

ANADIAN ROOTS RESEARCHING YOUR FRENCH CANADIAN FAMILY TREE AND G

Indeed, subconsciously, she had known that Nella was gone since receiving the call at 4:15 this morning. When the old woman had finished what she needed to say, the silence on the line had been eerily perfect, without one crackle of static or electronic murmur, unlike anything Celestina had ever heard on a telephone before..This didn't work for Junior. Strangely, when he focused on a mental image of any fruit-apple, peach, banana-his thoughts drifted to sex. He became aroused and had no hope of clearing his mind..Junior decided to attend the festivities, after all, motivated by the prospect of connecting with a woman more pliant than the Baval Poriferan sculpture..Behind them, the door rebounded forcefully from a rubber-tipped stopper and closed with a thud. The lock wasn't engaged, however, and they might be interrupted momentarily..She didn't hear gunfire this time, either, but the hard crack of splintering wood attested to the passage of at least two more bullets.."I want you to adopt the baby." Before they could react, she hurried on: "I won't be twenty-one for four months yet, and even then they might give me trouble about adopting, even though I'm her aunt, because I'm single. But if you adopt her, I'll raise her. I promise I will. I'll take full responsibility. You don't have to worry that I'll regret it or that I'll ever want to drop her in your laps and escape the responsibility. She'll have to be the center of my life from here on. I understand that. I accept it. I embrace it." "I sure think so. I think she's everything. I tell her she's the moon and stars. I'm probably spoiling her rotten." When he closed his eyes, he saw a bowling pin, a leftover image from his with-seed days. In less than a minute, he was able to make the pin dematerialize, filling his mind with featureless, soundless, soothing, white nothingness..It's unsettling. For all our delight in the impermanent, the entrancing flicker of electronics, we also long for the unalterable..He was too sensitive a soul to be able to take either a handsaw or a power saw to a corpse..Leaving the children under the tree, Tom returned to the house to phone the police..Unfortunately, Caesar Zedd had not written a self-help book on how to commit homicide and escape the consequences thereof, and as before, Junior was entirely on his own..Once more crowding his quarry, Junior said, "I'm amazed you'd recognize me, since I haven't been to the lounge often." Nevertheless, his sense of violation grew as he paced these now songless rooms, mystified and frustrated. On April 19, the unmanned Surveyor 3, after landing on the lunar surface, began transmitting photos to Earth, and when Junior stepped out of his morning shower, he again heard the eerie singing, which seemed to arise from a place more distant, more alien, than the moon..WALTER PANGLO, the only mortician in Bright Beach, was a sweet tempered wisp of a man who enjoyed puttering in his garden when he wasn't planting dead people. He grew prize roses and gave them away in great bouquets to the sick, to young people in love, to the school librarian on her birthday, to clerks who had been polite to him..Leaving three of the pats in the container, he carefully placed the fourth on the vinyl-tile floor..This colored person's grave, however, was uphill of Naomi's. Over time, as the body decomposed up there, its juices would mix with the soil. When rain saturated the ground, subsurface drainage would carry those juices steadily downslope, until they seeped into Naomi's grave 'let mingled with her remains. This seemed highly inappropriate to Junior..He was surprised they had come so soon, less than twenty-four hours after the tragedy. This was especially unusual, considering that a homicide detective was obsessed with the idea that rotting wood, alone, was not responsible for Naomi's death..For a while he enjoyed being challenged to figure the number of seconds elapsed since a particular historical event. Given the date, he did the calculations in his head, providing a correct answer in as little as twenty seconds, rarely taking more than a minute..Eventually, Junior remembered the quarter. He reached into the right pocket of the thin cotton bathrobe, but the coin wasn't there, as it should have been. The left pocket also was empty..That would not be a productive use of his time. Satisfying, but not prudent. Zedd tells us that time is the most precious thing we have, because we're born with so little of it..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..She found the switch and clicked off the lamp again. "Good-night, young prince." Looking up at the mirror above the sink, he saw reflected not the self-improved and fully realized man that he'd worked so hard to become, but the pale, round-eyed little boy who had hidden from his mother when she had been in the deepest and darkest end of one of her cocaine-assisted, amphetamine-spiced mood swings, before she traded cold reality for the warm coziness of the asylum. As if some whirlpool of time was spinning him backward into the hateful past, Junior felt his hard-won defenses being stripped away..Kathleen savored her martini. "Mmmm ... as cold as a hit man's heart and as crisp as a hundred-dollar bill from the devil's wallet." Two soft-boiled eggs, one slice of bread neither toasted nor buttered, a glass of apple juice, and a dish of orange..Between new women and needlepoint pillows, he participated in s?ances, attended lectures given by ghost hunters, visited haunted houses, and read more strange books. He even sat for the camera of a famous medium whose photographs sometimes revealed the auras of benign or malevolent presences hovering in the vicinity of her subject, though in his case she could discern no telltale sign of a spirit..She heard the door, and when she opened her eyes, the bay had already slid out of the car, into the downpour again. She called him back, but he kept going..against the operating table. The lights had grown painfully bright, and the air had.."Oh, that's me, all right. I'm on the FBI's most-wanted list for criminal pie jostling." In the noble ruin of his face, Thomas Vanadium's smoke-gray eyes were striking, filled with a beautiful ... sorrow. Not self-pity. He clearly didn't regard himself as a victim. This, Kathleen felt, was the sorrow of a man who had seen too much of the suffering of others, who knew the evil ways of the world. These were eyes that read you at a glance, that shone with compassion if you deserved it, and that glared with a terrifying judgment if compassion wasn't warranted..His exceptional sensitivity remained a curse. He had been more profoundly affected by Victoria's and Vanadium's tragic deaths than he had realized. Wrenched, he was..At the bottom,

the killer had pushed the cedar chest aside and clambered to his feet. From out of his raveled Tutankhamen windings, he peered up at Paul and fired one shot without taking aim, almost halfheartedly, before disappearing into the living room..Obadiah tossed the pack of cards to Edom, startling him. "Son, you'll have to help me. My fingers have no finesse anymore." His silent tears accomplished what his words could not: Nork, Knacker, and Hisscus retreated, urging him to speak to his attorney, promising to return, once more expressing their deepest condolences, perhaps as abashed as attorneys and political appointees could get, but certainly confused and unsure how to proceed when dealing with a man so untouched by greed, so free of anger, so forgiving as the widower Cain..No one could put him in prison because of his dreams. "I can't remember. Those are the worst, when you're not able to remember them--don't you think? They're always so silly when you can recall the details. When you draw a blank ... they seem more threatening." Thrusting his finger toward the table with each repetition of the word, Barty happily insisted, "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie." "Fifty died in London, in '57, when two trains crashed. And a hundred twelve were crushed, torn, mangled, in '52, also England." She twisted her sweat-drenched face in what might have been frustration, closed her. By the time this operation concluded and the sulphurous Mr. Cain was brought to some form of justice, Simon might have spent twenty or twenty-five percent of the fee that he'd collected from the liability settlement in the matter of Naomi Cain's death. The attorney put a substantial price on his dignity and reputation..He spat on his right thumb, scrubbed the thumb against one of the dried drips on the floor, rubbed thumb and forefinger together, and brought the freshened spoor to his nose. He smelled blood..Again he fired into the lock, squeezed the trigger a second time, and discovered that no rounds remained in the magazine. Extra cartridges were distributed in his pockets..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..As Tom reached Celestina, she said, "Shots." She said, "Gunshots." She held the receiver in one hand and pulled at her hair with the other, as if with the administration of a little pain, she might wake up from this nightmare. She said, "He's in Oregon." Earthquake weather. Southern Californians had many definitions of that term, but Edom knew he was right this time. Thunder would roll again soon, but it would arise from underfoot..In the physician's eyes, a yearning to believe. In his face, a squint of skepticism..Grinning but with an odd edge of concern in his expression that Celestina could see even through her tears, Wally said, "Does that mean you ... you will?" But on March 23, 1966, after a bad date with Frieda Bliss, who collected paintings by Jack Lientery, an important new artist, Junior had an experience that rocked him, added significance to the episode in the diner, and made him wish he hadn't donated his pistol to the police project that melted guns into switchblades..Maria Gonzalez brought rice casseroles, homemade tamales, and chile rellenos. Daily, Jacob made cookies and brownies, always a new variety, and in such volume that Maria's plates were heaped with baked goods each time they were returned to her.."Well," Kathleen said, "even if the money wasn't so nice, I'd be sorry to see this case end." The instant he flipped the coin, he opened both hands--palms up, fingers spread--with a distracting flourish..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..Move, move, like a runaway train, leaving the dead nuns--or at least one dead musician--far behind..Junior hadn't suffered a paranormal experience since the early--morning hours of October 18, when he'd drifted up from a vile dream of worms and beetles to hear the ghostly singer's faint a cappella serenade. Shouting at her to shut up, he had awakened neighbors..He doused the light and crouched motionless in the absolute darkness, leaning against a wall of the dumpster to steady himself, because his feet were planted in slippery layers of fog-dampened plastic trash bags..Paul couldn't remember when he began to love her. Not at first sight. But before she contracted polio. Love came gradually, and by the time it flowered, its roots were deep..The muffling fog quieted the city as much as obscured it, and the alley was surprisingly still. Many of the businesses were closed for the night, and as far as Junior could discern, no delivery trucks or other vehicles were parked the length of the block.."Paul," she said, "you've got a lovely house, but Celestina and Grace are doers. They need to keep occupied. They'll go stir-crazy if they don't stay busy. Am I right, ladies?" Otter said nothing..Neddy favored a quick greeting, two curt pumps, but Junior held fast after the handshake was over. He didn't grind the musician's knuckles, nothing so crude, just held on pleasantly but firmly. His intention was to confuse and further rattle the man, taking advantage of his obvious dislike of having his personal space encroached upon, in the hope that Neddy would reveal why he'd been watching Junior so intently from across the room..As Sklent so insightfully put it: Some of us live on after death, survive in spirit, because we are just too stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, and evil to accept our demise. None of those qualities described sweet Naomi, who had been far too kind and loving and meek to live on in spirit, after her lovely flesh failed. Now at one with the earth, Naomi was no threat to Junior, and the state had paid for its negligence in her death, and the whole matter should have been brought to closure. There were only two barriers to full and final resolution: first, the stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit of Thomas Vanadium; and second, Seraphim's bastard baby--little Bartholomew..The toast now came to Celestina. "To Phimie, who will be with me in memory every hour of every day for the rest of my life, until she is with me again for real. And to ... to this most momentous day." 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..that he could not entirely analyze. Any amateur magician--indeed, anyone willing to practice enough hours, magician or not--could master this trick. It was mere skill, not sorcery. "What was your motive, Enoch?" The heavy hand would come down on his shoulder, he would be spun around against his will, and there before him would be those nailhead eyes, the port-wine stain, facial bones crushed by a bludgeon.....Luck favored Paul: The hero was here, having breakfast. He and two other men were deep in conversation at a corner table..Anyway, traumatic as it had been, the shooting was not the worst thing that happened to him that

year.. "He knew how you felt about having too much life insurance. So he didn't disclose it to you." Her case of polio had been so severe that braces and crutches were never an option. Muscle rehabilitation had been ineffective..Knuckle over knuckle, snared in the web of thumb and forefinger, vanishing into the purse of the palm, secretly traversing the hand, reappearing, knuckle over knuckle, the coin glimmered as it turned..Dinner arrived, and Tom persuaded Celestina and Grace to come to the table for Angel's sake, even if they had no appetite. After so much chaos and confusion, the child needed stability and routine wherever they could be provided. Nothing brought a sense of order and normality to a disordered and distressing day more surely than the gathering of family and friends around a dinner table..madness or a brilliant deductive insight: Naomi, the hateful bitch, she poisoned me!.Bracing her feet against the floorboards, clutching the seat with her left hand, fiercely gripping the door handle with her right, she prayed, prayed that the baby would be all right, that she would live at least long enough to bring her child into this wonderful world, into this grand creation of endless and exquisite beauty, whether she herself lived past the birth or not..By ones and twos, the festive crowd eventually deconstructed, but for Celestina, an excitement lingered in the usual gallery hush that rebuilt in their wake.. "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie," Barty repeated in the same tone of self-satisfied delight that he used when announcing "Barty potty."..To celebrate, upon leaving the gallery, he went to the coffee shop in the Fairmont Hotel, atop Nob Hill, determined to have a beer and a cheeseburger..Cain turned the pistol on Barty, but when Tom charged, Cain swung toward him once more. The round that he fired would have been a crippler, maybe a killer, except that Angel launched herself off the window seat behind Cain and gave him a hard shove, spoiling his aim. The killer stumbled and then shimmered..Looking from one to another of his companions, Tom said, "When I think of everything that had to happen to bring us here tonight, the tragedies as well as the happy turns of fortune, when I think of the many ways things might have been, with all of us scattered and some of us never having met, I know we belong here, for we've arrived against all odds." His gaze traveled back to Agnes, and he gave her the answer that he knew she hoped to hear. "This boy and this girl were born to meet, for reasons only time will reveal, and all of us ... we're the instruments of some strange destiny."..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..As instructed earlier by phone, Junior purchased a large box of Raisinettes and a box of Milk Duds at the refreshment stand, and then he sat in one of the last three rows in the center section, eating the Milk Duds, grimacing at the sticky noises his shoes made when he moved them on the tacky floor, and waiting for Google to find him..WEDNESDAY, fully two days after delivering honey-raisin pear pies with Agnes, Edom worked up the nerve to visit Jacob..He had learned many things about himself on this momentous day--that he was more spontaneous than he had ever before realized, that he was willing to make grievous short-term sacrifices for long-term gain, that he was bold and daring-but perhaps the most important lesson was that he was a more sensitive person than he'd previously perceived himself to be and that this sensitivity, while admirable, was liable to undo him unexpectedly and at inconvenient times..Over the final refrain of "I'll Be Seeing You" came a man's voice from the foyer, raised quizzically, with perhaps a note of surprise: "Victoria..Neither guilt nor remorse plagued him. Good and bad, right and wrong, were not issues to him. Actions were either effective or ineffective, wise or stupid, but they were all value neutral..Junior could only imagine how flattered Victoria would be to receive the attentions of a twenty-three-year-old stud, flattered and grateful. When he contemplated all the ways she could express that gratitude, there was barely enough room behind the wheel of the Suburban for him and his manhood..Junior levered up, scrambled up, vaulted over, and crashed into the deep bin, with every intention of landing on his feet. But he overshot, slammed his shoulder into the back wall of the container, fell to his knees, and sprawled facedown in the trash..Whereas Paul had been confounded in his desire to express his admiration for Salk, he was able to speak about Perri at length and with ease. Her wit, her heart, her wisdom, her kindness, her beauty, he goodness, her courage were the threads in a narrative tapestry that Pad could have continued weaving for all the rest of his days. Since her death, he hadn't been able to talk about her with anyone he knew, because his friends tended to focus on him, on his suffering, when he wanted them only to understand Perri better, to realize what an exceptional person she had been. He wanted her to be remembered, after he was gone, wanted her grace and her fortitude to be recalled and respected. She was too fine a woman to leave without a ripple in her wake, and the thought that her memory might pass away with Paul himself was anguishing..In the foyer again, about six feet inside the front door, he stood the wineglass on the floor. He placed the bottle of Merlot beside the glass, the red rose beside the bottle..Nevertheless, Thomas Vanadium's hostile ghost, that terrible prickly bur of stubborn energy, wasn't done with Junior yet. Until Bartholomew was dead, the cop's filthy-scabby-monkey spirit would keep coming back and coming back, and it would surely grow more violent..In Cain's bedroom, Tom Vanadium's hooded flashlight revealed a six-foot-high bookcase that held approximately a hundred volumes. The top shelf was empty, as was most of the second..On that busy night, with Vanadium's corpse in the Studebaker and Victoria's cadaver awaiting a fiery disposal at her house, Junior was too distracted to recognize the pertinence of the message. Now it tormented him from a dark nook in his subconscious..White's paintings, which Junior found naive, dull, and insipid in the extreme. She imbued her work with all the qualities that real artists disdained: realistic detail, storytelling, beauty, optimism, and even charm..She stepped to the bed, bracketing Junior between her and Big Rude. The stream of obscene invective issuing from Sheena made Junior feel as if he had gotten in the way of a septic-tank cleanout hose..Although Junior continued to feel threatened, continued to trust his instinct in this matter, he didn't devote his every waking hour to the hunt. He had a life to enjoy, after all. Self-improvements to undertake, galleries to explore, women to pursue..More likely than not, this was a lie, and the detective was, setting him up. Suddenly Junior wished that he had denied dreaming..In each savings account, he deposited five hundred dollars in cash. He tucked twenty

thousand in crisp new bills into each safe-deposit box..A mutual interest in ballroom dancing had resulted in their introduction when each needed a new partner for a fox-trot and swing competition. Nolly had started taking lessons five years before he had met Kathleen.."Getting her into her shoes and coat sooner than Monday required a bribe," Wally said..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..She kissed his cheek, and he pulled his arms out from under the covers to hug her. Such small arms, but such a fierce hug..To the open casement window, into the men's room. Still seething with rage. Angrily cranking shut the twin panes while lazy tongues of fog licked through the narrowing gap..Nolly was, as usual, "Nolly" to everyone, but here Kathleen was "Mrs. Wulfstan."As they dropped toward the surgical floor, the solemn sister said, "Another hypertensive crisis..As if a door had briefly opened between this windless day and another world, a single gust rattled rain against the windows..In the bedroom once more, before poring through the contents of the nightstand drawers, the dresser drawers, and the closet, he looked in the adjacent bathroom, switched on the light because there was no window-and found Bartholomew on a wall, slashed and punctured, disfigured by hundreds of wounds. Wally parked the Buick at the curb in front of the house in which he lived, and when Celestina slid across the car seat to the passenger's door, he said, "No, wait here. I'll fetch Angel and drive the two of you home."On Thursday, January 4, he used his John Pinchbeck identity to purchase a new Ford van with a cashier's check. He leased a private garage space in the Pinchbeck name, near the Presidio, and stored the van there..Police identified Junior as the prime suspect, and newspapers featured his photograph in most stories. They referred to him as "handsome," "dashing," "a man with movie-star good looks." He was said to be well known in San Francisco's avant-garde arts community. He got a thrill when he discovered that Sklent was quoted as calling him "a charismatic figure, a deep thinker, a man -with exquisite artistic taste so clever he could get away with murder as easily as anyone else might get away with double-parking. " "It's people like him," Sklent continued, "who confirm the view of the world that informs my painting."..And the mills of capitalism provide them. Supply meets demand. Fantasy becomes a commodity, an industry..Breath held, Celestina confirmed what she had suspected about the child since the quick glimpse she'd had in the surgery. Its skin was cafe au lait with a warming touch of caramel..wickedly sharp silver scimitar suspended by a filament more fragile than a human hair..Each booth was at a large window, and each window provided a view of the street. Vanadium wasn't out there, watching from the sidewalk, either: no glimpse of his pan-flat face shining in the December sun..This momentous day. In every ending, new beginnings. But, thank God, no ending here.."It's just ... the last time I saw him, he trapped me in a corner and told this god awful story, far more than I wanted to know, about some British murderer back in the forties, this monstrous man who beat people to death with a hammer, drank their blood, then disposed of their bodies in a vat of acid in his workroom." He shuddered..To celebrate, Junior went to a gallery and purchased the second piece of art in his collection. Not sculpture this time: a painting..playing cards, Agnes fixated on Deed's blond bangs, which curled across his broad brow..Agnes held a smile as best she could, determined that her son's final glimpse of her face would not leave him with a memory of her despair..Meanwhile, before they needed to plan the wedding, there was time for an orange soda and a root beer, and more of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde..Instead of staring at Barty directly, he watched Angel as she studied the eyeless boy. She had exhibited no horror at the concave slackness of his closed lids, and when one lid fluttered up to reveal the dark hollow socket, she hadn't shown any revulsion. Now she moved closer to Barty's chair, and when she touched his cheek, just below his missing left eye, the boy didn't flinch in surprise..Angel was adamant: "Nope. I could learn that. Like dressing myself and saying thank-you."..He was nearly forty years old, and a life spent fearing nature could not be turned easily into a romance with her. Some nights he still stared at the ceiling, unable to sleep, waiting for the Big One, and he avoided walks on the shore in respect of deadly tsunamis. From time to time, he visited his brother's grave and sat on the grass by the headstone, reciting aloud the gruesome details of deadly storms and catastrophic geological events, but he found that he had also absorbed from Jacob some of the statistics related to serial killers and to the disastrous failures of manmade structures and machines. These visits were pleasantly nostalgic. But he always came with roses, too, and brought news of Barty, Angel, and other members of the family. When Paul sold his house to move in with Agnes, Tom Vanadium settled into Jacob's former apartment, now a fully retired cop but not yet ready to return to a life of the cloth. He assumed the management chores of the family's expanding community work, and he oversaw the establishment of a tax-advantaged charitable foundation. Agnes provided a list of fine-sounding and self-effacing names for this organization, but a majority vote rejected all her suggestions and, in spite of her embarrassment, settled on Pie Lady Services..He planned, as soon as they took him out of his cell, to use the old Changers spell of self-transformation and so escape. Surely his life was in danger, and it would be all right to use the spell? Only he couldn't decide what to turn himself into-a bird, or a wisp of smoke, what would be safest? But while he was thinking about it, Losen's men, used to wizard's tricks, drugged his food and he ceased to think of anything at all. They dumped him into a mule-cart like a sack of oats. When he showed signs of reviving during the journey, one of them bashed him on the head, remarking that he wanted to make sure he got his rest..After a while, when no plane crashed on top of him, Jacob got up, went into the kitchen, and mixed a batch of dough for Agnes's favorite treats. Chocolate-chip cookies with coconut and pecans..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..As they rolled along the coast, Agnes began to read to Barty from Podkayne of Mars: " 'All my life I've wanted to go to Earth. Not to live, of course-just to see it. As everybody knows, Terra is a wonderful place to visit but not to live. Not truly suited to human habitation.'"..Kathleen had never heard a religious calling described in

such odd words as these, and she was surprised, indeed, to hear a priest refer to God as "strange." At the mention of her son's name, Agnes stiffened. There were numerous ways for Deed to have learned the baby's name, yet it seemed wrong for him to know it, wrong to use it, the name of this child he had nearly orphaned, had almost killed..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..She looked down at her clutched hands. Made for work, these hands, and always ready to take on any task. Strong, nimble, reliable hands, but useless to her now, unable to perform the one miracle she needed. "Barty's birthday is in eight days. I was hoping. . ." Flanked by Dumpsters and trash cans, through steam rising out of grates in the pavement, past parked delivery trucks, here came the dead cop. Running..Taking her silence for assent, Tom continued: "Your father is gone from here, gone forever, but he still lives in other worlds. This isn't a statement of faith alone. If Albert Einstein were still alive and standing here, he'd tell you that it's true. Your father is with you in many places, and so is Phimie. In many places, she didn't die in childbirth. In some worlds, she was never raped, her life never blighted. But there's an irony in that, isn't there? Because in those worlds, Angel doesn't exist-yet Angel is a miracle and a blessing." He looked up from the city to the woman. "So when you're lying in bed tonight, kept awake by grief, don't think just about what you've lost with your father and Phimie. Think about what you have in this world that you've never known in some others-Angel. Whether God's a Catholic, a Baptist, a Jew, a Muslim, or a quantum mechanic, He gives us compensation for our pain, compensation right here in this world, not just in those parallel to it and not just in some afterlife. Always compensation for the pain ... if we recognize it when we see it." The blinds were raised, the windows bare. Usually, she liked the smoky, reddish-gold glow of the city at night, but this once it made her uneasy.

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