Night Kites may be a snapshot of 1980s first brushes with the AIDS epidemic, but it stands up impressively well. Reading Kerr's economical prose, as taut as Hemingway in places, as ruefully privileged as Salinger in others, remains a delight in 2021, and her keen, amused characterization is still incomparable. Obviously the many musical references are vintage now, and the notion that a financial-district kid living in the Hamptons would be preparing for SATs with only a Barron's study guide is quaintly archaic. However, the story of an illness that spreads fear and anger along with contagion takes on current resonance, and the homophobia, as virulent as HIV, is casual and savage in a way that may now be more curbed in some face to face encounters but is alive and well, especially online; Kerr's tacit calling out of its viciousness may have been as groundbreaking as her addressing the topic of AIDS. It's tempting to wonder where the characters would be now, to hope for sweet wisdom and sunny outcomes, but Kerr is such a mercilessly knowing writer that it's easier to imagine them as staying in their slightly improved ruts, melancholy as Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* as they reflexively turn their backs on possibility. Pull this out to display alongside Levithan's elegiac, celebratory *Two Boys Kissing* so that teens will read them in tandem and experience *Kissing*'s lost generation as they begin to go over the top.

- *Deborah Stevenson, Editor*