

FAMILIAR LETTERS OR EPISTOLAE HO ELIANAE VOL 2

Finally sleeping, he had anxiety dreams of being in a public rest room, overcome by urgent need, only to find that every stall was occupied by someone he had killed, all of them vengefully determined to deny him a chance for dignified relief. On Friday evening, he had arranged for the drawing of the aces, but he had not stacked the subsequent twelve cards to provide for the selection of four identical knaves at three-card intervals. He'd sat in stunned. More likely than not, Victoria spoke directly to the maniac detective. Even if she reported her sordid fabrications to another officer, it would have gotten back to Vanadium, and the cop would have sought her out at once to hear her filth firsthand, whereupon she would have enhanced her story until it sounded as though Junior had grabbed her knockers and had tried to shove his tongue down her throat. The ghost cop was forty feet behind him, beyond ranks of other pedestrians, every one of whom might as well have been faceless now, smooth and featureless from brow to chin, because suddenly Junior could see no countenance other than that of the walking dead man. The haunting visage bobbed up and down as the grim spirit strode along, vanishing and reappearing and then vanishing again among all the bobbing and swaying heads of the intervening multitudes. Although the Rolex was expensive, Junior cared nothing about the monetary loss. He could afford to buy an armful of Rolexes, and wear them from wrist to shoulder. His throat was still so raw from the explosive vomiting, seared by stomach acid, that he sounded like a character from a puppet show for children on Saturday-morning television, hoarse and squeaky at the same time. If not for the pain, he would have felt ridiculous, but the hot and jagged scrape of each word through his throat left him unable to. He halted, made a quick calculation, turned, and moved toward where the back door ought to be. He found it half open. "Toes," he repeated immediately in his sweet, piping voice. This was a new word for him. Of the deceased. This memorial was modest, neither large nor complicated in design. Nevertheless, often the carvers in this line of business followed days after the morticians, because the stones to which they applied their craft demanded more labor and less urgency than the cold bodies that rested under them. Instead of answering the question, meaning to imply that he believed Junior already knew the facts, Thomas Vanadium said, "I was able to get a warrant to search your house." Junior thought this must be a trick. No hard evidence existed to indicate that Naomi had died at the hands of another rather than by accident. He was confused initially, frowning at the heart monitor and at the IV rack that loomed over him. When his eyes met Celestina's, his gaze clarified, and the smile that he found for her brought as much light into her heart as the diamond ring he had slipped onto her finger so few hours before. Since he knew where Celestina would be on January 12, there was no point in taking risks to find her sooner. He had plenty of time to prepare for their encounter, time to savor the sweet anticipation. He stopped straining to see through the black room to the corner armchair. He closed his eyes and tried to lull himself to sleep by summoning into his mind's eye a lovely but calculatedly monotonous scene of gentle waves breaking on a moonlit shore. When the waiter had gone, Tom said, "Don't worry about abetting a crime. If I had to pop Cain to prevent him from hurting someone, I wouldn't hesitate. But I'd never act as judge and jury otherwise." And so at the age of thirty-one, after more than twenty-eight years of blindness with a few short reprieves, Barty Lampion received the gift of sight from his ten-year-old daughter. 1996 through 2000: Day after day, the work was done in memory of Agnes Lampion, Joey Lampion, Harrison White, Seraphim White, Jacob Isaacson, Simon Magusson, Tom Vanadium, Grace White, and most recently Wally Lipscomb, in memory of all those who had given so much and, though perhaps still alive in other places, were gone from here. Once, he had been a superb driver. For the past decade, his performance behind the wheel depended on his mood. The modulated electronic brrrrr was similar to the sound of the telephone in Vanadium's cramped study, on Sunday night. Junior was transported back to that place, that moment in time. The boy's silvery giggles rang as merrily as sleigh bells, his Christmas spirit undampened. "Not between, Mommy. Nobody could do that. I just ran where the rain wasn't." "I haven't disturbed him," said the visitor, taking his cue from the doctor and keeping his voice low. All the way to the nightstand, he expected to discover that the revolver had been taken from the drawer. Yet here it was. Loaded. Yet the most enduring relationship he had all year was with the ghostly singer. On February 18, he returned home in the afternoon, from a class in spirit channeling, and heard singing as he opened his front door. That same voice. And the same hateful song. As faint as before, repeatedly rising and falling. He had been surprised to learn her age. She didn't appear to be that old. Thirty or not, Victoria was unusually attractive. Agnes had the craziest notion that he was counting them, when at his age, Of course, he would have no concept of numbers. "I thought there was a burglar," Junior groaned, but he knew better than to spit out his entire story at once, for then he would appear to be reciting a script. The short walk across the room, to the hero's table, looked more daunting to Paul than the trek he'd just completed. He was nobody, a small-town pharmacist who missed more work each month, who relied increasingly on his worried employees to cover for him, and who would lose his business if he didn't get a grip on himself. He had never done a great deed, never saved a life. He had no right to impose upon this man, and now he knew he hadn't the nerve to do so, either. Unquestionably, if he hadn't killed Vanadium, the maniac cop would have blown him away. That was clearly an act of self-defense. Too late for interrogation now, with Vanadium bludgeoned into eternal sleep and resting under many fathoms of cold bedding. He had not heard the lawman rising up with malevolent intent, as he had imagined. The body had simply rolled off the backseat onto the floor during the too-sharp 180-degree turn. Although Junior had not answered, Vanadium said, "Yes, I thought you heard it." That was another thing. Junior hadn't gotten his noon meal, because the spirit of Vanadium had nearly caught up with him when he'd been browsing for tie chains and silk pocket squares before lunch. Then he missed dinner, as well, because he had to maintain surveillance on Celestina when she didn't go straight home from the gallery. He was hungry. He was starving. This, too, she had done to him. The

bitch..On January 3, 1968, Paul was fewer than 250 miles from Spruce Hills, Oregon. He wasn't aware of that town's proximity, however, and he didn't, at the time, have it as his destination..Sapphires and emeralds, dazzling gems set in clearest white, ebony pupils at the center. Beautiful mysteries, these eyes, but no different now than they had ever been, as far as she could tell..But the other learning he had been given had made Otter touchy in these matters, delicate of conscience. The big galley they were building now would be rowed to war by Losen's slaves and would bring back slaves as cargo. It galled him to think of the good ship in that vicious usage. "Why can't we build fishing boats, the way we used to?" he asked, and his father said, "Because the fishermen can't pay us." They ordered martinis, and when Kathleen, perusing a menu, asked her husband what looked good for dinner, he suggested, "Oysters?". Later, at home in bed, after Nolly proved the value of oysters, he and Kathleen lay holding hands. Following a companionable silence, he said, "It's a mystery."..Back in January, when he received the disappointing report from Nolly Wulfstan, Junior was not convinced that the private detective had exercised due diligence in his investigation. He suspected that Wulfstan's ugliness was matched by his laziness..Tom was aware that something had happened here during the past week, an important development that Celestina mentioned on the phone but that she declined to discuss. He didn't harbor any expectations of what he'd find when she escorted him and Wally into the Lampion dining room, but if he'd tried to imagine the scene awaiting him, he wouldn't have pictured a s?ance..Angel, however, focused on a point in the air above the table. Faint furrows marked her brow for a moment, but then the frown gave way to a smile..Maybe the bright side was that the musician hadn't either wet his pants or taken a dump while in his death throes. Sometimes, during a comparatively slow death like strangulation, the victim lost control of all bodily functions. He'd read it in a novel, something from the Book-of-the-Month Club and therefore both life-enriching and reliable. Probably not Eudora Welty. Maybe Norman Mailer. Anyway, the men's room didn't smell as fresh as a flower shop, but it didn't reek, either..Under other circumstances, Agnes might have blushed, but now her apparently irrational fear of too much life insurance had been vindicated..Similarities between Naomi and her mom- ended with appearances. Sheena was loud, crass, self-absorbed, and had the vocabulary of a brothel owner specializing in service to sailors with Tourette's syndrome..Vanadium arrived and stood beside Junior. His black suit was cheap, but it fit better than Rudy's..On this January twilight, as Maria Elena Gonzalez drove south along the coast from Newport Beach, all men of the sea must have been reaching for bottles of rum to celebrate the fruit-punch sky: ripe cherries in the west, blood oranges overhead, clustered grapes dark purple in the east..Now, here, lying on a bed in the emergency room of a Sacramento hospital, on a Saturday afternoon only six weeks before the camellia festival, Junior suffered under the care of a resident physician who was so young as to raise the suspicion that he was merely playing doctor.."You may be eating yourself into an early grave, Vinnie, but poor Jacob has murdered his own soul, and that's infinitely worse."..Celebration of course, would lead to incarceration and perhaps to electrocution. With Vanadium, the maniac cop, likely to be found lurking under the bed or masquerading as a nurse to catch him in an unguarded moment, Junior had to recover at a pace that his physician would not find miraculous. Dr. Parkhurst expected to discharge him no sooner than the following morning.."But before you leave St. Mary's," the physician said, "I'd like a few mutes of your time. It's very important to me. Personally."..Beyond the window, Barty failed to do any of the things that Agnes expected of a boy not fully enough part of the day to share its rain: He didn't flicker like an image on a static-peppered TV screen; he didn't shimmer like a phantom figure in Sahara heat or blur like a reflection in a steam-clouded mirror..Frequently, people told Agnes that she should find an agent for Barty, as he was wonderfully photogenic; modeling and acting careers, they assured her, were his for the asking. Though her son was indeed a fine-looking lad, Agnes knew he wasn't as exceptionally handsome as many perceived him to be. Rather than his looks, what made Barty so appealing, what made him seem extraordinarily good-looking, were other qualities: an unusual gracefulness for a child, such a physical easiness in every movement and posture that it seemed as though some curious personal relationship with time had allowed him twenty years to become a three-year-old; an unfailingly affable temperament and quick smile that possessed his entire face, including his mesmerizing green blue eyes. Perhaps most affecting of all, his remarkable good health was expressed in the lustrous sheen of his thick hair, in the golden-pink glow of his summer-touched skin, in every physical aspect of him, until there were times when he seemed radiant..Or perhaps the sorrow was less sadness than yearning. He had to move on, but he was loath to begin this strange journey without her..The upper shelf of the closet held boxes and two inexpensive suitcases: pressboard laminated with green vinyl. He took down the suitcases and put them on the bed..The time had come for him to think more seriously about his situation and his future. Self-improvement remained a laudable goal, but his efforts needed to be more focused..Celestina stared out for a moment, and then turned her head to look at Tom, with both the shade of the night and the sparkle of the metropolis still captured in her eyes. "What was that all about?"..Skinny, pasty-faced, chattering sissy," he hissed, still so furious with Neddy that he wanted to jam the pianist's head in the toilet even though he was dead. Jam his head in and stomp on him. Stomp him into the bowl. Flush and flush, stomp and stomp..After a few racing steps, when the dog realized that Mary hadn't thrown the ball, it whipped around and sprinted back..The tenderness with which Grace acceded to Phimie's desire, at the expense of her own peace of mind, filled Celestina with emotion. She'd always admired and loved her mother to an extent that no words-or work of art-could adequately describe, but never more than now..Maria Gonzalez arrived with her daughters, and while it was natural for Angel to be drawn to the company of older girls, she had no interest in anyone but Barty..Outside, flames churned to the left and right of the opening. The front of the house was afire..too quiet and too patient to be the living-dead incarnation of a murdered wife. This was a predatory silence, an animal cunning, not a supernatural hush. This was the elegant stillness of a panther in the brush..,"Good heavens, Vinnie, I know that," she assured him as she lifted Barty-hardly bigger than a bag of sugar-from the bassinet. She

settled with the baby into a rocking chair..These Spartan arrangements were good enough for Vanadium. He had arrived from Oregon the previous night with three suitcases full of his clothes and personal effects. He expected that his unique combination of detective work and psychological warfare would enable him to entrap Cain in a month, before these accommodations began to feel too austere even for one to whom anything fancier than a monk's cell could seem baroque..He traveled prairies and mountains and valleys, passed fields rich in every imaginable crop, crossed great forests and wide rivers. He walked in fierce storms when thunder crushed the sky and lightning tore it, walked in wind that skinned the bare earth and sheared green tresses from trees, and walked also in sun-scrubbed days as blue and clean as ever there had been in Eden..Cupping Angel entirely in his big hands, smiling at her, he said, "Oh, no, Mrs. White, this looks like a healthy young lady to me. No medicine required."..Anyway, traumatic as it had been, the shooting was not the worst thing that happened to him that year..The boy dashed for the front passenger's door. Agnes didn't follow him, because she knew that he would politely but pointedly express frustration if any attempt was made to help him with a task that he could perform himself..If magic explained the jacks on Friday evening, maybe it was the dark variety of magic. Maybe he shouldn't be endeavoring to summon, once more, whatever spirit was responsible for the four knaves..Ten months later, Simon called again, also regarding Cain, but this time the attorney was the client, and Cain was the target. What Simon wanted Nolly to do was strange, to say the least, and it could be construed as harassment, but none of it was exactly illegal. And for two years, beginning with the quarter in the cheeseburger, ending with the coin-spitting machines, all of it had been great fun.. "I was never Cary Grant, to begin with," said Vanadium, still ceaselessly rolling the quarter across his fingers, "so I had no big emotional investment in my appearance. Cosmetic surgery would have added another year of recuperation time, probably much longer, and I was anxious to get after Cain. Seemed to me this mug of mine might be just the thing to scare him into an incriminating mistake, even a confession."..Of course, when turning a quarter across his knuckles, the cop had made no noise. And he had glided across the hospital room, in the dark, with feline stealth..At 11:45, on her way to bed, Agnes stopped at Barty's room and found him propped against pillows. The book was not particularly large as books went, but it was big in proportion to the boy; unable to hold it open with his hands alone, he rested his entire left arm across the top of the volume..As kids-living in a house that was run like a prison, stifled by the oppressive rule of a morose father who believed that any form of entertainment was an offense against God-they conducted secret card games as their primary act of rebellion. A deck of cards was small enough to hide quickly and to keep hidden successfully even during one of their father's painstakingly thorough room searches..She might have attributed his problem to eyestrain from all the reading he'd done during the past few days. She might have put drops in his eyes, told him to leave the books alone for a while, and sent him into the backyard to play. She might have counseled herself not to be one of those alarmist mothers who detected pneumonia in every snuffle, a brain tumor behind every headache..Unbuttoning her blouse, Celestina said, "Traditionally, puppies don't have a role in weddings."..He had bribed a parking attendant to keep his Mercedes at the curb in a valet zone, in front of a nearby restaurant, so it would be instantly available when needed. He could also leave the car and follow Celestina on foot if she chose to stroll home from here..He found nothing especially gratifying, switched off the lights, and moved on to the living room. If Cain was coming home, he could glance up from the street and see lights ablaze here, so Vanadium resorted to a small flashlight, always carefully hooding the lens with one hand..In the bedroom, as he opened a suitcase on the bed, he saw the quarter. Shiny. Heads-up. On the nightstand.."If you don't, your feeling gland isn't working. Want me to read you to sleep?"..Kathleen watched him with obvious amusement, aware that he was savoring her suspense as much as he was the appetizer..After a day of work, the pencil portrait of Nella Lombardi was finished. The second piece in the series-an extrapolation of her appearance at age sixty-was begun..Chastened by these recent events, he vowed to stop meditating, to void all passive responses to the challenges of life. He must explore the unknown rather than flinch from it in fear. Besides, through his explorations, he would prove that the unknown was all just tapioca or applesauce, or whatever..He slipped behind the door and raised the pewter candlestick over his head. Weighing perhaps five pounds, the object made a formidable bludgeon, almost as good as a hammer..Edom and Jacob arrived, dinner was served, and while the food was wonderful, the conversation was better-even though the twins occasionally shared their vast knowledge of train wrecks and deadly volcanic eruptions. Paul didn't contribute much to the talk, because he preferred to bask in it. If he hadn't known any of these people, if he had walked into the room while they were in the middle of dinner, he would have thought they were family, because the warmth and the intimacy-and in the twins' case, the eccentricity-of the conversation were not what he expected of such newly made friends. There was no pretense, no falsity, and no avoidance of any awkward subject, which meant there were sometimes tears, because the death of Reverend White was such a fresh wound in the hearts of those who loved him. But in the healing ways of women that remained mysterious to Paul even as he watched them do..you greater strength and determination than any other motive. But you should know this much.... You need to keep her safe for another reason. She's special. I don't want to explain why she's special or how I know that she is, because this isn't the time or place, not with your dad's death and Wally in the hospital and you still shaky from the attack.".. "Well, anyway," she said, as though Muffins uncharacteristic viciousness had been adequately explained, "this mending ought to cover ten more lessons."..The air was cool but not yet cold. A faint breeze smelled of the sea beyond the hill..exercise. Although they expected him to be dizzy, he had no difficulty whatsoever with his balance, and in spite of feeling a little drained, he wasn't as weak as they thought he was. He could have toured the hospital unassisted, but he played to their expectations and used the wheeled walker..Nolly sighed. "Well, I guess if you were going to just plug him, you could've done that already, soon as you got to town."..He was too sensitive a soul to be able to take either a handsaw or a power saw to a corpse..He moved from a crib to a bed of his own, with guardrails, months

ahead of the average toddler. Within a week, he requested that the rails be left down..Having risen higher in the sky during the past couple hours, the gold-coin moon reminted itself as silver, and in the black lake, its reflection rolled across the knuckles of the quiet wavelets..By the grace of Caesar Zedd and Remy Martin, Junior eventually slipped into undulant currents of sleep, and as he drifted away on those velvet tides, he took some solace from the thought that come what may, December 29 would be a better day than December 28..Agnes was not fully aware of how she was lifted from the car, but she remembered looking back and seeing Joey's body huddled in the tangled shadows of the wreckage, remembered reaching toward him, desperate for the anchorage that he had always given her, and then she was on the gurney and moving..Downstairs, two shots cracked, and an instant after the second, an explosion shook the parsonage as though the long-promised Judgment were at hand. This was a real explosion, not the impact of another runaway Pontiac..Although Dr. Lipscomb spoke almost as softly as the long-winded pianist, and though the physician's narrow face was homely and devoid of any trace of violent temperament, Neddy Gnathic flinched from him and retreated across the threshold, into the hallway..No weekend had ever passed so quickly, and no midnight had ever brought with it such dread..Speaking of bosoms, everywhere in the loft were braless girls in sweaters and miniskirts, braless girls in T-shirts and miniskirts, braless girls in silk-lined rawhide vests and jeans, braless girls in tie-dyed sash tops, with bared midriffs, and calypso pants. Lots of guys moved through the crowd, too, but Junior barely noticed them..Too late. The parsonage was fully engulfed. With luck, they would save the church..Vanadium's wounds were too grievous to pass for accidental injuries. Even if there were some way to disguise them through clever staging, no one would believe that Victoria had died in a freak fall and that Vanadium, rushing to her side, had slipped and tumbled and sustained mortal head injuries, as well. Such a strong whiff of slapstick would put even the Spruce Hills police on to the scent of murder..Without a word, Joshua Nunn and the paramedic retreated to the foyer. The parlor doors slid shut..After a while, he dared to crack his eyelids. Pressing against his eyes was a blackness as smooth and as unrelenting as any known by a blind man. Not even a ghost of light haunted the night beyond the window, and the slats of the venetian blind were as hidden from view as the meatless ribs under Death's voluminous black robe.. "Cancer," she whispered, and superstitiously reproached herself for speaking the word aloud, as though thereby she'd given power to the malignancy and ensured its existence..She was sopping, shivering. Water streamed from her soaked hair, down her face, as she wiped at her beaded eyelashes with one dripping hand..Curiosity brought him here. Curiosity and a talent for self-preservation. Earlier, Vanadium had not come to Naomi's graveside as a mourner. He had been there as a cop, on business. Perhaps he had been at the other funeral on business, too..LEFT HAND ON the banister, right hand with knife tucked close to his side and ready to thrust, Tom Vanadium climbed cautiously but quickly to the upper floor, glancing back twice to be sure that Cain didn't slip in behind him..The bow business had started a few months ago. Angel said she wanted to look pretty in her sleep, in case she met a handsome prince in her dreams..An SFPD patrol car swept past, its siren silent, the rack of emergency beacons flashing on its roof..Instead, he focused on the hand in the flashlight beam: four long, thin, chalk-white digits bent to the heel; thumb thrust up stiffly, as though Neddy hoped to hitchhike out of the Dumpster, out of death, and back to his piano in the cocktail lounge on Nob Hill..The little hands, so weak now but someday strong: Would they eventually be capable of savagery, as were the father's hands? Misbegotten offspring. This seed of a demonic man whom Phimie herself had called sick and evil. However innocent-looking now, what pain might she eventually in-- on others? What outrages might she commit in years to come? Although Celestina searched intently, she could not glimpse the father's evil in the child..She was forty-three, so young to have left such a mark upon the world. Yet more than two thousand people attended her funeral service-which was conducted by clergymen of seven denominations-and the subsequent procession to the cemetery was so lengthy that some people had to park a mile away and walk. The mourners streamed across the grassy hills and among the headstones for the longest time, but the presiding minister did not begin the graveside service until all had assembled. None here showed impatience at the delay. Indeed, when the final prayer was said and the casket lowered, the crowd hesitated to depart, lingering in the most unusual way, until Barty realized that like he himself, they half expected a miraculous resurrection and ascension, for among them had so recently walked this one who was without stain..A blood test might prove that Junior was the father. Accusations might sooner or later be made against him by bitter and hate-filled members of her family, perhaps not even with the hope of sending him to prison, but solely for the purpose of getting their hands on a sizable pan of his fortune, in the form of child support..Incredibly, Renee came after him, slinky and seductive, trying to calm him and lure him back into an embrace..Now out of the kitchen, along the hall, and up the stairs, two at a time, into Victoria's bedroom. Not with the intention of snaring a perverse souvenir. Merely to find a blanket..According to Helen, more than half the paintings had been sold by the close of the reception, a record for the gallery. With the exhibition scheduled to run two fall weeks, she was confident that they would enjoy a sellout or the next thing to it..Bright though they were at all times, Barty's Tiffany eyes shone brighter now with beams of North Pole magic. "Maybe I do feel it..".When Agnes groaned, one of the shadows spread its wings, moved closer, to the right side of the bed, and resolved into a nurse. Agnes's vision had cleared. The nurse was a pretty young woman with black hair and indigo eyes.. "I see. Sometimes. Just quick. For like a blink. Like when you stand between two mirrors. You know?".Maybe his pursuit of the matter sprang from mere curiosity, the desire to discover what a child of his might look like; however, if something else lay behind his interest, the motivation would not be benign. Whatever Cain's intentions, he would prove to be at least an annoyance to Celestina and the little girl-and possibly a danger.. "Living high. When I wasn't on the road, I had a fine house here in Bright Beach, not this rental shack I'm in now, but a nice little place with an ocean view. You can guess what went wrong..".AT THE END OF THE fourth book of Earthsea, Tehanu, the story had arrived at what I felt to be now. And, just as in the now of the so-called real world, I didn't

know what would happen next. I could guess, foretell, fear, hope, but I didn't know..This was only a fraction of Paul's collection. Thousands of additional issues filled rooms at home..Few people will spend the greater part of their youth in school, struggling to obtain the education required for a medical specialty, unless they have a passion to heal. Franklin Chan was a healer, whose passion was the preservation of vision, and Agnes could see that his anguish, while a pale reflection of hers, was real and deeply felt..Nevertheless, with Gein in mind, how easy it was to imagine that a monstrous evil lurked nearby. Watching. Scheming. Driven by an unspeakable hunger. In a century torn by two world wars, marked by the boot heels of men like Hider and Stalin, the monsters were no longer supernatural, but human, and their humanity made them scarier than vampires and hell born fiends..He switched off the flashlight and stood solemnly for a moment, paying his respects to Seraphim. She had been so sweet, so innocent, so supple, so exquisitely proportioned.. "If I ever get there, I'll be back," she promised the gathered family. "Imagine how much we'll have to talk about. Maybe I'll even get some new pie recipes from Over There."..I'm not the first to observe that much of what quantum mechanics reveals about the nature of reality is uncannily compatible with faith, specifically with the concept of a created universe. Several fine physicists have written about this before me. As far as I am aware, however, the notion that human relationships reflect quantum mechanics is fresh with this book: Every human life is intricately connected to every other on a level as profound as the subatomic level in the physical world; underlying every apparent chaos is strange order; and "spooky effects at a distance," as the quantum-savvy put it, are as easily observed in human society as in atomic, molecular, and other physical systems. In this story, Tom Vanadium must simplify and condense complex aspects of quantum mechanics into a few sentences in a single chapter, because although he isn't aware that he's a fictional character, he is obliged to be entertaining. I hope that any physicists reading this will have mercy on him..Although a cold current crackled along the cable of her spine, Agnes smiled at the card. She was determined to change the dark mood that had descended over them..With the great tree ninety degrees to his left, he was able to locate the back-porch steps at forty-five degrees. He pointed with the cane, which otherwise he had not used. "The porch?"

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