it is always such a long ride to the Establishment—not so far really—only the anticipation makes it long: like a journey into forgetfulness... so often almost there... very seldom there. even when we arrive we aren't in a geographical location; not two miles out of Bloomington, not in southern Indiana, not in the United States, only in the Establishment, on the Plantation, away from harshness and reality and into thought and intellect and humor—most important the humor. the first time we came: here on your right you see Union Valley Road... on your left (with the hand-painted sign) you see Confederate Ridge... that's only fair. ... don't you agree? as we started up Confederate Ridge i saw the Establishment. we are now crossing lynnie johnson memorial bridge (it was crumbling) and to your left you'll note Calvin Coolidge Expressway (sign also hand-painted). further up... the commentator continued. ... there's the bobby kennedy memorial drive (actually a turnaround-like fixture). you see... the Baron explained... the Establishment is what little is left of a progressive movement here (he always likes to talk in progressives and reformists and libs and conservs) you see: this started out as a housing development; but, as so often happens when the progressives bite off something, they didn't have enough cash to chew it: the streets got built and a couple of the houses were torn down, but that's all. the Establishment here... that's all that's left in this whole beautiful 140-acre southern Indiana hillside... and the pigpen beyond bobby kennedy memorial drive.

the Baron... it must be explained... is a male history student at Indiana University: actually i'm not in politics he would elaborate at an introduction: i'm studying to be a statesman... a qualified statesman. i believe that he will be—the Establishment proves it. the Baron and eight other politically-minded conservatives at IU rent the Establishment and publish from the Establishment a monthly magazine called the Alternative (simply an alternative to the new left which on the surface controls the campus). the Alternative is small but growing... has contributors like Goldwater and Buckley.

my first impression of the Establishment was that of amusement: the lawn in weeds... the back porch crumbling... no curtains at the windows... and a Wallace for President sign (which i knew was
strictly for confusion) on the door. I guess I expected too much: an inexpensive, respectable looking farmhouse. The farmhouse only materialized. As the Baron stood there with pride, I just laughed. You like it. . . I know you like it he said: wait till you see the inside. We came into the hall and he took my coat. There were books and manuscripts everywhere. I picked up the dummy for a coming issue. He took my arm: this is the John C. Calhoun room (a tropical fish tank, two chairs, a desk and books) and this is the Jeff Davis room (sofa, chair, stereo, fireplace and more books) the Blue Room is here (we were walking south in the Establishment) and it’s our room for relaxing: the Blue Room is a bar, complete with L-shaped bar, four barstools made from tree trunks with the limbs sawed off to form steps, and a communist flag stolen from the 1964 Olympics hanging side-by-side with a United Nations flag. The kitchen we aren’t too proud of he went on but we’re fixing it up. The John F. Kennedy room (the john) and the FDR room (the cellar) could use some improvement too, but it’s not crucial.

That’s the thing about the Establishment I guess: material things aren’t crucial. You hear of people living on truth and beauty but you rarely see an example. The people living at the Establishment are hard-working students: the editor-in-chief is working on his PhD in both history and journalism. The people come from well-to-do families, nice, well-to-do neighborhoods. They are conservatives and thinkers though: not hippies, they don’t smoke pot or take lsd or demonstrate. Through thought and the written word they are changing their society from the inside. They use jars for drinking glasses, get their plates out of soapboxes, watch all the sales on food. When you need quality you get it—at any price, but why support the inflationary libs the Baron would say . . . and so, as Beethoven’s fifth fills the Establishment with its excitement and rapture . . . the Baron starts a fire in the fireplace . . . hands me a book and goes out to check the steaks he is grilling (on exactly the right number of charcoals . . . so as not to waste any). The Establishment is a way of forgetting all the unimportant necessities. . . . the Establishment is a place of remembering to find oneself. . . . a journey well worth the distance.