

# HILOSOPHIE DER POLITIK EINHEITEN UND MÄCHTE DER UNIVERSALGESCHICHT

Three doors in the dark hallway: one to the right, ajar, and two to the left, both closed. Paul withdrew the pistol from the drawer. The weapon didn't feel as good to him as guns always felt in the hands of pulp heroes. Worse, the people who adopted Seraphim's baby might be anywhere in the nine-county Bay Area. Millions of phone listings to scan. Turning to face his four trailing escorts, all of whom were hunch shouldered and stiff-necked with tension, Barty said, "What's for dinner?" As he passed the living-room archway, he said, "Watch out for tidal waves, Uncle Jacob." "He's here as sure as I am, Barty. He's very busy, with a whole universe to run, so many people to look after, not just here but on other planets, like you've been reading about." As if he sensed her reluctance to return to Dr. Chan, Barty had kept her occupied with talk of the red planet as they approached the office building, had talked her off the street, along the driveway, and into a parking space, where finally she relinquished the fantasy of an endless road trip. At 5:45, long past the end of office hours, Dr. Chan's suite was quiet. A stab of horror punctured Celestina as she failed to repress a mental image of a carnival-sideshow monster, half dragon and half insect, coiled in her sister's womb. She hated the rapist's child but was appalled by her hatred, for the baby was blameless. No one was surprised by his proposal, her acceptance, and the wedding. Barty and Angel were both eighteen when they were married in June of 1983. Finally Angel dropped and slithered, vanishing under the overhanging bedclothes with a final flurry of yellow socks. Rowena loves you, Phimie had told him, briefly repressing the effects of her stroke to speak with clarity. Beezil and Feezil are safe with her Messages from his lost wife and children, where they waited for him beyond this life. In the physician's eyes, a yearning to believe. In his face, a squint of skepticism. Not incidentally, the project served as a vehicle by which some older citizens, in financial crisis, could receive money in a way that spared their dignity, gave them hope, and repaired their damaged self esteem. Agnes asked Obadiah to enrich the project by accepting a one year grant to record the story of his life with the help of the head librarian. "I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it, you understand," Neddy whispered with a sort of fierce conciliation, "but I'm not gay, and I'm not interested in teaching you the piano or anything else. Besides, after the stories Renee told about you, I can't imagine why you think any friend of his ... hers would get near you. You need help. Renee is what she is, but she's not a bad person, she's generous and she's sweet. She doesn't deserve to be beaten, abused, and ... and all those horrible things you did. Excuse me." "Well, as years pass, they're going to be a financial burden, if nothing else, so I'm glad I've got a little surprise for you." He was a patriotic guy, and he preferred American rock to the British brand. He had nothing against the English, no prejudices against people of any nationality. Nevertheless, he believed that the American Top 40 ought to feature American music exclusively. Kathleen and Nolly shifted their attention to Tom's clenched left hand, although the quarter could not possibly have traveled from one fist to the other. Further preparation—the purchase of gold coins and diamonds, the establishment of false identities—had to be delayed due to the hives. An hour short of dawn, Junior was awakened by a fierce itching not limited to his phantom toe. His entire body, over every plane and into every crevice, prickled and tingled and burned as with fever—and itched. When the ophthalmologist saw her misery, his kind face softened further, and his pity became palpable. The coin stopped turning across his knuckles and, as though with volition of its own, it slipped into the tight curve of his curled forefinger. With a snap of his thumb, he flipped the quarter into the air. Standing over the body, he squeezed off the last three shots. Finished, he detested guns more than ever. Blink, the living room. Turning off Sinatra halfway through "It Gets Lonely Early." He shook his head. "I think he's evil, not crazy. And stupid in the way that evil often is. Too arrogant and too vain to be aware of his stupidity—and therefore always tangled up in traps of his own making. But nonetheless dangerous for being stupid. In fact, far more dangerous than a wiser man with a sense of consequences." Junior glanced over his shoulder even as Celestina turned and fled. He caught only a glimpse of her disappearing into the inner hallway. Gifted with unusual powers of visual observation, the girl was quick to notice the slightest changes in her world. The sparkling engagement ring on Celestina's left hand had not escaped her notice. One of his favorite gifts for Christmas 1967 was a twelve-hole chromatic harmonica with forty-eight reeds providing a full three-octave range. Even in his little hands, and with the limitations of his small mouth, this more sophisticated instrument enabled him to produce full-bodied versions of any song that appealed to him. After examining Barty, Dr. Schurr sent them to the hospital for further tests. There they spent the rest of the day, except for an hour break during which they ate lunch in a burger joint. He capped the bottle, pocketed it, and then kicked the dead man, kicked him again, and spat on him. If such a small quantity of crushed ice, taken in a single swallow, might cause. This comment left Tom nonplussed. He could only imagine that Jacob had known someone who died in that crash—yet the twin's tone of voice and his expression seemed to suggest that a world without the Bakersfield train wreck would be a less convivial place than one that included it. Whether making love or killing, he was never guided by bigotry. A private little joke with himself. But true. "Each life," Barty Lampion said, "is like our oak tree in the backyard but lots bigger. One trunk to start with, and then all the branches, millions of branches, and every branch is the same life going in a new direction." "And," Joshua cautioned, "you better prepare for a long day. I'm pretty sure Dr. Chan will want to consult with an oncologist." The doors slid open, and they rolled Barty corridor to corridor, past the scrub sinks, to a waiting surgical nurse in green cap, mask, and gown. She alone effected his transfer into the positive pressure of the surgery. "Wally," Celestina said, without hesitation, because suddenly she saw something of a Wally in his green eyes, which were livelier than they had been before. Thursday evening, his third in the hotel, he returned to the lounge for cocktails and another steak. The same tuxedoed pianist provided the entertainment. Behind his masking hands, the physician let out a thin sound, as though he were trying to pull from his heart an anguish that was embedded like a bur with countless sharp,

hooked thorns..No hesitation preceded Grace's response. "That's very generous of you, Paul. And I, for one, accept. Is this the house where you lived with your Perri?".He was immensely weary, limp. He felt oppressed, as though a great weight were piled on him. Even keeping his eyes open was tiring..Twice would indicate a dangerous mania. Three times would be indefensible. But once was healthy experimentation. A learning experience..Although rain-pasted to her skin, the fine hairs rose on the nape of her neck. The gooseflesh crawling across her arms had nothing to do with her cold, wet clothes..Cypresses lined the entry drive to the cemetery. Tall and solemn, the trees kept guard, as though posted to prevent restless spirits from roaming out into the land of the living..Tom knew only three of the eight. Grace White, Angel, and Paul Damascus. The others were introduced quickly by Celestina. Agnes Lampion, their hostess. Edom and Jacob Isaacson, brothers to Agnes. Maria Gonzalez, best friend to Agnes. And Barty..Celestina slammed the door, pressed the lock button in the knob, shoved-rocked-muscled the dresser in front of the door, astonished by her own strength, and heard Angel speaking into the phone: "Mommy's moving furniture.".During the course of this momentous day, he had employed Zedd learned techniques to channel his hot anger into a red-hot rage. Now, without any conscious effort on his part, rage grew into molten-white fury..He didn't rely on sounds to help him find his way, though here and there one served as a marker of his progress. Twelve paces from his room, a floorboard squeaked almost inaudibly under the hallway carpet, which told him that he was seventeen paces from the head of the stairs. He didn't need that muffled creak to know exactly where he was, but it always reassured him..Ordinarily, a child of three would be too young to learn the use of a blind man's cane, but Barty wasn't ordinary. Initially, no cane was available for such a small child, so Barty began with a yardstick sawn off to twenty-six inches. By his last day, they had for him a custom cane, white with a black tip; the sight of it and all that it implied brought tears to Agnes just when she thought her heart had toughened for the task ahead..Junior knew that she must be teasing him. Her sense of play was delicious. Such devilry in her scintillant blue eyes, such sauciness..Even at this post midnight hour, the lounge would sometimes be as crowded with worried loved ones as at any other time of the day. This morning, however, the only life under the threat of the scythe appeared to be Wally's; the sole vigil being kept was for him..A sense of mystery overcame Agnes, unnerving but not entirely or even primarily unpleasant..Now, without realizing when it had happened, he had been lowered from his knees to his right side. Head elevated and tilted by one of the paramedics. So he could expel the bile, the blood, rather than choke on it..How ironic it would be if Celestina, the aunt of Seraphim's bastard boy, proved to be the heart mate for whom Junior had been longing through the past few years of unsatisfying relationships and casual sex. This seemed unlikely, considering the jejune quality of her paintings, but perhaps he could help her to grow and to evolve as an artist. He was an open-minded man, without prejudices, so anything could happen after the child was found and killed..Minutes later, once more in a corridor conference with Dr. Daines, she was forced to temper her new optimism..Not cheerful, life-loving, high-spirited, churchgoing Naomi. She saw every day through a golden haze that came from the sun in her heart..And now she didn't need him anymore. He gazed at her face, held her cooling hand; his anchor was slipping away from him, leaving him adrift..He chased after none of these lovelies beyond a few dates, and none of them pursued him when he was done with them, although surely they were distressed if not bereft at losing him..Although she had acutely felt the loss of Joey during the past three years, she had never missed him as much as she missed him now. Marriage is an expression of love and respect and trust and faith in the future, but the union of husband and wife is also an alliance against the challenges and tragedies of life, a promise that with me in your corner, you will never stand alone..He reached the end of the alleyway, stumbled into the stream of pedestrians, nearly knocked over an elderly Chinese man, turned, and discovered ... no Vanadium..The dear man cried and kissed her scars and told her that she was as beautiful as any woman alive. They stood then for a while, embracing, his hands upon her back, her breasts against his chest, and twice they kissed, but almost chastely, before she put on her blouse again..Pecan cakes, cinnamon custard pies boxed in insulated coolers, gifts wrapped with bright paper and glittery ribbons. Agnes Lampion made deliveries to those friends who were on her list of the needful, but also to friends who were blessed with plenty. The sight of each beloved face, each embrace, each kiss, each smile, each cheerfully spoken "Merry Christmas" at every stop fortified her heart for the sad task awaiting her when all gifts were given..Draped across his midsection, the terrible cold weight had chilled his flesh; but now his bone marrow prickled with ice at the thought of the birthmarked detective sitting silently in the dark, watching. Junior would have preferred dealing with Naomi, dead and risen and seriously pissed, rather than with this dangerously patient man..terrified, the thorns pricking so close to his eyes, green points combing his lashes. He's too weak to resist, disabled."I suppose anyone could fill some empty gelatin capsules with the syrup," said Parkhurst. "But-" "Roll your own, so to speak. Then he could palm a few of them, swallow 'em without water, and the reaction would be delayed maybe.He was filled with bitter remorse for having suspected Naomi of poisoning his cheese sandwich or his apricots. She-had in fact adored him, as he had always believed. She would never have lifted a hand against him, never. Dear Naomi would have died for him. In fact, she had..Sitting in Simon Magusson's mahogany-paneled office, reading the contents of this file, Junior was aghast. "I could have been killed..".Fathoms of silence flooded the line. Still, she listened. He sensed her there, though as if at a great depth..The receptionist, Rebecca, had stayed late, just to keep company with Barty in the waiting room. As she settled into a chair beside the boy, he asked her if she knew what gravity was on Mars, and when she confessed ignorance, he said, "Only thirty-seven percent what it is here. You can really jump on Mars..".During the cleaning, installation of new carpet, and painting that had followed the removal of the diarrhetic pig set loose by one of Cain's disgruntled girlfriends, the wife killer had spent a few nights in a hotel. Nolly took advantage of the opportunity to bring his associate James Hunnicolt--Jimmy Gadget-onto the premises to provide a customized, undetectable, exterior window-latch release..Harmonizing with Diana Ross, Mary Wilson, and Florence Ballard, he drove to the

granite quarry three miles beyond the town limits..Because of his blindness and his intellectual gifts, Barty was home schooled; besides, no teacher was a match for his autodidactic skills, nor could anyone possibly inspire in him a greater thirst for knowledge than the one with which he had been born. Angel went to this same informal classroom, and her sole fellow student was also her teacher. They aced the periodic equivalency tests that the law required. Their constant companionship seemed to be all play, yet was filled with constant learning, too..Murder itself was easy, but the aftermath was more draining than he had anticipated. Although the ultimate liability settlement with the state was certain to leave him financially secure for life, the stress was so great that he wondered, in his darker moments, if the reward would prove to be worth the risk..Celestina had wanted to go to Oregon for the service, but Tom, Max Bellini, the Spruce Hills police, and Wally Lipscomb-to whom, by Sunday, she'd begun talking almost hourly on the telephone-all advised strenuously against making the trip. A man as crazed and as reckless as Enoch Cain, expecting to find her at the funeral home or the cemetery, might not be deterred by a police guard, no matter what its size..In the gallery windows, eight of the nine sculptures were so disturbing that many passersby, catching sight of them, blanched and looked away and hurried on. Not everyone can be a connoisseur..Naomi's beautiful countenance rose in his mind, and she looked beautiful for a moment, but then he thought he saw a certain slyness in her angelic smile, a disturbing glint of calculation in her once loving eyes..Worse, to make credible his anguish and to avoid suspicion, he would have to play the devastated widower for at least another couple weeks, perhaps for as long as a month. As a dedicated follower of the self-improvement advice of Dr. Caesar Zedd, Junior was impatient with those who were ruled by sentimentality and by the expectations of society, and now he was required to pretend to be one of them-and for an interminable period of time..Outside, flames churned to the left and right of the opening. The front of the house was afire..He liked her face, too. She wore no makeup, and pulled her brown hair back in a bun. Some might say she was mousy, but the only things mousy that Nolly saw about her were a piquant tilt to her nose and a certain cuteness..He still had a sour taste in his mouth, although it was not as disgusting as it had been. All the odors were wonderfully clean and bracing--antiseptics, floor wax, freshly laundered bedsheets-without a whiff of.It was the best he could do in protest against the misuse of good work and a good ship. He was pleased with himself. When the ship was launched (and all seemed well with her, for her fault would not show up until she was out on the open sea) he could not keep from his teachers what he had done, the little circle of old men and midwives, the young hunchback who could speak with the dead, the blind girl who knew the names of things. He told them his trick, and the blind girl laughed, but the old people said, "Look out. Take care. Keep hidden."..Everyone confronted Agnes with expressions of puzzlement and expectation, and she looked from one to another. Paul. Maria. Francesca. Bonita. Grace. Edom. Jacob. Finally Celestina.."Oh!" She blotted her eyes on the heels of her hands. "Wait! Give me a second chance. I can do it better, I'm sure I can."..He wasn't required to torture himself in search of pleasant conversation with those they visited. Agnes had virtually invented pleasant conversation..Everyone regarded him expectantly, as if there would be more magic, as if flipping a coin into another reality was something you saw every week or two on the Ed Sullivan Show, between the acrobats and the jugglers who could balance ten spinning plates on ten tall sticks simultaneously.."September 27, 1962. Barcelona, Spain. A flood killed four hundred forty-five people.".."So what I am is I'm your talking eyes." Lowering her hand from his face, Angel said, "Do you know where bacon comes from?"..rearview mirror was not hung with one of those tacky decorative deodorizers. The seats, regularly treated with leather soap, were softer and more supple than they had been when the car had shipped out of..If Cain had been attracted to one woman by her looks, surely he would be attracted to the other. And perhaps the sisters shared a quality other than beauty that drew Cain with even greater power. Innocence, perhaps, or goodness: both foods for a demon..Because drugs foil all efforts at self-improvement, Junior had no use for the cocaine and acid. He didn't dare sell them to recover his money; even five thousand dollars wasn't worth risking arrest. Instead, he gave the pharmaceuticals to a group of young boys playing basketball in a schoolyard, and wished them a Merry Christmas. The twenty-fourth of December began with rain, but the storm moved south soon after dawn. Sunshine tinselled the city, and the streets filled with last-minute holiday shoppers..Junior didn't slow as he passed the house, but circled the block and drove by the place again..Quick introductions were made in the process of moving from the porch to the foyer, and Agnes said, "Come on back to the kitchen, I'm baking pies."..Another small pane of glass burst. A dismaying crack of wood. His back to her, the maniac raged at the window with the snarling ferocity of a caged beast..The 9-mm pistol and the ammunition were on the foyer table. With trembling hands, Junior tore open the boxes and loaded the gun..Through the big window beyond her, the charry branches of the massive oak tree formed a black cat's cradle against the sky, leaves quivering slightly, as though nature herself trembled in trepidation of what Junior Cain might do..He also concluded arrangements to open an account for Gammoner in a Grand Cayman Island bank and one for Pinchbeck in Switzerland..Always, he was good with Barty, and on this occasion, he teased more than the usual number of smiles and giggles from the boy as he tried to get him to read the Snellen chart on the wall. Then he lowered the lights in the examination room to study his eyes with an ophthalmometer and an ophthalmoscope..Settling onto the empty stool beside this beauty, Junior offered to buy her a drink, and she accepted..he had sat here with a pencil, making shopping lists. Now, instead of a pencil, there was the Italian-made .22 pistol..The maniac kicked once more, but because of the bracing dresser, the door wouldn't budge, so he kicked harder, again without success..He was astonished that adoption records would be sealed and so closely guarded when a child was being placed with a member of its immediate family, with its mother's sister..A new quarry, operated by the same company, lay a mile farther north. This was the old one, abandoned after decades of cutting..A pathologically suspicious cop, aware of Junior's acute.; emesis following Naomi's death, might imagine a connection between this epic bout of diarrhea and Victoria's murder, and Vanadium's disappearance Here was an avenue of speculation that he did

not want to encourage..So that my mind could move about among the years and centuries without getting things all out of order, and to keep contradictions and discrepancies at a minimum while I was writing these stories, I became (somewhat) more systematic and methodical, and put my knowledge of the peoples and their history together into "A Description of Earthsea." Its function is like that of the first big map I drew of all the Archipelago and the Reaches, when I began to work on A Wizard of Earthsea over thirty years ago: I needed to know where things are, and how to get from here to there-in time as well as in space..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there." Angel followed him and observed as he climbed a stepstool and unhooked the telephone handset. He dialed with little pause between digits, and spoke with each of his uncles..Behind her, he said, "And is that my gray cardigan? What did you do to my cardigan?""It's just that you never know what anyone's hand has been up to recently," Jacob explained. "That respectable banker down the street might have thirty dismembered women buried in his backyard. The nice church-going lady next door might be sleeping in the same bed with the rotting corpse of a lover who tried to jilt her, and for a hobby she makes jewelry from the finger bones of preschool children she's tortured and murdered."..This guy was spooky. Junior was beginning to think that the detective's unorthodox behavior wasn't a carefully crafted strategy, as it had first seemed, but that Vanadium was a little wacky..The coin stopped turning, pinched flat between the knuckles of the cops middle and ring fingers. He retrieved a box of Kleenex from the nightstand and offered it to his suspect. "Here."..On a street a half mile from the airport in Eugene, he sat in the parked Dodge long enough to gingerly unwind the bandages and use a tissue to wipe off the pungent but useless salve he'd purchased at a pharmacy. Although he pressed the Kleenex to his face so gently that the pressure might not have broken the surface tension on a pool of water, the agony of the touch was so great that he nearly passed out. The rearview mirror revealed clusters of hideous, large, red knobs with glistening yellow heads, and at the sight of himself, he actually did pass out for a minute or two, just long enough to dream that he was a grotesque but misunderstood creature being pursued through a stormy night by crowds of angry villagers with torches and pitchforks, but then the throbbing agony revived him..Although he didn't believe in destiny, in fate, in anything more than himself and his own ability to shape his future, Junior couldn't deny how extraordinary it was that this woman should cross his path at this precise moment in his life, when he was frustrated to the point of cerebral hemorrhage by his inability to find Bartholomew, confused and nervous about the phantom singer and other apparently supernatural events in his life, and generally in a funk unlike any he had ever known before. Here was a link to Seraphim and, through Seraphim, to Bartholomew.."Go home. Sleep," he said. "You'll be no help to your sister if you wind up a patient here yourself."..When Renee, sweetly oblivious of her looming doom, claimed to have inherited a sizable industrial-valve fortune, Junior thought she might be inventing the wealth or at least exaggerating to make herself more desirable. But when he accompanied her back to her place, he discovered a level of luxury that proved she wasn't a shop girl with fantasies..Wally's help, not just with the apartment, but with his time and love, had made an incalculable difference..Alarmed, concerned that his patient's emotional reaction would lead to racking sobs, which in turn might stimulate abdominal spasms and renewed vomiting, Parkhurst called for a nurse and prescribed the immediate administration of diazepam..Even the Shantung-softened lamplight blazed too bright and did not serve her well, so she switched it off and said, "Scoot over."..He shook so badly that he couldn't remove the cap from the bottle. He was proud to be more sensitive than most people, to be so full of feeling, but sometimes sensitivity was a curse..WITH A CRASH as loud as the dire crack of heaven opening on Judgment Day, the Ford pickup broadsided the Pontiac. Agnes couldn't hear the first fraction of her scream, and not much of the rest of it, either, as I..Sitting at the desk, Celestina phoned her parents again. She shook uncontrollably, but her voice was steady..Edom, eager to learn precisely when a tidal wave or falling asteroid would bring his doom, fetched a pack of cards from a cabinet in the parlor. When Maria explained that only every third card was read and that a full look at the future required four decks, Edom returned to the parlor to scare up three more..The dining table could accommodate six, and Agnes instructed Maria to set two places on each of the long sides, leaving the ends unused. "It'll be cozier if we all sit across from one another."..What if the stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit of Thomas Vanadium, which had earlier pursued Junior through another alleyway in broad daylight, had followed him into this one in the more ghost-friendly hours of the night, and what if that spirit were standing just outside the Dumpster right now, and what if it closed the bifurcated lid and slipped a bolt through the latch rings, and what if Junior were trapped here with the thoroughly strangled corpse of Neddy Gnathic, and what if the flashlight failed when he tried to switch it on again, and then what if in the pitch-blackness he heard Neddy say, "Does anyone have a special request?""You can't take much of anything by mouth for a few hours yet," said the nurse. "Nausea is too great a risk. Retching might start you hemorrhaging again."..Junior stalked her, but she eluded him. Always, the song seemed to arise from the next room, but when he passed through the doorway into that space, the voice then sounded as if it came from the room that he'd just left..Before he taught himself to read books, he also taught himself numbers, and then how to read a clock. The significance of time had a more profound impact on him than Agnes could understand, perhaps because acquiring an awareness of the infinite nature of the universe and the finite nature of each human life-and fully understanding the implications of this knowledge-takes most of us till early adulthood if not later, whereas for Barty, the vast glories of the universe and the comparatively humble nature of human existence were recognized, contemplated, and absorbed in a matter of weeks..She dealt with them equally, too, favoring neither-except in-the matter of pie delivery. On those rare occasions when she could not make these rounds herself and when she had no one to turn to but a brother, Agnes always asked for Edom's help..-and whenever the good Pharaoh was here in San Francisco, a few times each year, he always stopped by St. Anselmo's to entertain the boys--".Of course, Angel might have been playing around with the talking book. Or, even though she'd left the dolls downstairs, she might have been filling the time until

Barty's return by having a nice chat with Miss Pixie and Miss Velveeta. She had other voices, too, for other dolls, and one for a sock puppet named Smelly. "I find you more than adequate in all ways that count. Besides, Joey was a generous and good lover. What he taught me, I can share." She smiled. "You'll find that I'm a darn good teacher, and I sense in you a star pupil." Regrettably, at 2:00 A.M., February 28, waking alone in Tammy's bed, Junior sought her out and found her snacking in the kitchen. Forsaking a fork in favor of her fingers, she was eating a. He opened his mouth but stood mute. Raised his right hand from his side. Worked his fingers in the air, as though the needed words could be strummed from the ether. He felt stupid, foolish. The detective gazed at the cash as longingly as a glutton might stare at a custard pie, as intensely as a satyr might ogle a naked blonde. "Impossible. Too damn much integrity in their system. You might as well ask me to go to Buckingham Palace and fetch you a pair of the queen's undies." Evidently, the hero was accustomed to encounters of this nature. He rose, pulled out the unused fourth chair. "Please sit with us." This rosarium was Edom's only relationship with nature that did not inspire terror in him. Agnes believed that Joey's enthusiasm for the restoration of the garden was, in part, the reason why Edom had not tamed as far inward as Jacob and why he'd remained better able than his twin to function beyond the walls of his apartment. Clearly, the musician recognized him, which seemed unlikely, even extraordinary, considering that they'd never spoken to each other, and considering that Junior must be only one of thousands of customers who had passed through that lounge in the past three years. If he woke, however, and saw her sitting vigil, Barty would understand how terrible his condition might be. A speeding truck passed, stirring the fog, and the white broth churned past the car windows, a disorienting swirl. He was a pretty good detective, but as regarded the minutiae of daily life, he wasn't as organized as he would like to be. He never remembered to set aside his holey socks for darning; and once he had worn a hat with a bullet hole in it for nearly a year before he'd at last thought to buy a new one. Junior's body betrayed him as before, and also in new ways that terrified and humiliated him, involving every bodily fluid except cerebrospinal. For a while, inside that rocking ambulance, he wished that he were in a gondola upon the waters of the Styx, his misery at an end.

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