Beyond, William Faulkner

Beyond

THE HARD ROUND ear of the stethoscope was cold and unpleasant upon his naked chest; the room, big and square, furnished with clumsy walnut — the bed where he had first slept alone, which had been his marriage bed, in which his son had been conceived and been born and lain dressed for the coffin — the room familiar for sixty-five years, by ordinary peaceful and lonely and so peculiarly his own as to have the same odor which he had, seemed to be cluttered with people, though there were but three of them and all of them he knew: Lucius Peabody who should have been down town attending to his medical practice, and the two Negroes, the one who should be in the kitchen and the other with the lawn mower on the lawn, making some pretence toward earning the money which on Saturday night they would expect.

But worst of all was the hard cold little ear of the stethoscope, worse even than the outrage of his bared chest with its fine delicate matting of gray hair. In fact, about the whole business there was just one alleviating circumstance.

“At least,” he thought with fretted and sardonic humor, “I am spared that uproar of female connections which might have been my lot, which is the ordinary concomitant of occasions of marriage or divorcement. And if he will just move his damned little toy telephone and let my niggers go back to work—”

And then, before he had finished the thought, Peabody did remove the stethoscope. And then, just as he was settling himself back into the pillow with a sigh of fretted relief, one of the Negroes, the woman, set up such a pandemonium of wailing as to fetch him bolt upright in the bed, his hands to his ears.

The Negress stood at the foot of the bed, her long limber black hands motionless on the footboard, her eyes whitely backrolled into her skull and her mouth wide open, while from it rolled slow billows of soprano sound as mellow as high-register organ tones and wall-shattering as a steamer siren.

“Chlory!” he shouted. “Stop that!” She didn’t stop. Apparently she could neither see nor hear. “You, Jake!” he shouted to the Negro man who stood beside her, his hands too on the footboard, his face brooding upon the bed with an expression darkly and profoundly enigmatic; “get her out of here!

At once!” But Jake too did not move, and he then turned to Peabody in angry outrage. “Here! Loosh! Get these damn niggers out of here!” But Peabody also did not seem to hear him. The Judge watched him methodically folding the stethoscope into its case; glared at him for a moment longer while the woman’s shattering noise billowed through the room. Then he flung the covers back and rose from the bed and hurried furiously from the room and from the house.

At once he realized that he was still in his pajamas, so he buttoned his overcoat. It was of broadcloth, black, brushed, of an outmoded elegance, with a sable collar. “At least they didn’t have time to hide this from me,” he thought in fretted rage. “Now, if I just had my. . . .” He looked down at his feet. “Ah. I seem to have. . . .”

He looked at his shoes. “That’s fortunate, too.” Then the momentary surprise faded too, now that outrage had space in which to disseminate itself. He touched his hat, then he put his hand to his lapel. The jasmine

was there. Say what he would, curse Jake as he often had to do, the Negro never forgot whatever flower in its season.

Always it would be there, fresh and recent and unblemished, on the morning coffee tray. The flower and the. . . . He clasped his ebony stick beneath his arm and opened the briefcase. The two fresh handkerchiefs were there, beside the book. He thrust one of them into his breast pocket and went on. After a while the noise of Chlory's wailing died away.

Then for a little while it was definitely unpleasant. He detested crowds: the milling and aimless and patient stupidity; the concussion of life-quick flesh with his own. But presently, if not soon, he was free, and standing so, still a little ruffled, a little annoyed, he looked back with fading outrage and distaste at the throng as it clotted quietly through the entrance.

With fading distaste until the distaste was gone, leaving his face quiet and quite intelligent, with a faint and long constant overtone of quizzical bemusement not yet tinctured with surprised speculation, not yet puzzled, not yet wary. That was to come later. Hence it did not show in his voice, which was now merely light, quizzical, contained, "There seems to be quite a crowd of them."

"Yes," the other said. The Judge looked at him and saw a young man in conventional morning dress with some subtle effluvium of weddings, watching the entrance with a strained, patient air.

"You are expecting someone?" the Judge said.

Now the other looked at him. “Yes. You didn’t see — But you don’t know her.”

“Know whom?”

“My wife. That is, she is not my wife yet. But the wedding was to be at noon.”

“Something happened, did it?”

“I had to do it.” The young man looked at him, strained, anxious. “I was late. That’s why I was driving fast. A child ran into the road. I was going too fast to stop. So I had to turn.”

“But you missed the child?”

“Yes.” The other looked at him. “You don’t know her?”

“And are you waiting here to. . . .” The judge stared at the other. His eyes were narrowed, his gaze was piercing, hard. He said suddenly, sharply, “Nonsense.”

“What? What did you say?” the other asked with his vague, strained, almost beseeching air. The Judge looked away.

His frowning concentration, his reflex of angry astonishment, was gone. He seemed to have wiped it from his face by a sudden deliberate action. He was like a man who, not a swordsman, has practiced with a blade a little against a certain improbable crisis, and who suddenly finds himself, blade in hand, face to face with the event. He looked at the entrance, his face alert, musing swiftly: he seemed to muse upon the entering faces with a still and furious concentration, and quietly; quietly he looked about, then at the other again. The young man still watched him.

“You’re looking for your wife too, I suppose,” he said. “I hope you find her. I hope you do.” He spoke with a sort of quiet despair. “I suppose she is old, as you are. It must be hell on the one who has to watch and wait for the other one he or she has grown old in marriage with, because it is so terrible to wait and watch like me, for a girl who is a maiden to you.

Of course I think mine is the most unbearable. You see if it had only been the next day — anything. But then if it had, I guess I could not have turned out for that kid. I guess I just think mine is so terrible. It can’t be as bad as I think it is. It just can’t be. I hope you find her.”

The Judge’s lip lifted. “I came here to escape someone; not to find anyone.” He looked at the other. His face was still broken with that grimace which might have been smiling. But his eyes were not smiling. “If I were looking for anybody, it would probably be my son.”

“Oh. A son. I see.”

“Yes. He would be about your age. He was ten when he died.”

“Look for him here.”

Now the Judge laughed outright, save for his eyes. The other watched him with that grave anxiety leavened now with quiet interested curiosity. “You mean you don’t believe?” The Judge laughed aloud. Still laughing, he produced a cloth sack of tobacco and rolled a slender cigarette.

When he looked up, the other was watching the entrance again. The Judge ceased to laugh.

“Have you a match?” he said. The other looked at him. The Judge raised the cigarette. “A match.”

The other sought in his pockets. “No.” He looked at the Judge. “Look for him here,” he said.

“Thank you,” the Judge answered. “I may avail myself of your advice later.” He turned away. Then he paused and looked back. The young man was watching the entrance. The Judge watched him, bemused, his lip lifted. He turned on, then he stopped still. His face was now completely shocked, into complete immobility like a mask; the sensitive, worn mouth, the delicate nostrils, the eyes all pupil or pupilless.

He could not seem to move at all. Then Mothershed turned and saw him. For an instant Mothershed’s pale eyes flickered, his truncated jaw, collapsing steadily with a savage, toothless motion, ceased.

“Well?” Mothershed said.

“Yes,” the Judge said; “it’s me.” Now it was that, as the mesmerism left him, the shadow bewildered and wary and complete, touched his face. Even to himself his words sounded idiotic. “I thought that you were dea. . . .” Then he made a supreme and gallant effort, his voice light, quizzical, contained again, “Well?”

Mothershed looked at him — a squat man in a soiled and mismatched suit stained with grease and dirt, his soiled collar innocent of tie — with a pale, lightly slumbering glare filled with savage outrage. “So they got you here, too, did they?”

“That depends on who you mean by ‘they’ and what you mean by ‘here.’”

Mothershed made a savage, sweeping gesture with one arm. “Here, by God! The preachers. The Jesus shouters.”

“Ah,” the Judge said. “Well, if I am where I am beginning to think I am, I don’t know whether I am here or not. But you are not here at all, are you?” Mothershed cursed violently. “Yes,” the Judge said, “we never thought, sitting in my office on those afternoons, discussing Voltaire and Ingersoll, that we should ever be brought to this, did we?

You, the atheist whom the mere sight of a church spire on the sky could enrage; and I who have never been able to divorce myself from reason enough to accept even your pleasant and labor-saving theory of nihilism.”

“Labor-saving!” Mothershed cried. “By God, I. . . .” He cursed with impotent fury. The Judge might have been smiling save for his eyes. He sealed the cigarette again.

“Have you a match?”

“What?” Mothershed said. He glared at the Judge, his mouth open. He sought through his clothes. From out the savage movement, strapped beneath his armpit, there peeped fleetly the butt of a heavy pistol. “No,” he said. “I ain’t.”

“Yes,” the Judge said. He twisted the cigarette, his gaze light, quizzical. “But you still haven’t told me what you are doing here. I heard that you had. . . .”

Again Mothershed cursed, prompt, outraged. “I ain’t. I just committed suicide.” He glared at the Judge. “God damn it, I remember raising the pistol; I remember the little cold ring it made against my ear; I remember when I told my finger on the trigger. . . .”

He glared at the Judge. “I thought that that would be one way I could escape the preachers, since by the church’s own token. . . .”. He glared at the Judge, his pale gaze apoplectic and outraged. “Well, I know why you are here. You come here looking for that boy.”

The Judge looked down, his lip lifted, the movement pouched upward about his eyes. He said quietly, “No.”

Mothershed watched him, glared at him. “Looking for that boy. Agnosticism.” He snarled it. “Won’t say ‘Yes’ and won’t say ‘No’ until you see which way the cat will jump. Ready to sell out to the highest bidder. By God, I’d rather have give up and died in sanctity, with every heaven-yelping fool in ten miles around. . . .”

“No,” the Judge said quietly behind the still, dead gleam of his teeth. Then his teeth vanished quietly, though he did not look up. He sealed the cigarette carefully again. “There seem to be a lot of people here.” Mothershed now began to watch him with speculation, tasting his savage gums, his pale furious glare arrested. “You have seen other familiar faces besides my own here, I suppose. Even those of men whom you know only by name, perhaps?”

“Oh,” Mothershed said. “I see. I get you now.” The Judge seemed to be engrossed in the cigarette. “You want to take a whirl at them too, do you? Go ahead. I hope you will get a little more out of them that will

stick to your guts than I did. Maybe you will, since you don't seem to want to know as much as you want something new to be uncertain about. Well, you can get plenty of that from any of them."

"You mean you have. . . ."

Again Mothershed cursed, harsh, savage. "Sure. Ingersoll. Paine. Every bastard one of them that I used to waste my time reading when I had better been sitting on the sunny side of a log."

"Ah," the Judge said. "Ingersoll. Is he. . . ."

"Sure. On a bench just inside the park yonder. And maybe on the same bench you'll find the one that wrote the little women books. If he ain't there, he ought to be."

So the Judge sat forward, elbows on knees, the unlighted cigarette in his fingers. "So you too are reconciled," he said. The man who Mothershed said was Ingersoll looked at his profile quietly. "To this place."

"Ah," the other said. He made a brief, short gesture. "Reconciled."

The Judge did not look up. "You accept it? You acquiesce?" He seemed to be absorbed in the cigarette. "If I could just see Him, talk to Him." The cigarette turned slowly in his fingers. "Perhaps I was seeking Him. Perhaps I was seeking Him all the time I was reading your books, and Voltaire and Montesquieu. Perhaps I was." The cigarette turned slowly. "I have believed in you. In your sincerity.

I said, if Truth is to be found by man, this man will be among those who find it. At one time — I was in the throes of that suffering from a still green hurt which causes even an intelligent man to cast about for

anything, any straw — I had a foolish conceit: you will be the first to laugh at it as I myself did later.

I thought, perhaps there is a hereafter, a way station into nothingness perhaps, where for an instant lesser men might speak face to face with men like you whom they could believe; could hear from such a man's own lips the words: 'There is hope,' or: 'There is nothing.' I said to myself, in such case it will not be Him whom I shall seek; it will be Ingersoll or Paine or Voltaire." He watched the cigarette. "Give me your word now. Say either of these to me. I will believe."

The other looked at the Judge for a time. Then he said, "Why? Believe why?"

The paper about the cigarette had come loose. The Judge twisted it carefully back, handling the cigarette carefully. "You see, I had a son. He was the last of my name and race. After my wife died we lived alone, two men in the house.

It had been a good name, you see. I wanted him to be manly, worthy of it. He had a pony which he rode all the time. I have a photograph of them which I use as a bookmark. Often, looking at the picture or watching them unbeknownst as they passed the library window, I would think What hopes ride yonder; of the pony I would think What burden do you blindly bear, dumb brute.

One day they telephoned me at my office. He had been found dragging from the stirrup. Whether the pony had kicked him or he had struck his head in falling, I never knew."

He laid the cigarette carefully on the bench beside him and opened the briefcase. He took out a book. “Voltaire’s Philosophical Dictionary,” he said. “I always carry a book with me. I am a great reader. It happens that my life is a solitary one, owing to the fact that I am the last of my family, and perhaps to the fact that I am a Republican office-holder in a Democratic stronghold. I am a Federal judge, from a Mississippi district.

My wife’s father was a Republican.” He added quickly, “I believe the tenets of the Republican Party to be best for the country. You will not believe it, but for the last fifteen years my one intellectual companion has been a rabid atheist, almost an illiterate, who not only scorns all logic and science, but who has a distinct body odor as well.

Sometimes I have thought, sitting with him in my office on a summer afternoon — a damp one — that if a restoration of faith could remove his prejudice against bathing, I should be justified in going to that length myself even.” He took a photograph from the book and extended it. “This was my son.”

The other looked at the picture without moving, without offering to take it. From the brown and fading cardboard a boy of ten, erect upon the pony, looked back at them with a grave and tranquil hauteur. “He rode practically all the time. Even to church (I attended church regularly then.

I still do, at times, even now). We had to take an extra groom along in the carriage to. . . .” He looked at the picture, musing. “After his mother died I never married again. My own mother was sickly, an invalid. I could cajole her.

In the absence of my aunts I could browbeat her into letting me go barefoot in the garden, with two house servants on watch to signal the approach of my aunts. I would return to the house, my manhood triumphant, vindicated, until I entered the room where she waited for me.

Then I would know that for every grain of dust which pleasured my feet, she would pay with a second of her life. And we would sit in the dusk like two children, she holding my hand and crying quietly, until my aunts entered with the lamp. 'Now, Sophia. Crying again. What have you let him bulldoze you into doing this time?'

She died when I was fourteen; I was twenty-eight before I asserted myself and took the wife of my choice; I was thirty-seven when my son was born." He looked at the photograph, his eyes pouched, netted by two delicate hammocks of myriad lines as fine as etching. "He rode all the time.

Hence the picture of the two of them, since they were inseparable. I have used this picture as a bookmark in the printed volumes where his and my ancestry can be followed for ten generations in our American annals, so that as the pages progressed it would be as though with my own eyes I watched him ride in the flesh down the long road which his blood and bone had traveled before it became his." He held the picture. With his other hand he took up the cigarette.

The paper had come loose: he held it raised a little and then arrested so, as if he did not dare raise it farther. "And you can give me your word. I will believe."

"Go seek your son," the other said. "Go seek him."

Now the Judge did not move at all. Holding the picture and the dissolving cigarette, he sat in a complete immobility. He seemed to sit in a kind of terrible and unbreathing suspension. “And find him? And find him?” The other did not answer. Then the Judge turned and looked at him, and then the cigarette dropped quietly into dissolution as the tobacco rained down upon his neat, gleaming shoe. “Is that your word? I will believe, I tell you.” The other sat, shapeless, gray, sedentary, almost nondescript, looking down. “Come. You cannot stop with that. You cannot.”

Along the path before them people passed constantly. A woman passed, carrying a child and a basket, a young woman in a plain, worn, brushed cape. She turned upon the man who Mothershed had said was Ingersoll a plain, bright, pleasant face and spoke to him in a pleasant, tranquil voice.

Then she looked at the Judge, pleasantly, a full look without boldness or diffidence, and went on. “Come. You cannot. You cannot.” Then his face went completely blank.

In the midst of speaking his face emptied; he repeated “cannot. Cannot” in a tone of musing consternation. “Cannot,” he said. “You mean, you cannot give me any word? That you do not know? That you, yourself, do not know? You, Robert Ingersoll? Robert Ingersoll?” The other did not move. “Is Robert Ingersoll telling me that for twenty years I have leaned upon a reed no stronger than myself?”

Still the other did not look up. “You saw that young woman who just passed, carrying a child. Follow her. Look into her face.”

“A young woman. With a. . . .” The Judge looked at the other. “Ah. I see. Yes. I will look at the child and I shall see scars. Then I am to look into the woman’s face. Is that it?” The other didn’t answer. “That is your answer? your final word?” The other did not move. The Judge’s lip lifted. The movement pouched upward about his eyes as though despair, grief, had flared up for a final instant like a dying flame, leaving upon his face its ultimate and fading gleam in a faint grimace of dead teeth.

He rose and put the photograph back into the briefcase. “And this is the man who says that he was once Robert Ingersoll.” Above his teeth his face mused in that expression which could have been smiling save for the eyes.

“It is not proof that I sought. I, of all men, know that proof is but a fallacy invented by man to justify to himself and his fellows his own crass lust and folly. It was not proof that I sought.” With the stick and the briefcase clasped beneath his arm he rolled another slender cigarette.

“I don’t know who you are, but I don’t believe you are Robert Ingersoll. Perhaps I could not know it even if you were. Anyway, there is a certain integral consistency which, whether it be right or wrong, a man must cherish because it alone will ever permit him to die. So what I have been, I am; what I am, I shall be until that instant comes when I am not. And then I shall have never been. How does it go? Non fui. Sum. Fui. Non sum.”

With the unlighted cigarette in his fingers he thought at first that he would pass on. But instead he paused and looked down at the child. It

sat in the path at the woman's feet, surrounded by tiny leaden effigies of men, some erect and some prone. The overturned and now empty basket lay at one side.

Then the Judge saw that the effigies were Roman soldiers in various stages of dismemberment — some headless, some armless and legless — scattered about, lying profoundly on their faces or staring up with martial and battered inscrutability from the mild and inscrutable dust. On the exact center of each of the child's insteps was a small scar.

There was a third scar in the palm of its exposed hand, and as the Judge looked down with quiet and quizzical bemusement, the child swept flat the few remaining figures and he saw the fourth scar. The child began to cry.

"Shhhhhhhhh," the woman said. She glanced up at the Judge, then she knelt and set the soldiers up. The child cried steadily, with a streaked and dirty face, strong, unhurried, passionless, without tears. "Look!" the woman said, "See? Here! Here's Pilate too! Look!" The child ceased. Tearless, it sat in the dust, looking at the soldiers with an expression as inscrutable as theirs, suspended, aldermanic, and reserved.

She swept the soldiers flat. "There!" she cried in a fond, bright voice, "see?" For a moment longer the child sat. Then it began to cry. She took it up and sat on the bench, rocking it back and forth, glancing up at the Judge. "Now, now," she said. "Now, now."

"Is he sick?" the Judge said.

“Oh, no. He’s just tired of his toys, as children will get.” She rocked the child with an air fond and unconcerned. “Now, now. The gentleman is watching you.”

The child cried steadily. “Hasn’t he other toys?” the Judge said.

“Oh, yes. So many that I don’t dare walk about the house in the dark. But he likes his soldiers the best. An old gentleman who has lived here a long time, they say, and is quite wealthy, gave them to him.

An old gentleman with a white mustache and that kind of popping eyes that old people have who eat too much; I tell him so. He has a footman to carry his umbrella and overcoat and steamer rug, and he sits here with us for more than an hour, sometimes, talking and breathing hard. He always has candy or something.”

She looked down at the child, her face brooding and serene. It cried steadily. Quizzical, bemused, the Judge stood, looking quietly down at the child’s scarred, dirty feet.

The woman glanced up and followed his look. “You are looking at his scars and wondering how he got them, aren’t you? The other children did it one day when they were playing. Of course they didn’t know they were going to hurt him. I imagine they were as surprised as he was. You know how children are when they get too quiet.”

“Yes,” the Judge said. “I had a son too.”

“You have? Why don’t you bring him here? I’m sure we would be glad to have him play with our soldiers too.”

The Judge's teeth glinted quietly. "I'm afraid he's a little too big for toys." He took the photograph from the briefcase. "This was my son."

The woman took the picture. The child cried steady and strong. "Why, it's Howard. Why, we see him every day. He rides past here every day. Sometimes he stops and lets us ride too. I walk beside to hold him on," she added, glancing up. She showed the picture to the child.

"Look! See Howard on his pony? See?" Without ceasing to cry, the child contemplated the picture, its face streaked with tears and dirt, its expression detached, suspended, as though it were living two distinct and separate lives at one time. She returned the picture. "I suppose you are looking for him."

"Ah," the Judge said behind his momentary teeth. He replaced the picture carefully in the briefcase, the unlighted cigarette in his fingers.

The woman moved on the bench, gathering her skirts in with invitation. "Won't you sit down? You will be sure to see him pass here."

"Ah," the Judge said again. He looked at her, quizzical, with the blurred eyes of the old. "It's like this, you see. He always rides the same pony, you say?"

"Why, yes." She looked at him with grave and tranquil surprise.

"And how old would you say the pony is?"

"Why, I. . . . It looks just the right size for him."

"A young pony, you would say then?"

"Why . . . yes. Yes." She watched him, her eyes wide.

“Ah,” the Judge said again behind his faint still teeth. He closed the briefcase carefully. From his pocket he took a half dollar. “Perhaps he is tired of the soldiers too. Perhaps with this. . . .”

“Thank you,” she said. She did not look again at the coin. “Your face is so sad. There: when you think you are smiling it is sadder than ever. Aren’t you well?” She glanced down at his extended hand. She did not offer to take the coin. “He’d just lose it, you see. And it’s so pretty and bright. When he is older, and can take care of small playthings. . . . He’s so little now, you see.”

“I see,” the Judge said. He put the coin back into his pocket. “Well, I think I shall—”

“You wait here with us. He always passes here. You’ll find him quicker that way.”

“Ah,” the Judge said. “On the pony, the same pony. You see, by that token, the pony would have to be thirty years old. That pony died at eighteen, six years unridden, in my lot. That was twelve years ago. So I had better get on.”

And again it was quite unpleasant. It should have been doubly so, what with the narrow entrance and the fact that, while the other time he was moving with the crowd, this time he must fight his way inch by inch against it.

“But at least I know where I am going,” he thought, beneath his crushed hat, his stick and briefcase dragging at his arms; “which I did not seem to know before.” But he was free at last, and looking up at the clock on the courthouse, as he never failed to do on descending his

office stairs, he saw that he had a full hour before supper would be ready, before the neighbors would be ready to mark his clocklike passing.

“I shall have time to go the cemetery,” he thought, and looking down at the raw and recent excavation, he swore with fretful annoyance, for some of the savage clods had fallen or been thrown upon the marble slab beside it. “Damn that Pettigrew,” he said. “He should have seen to this.

I told him I wanted the two of them as close as possible, but at least I thought that he. . . .” Kneeling, he tried to remove the earth which had fallen upon the slab. But it was beyond his strength to do more than clear away that which partially obscured the lettering: Howard Allison II. April 3, 1903. August 22, 1913, and the quietly cryptic Gothic lettering at the foot: Auf Wiedersehen, Little Boy.

He continued to smooth, to stroke the letters after the earth was gone, his face bemused, quiet, as he spoke to the man who Mothershed had said was Ingersoll, “You see, if I could believe that I shall see and touch him again, I shall not have lost him. And if I have not lost him, I shall never have had a son. Because I am I through bereavement and because of it.

I do not know what I was nor what I shall be. But because of death, I know that I am. And that is all the immortality of which intellect is capable and flesh should desire. Anything else is for peasants, clods, who could never have loved a son well enough to have lost him.” His face broke, myriad, quizzical, while his hand moved lightly upon the quiet lettering. “No. I do not require that.

To lie beside him will be sufficient for me. There will be a wall of dust between us: that is true, and he is already dust these twenty years. But some day I shall be dust too. And—" he spoke now firmly, quietly, with a kind of triumph: "who is he who will affirm that there must be a web of flesh and bone to hold the shape of love?"

Now it was late. "Probably they are setting their clocks back at this very moment," he thought, pacing along the street toward his home. Already he should have been hearing the lawn mower, and then in the instant of exasperation at Jake, he remarked the line of motor cars before his gate and a sudden haste came upon him.

But not so much but what, looking at the vehicle at the head of the line, he cursed again. "Damn that Pettigrew! I told him, in the presence of witnesses when I signed my will, that I would not be hauled feet first through Jefferson at forty miles an hour. That if he couldn't find me a decent pair of horses. . . . I am a good mind to come back and haunt him, as Jake would have me do."

But the haste, the urgency, was upon him. He hurried round to the back door (he remarked that the lawn was freshly and neatly trimmed, as though done that day) and entered. Then he could smell the flowers faintly and hear the voice; he had just time to slip out of his overcoat and pajamas and leave them hanging neatly in the closet, and cross the hall into the odor of cut flowers and the drone of the voice, and slip into his clothes. They had been recently pressed, and his face had been shaved too.

Nevertheless they were his own, and he fitted himself to the olden and familiar embrace which no iron could change, with the same lascivious

eagerness with which he shaped his limbs to the bedclothes on a winter night.

“Ah,” he said to the man who Mothershed had said was Ingersoll, “this is best, after all. An old man is never at home save in his own garments: his own old thinking and beliefs; old hands and feet, elbow, knee, shoulder which he knows will fit.”

Now the light vanished with a mute, faint, decorous hollow sound which drove for a fading instant down upon him the dreadful, macabre smell of slain flowers; at the same time he became aware that the droning voice had ceased. “In my own house too,” he thought, waiting for the smell of the flowers to fade; “yet I did not once think to notice who was speaking, nor when he ceased.”

Then he heard or felt the decorous scuffing of feet about him, and he lay in the close dark, his hands folded upon his breast as he slept, as the old sleep, waiting for the moment. It came. He said quietly aloud, quizzical, humorous, peaceful, as he did each night in his bed in his lonely and peaceful room when a last full exhalation had emptied his body of waking and he seemed for less than an instant to look about him from the portal of sleep, “Gentlemen of the Jury, you may proceed.”

The End