

## **OL 4 COMPARE AVEC TOUS LES POETES EPIQUES ET DRAMATIQUES DES ANCIENS**

Celestina expected to be taken to a waiting room, but instead the nun escorted her to surgical prep..At home, after phoning her folks, Celestina made a ham sandwich. She ate a quarter of it. Then two bites of a chocolate croissant. One spoonful of butter pecan ice cream. Everything was without taste, more bland than Phimie's hospital food, and it cloyed in her throat..Barty, didn't watch much television. He'd been up late enough to see Red Skelton only a few times, but that comedian always drew gales of laughter from him..He usually ate lunch alone in his office. The room was the size of an elevator, but of course didn't go up or down. It went sideways, however, in the sense that herein Paul was transported into wondrous lands of adventure..A dry laugh escaped the detective, but it had none of the warmth of most people's laughter. "You're not bad, Enoch. You're just not as good as you think you are.".This ended any hope of romance, and he was disappointed. A less self-controlled man might have seized a nearby bronze vase-fashioned to resemble dinosaur stool-and stuffed her into it or vice versa..On the high marsh-Dragonfly-A description of Earthsea..Maria Elena Gonzalez--such an imposing figure in spite of her diminutive stature that even three names seemed insufficient to identify her--was still present. Although the crisis had passed, she wasn't ready to trust that nurses and doctors, by themselves, could provide Agnes with adequate care..As his drying tears became stiff on his cheeks, Junior decided that he would most likely have to kill Vanadium to be rid of him and fully safe. No problem. And in spite of his exquisite sensitivity, he was convinced that wasting the detective would not trigger in him another bout of vomiting. If anything, he might pee his pants in sheer delight..When Agnes pressed for a diagnosis, Dr. Chan quietly pleaded the need to gather more information. After Barty had seen the oncologist and had additional tests, he and his mother would return here in the afternoon to receive a diagnosis and counseling in treatment options..Although Zedd counsels living in the future, he recognizes the need to have full recollection of the past when absolutely needed. One of his favorite techniques for jolting memories loose when the subconsciously..Curious to know what Neddy had said, Junior quickly approached the same gallery staffer. "Excuse me, but I've been looking for my friend ever so long in this mob, and then I saw him talking to you--the gentleman in the London Fog and the tux--and now I've lost him again. He didn't say if he was leaving, did he? He's my ride home.".Agnes dropped to one knee before the boy and held him gently by the shoulders. "Let me look.".The instant he flipped the coin, he opened both hands--palms up, fingers spread--with a distracting flourish..In November, Edom asked Maria Gonzalez to dinner and a movie. Although he was only six years older than Maria, both agreed that this was a date between friends, not really a boy-girl thing..He had recently learned about the demigods of classic mythology in one of the selections from the Book-of-the-Month Club..With the dead woman's guest on the way, minutes were precious. Attention to detail was essential, however, regardless of how much time was required to properly stage the little tableau that might disguise murder as a domestic accident..Edom felt uneasy in this kingdom of a strange god. The god that his brother feared was humanity, its dark compulsions, its arrogance. Edom, on the other hand, trembled before Nature, whose wrath was so great that one day she would destroy all things, when the universe collapsed into a super dense nugget of matter the size of a pea..So they had cooked up this project, math and mayhem, geometry of limbs and branches, arboreal science and childish stunt, a test of strategy and strength and skill--and of the scary limits of nine-year-old bravado..This night in Weott, with the high solemn silence of the redwood forests out there now and waiting to embrace him in the morning, he slept without dreams..Too much had happened in those rooms. They were stained dark with family history, and in the night, when either Edom or Jacob slept under that gabled roof, the past came alive again in dreams..Considering the protection that it would afford him in a world full of warmongers, Junior considered the loss of the toe, while tragic, to be a necessary disfigurement. To his doctors and nurses, he made jokes about dismemberment, and in general he put on a brave face, for which he knew he was much admired..If they were suspicious of him, they showed no obvious alarm. The three went inside in no particular rush, and judging by their demeanor, Junior decided that they hadn't spotted him, after all..Having ridden from the church to the cemetery with Hanna, his housekeeper, Paul chose to walk home. The distance between Perri's new bed and her old was only three miles, and the afternoon mild..Then he closed his eyes, held the revolver in both hands, and at point-blank range, he shot the dead woman twice..She found the switch and clicked off the lamp again. "Good-night, young prince"..thickened with the odors of antiseptics and blood, until breathing required an effort..Raising his revolver, Tom squeezed off two shots, but the gun didn't discharge..Cradling the baby, the nun turned with it to Celestina, folding back a thin blanket to present her with a good look at the tiny girl..He turned the knob. The door eased inward, but he pushed it open only a fraction of an inch..Celestina jammed the shaft of the crank into the casing socket. Wouldn't fit. Her hands were shaking. Steel fins on the shaft of the crank had to be lined up just-so with slots in the socket. She fumbled, fumbled.."It sure is," Barty said. When only a mortified silence followed his remark, he added: "Gee, I thought that was kinda funny"..Agnes returned home from a pie run with the usual team--grown to five vehicles, including paid employees--to find a gathering in the yard and Barty halfway up the oak.."Yeah, they think we're with Candid Camera. So Jimmy points to this United Parcel truck parked across the street and says the cameras are in there.."."You haven't had previous episodes like this?" Parkhurst asked, standing at the bedside with a file folder in his hands, half-lens reading glasses pulled down to the tip of his nose..The window was French with small panes, so Celestina couldn't simply break the glass and climb out..Opening the directory to the marker, he found a card tucked between the pages. A joker, with BARTHOLOMEW in red block letters..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..During the past week, he had ferreted out what he could about the nurse. She was thirty, divorced, without kids, and lived alone..He was a man of medicine and science,

who had been served well by hard logic and by an unwavering commitment to reason. He wasn't prepared easily to accept the notion that logic and reason, while essential tools to anyone hoping to lead a full and happy life, were nevertheless sufficient to describe either the physical world or the human experience..Jacob Isaacson--twin brother of Edom-knew nothing negative about Panglo, but he didn't trust him. If the mortician had been caught prying gold teeth from the dead and carving satanic symbols in their buttocks, Jacob would have said, "It figures." If Panglo had saved bottles of infected blood from diseased cadavers, and if one day he ran through town, splashing it in the faces of unsuspecting citizens, Jacob would not have raised one eyebrow in surprise..Think, think. A three-minute drive to the Lampion place. Maybe two minutes, running stop signs, cutting corners..Holding on to the jamb with one hand, Barty leaned across the threshold, listening to the day. Birds. Softly rustling leaves. Nobody on the porch. Even trying hard to be quiet, people always made some little noise..All the way back to the ridge, sitting up front beside a county deputy in a police cruiser, with an ambulance and other patrol cars racing close behind them. Junior had shaken uncontrollably. When he tried to respond to the officer's questions, his uncharacteristically thin voice cracked more often than not, and he was able to croak only, "Jesus, dear Jesus," over and over..When together in Agnes's company, Edom and Jacob were brothers, comfortable with each other. But together, just the two, no Agnes, they were more awkward than strangers, because strangers had no shared history to overcome.."Who else? I think there's romance in the air. The cow-eyed way he looks at her, she could knock his knees out from under him just by giving him a wink."..The bandaged man stormed up from the ruin of the living room, gauze fluttering around his lips as his hard exhalations seemed to prove that he wasn't a long-dead pharaoh reanimated to punish some heedless archaeologist who had ignored all warnings and violated his tomb. So this wasn't a *Weird Tales* moment..Highly impressed by the spot-on hyena scream with which Frieda had purged herself of the childhood emotional trauma inflicted by an authoritarian grandmother, Junior asked her to go out with him..At the end of the famous sermon, Celestina's father had wished to all well-meaning people that into their lives should fall a rain of benign effects from the kind and selfless actions of countless Bartholomews whom they would never meet. And he assures those who are selfish or envious or lacking in compassion, or who in fact commit acts of great evil, that their deeds will return to them, magnified beyond imagining, for they are at war with the purpose of life. If the spirit of Bartholomew cannot enter their hearts and change them, then it will find them and mete out the terrible judgment they deserve..By nature, she was unable to hold fast to resentment, couldn't nurture a grudge, and was incapable of vengeance. She had forgiven even her father, who had put her through hell for so long, who had blighted the lives of her brothers, and who had killed her mother. Forgiving was not the same as condoning. Forgiving did not mean that you had to exonerate or forget..They could not have been more solemn or more respectful if Naomi's corpse--stitched back together, pumped full of embalming fluid, painted with pancake makeup, dressed in white, with her cold hands clasping a Bible to her breast--had been reposing in a casket in this very room, surrounded by flowers and awaiting the arrival of mourners. They were all polite, soft-spoken, sad-eyed, oozing unctuous concern--and so full of feverish calculation that Junior wouldn't have been surprised if they had set off the ceiling-mounted fire sprinklers..But first, March 23: the bad date with Frieda Bliss, and what he discovered in his apartment when he came home that night..Drawn one after the other, two knaves of spades didn't signify two deadly enemies, but meant that the enemy already predicted by the first would be unusually powerful, exceptionally dangerous..The singular beauty of San Francisco and the exquisite patina of its colorful history spoke to her heart and kindled in her such an unreasonable passion that she sometimes wondered, at least half seriously, if she had spent other lives here. Often, streets were wondrously familiar to her the first time that she set foot on them. Certain great houses, dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s, inspired her to imagine elegant parties thrown..Junior hoped that he hadn't been betrayed by eyeshine in the fraction of a second before he closed his eyes to slits.."I've always wanted to learn the piano myself," Junior claimed, "but I guess you really have to start young."..Having settled on the sofa with Agnes and Barty, prepared to serve comfortably in the role of quiet observer, Edom was alarmed to have suddenly become the subject of conversation. He was also alarmed to be called "son," because in his thirty-six years, the only person ever to have addressed him in that fashion had been his father, dead for a decade yet still a terror in Edom's dreams..The nurse raised her eyes from Agnes to this other person. "Yes a chip of ice would be all right."..a deeply troubled John Wayne while the delightful David Niven floated along overhead in a basket suspended from a huge, colorful hot-air balloon..Edom, who had never made it big, medium, or little, watched his sister blur before him. He strove to contain the shimmering hotness in his eyes. His love was not for magic, and his pride was not in any skill he possessed, for he possessed none worth noting. His love was for his good sister; she was his pride, too, and he felt that his small life had precious meaning as long as he was able to drive her on days like this, carry her pies, and occasionally make her smile..She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride..In that slow, flat delivery with which Junior was becoming increasingly impatient, Detective Vanadium said, "We all were, Doctor. It was another election year, remember? More than once during that campaign, I could've chugged ipecac. What else would work if I wanted to have a good vomit?"..Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Le Guin, Ursula K., 1929-.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."..Cops at the doorstep, the lunatic bitch with the chair, the clergyman's curse--all this amounted to more than even a committed man could handle. Get out of the present, go for the future..Once more crowding his quarry, Junior said, "I'm amazed you'd recognize me, since I haven't been to the lounge often."..Instead of gaping at her as though she had been possessed by an inarticulate demon, Wally urgently fumbled a small box out of his jacket pocket and blurted, "Will you marry me?"..Three times, Mary vanished, and three times she reappeared, before she led the bamboozled Koko to her mother and father. "Neat, huh?"..Agnes was grateful for the speed with

which these arrangements were made, but she was also disturbed. Chan's expeditious management of Barty's case resulted in part from his friendship with Joshua, but an urgency arose, as well, during his examination of the boy, from a suspicion that he remained reluctant to put into words. Dr. Morley Schurr, the oncologist, who had offices in a building near Hoag Hospital, proved to be tall and portly, although otherwise much like Franklin Chan: kind, calm, and confident. 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. Wally Lipscomb's face, as long and narrow as ever, seemed not at all like the dour visage of an undertaker, as once it had, but rather like the rubbery mug of one of those circus clowns who can make you laugh as easily by striking an exaggeratedly sad frown as by putting on a goofy grin. She saw a warmth of spirit where once she had seen spiritual indifference, vulnerability where once she had seen an armored heart, great expectations where once she had seen withered hope; she saw kindness and gentleness where they had always been but now in more generous measure than before. She loved this long, narrow, homely, wonderful face, and she loved the man who wore it. Books were stacked high on a nearby table, favorite novels and volumes of verse, all of which Agnes had read before. With time so limited, she preferred the comfort of the familiar to the possibility that new writers and new stories would fail to please. Paul read to her often, as did Angel. Tom Vanadium sat with her, too, as did Celestina and Grace. This was one of many things about Agnes that amazed Edom. If he had dared to make a list of all the qualities that he admired in her, he would have sunk into despair at the consideration of how much better she had coped with adversity than either he or Jacob. For a long time, she stood beside the bed, holding his hand, confident that on some level he was aware of her presence, though he gave no indication whatsoever that he knew she was there. Then the boy put new and puzzling shadings on his meaning when he said, "Daddy died here, but he didn't die every place I am." 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. Two staff members were at the front desk, when last he'd seen them, out of sight now and too far away to hear the crooning. Junior had been waiting at the doors when the library opened, and thus far he'd encountered no other patrons. Angel pointed to a Mercedes parked about forty feet behind the Buick, just as its headlights went off. He thought he heard the soft swoosh of knife-edge wings slicing the January air. He dared not look up. More in his throat. The agony. Darkness poured into his head, as if it were blood rising relentlessly from his flooded stomach and esophagus. PERRI'S POLIO-WHITTLED body did not test the strength of her pallbearers. The minister prayed for her soul, her friends mourned her loss, and the earth received her. buttery sunshine, and emerald-black where the shadows of limbs and leaves overlay it. Fat crows as black as. Lying on his side in bed, clothed and shod, knees drawn up, arms folded across his chest, hands pressed under his chin, like a precocious fetus dressed and waiting for birth, Junior tried to recall the chain of logic that had led to this long and difficult pursuit of Bartholomew. That chain led three years into the past, however, which to Junior was an eternity, and not all the links were still in place. The pendulous bellies of the rain-swollen clouds were no darker than when he had first come to the cemetery, yet they appeared more ominous now than earlier. "I'm going to tell you something about your father that might comfort you," he said, "but you can't ask me for more than I'm ready to say right now. It's all a part of what I'll discuss with you in Bright Beach." Until Nolly, Kathleen's life had been as short on romance as a saltless saltine is short on flavor. Her childhood and even her adolescence were so colorless that she'd settled on dentistry as a career because it seemed, by comparison to what she knew, to be an exotic and exciting profession. She'd dated a few men, but all were boring and none was kind. Ballroom-dancing lessons-and ultimately competitions-promised the romance that dentistry and dating hadn't provided, but even dancing was somewhat a disappointment until her instructor introduced Kathleen to this balding, bull-necked, lumpy, utterly wonderful Romeo. On this chilly January night, no campers or fishermen had staked claims along the lake. Because the trees were far enough back to be lost in the night, the immediate shore and the pooled blackness that it encircled appeared as desolate as any landscape on a world without an atmosphere. He had taken refuge in meditation, because he'd been frustrated by his continuing failure in the Bartholomew hunt and disturbed by his apparently paranormal experiences with quarters and with phone calls from the dead. More deeply disturbed than he had realized or had been able to admit. Later, after they finished eating but were still sitting at the table over coffee, the conversation turned solemn, although for the moment, the subject wasn't the late Harrison White. How long the two women and the girl must hide out, when and where they would be able to resume lives as normal as might still be possible for them: These were the issues of the moment. So quick, this violence, over even as it began. Because he had no interest in aftermath, however, Junior suffered no disappointment at the briefness of the thrill. The past was past, and as he closed the front door and stepped around the body, he focused on the future. On his nightstand, he found an envelope evidently placed there by Hanna, after she'd taken it from his pharmacy smock, which he had given her to launder. The envelope contained the letter about Agnes Lampion that Paul had written to Reverend White in Oregon. In July 1967, at two and a half, he finally contracted his first cold, an off-season virus with a mean bite. His throat was sore, but he didn't fuss or even complain. He swallowed his medicine without resistance, and though he rested occasionally, he played with toys and paged through picture books with as much pleasure as ever. Now, on his kitchenette table, two nights after Maria's reading, Jacob finished integrating the four decks as he had done Friday in the dining room of the main house. His work completed, he sat for a while, staring at the stack of cards, hesitant to proceed. She looked surprised, all right, but her expression wasn't the one that Junior had painted on the canvas of his imagination. Her surprise had no delight in it, and she didn't

at once break into a radiant smile.. "September 13, 1928. Lake Okeechobee, Florida. Two thousand people died in a flood." "Sure they do," said Wally as he unlocked the two deadbolts. "But you gotta be twenty-one years old to get a license for one." Lipscomb shifted his gaze from the street below to the source of the rain. "Phimie was not gone long, perhaps a minute-a minute and ten seconds at most-and when she was with us again, it was clear from her condition that the cardiac arrest was most likely secondary to a massive cerebral incident. She was disoriented, paralysis on the right side ... with the distortion of the facial muscles that you saw. Her speech was slurred at first, but then something strange happened. . . . So Barty and Tom just happened to be chatting about a quantum physicist they had seen on a television program, a documentary about the uncanny resonance between the belief in a created universe and some recent discoveries in quantum mechanics and molecular biology. The physicist claimed that a handful of his colleagues, though by no means the majority, believed that with a deepening understanding of the quantum level of reality, there would in time be a surprising rapprochement between science and faith.. Settling onto the empty stool beside this beauty, Junior offered to buy her a drink, and she accepted.. She woke weeping from the dreams, and she wanted no witnesses. She wasn't embarrassed by her tears. She just didn't want to share them with anyone but Barty.. With a thin hiss of disgust, Junior pulled away from the thing, whatever it was, withdrew the flashlight from his belt, and listened intently for sounds in the alleyway. No voices. No footsteps. Only distant traffic noises so muffled that they sounded like the grunts and groans and low menacing growls of foraging animals, displaced predators prowling the urban mist.. Returning from his tests, he'd gotten into bed without stripping off the thin, hospital-issue robe. He was still wearing it over his pajamas.. 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.. "I only told you about that," said Grace, "because it was a very handsome shirt, and I thought you might want to get one for Wally." He knew the titles that he wanted: "Tunnel in the Sky, Between Planets, Starman Jones. ". Only a few theater goers attended the matinee. No one sat near, so Google and Junior openly swapped packages: a five-by-six manila envelope to Google, a nine-by-twelve to Junior.. Elsewhere in the cemetery, about 150 yards away, another interment service-with a much larger group of mourners-had begun prior to this one for Naomi. Now it was over, and the people were dispersing to their cars.. He had already reviewed twenty-four thousand names, finding no Bartholomew, putting red checks beside entries with the initial B instead of a first name. A slip of yellow paper marked his place.. The adoption records on Seraphim White's baby weren't sealed by law, because custody of the child was being retained by family.. Somehow, Vanadium's malevolent spirit was also to blame for Junior's failure to find a new heart mate, in spite of all the women he'd been through. Undoubtedly, when Bartholomew was dead and Vanadium vanquished with him, romance and true love would bloom.. Since childhood, he had been waiting for this moment-if indeed it was The Moment-and he had nearly lost hope that the much-desired encounter would ever come to pass. He had expected to find others with his perceptions among physicists or mathematicians, among monks or mystics, but never in the form of a three-year-old girl dressed all in midnight-blue except for a red belt and two red hair bows.. "It's just that you never know what anyone's hand has been up to recently," Jacob explained. "That respectable banker down the street might have thirty dismembered women buried in his backyard. The nice church-going lady next door might be sleeping in the same bed with the rotting corpse of a lover who tried to jilt her, and for a hobby she makes jewelry from the finger bones of preschool children she's tortured and murdered." As if he sensed her reluctance to return to Dr. Chan, Barty had kept her occupied with talk of the red planet as they approached the office building, had talked her off the street, along the driveway, and into a parking space, where finally she relinquished the fantasy of an endless road trip. At 5:45, long past the end of office hours, Dr. Chan's suite was quiet.. Perhaps a lot of suspects were rattled and ultimately unnerved by this behavior. Junior wouldn't be easily trapped. He was smart.. Striving to appear casual, but obviously unnerved, the pencil-thin man backed off again. "The paintings are lovely, wonderful, I'm enormously impressed. I'm a friend of the artist's, you know. She was a tenant of mine, I was her landlord during her early college years, in her salad days, a nice little studio apartment, before the baby. A lovely girl, I always knew she'd be a success, it was so apparent in even her earliest work. I just had to come tonight, even though a friend's covering two of my four sets. I couldn't miss this." His musical abilities were most likely an offshoot of his more extraordinary talent for math. He said that music was numbers, and what he seemed to mean was that he could all but instantly translate the notes of any song into a personal numerical code, retain it, and repeat the song by repeating the memorized sequence of code. When he read sheet music, he saw arrangements of numbers.. He wanted Celestina to sit in her seat and use her lap belt, but she insisted on cuddling next to him, as if she were a high-school girl and he were her teenage beau.. Heart racing, Tom produced another quarter from a pants pocket. For the benefit of the adults, he performed the proper preparation-a little patter and the ten-finger flimflam-because in magic as in jewelry, every diamond must have the proper setting if it's to glitter impressively.. The hardest was being in this room at the very moment when Phimie had moved on. Celestina knew beyond doubt that this was the worst thing she would have to endure in all her life, worse than her own death when it came.. Barty's release from Hoag Presbyterian had been delayed by an infection, and thereafter he had spent three days in a Newport-area rehabilitation hospital. Rehab consisted largely of orientation to his new dark world, since his lost function could not be recovered by either diligent exercise or therapy.. Seraphim's child had been alive as long as Naomi had been dead, almost fifteen months. In fifteen months, Junior should have located the little bastard and eliminated him.. In her arms she held Bartholomew. The infant was not heavily bundled, for the weather was unseasonably mild.. Dressed entirely in a shade of pink that darkened to rouge when wet, Angel squealed and deserted Barty. Spotted-streaked-splashed, with false tears on her cheeks, with a darkly glimmering crown of rain jewels in her hair, she raced up the steps as though she were a princess abandoned by her coachman, and

allowed herself to be scooped into her grandmother's arms..From his first birthday to his third, Barty made worthless all the child-care and child-development books that a first-time mother relied on to know what to expect of her offspring, and when. Barty grew and coped and learned according to his own clock..Shortly before ten o'clock, Junior returned to the cemetery and left his Suburban where the Negro mourners had parked earlier in the day. His was the only vehicle on the service road..He might not have this future-living thing down perfectly, but he was absolutely terrific at anger.. "And in a lot of somewheres," said Barty, "things are worse for us than here. Some somewheres, you died, too, when I was born, so I never met you, either."..If the angular mass was Neddy, the vaguely warm, damp something must be the strangled man's protruding tongue..IMPLODE To burst inward under pressure. Like the hull of a submarine at too great a depth..to believe that any man with such a hard gut slung over his belt, with a bull neck.No mystery here. No reason to leap to the ceiling and cling upside down like a frightened cartoon cat..The Spruce Hills Police Department was far too small to have a full-blown Scientific Investigation Division. And if the tableau presented to them appeared convincing enough, they might accept the death as a freak accident and never turn to the state police for technical..AS MEANINGFUL AS Jacob's death had been within the small world of his family, Agnes Lampion never lost sight of the fact that there were more resonant deaths in the larger world before 1968 ended and the Year of the Rooster followed. On the fourth of April, James Earl Ray gunned down Martin Luther King on a motel balcony in Memphis, but the assassin's hopes were foiled when, because of this murder, freedom grew more vigorously from the richness of a in martyr's blood. On June 1, Helen Keller died peacefully at eighty-seven. Blind and deaf since early childhood, mute until her adolescence, Miss Keller led a life of astonishing accomplishment; she learned to speak, to ride horses, to waltz; she graduated cum laude from Radcliffe, an inspiration to millions and a testament to the potential in even the most blighted life. On June 5, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Unknown numbers died when Soviet tanks invaded Czechoslovakia, and hundreds of thousands perished in the final days of the Cultural Revolution in China, many eaten in acts of cannibalism sanctioned by Chairman Mao as acceptable political action. John Steinbeck, novelist, and Tallulah Bankhead, actress, came to the end of their journeys in this world, if not yet in all others. But James Lovell, William Anders, and Frank Borman-the first men to orbit the moon-traveled 250,000 miles into space, and all returned alive..In fact, though he strained hard to recall their conversations, he could dredge up nothing that Seraphim had said during therapy, as if he'd been stone-deaf in those days. The only things he retained were sensual impressions: the beauty of her face, the texture of her skin, the firmness of her flesh under his ministering hands..In the closet, a limited wardrobe did not fully occupy available rod space. On the floor, shoes were neatly arranged toe-to-heel..With no job to return to, he dawdled over lunch. He was actually tumescent with a growing sense of freedom that was as thrilling as sex.

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