

WATERMARK A POETRY CHAPBOOK

They came to the house in Boatwright Street after dark. They kicked the door in, and Hound, standing among the armed and armored men, said, "Him. Let the others be." And to Otter he said, "Don't move," in a low, amicable voice. He sensed great power in the young man, enough that he was a little afraid of him. But Otter's distress was too great and his training too slight for him to think of using magic to free himself or stop the men's brutality. He flung himself at them and fought them like an animal till they knocked him on the head. They broke Otter's father's jaw and beat his aunt and mother senseless to teach them not to bring up crafty men. Then they carried Otter away..Over many proud generations and at least to the extent of second cousins, no one on either side of Celestina's family had skin of this light color. They were without exception medium to dark mahogany, many shades darker than this infant..He knew that the only movement in those staring, sightless eyes was the restless reflection of the flashlight beam as he probed the trash with it. He knew he was being irrational, but nevertheless he was reluctant to turn his back on the corpse. Repeatedly in the midst of searching, he snapped his head up, whipping his attention to Neddy, certain that from the corner of his eye, he had seen the dead gaze following him..Agnes had believed that through this ordeal, she'd largely spared her child from an awareness of the awful depth of her misery. In this, however, as in so many other instances, the boy proved to be more perceptive and more mature than she'd realized. Now she felt that she had failed him, and this failure ached like a wound..Everywhere in the fabled city, calves and knees and magnificent expanses of taut thighs were on display. This brought out the dreamy romantic in Junior, and more than ever he yearned desperately for the perfect woman, the ideal lover, the matching half of his incomplete heart..Three and a half days had passed since he'd pushed his wife off the tower, and in that time he'd had no real fun. He was gregarious by nature, never one to turn down a party invitation. He liked to laugh, to love, to live, but he couldn't enjoy life when he must remember at all times to appear bereft and to keep sorrow in his voice..These kids were the same age, yet listening to them was akin to hearing Angel do her charming shtick with an adult who had a lot of patience, a sense of humor, and an awareness of generational ironies..Earlier in the week, Junior had looked up Thomas Vanadium in the telephone directory. He expected the number to be unlisted, but it was published. What he wanted more than a number was an address, and he found that as well..She had lighted one candle for each of eleven apostles, none for the twelfth, Judas, the betrayer. Consequently, after burning a fragment of the cards in each votive glass, she was left with one piece..From the plush pillowy shadows of the bed, Barty said, "Oh, look. Christmas lights." The dying-dove hands fluttered down Junior's arms, plucking feebly at his leather coat, and at last hung limp at Neddy's sides..of color had to search for mentoring, especially in 1922, when twenty year-old Obadiah dreamed of being the next Houdini..As Junior paced the hotel room, his fear made way for anger. All he wanted was peace, a chance to grow as a person, an opportunity to improve himself And now this. The unfairness, the injustice, galled him. He seethed with a sense of persecution..Because of the events regarding Barty and Angel back in January, Celestina, Grace, and Wally were no longer displaced persons waiting to return to San Francisco. They had begun anew here in Bright Beach; and judging by all indications, they were going to be as happy and as occupied with useful work as it was possible to be on this troubled side of the grave..Magically, a shiny quarter appeared in Thomas Vanadium's right hand. It turned end over end, knuckle to knuckle, disappeared between thumb and forefinger, and reappeared at the little finger, beginning its cross-hand journey once more..Whether or not the visitor in the client's chair had ever known much romance, he unquestionably had experienced too much adventure and more than his share of tragedy. Thomas Vanadium's face was a quake-rocked landscape: cracked by white scars like fault lines in a strata of granite; the planes of brow, cheeks, and jaws canted in odd relationships to one another. The hemangioma that surrounded his right eye and discolored his face had been with him since birth, but the awful damage to his bone structure was the work of man, not God..She was not going to be as forthright with Barty as she had insisted that Joshua Nunn be with her, in part because she was too shaken to risk forthrightness..No longer able to judge the boy's degree of sleepiness by his eyes, she relied on him to tell her when to stop reading. At his request, she closed the book after forty-seven pages, at the end of Chapter 2..When he located the new grave, approximately where he'd guessed that it would be, he was surprised to find a black granite headstone already set in place, instead of a temporary marker painted with the..For just one hour, which was not too taxing, he walked in the idea of a world where he had healthy eyes, and shared the vision of other Barty's in other places, so he would be able to see his bride as she walked down the aisle and as, beside him, she took their vows with him, and as she held out her hand to receive the ring..Most of these firearms were loaded and ready for use, but five remained in their original boxes, in the back of her bedroom closet. Evidently, considering the original bill of sale taped to each of the five boxed handguns, she must have acquired all the weapons legally..He had noted all seven names on the bassinets, but he read them again. He sensed in their names-or in one of their names-the explanation for his seemingly mad perception of a looming threat..Junior was vigilant. He took note of all those who approached the piano, whether they dropped money in the fishbowl or not..Rising slowly like the blade in the hands of an ax murderer as deliberate as an accountant, Thomas Vanadium's gaze arced from Junior's clenched fist to his face..Nothing he had learned about the supernatural had led him closer to a belief in ghosts and in all that ghosts implied. His faith still reposed entirely in Enoch Cain Jr., and he refused to make room on his altar for anyone or anything other than himself..Averting his eyes from Vanadium's face, Junior moved farther up the stocky body. He folded back the tweed sports jacket to reveal a shoulder holster..After the song concluded, Junior felt better. His heartbeat soon returned to normal. The damp palms of his hands grew dry..FOR THE BETTER PART of a week, on doctor's orders, Agnes avoided stairs. She took sponge baths in the ground-floor powder room and slept in the parlor, on a sofa bed, with Barty nearby in a

bassinet..Both angry and mortified, yet still fearful, a walking multimedia collage of emotions, Junior left the gallery..An SFPD patrol car swept past, its siren silent, the rack of emergency beacons flashing on its roof..Holding a shaker in each hand, Tom walked them forward, causing them to diverge slightly at first, but then moving them along exactly parallel to each other.. "I knew," said Wally, braking for a red traffic light, "that you'd be thinking of Phimie now, and thinking of her would lead you to your father's words, because as short as her life might have been, Phimie was a Bartholomew. She left her mark."..A plate-size piece of the door had been blasted away. Because of the light shining through from the room beyond, Junior could see that no part of the lock remained intact. In fact, he peered through the hole in the door to the back of a piece of furniture that was jammed against it, whereupon the nature of the problem became clear to him..She said, "Honey, what I'm wondering is ... could you walk where you don't have bad eyes, like you walked where the rain wasn't ... and leave the tumors in that other place? Could you walk where you have good eyes and come back with them?".. "For one thing, jurors might conclude that the authorities never really suspected you and tried to frame you for murder to conceal their culpability in the poor maintenance of the tower. By far, most of the cops think you're innocent anyway.".. "From 1604 through 1610, Erzebet Bathory, sister of the Polish king, with the assistance of her servants, tortured and killed six hundred girls. She bit them, drank their blood, tore their faces off with tongs, mutilated their private parts, and mocked their screams.".. Maria said nothing, working busily, but Agnes recognized that special silence in which difficult words were sought and laboriously stitched together.. Mustering all her hostess skills, Agnes gradually turned the conversation from disastrous explosions to Fourth of July fireworks, and then to reminiscences of summer evenings when she, Joey, Edom, and Jacob.. She removed a temporary cap from the second bicuspid on the lower left side and replaced it with the porcelain cap that had been delivered by the lab that morning.. "And, of course, you'll need to make arrangements for the body," said Dr. Lipscomb. "Sister Josephina will provide you with a room, a phone, privacy, whatever you need, and for however long you need.".. The hospital was eerily quiet, except for the occasional squeak of rubber-soled shoes on the vinyl floor of the corridor.. A rescuer instructed her to close her eyes and turn her face away from the passenger's door. He shoved a quilted mover's blanket through the window and arranged this protective padding along her right side.. From Joey's closet, she extracted an old blue blazer that he seldom wore anymore. The lining was sagging, worn.. She lived with her parents then. They had converted the dining room to a bedroom for her.. Agnes could not bear to watch Maria sewing. The light no longer stung, but her new future.. The wink startled and baffled Edom. Oddly, he thought of the mysterious, disembodied, and eternally unwinking eye in the floating pinnacle of the pyramid that was on the back of any one-dollar bill.. it to the granite-topped secretary, and sat in front of the telephone. Previously.. "Retinoblastoma is usually unilateral," Dr. Chan continued, "occurring in one eye. Bartholomew has tumors in both.".. Edom had turned away from the box of groceries that he was packing. Frowning at the pies, he said, "You don't think. . .".. "Where did you hear that expression," she demanded, though she couldn't conceal her amusement.. Junior locked the door. He started the engine and drove out of the cemetery faster than was prudent on the winding service road.. Although she would have felt ridiculous phrasing this question in these words to any other three-year-old, no better way existed to ask it of her special son: "Kiddo ... do you realize you're speaking of your dad in the present tense?".. Because this kind of fictional fact, like maps of imaginary realms, is of real interest to some readers, I include the description after the stories. I also redrew the geographical maps for this book, and while doing so, happily discovered a very old one in the Archives in Havnor.. The possibility that he'd left a clear fingerprint on the watch crystal had to be judged remote. And the band had been too textured to take a print useful to the police.. He visited the bank in which he maintained a safe-deposit box under the John Pinchbeck identity. He withdrew the twenty thousand in cash and retrieved all the forged documents from the box.. their work, tears were followed by reminiscences that brought a smile and soothed, and hope was always found to be the flower that bloomed from every seed of hopelessness.. During the past three years, he'd suffered much because of these sisters, including most recently the humiliation in the Dumpster with the dead musician, Celestina's pencil-necked friend with a propensity for postmortem licking. The memory of that horror flared so vividly-every grotesque detail condensed into one intense and devastating flash of recollection-that Junior's bladder suddenly felt swollen and full, although he had taken a long satisfying leak in an alleyway across the street from the restaurant at which the postcard-painting poseur had enjoyed a leisurely dinner with Ichabod.. The opening paragraph still lingered in his memory, because he had crafted it with great care: Greetings on this momentous day. I'm writing to you about an exceptional woman, Agnes Lampion, whose life you have touched without knowing, and whose story may interest you.. Room by room, closet by closet, Junior conducted a search for the detective. The cop was not here.. "Doesn't look so spooky to me." She turned the knave of spades so the baby could see it. "Does he scare you, Barty?".. Bellini assured Celestina that they didn't expect Enoch Cain to be so brazen as to follow police vehicles and to renew his assault on her at St. Mary's. Nevertheless, he assigned a uniformed police officer to the hall outside of the waiting room that served friends and family of the patients in the intensive-care unit. And judging by that guard's high level of vigilance, Bellini had not entirely ruled out the possibility that Cain might show up here to finish what he started in Pacific Heights.. As though Amelia Earhart, the long-lost aviatrix, had reached out of her twilight zone and snared the two bits, no tumbling coin glinted in the air above the desk.. The past three years had given Wally much to celebrate, as well. After selling his medical practice and taking an eight-month hiatus from the sixty-hour work weeks he had endured for so long, he'd been giving twenty-four hours of free service to a pediatric clinic each week, providing care to the disadvantaged. He'd worked hard all his life, and saved diligently, and now he was able to focus solely on those activities that gave him the greatest gratification.. By the time they reached the seventh painting, alcohol and rich French cuisine and Jack Lientery's powerful art combined to devastate Frieda. She shuddered, leaned with one hand on a canvas, hung her head,

and committed an act of bad PR..Neddy, dressed for work but overdressed for his own funeral, slumped against the wall, head bowed, chin on his chest. His pale hands were splayed at his sides, as though he were trying to strike chords from the floor tiles..Surprising himself more than anyone, Edom also presented his collection to the university. Out with tornadoes, hurricanes, tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanoes; bring in the roses. He lightly renovated his small apartment, painted it in brighter colors, and throughout the autumn, he stocked his bookshelves with volumes on horticulture, excitedly planning a substantial expansion of the rosarium come spring..Assuming this criticism was amusing hyperbole, Junior laughed, but Sklent squinted those virtually colorless eyes, and Junior's laugh withered in his throat. "Well, maybe that's how it'll work out," he said, wanting to be on Sklent's good side, but he was at once sorry he'd spoken those words in front of witnesses..Too much clatter, drawing attention. No leisure for romance now, no chance for a two-sister score. just kill Celestina, kill Bartholomew, and go, go.."Money's no object. I can afford whatever you'd like to charge. And I'd be a diligent student." The pewter bludgeon slammed into the back of his skull with a hard pack. The scalp tore, blood sprang forth, and the man fell as hard as Victoria had fallen under the influence of a good Merlot, although he went facedown, not faceup as she had done..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.."Yes, I'm nicely rounding myself into an early grave," he said almost cheerfully. "And I must admit to enjoying it."..At a point where deep water met the shoreline, Junior drove off the road and onto the strand. He parked twenty feet from the water, facing the lake, and switched off the headlights and the engine.."I don't ... don't understand." Blinking sleepily, pretending to be still thickheaded from tranquilizers and whatever other drugs they were dripping into his veins, Junior was pleased by the note of perplexity in his hoarse voice, although he knew that even an Oscar-caliber performance would not win over this critic.."Oh, yes. When he phoned, Reverend Collins told me all about you and Bartholomew. At the front door, when I asked the boy's name, I already knew it and was just setting up this little trick for you."..The owner's attitude softened somewhat with Junior's reference to the quarter, and softened even further when together they returned to the counter to see the proof in the cheese. He went from righteous anger to abject apology..This wasn't a new sensation. He had experienced it before. In the night just passed, when he awakened from an unremembered dream and saw the bright quarter dancing across Vanadium's knuckles..The beetle-green Pontiac waited in the driveway, with a shine that tempted nature to throw around some bad weather. Joey always kept a spotless car, and he probably wouldn't have had time to earn a living if he had resided in some shine-spoiling climate rather than in southern California..He wondered if the hawk had descended in a constricting gyre, justice coming down, but he could not lift his head to see..Concerned that Junior's crying jag would trigger spasms of the abdominal muscles and ultimately another attack of hemorrhagic vomiting, the nurse had with her a tranquilizer. She wanted him to use the apple juice to wash down the pill..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..Entering the bedroom, Junior had expected to cast aside his pistol and draw a knife. But he was no longer in a mood for close-up work. Fortunately, he'd managed to hold on to the gun..The shriek of the sirens groaned into silence. The police must have pulled to the curb in the street..The Book of the Dark, written late in the time it tells of, is a compilation of self-contradictory histories, partial biographies, and garbled legends. But it's the best of the records that survived the dark years. Wanting praise, not history, the warlords burnt the books in which the poor and powerless might learn what power is..He also concluded arrangements to open an account for Gammoner in a Grand Cayman Island bank and one for Pinchbeck in Switzerland..Without a word, Joshua Nunn and the paramedic retreated to the foyer. The parlor doors slid shut..Why Cain, even if he was the father, should be interested in the little girl was a mystery to Tom Vanadium. This totally self-involved, spookily hollow man held nothing sacred; fatherhood would have no appeal for him, and he certainly wouldn't feel any obligation to the child that had resulted from his assault on Phimie..Those who had just met her and those who were overly charmed by eccentricity called her Seraphim, her name complete. Her teachers, neighbors, and casual acquaintances called her Sera. Those who knew her best and loved her the most deeply--like her sister, Celestina called her Phimie..PZ7.L52I5 Tal 2001 [Fic]-dc21 2001016554.Walking was part of a fitness regimen that he took seriously. He would never be called upon to save the world, like the pulp heroes in the tales he enjoyed; however, he had solemn responsibilities he was determined to meet, and to do so, he must maintain good health..Dr. Salk returned the photos, put a hand on Paul's shoulder, and smiled. "But that's always the way, you see? Heroes always get back more than they give. The act of giving assures the getting back."..The currents of irrational fear, which bring periodic turbulence to virtually every childhood, didn't disturb the smoothly flowing river of Barty's first three years. He showed no fear of the doctor or the dentist..One of the paramedics knelt beside the body, checking Naomi for a pulse, although in these circumstances, his action was such a formality that it was almost harebrained..Standing at graveside, Junior was in a foul mood. He was weary of pretending to be deep in grief..Too far from Spruce Hills to be a popular make-out spot for teenagers, Quarry Lake was a turnoff for young lovers also because it had a reputation as haunted territory. Over five decades, four quarry workers had died in mining accidents. County lore included stories of ghosts roaming the depths of the excavation before it was flooded-and subsequently the shoreline, after the lake was filled..He went in a pretense of blindness, gripping Angel's arm, but he missed nothing, and etched every detail in his memory, against the need of them in the coming dark..Because he kept imagining the stealthy sounds of a dead cop rising in vengeance behind him, Junior switched on the radio. He tuned in a station featuring a Top 40 countdown..Shuddering, rubbing furiously at himself, he stumbled into the bathroom. In the mirror, he confronted a face he hardly recognized: swollen, lumpy peppered with red hives..cocktail lounge to be her personal pickup spot. Naturally,

people who worked the lounge knew her, were friendly with her. They would remember any man who accompanied the heiress to her penthouse..Her hands trembled as she attempted to fold her sister's clothes into the small suitcase. What should have been a simple task became a daunting challenge; the fabric seemed to come alive in her hands and slip through her fingers, resisting every attempt to organize it. When eventually she realized there was no reason to be neat, she tossed the garments into the bag without concern for wrinkling them..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..He stashed two suitcases full of clothes and toiletries-plus the contents of Pinchbeck's safe-deposit box-in the van, and then added those precious items that he'd be loath to lose if the hit on Bartholomew went wrong, forcing him to leave his Russian Hill life and flee arrest. The works of Caesar Zedd. Sklent's three brilliant paintings. The needlepoint pillows, to which he'd colorfully applied the wisdom of Zedd, constituted the bulk of this collection of bare essentials: 102 pillows in numerous shapes and sizes, which he had completed in just thirteen months of feverish stitchery~.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.. "Don't get me started on cyclones!" Edom hurried through the house and out to the station wagon, to fetch the boxes of groceries..He told her that he loved her, and she slipped away upon his words. As she went, the haggard look of the terminal leukemic patient passed from her, and before the gray mask of death replaced it, he saw the beauty he had preserved in memory when he was three, before they took his eyes, saw it so briefly, as if something transforming welled out of her, a perfect light, her essence..Abruptly, without a cannonade of thunder, without artillery strikes of lightning, the storm broke. As loud as marching armies, rain tramped across the roof..One nurse and one nun brought Celestina into the creche behind the viewing window.. "If he and Agnes were your age, I'd agree. But she's got ten years on you, and he's got twenty, and no previous generations were as wild as yours."..In recounting the fortune-telling session, Agnes had not told the magician about the four jacks of spades, only about the aces of diamonds and hearts. She never wore her worries for anyone to see; and though she had made a joke of the appearance of the fourth knave on Friday, Edom knew that it had deeply troubled her..Initially, when told that his patient was a Negro, Junior had been reluctant to serve as her physical therapist. Her program of rehab required mostly structured exercise to restore flexibility and to gain strength in the affected limb, but some massage would be involved, as well, which made him uncomfortable..Happiness could grow out of unspeakable tragedy with such vigor that it produced dazzling blooms and lush green bracts. This insight served, for Celestina, as a primary inspiration for her painting and as proof of the grace granted in this world that we might perceive and be sustained by the promise of an ultimate joy to come..Great anger was apparent in the way that the uneven, red block letters had been drawn on the wall in hard slashes. But the lettering looked like the work of a calm and rational mind compared to what had been done after the three Bartholomews were printed..That was the first-and until now the last-long walk he made with a purpose in mind. He went to see a hero..As one of the two paramedics hurried to the ambulance van and scrambled into the driver's seat, Agnes suffered another contraction so severe that for a tremulous moment, at the peak of the agony, she almost lost consciousness..Beseechingly, with no intention of intimacy, he took Celestina's hands in his. "For years, as an obstetrician, I brought life into the world, but I didn't know what life was, didn't grasp the meaning of it, that it even had meaning. Before Rowena, Harry, and Danny went down in that airplane, I was already ... empty. After losing them, I was worse than empty. Celestina, I was dead inside. Phimie gave me hope. I can't repay her, but I can do something for her daughter and for you, if you'll let me.".. "She. Was eating. Dried apricots." Junior spoke almost in a whisper yet the ridge was so quiet that he had no doubt each of these uniformed but unofficial jurors heard him clearly. "Walking. Around the deck. Paused. The view. She. She. She leaned. Gone.".. "I'm gifted to a small extent, and it's an unusual gift," he admitted. "Nothing world-shaking. More than anything, really, it's a special perception I've been given. Angel's gift seems to be different from mine but related. In fifty years, she's the first I've ever met who's somewhat like me. I'm still shaking inside from the shock of finding her. But please, let's save this for Bright Beach and a better evening. You go down there tomorrow with Paul, okay? I'll stay here to look after Wally. When he's able to travel, I'll bring him with me. I know you'll want him to hear what I have to say, too. Is it a deal?"..Celestina breezed through the open door with Angel. "No vanilla wafers. You'll be up all night with a sugar rush."..Moving out of the doorway, into the bedroom, he said, "What book would that be?"..He clenched the steering wheel tightly with both hands, clenched his teeth so fiercely that his jaw muscles bulged and twitched, and clenched his mind around a stubborn determination to get control of himself. Slow deep breaths. Positive thoughts..Aware of the mortician's new edginess, Jacob was convinced that his initial distrust of Panglo was justified. This twitchy little guy seemed to have something to hide. Jacob didn't have to be a cop to recognize nervousness born of guilt.. "The pepper tree had been whispering in the breeze, the roses nodding their bright heads. Now a stillness came into the cemetery, as if rising from beneath the grass, from out of that city of the lost..Saturday morning, Paul made himself useful by assisting Grace with food preparation and by setting out the plates, flatware, and glasses on the dining-room sideboard..The night was in flight, however, and he had a lot to do before it swooped straight into morning..When Seraphim's bastard baby was dead, evidence of paternity would die with it-and any claim for child support. Even Vanadium's stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit would have to recognize that all hope of bringing Junior down was lost, and it would at last either dissipate in frustration or be reincarnated..More than once, a passing nurse stopped to check on him and to advise him not to exhaust himself..He summoned enough courage to approach the nightstand. His hand trembled. He half expected the quarter to be illusory; to disappear between his pinching fingers, but it was real.".. "If Phimie wasn't here," Celestina said, "and then she came back, she was somewhere during that minute, wasn't she?"..He

rewound the words, played them again, but still the source of the threat eluded him. He was hearing them in his own voice, as if he had once read them in a book, but he suspected that they had been spoken to him and that. Five days ago, reasoning that an unscrupulous attorney would know how to find an equally unscrupulous private detective, even across state borders, Junior had phoned Simon Magusson, in Spruce Hills, for a confidential recommendation. Apparently, there also existed a brotherhood of the terminally ugly, the members of which sent business to one another. Magusson-he of the large head, small ears, and protuberant eyes-had referred Junior to Nolly Wulfstan. 'She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil.'. Shortly after Agnes turned out the light, she said, "Kidido, it's been one whole week since you walked where the rain wasn't, and I've been doing a lot of thinking about that." ONWARD THROUGH THIS Monday, January 17, this momentous day, when the ending of one thing is the beginning of another.. Even Barty seemed to be attentive, but Angel happily applied crayons to a coloring book and hummed softly to herself. They were childless. It had to be that way. Truthfully, Paul felt no regrets about missing out on fatherhood. Because they were a family of two, they were closer than they might have been if fate had made children possible, and he treasured their relationship.. In fact, attorneys for the potential plaintiffs felt that Nork, Hisscus, and Knacker were too willing to reach an accommodation, and they met the trio's conciliation with high suspicion. Naturally, the state didn't want to defend against a claim involving the death of a beautiful young bride and her unborn baby, but their willingness to negotiate so early, from such a reasonable posture, implied that their position was even weaker than it appeared to be.. She pushed her chair back from the table and got to her feet, and everyone followed her example.. "Once out of the coma and stabilized for a few weeks, I was transferred to a hospital in Portland, where I had to undergo eleven surgeries." An IV rack stood beside the bed, dripping fluid into his vein, replacing the electrolytes that he had lost through vomiting, most likely medicating him with an antiemetic as well. His right arm was securely strapped to a supporting board, to prevent him from bending his elbow and accidentally tearing out the needle.. Neddy possessed all the musical talent, but Junior had the muscle. Pinned against the wall, his throat in the vise of Junior's hands, Neddy needed a miracle if he were ever again to sweep another glissando from a keyboard.. This declaration was received seriously by Edom and Jacob, as if the devil often strolled the streets of Bright Beach and from time had been known to snatch little babies from their mothers' and eat them with mustard.

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