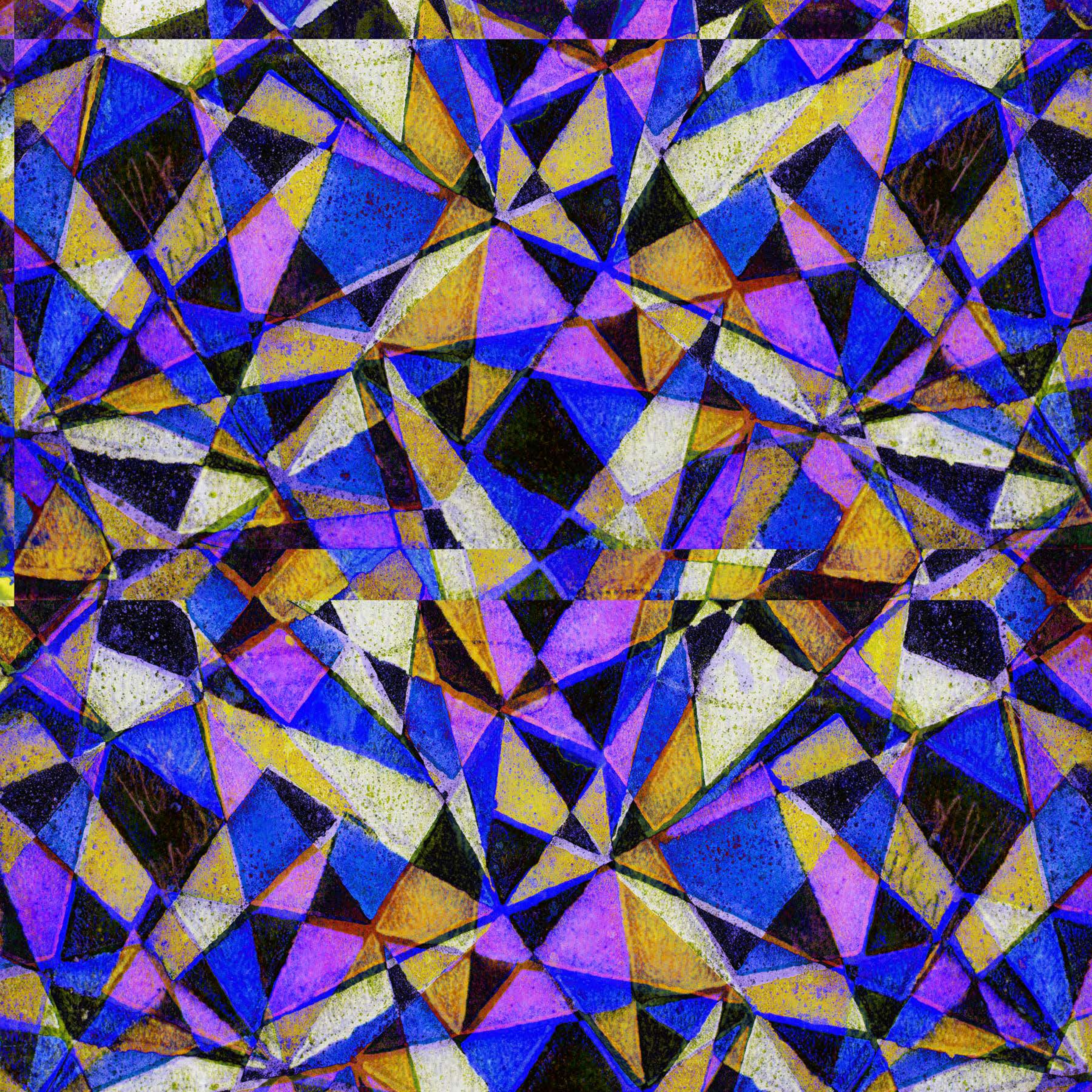


and Colette were her best friends,
and she often dined with Mrs Dalloway.
Annabella lived alone playing
solitaire, and she was prone to tears
for no apparent reason.

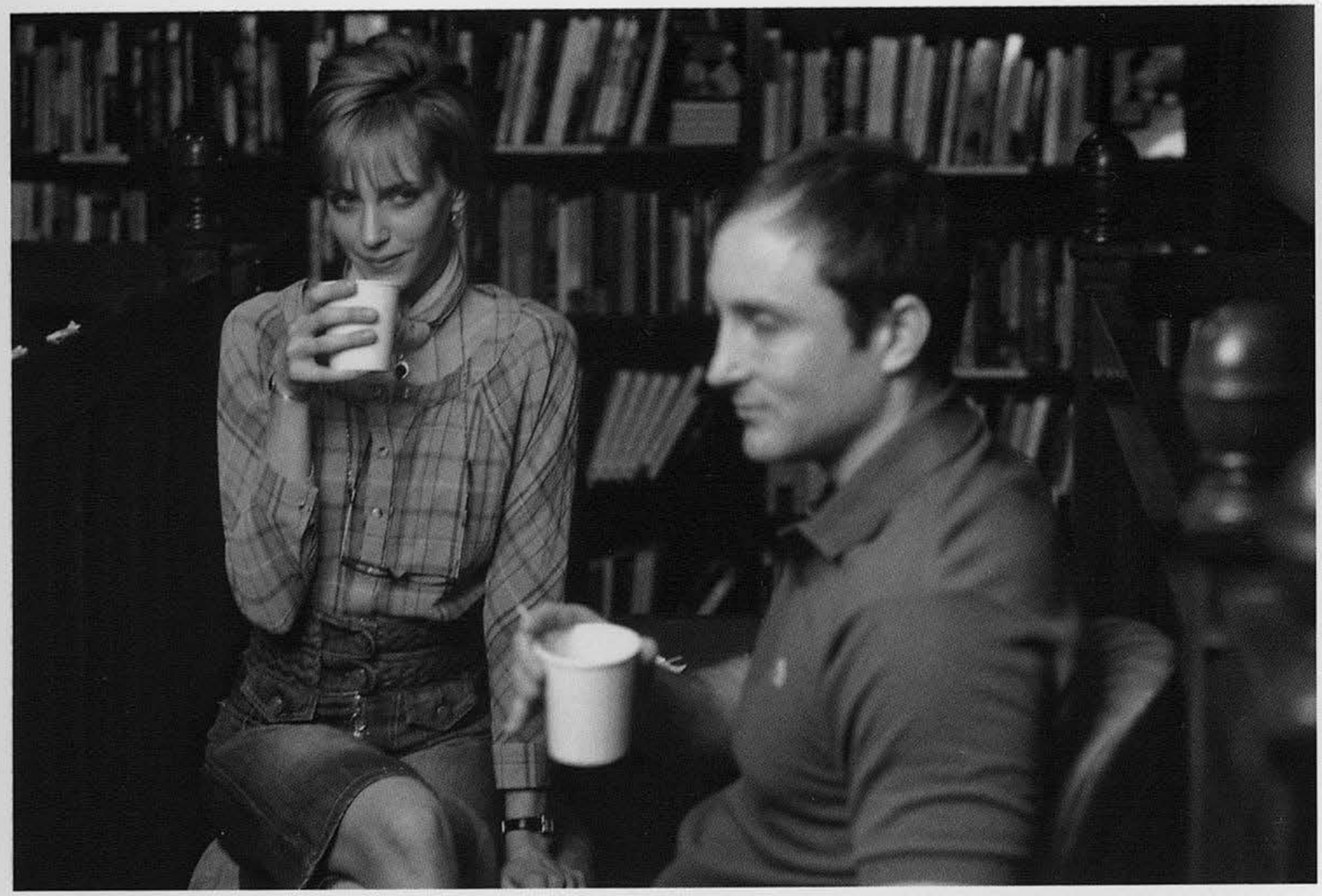
When Oliver first saw Annabella,
he became enchanted and bought
a book he did not want to read.
He thought her exquisite
He thought her beautiful, and found
that it was her flaw that made her
exquisite and saved her from the
banality of perfection. All men seemed
the same to her and were a kind of blur.
But Oliver returned again and again,
and soon he asked her name. She looked
him in the eye and with a soft voice
sighed, "Annabella" and that is how
it all began.

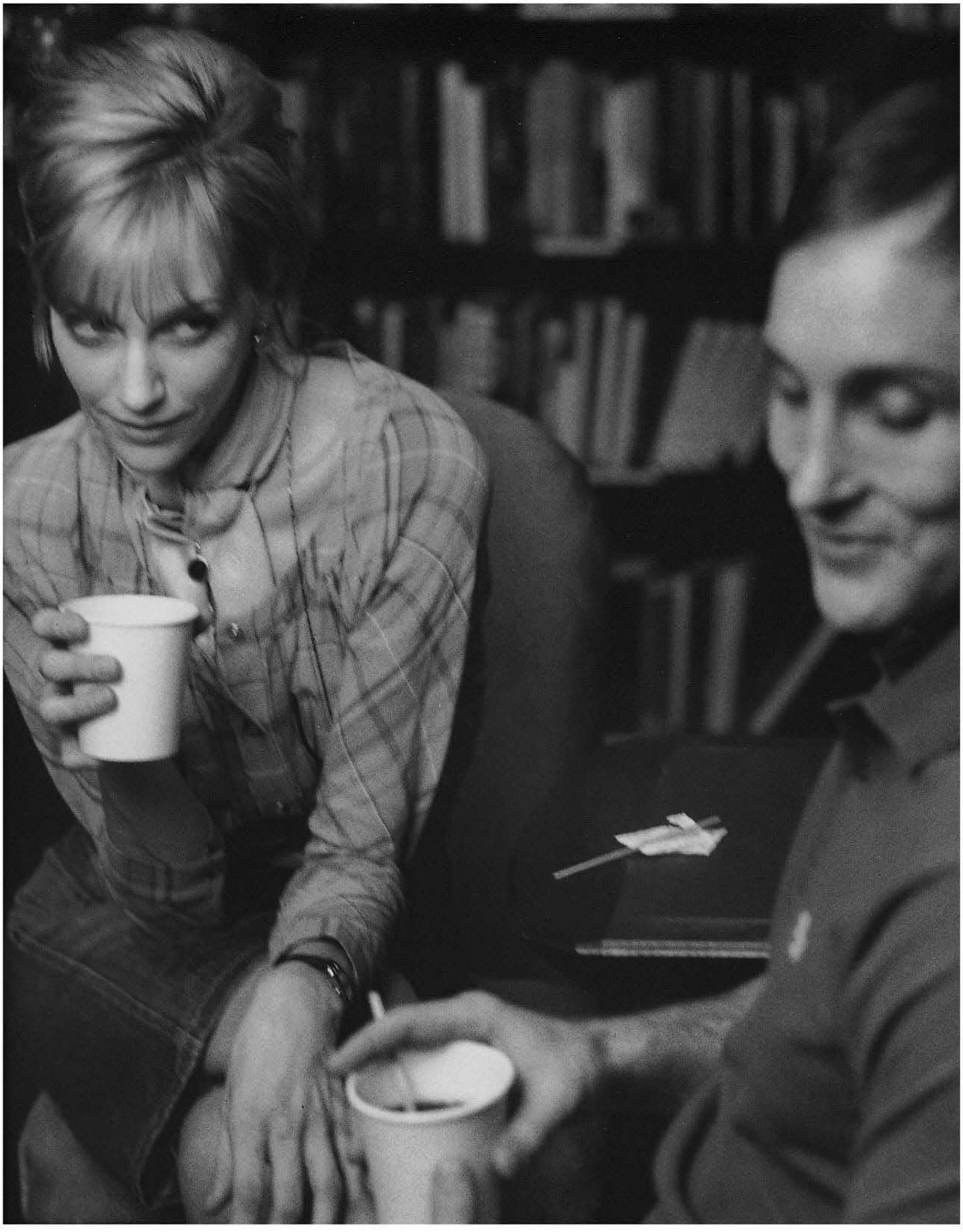


When Oliver brought her flowers, she touched his hand and did not blush.



Slowly, day by day, the way winter snow melts in spring
Annabella's heart stirred and grew green. At first she did
not say much, just this and that, and such and such.
Their lives began to rhyme as more they shared their time.
Oliver loved to read to her, and she loved to read to him.
They played the games lovers usually do. Sometimes she
would laugh a little girlish giggle because she was happy.





Once he kissed the wound on her cheek
to make it well, and it did.

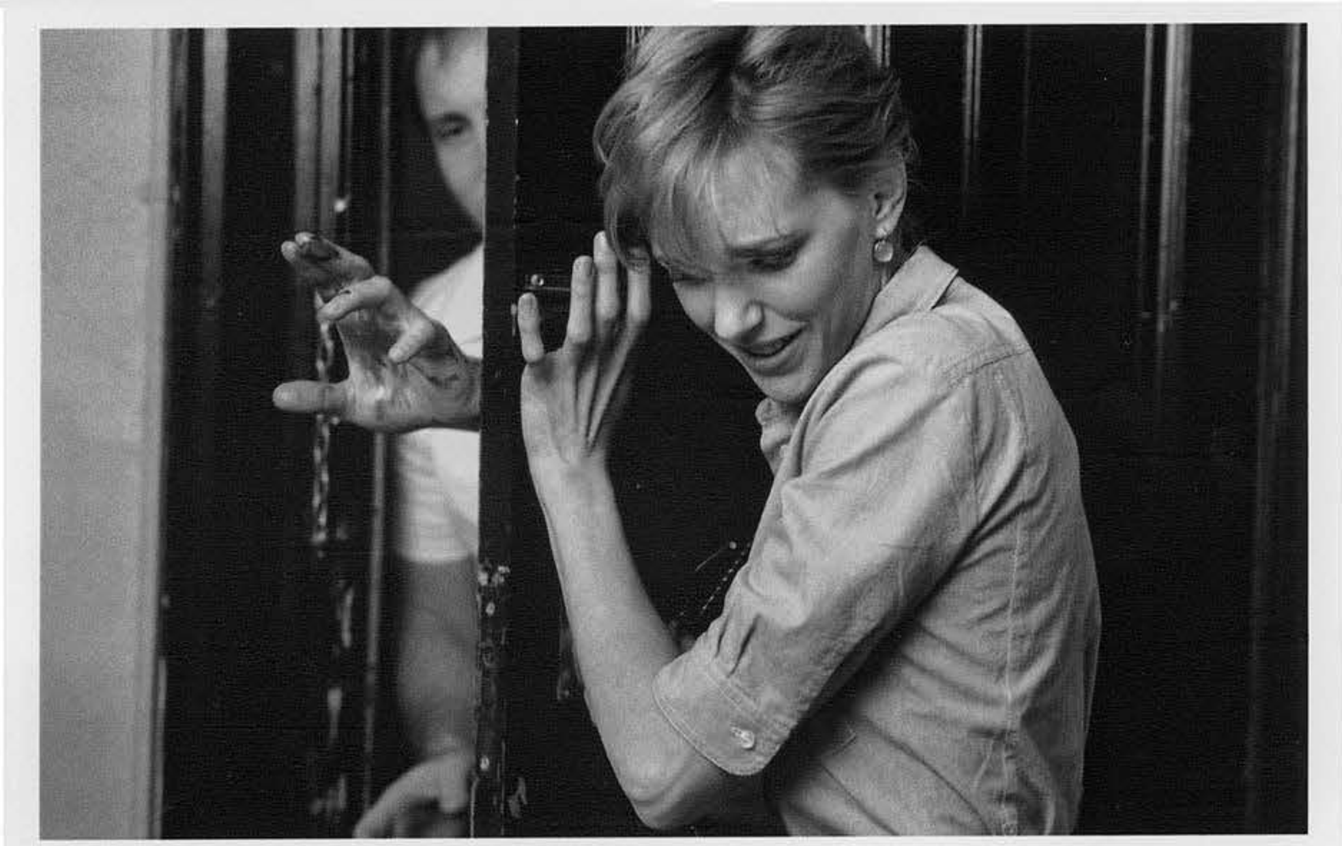
Like in a fairy tale, Olivier's love freed
her from Hortense's satanic spell.

And as Annabella began to thaw in the
warmth of his affection,

Her unsightly scar begn to fade.
First slightly faint, then fainter still

until it was gone. When she looked into
her mirror she cried, and he cried too.

Oliver went out to buy Annabella ice cream and became a victim in a crime scene. With a flash of knife, a mugger slashed him in the same place where Annabella had been defaced. Blood dripped erery where, on the floor, in his hair,



Her body was convulsed with revulsion. She despised the ugliness of the gash in his cheek and could not bear his imperfection. She raged with an irrational fury, that she had somehow been betrayed. When she stopped quivering, Annabella took to her chair with a book in her lap [redacted] staring straight ahead. As the room darkened, if one looked closely at her face, you could see a trace of red as her scar began to return.

Annabella's flaw was not that she had been physically damaged, but that she was not capable of giving compassion in kind that she had received from the one person who would ever love HER.