

as "Oggsford University." Meyer Wolfsheim, the man who "made" Jay Gatsby: I have not seen him since that last encounter in his office in Manhattan, but he has left messages with my secretary. He wants to see me, he says. I cannot think why.

Unable to sleep, I plucked a volume on the predictability of the bond market's fluctuations from my meager bookshelf (it was wedged, uncomfortably, between *This Side of Paradise*, a mellifluous novel by a young Princetonian of my acquaintance, and *Stover at Yale*, which I have not looked into again since my sophomore year). The bond market, to my consternation, has not been as accessible, as malleable, as one might have hoped. My father, bless him, has offered to take me into the wholesale hardware business that has supported several generations of Carraways nicely, but—who can understand the ministrations of the spirit?—I hear other voices.

For reasons obscure even to myself, I prefer to keep the Middle West where it is—at a safe distance. It's not that I disliked my youth. Indeed, I often fall asleep with my head full of thrilling winter memories of a boyhood passed amid the buzzing street lamps, the sleigh bells jingling in the frosty dark, with shadows of holly wreaths tossed by the bright windows onto the purest snowy lawns. But one cannot go home again. My future is here at the dazzling center of the world, not there on the ragged edge of the universe with nothing to look forward to but the next meeting of the Rotary Club or the next round of Wednesday golf with local worthies.

I closed my book, which did nothing but fan the coals of greed in my heart; wearily, I put on my smoking jacket, my doeskin slippers, and stepped outside. All lights blazed at Gatsby's house next door, and my curiosity was piqued. Had someone moved in already? At first I found myself hesitating. Had I not learned my lesson? The adventures of the past season should have put the fear of God into me, but I am not like that. I am not so easily frightened.

A light wind rustled in the deep grass that stretched to Gatsby's house; the gardener, left rudderless by his master's death, had failed to cut it for the last two weeks. I cast an eye to the pool, but—although the lights burned brightly—it was quickly apparent to me that all that shimmering was for nought. The place had the desolate look of an amusement park immediately after closing time, just as the talkative crowds have passed through the gates but the lights have yet to be extinguished.

The lawn started at the beach, which beckoned mournfully across Long Island Sound to East Egg, the most coveted stretch of shoreline in the Known World. My eyes were naturally drawn there, lifted beyond the shadowy, moving

glow of a ferryboat to the green lights flickering at the docks of legendary palaces owned by people who are different from you and me—luckier, richer, perhaps even happier. Briefly, I imagined myself standing again beside Daisy Buchanan, my dear inscrutable cousin, in the garden of her red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion that overlooked the bay. The sundials and brick walls and burning rosebushes of that garden were a kind of mythical Wonderland into which I, like Alice, had fallen through a crack in the infinitely drabber Middle West.

"Isn't that Jay Gatsby's mansion across the water?" she asked, flipping her hair to one side rather too fetchingly. "I was sorry about what happened to the poor chap, weren't you?" Her voice tinkled like gold coins dropped in an antique porcelain bowl, and it was irresistible. Now I understood, for the first time, what Gatsby had been going on about.

Shaking myself free of that dream, I turned, and Gatsby's house flooded my vision. Wing upon wing, a many-layered vision of wealth and power, of lust—or was it love?—ungratified. How could one resist such plenitude? It was as if I smelled them again: the frothy odor of hawthorn, the plum blossoms, the sparkling fragrance of jonquils. I bent down on my knees and buried my face in the wet lawn, the night dew sparkling on the grass, and I knew what I wanted. I wanted this! The house, the garden, the pool, the huge black feudal silhouette against the moonlit sky!

I found myself pulled forward toward the house, tugged by invisible strings of desire; my mind swirled with images of the lush interior rooms: the Marie Antoinette music room, the Restoration salon, the oak-paneled Adam study with complete sets of Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Trollope, Kipling, and Turgenev lined up like artistic honor guards along the walls. I wanted the poolroom, the dressing rooms, the vast sunken baths, the great glimmering views from the master bedroom. There was no end to what I wanted.

I paused on the white marble steps that led into the house. It was all so odd, the emptiness in the midst of splendor. No bright dresses swirled in and out of the door. No cheerful, gin-fueled voices called across the garden wall. And no bird sang. My heart sank, and my will seemed to fail me.

"Excuse me, but aren't you Mr. Carraway?"

I turned, astonished, and from the shadows lurched the small but unmistakable figure of Meyer Wolfsheim. His pasty, flat-nosed face was now part of my permanent record of recollections. He put his hands in his jacket pockets and tipped his head back, and the coarse hairs in his nostrils poked through the openings. His teeth were waxy and long, and he was smiling.

"You are speechless, Mr. Carraway?"

"I'm sorry. You surprised me."

"Ah, that is a problem with me. I seem to surprise everyone these days."

I felt the urge to apologize for trespassing but restrained myself. Instead I said, "I was just taking the air."

"Me too," he said. "I suppose you are surprised to see me here?"

"Yes, rather." I looked away like a schoolboy caught in some dubious if inconsequential act of minor treachery.

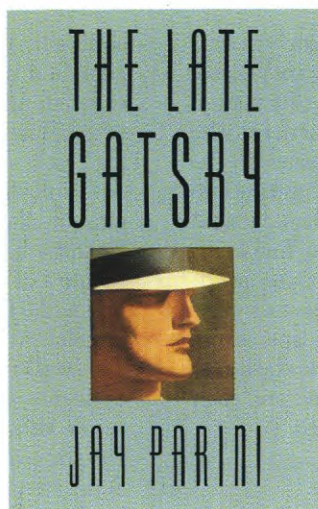
"I am looking into the possibility of buying this place," Mr. Wolfsheim continued. "The real estate agent, you know . . ." He dangled the keys to Gatsby's mansion before my eyes. "Mr. Carraway, I've been thinking about you lately. I believe you are a Yale man? Is that correct?"

"Class of '17," I said.

"Ah, yes. My nephew was class of '18. Rodney Wolfsheim, you know him?"

"I'm afraid not."

"No matter. Listen, Mr. Carraway. I left a message with your secretary saying I would like to talk



to you. It's about something that may interest you."

I lifted my eyebrows, implicitly inviting him to proceed.

"It's your future to which I refer, Mr. Carraway. With Jay Gatsby gone, well . . . I wonder if we might have lunch tomorrow?"

I was amazed, delighted, terrified. "Of course," I said hurriedly. "I would like that very much, Mr. Wolfsheim."

"This is wonderful," he said. "Stop by late in the morning and we'll have a little walk in the garden before we eat. All right?"

I nodded, shook his hand, and left him standing there with his hands in his jacket pockets, the smile on his face undiminished. As I pushed through a row of thick rhododendrons on my way back to my cottage, I could feel myself falling, falling into the large but somehow marvelously whirling black hole of the future.

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## RABBIT RESURRECTED

By David Foster Wallace

**I**n this sequel to *Rabbit at Rest*, which ended with the hero on his deathbed, beset with transmural infarctions and the consequences of his own appetites, Rabbit Angstrom, ambivalent hero of four Really Big Novels, athlete, adulterer, Republican, duly designated observer of the U.S. scene, and synecdoche of a generation's pathos, negotiates the pitfalls of post-life America in his own erratic way, and learns some very special truths he'd suspected all along . . .

The bright bed of happy unfeeling from which his son's straining face recedes has not deserted him, Rabbit Angstrom feels. The bed merely tilts at the foot and erects itself, rising, Rabbit with it. Behind his eyes the red cave he had thought was the exit reveals itself to have been his brain's own color, its red music; darkness now flows like spilled ink in at all sides until the color shrinks to the frozen star of a television's last point of light, then out. Not darkness but whatever is its absence. Rabbit hears earlessly the blank whine of the heart monitor and his family's Kabuki cries of self-concerned grief, the *chud* of defibrillation paddles trying to stun what is no longer his. He is not his body—can I keep my

prick in heaven? is his first wild thought, and on its heels the toothier question of heaven itself, of just where is he off to, floating.

Instead of the cacophony of his big body's constant reminders, Rabbit's sense of himself is now merely as huge and clean, a white idea, untethered, rising like a red balloon whose red is less the color of candy apples than of a squat, solid Amish barn in the oblique light of a Pennsylvania mid-to-late afternoon. As beneath him the slate roofs of the DeLeon hospital complex first form a pattern of tile with other roofs and then melt into the blue and green gem the Atlantic wears, Rabbit finds the star expanding, his inner vision restored but altered. As an astringent light the same bleached

blue as the DeLeon ICU yawns out from both sides of a gassy pink warmth he screams at leaving, as a slap's sharp sting on his tiny plum of a bottom meets the inverted face of the obstetrician who holds him by a heel, replaced immediately by the moon of his mother's face rising and breaking into crescents over the edge of a crib, then the sight of their nubbly rug rushing up to slap him as his first fat steps fail, Rabbit realizes all those fags in sandals had been right, and he was about to re-ex-

perience, in time lapse, every sensuous experience he'd ever had. Here they all are, each minutely described:

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[cont. p. 284]

... in air tinged the bloody lavender of a sunrise over an Ipswich dune, Rabbit was heartsore. How quickly, in the dim Cineplex of recall, the associations rose and passed! How little the lyrical metaphors his head conjured for everything he saw, the poetic analogies that had bloomed beside milk boxes and damp screens, pubic

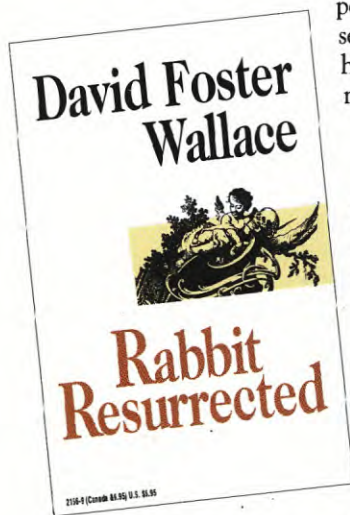
hair and Toyotas, plumber's helpers and Janice's poor slotted mouth, images hovering palsied like the faint UHF ghosts that shadowed televised images before everybody all of a sudden had to have those cable hookups, or like the odd clover's fourth leaf, jutting so vainly with its Valentine creases between what was complete in itself... or maybe more like the echo of a yodel in a void, because how damned little they added up to, these unlikely observations of a self-centered clod, these locations of literary meaning in the angle of light on prefab siding in the smooth hiss of a public fart, these strings of pedestrian epiphanies that he had presumed lifted him above the herd of all other self-centered pedestrian clods to become the distillate of an American generation. All ghosts, gone the moment seen.

He is alone, rising erect in the cerulean space above the dazzling frozen gauze of the clouds—boiling, radiant, motionless, terrible, silent, and clumped. He is by himself. No voice booms off his skull or plucks at his gown's sleeve. Rabbit dislikes being by himself. Will there be no one to guide him on a flight that has become less upward than stolidly out, expanding? No one to banter with? To hear his opinions, views? Would there be perhaps some way to get laid, maybe? If disembodied, is he unmanned? His idea of heaven is not wings' flutter or robes' flow. Rabbit's heaven, as ecumenical in its spirituality as Tertullian's hell, comprises an infinity of snatch. He rises, erect, meditative. Would there be vaginas where he was going, vaginas finally freed from the

shrill silly vessels around them, bodiless, pungent, and rubicund, swaddled in angelic linen or straining plump around some Unitarian G-string? The odd breast or two, detached, obliging? Arabs saw heaven as for men, the accredited dead enjoying the spicy favors of black-eyed virgins for all eternity. Was it too late to convert? Would a lapsed Episcopalian who slapped the bottoms of ministers' wives stand a chance at bliss at the top of this rise? Rabbit asks of the airless blue: to Whom will he be held accountable? The well-dressed, sad-smelling God of the Springer's airless church? Some Catholic intercessor with an infant at her tit? Weedy, beaming Eastern gods with hookahs and pelican bellies? Some stern Dutch Reform personage with the black coat and pale dour face of a Hals oil?

And he begins to wonder, as he rises, weightless and squeezed into the navy blue dome, rising like a bubble in beer, less pushed by any pressure than drawn by pressure's absence, rising it seems to some surface where he fears he will, as in life, merely spread, refract light for a while, and disappear with a thin pop, what he will be held to answer for. How stood his accounts? Surely Whoever decided must make allowances for a character damned at conception to act out all America's narcissistic, grimly prurient drama. And surely Rabbit's balance sheet is written in two inks. The sun fills the cone of his upward sight, expands without heat. Surely each late afternoon a Has-sy riding a squealing Mim on his handlebars canceled out an occasion on which he'd seen a woman and wondered how she would do instead of who she was. Surely his exasperated kindness toward Nelson the child appeared opposite such snafus as a dead Jill or the briefest of just-once slips with a daughter-in-law who'd been asking for it for years. Only human, after all. Surely Rabbit is headed for a heaven he's never left.

Much bolstered, Rabbit is able to close his eyes; color blooms behind his lids. How sweet to see stars clotted around a lit sun. The stars burn bright and cold as lit ice, and as what is left of him leaves the rest behind, Rabbit sees the stars, and the stars behind the stars, coalesce into the image of a tree. The tree is a rood, and does not visually or metaphorically resemble any other tree, or any other thing, which for obvious reasons disturbs Rabbit a lot. But hung aloft the schematized branches, and subtending the light-spike roots like leafy brachts, hanging and sitting, like baubles, objects for Rabbit's observation and (though not connection) pleasure, is everyone he's ever known who died and rose: Mom, Pop, baby Becky in her tomb of gray water, Skeeter, Jill, old man Springer, Thelma with her rash-covered arms out, poor walle-eyed Peggy Gring, Mr. Abendroth the postman who went house to house like doctors used to, the obstetrician who'd



yanked him from the infinity he dreamed of and spanked him awake, all the rest, more than anyone could ever count: shades: pale wisps of images, as yet insubstantial as lit gauze, as mist off a dawn Susquehanna. It's a solipsist's heaven, full of his own dead perceptions.

Here they all are, Rabbit's tree's decorations, crying out to the white animal who twists upward toward them in an erect bed, crying out to Rab-

bit to be resurrected, reseen, by He whose attention had made them. And Rabbit dispenses mercy, in a heaven he's never left, to these supplicant ghosts of his life's sight. Here they all are: minutely described. Each.

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## TADZIO'S FAREWELL

By Paul West

**H**aving followed the gracious, voluptuous Polish boy Tazio, Gustave von Aschenbach, Thomas Mann's novelist hero, returned to his hotel feverish and dizzy. A few days later, still feeling dizzy and full of dread, he goes to the beach, there to brood on the plague that is any day going to engulf his beloved Venice. He watches Tazio scuffle in the dry sand of the Lido with his heftier playfellow, Jaschiu. Bested, Tazio has walked in a snit out onto the sandbar, pacing and pausing, and now he casts a look backward at Aschenbach, a look of almost imploring dependency touched with something innocently lascivious. Tazio beckons, summoning the novelist and pointing out to sea. In his mind, Aschenbach rises from his chair, but remains, collapsed, as he was, and is carried to his room. That night, news of his death drifts out to a stunned and respectful world.

As they bore him to his room, that not-quite-adequate hell, a middle-class room proscribing mighty thoughts, Aschenbach felt his brain begin to whimper, adding itself to the giddiness of earlier on, the sedentary giddiness which followed, and wondered what devilish destiny had kept him at the last moment from following that golden youth out onto the sandbar, there to have with him the merest of talks pregnant with ill-judged, inane desire. Or a dialogue of eyes, all soft glistening reciprocity somewhere between craven wink and temptation-abolishing closure. His flabby, lipsticked mouth would have refused to work for him beyond a puckering release of lips done to expel air only. It would have been easy, would it not, to tell the boy "I saw you" or, possessively bolder, "I have been seeing you" or, erotically overbearing, "I have done nothing but watch you," and with that, Aschenbach's kid glove became a slice of live, tempestuous flesh in his right hand: mulled, oiled, smeared with Venetian musk. Then the boy would have responded in kind, perhaps, not going so far

as to tap his hand or to peer obsessively into the daubed slit of Aschenbach's mouth, where many a silver fountain pen had lost its cap's patina from rhythmic contact with our novelist's teeth. Ah, that did it: the boy's teeth themselves had looked somewhat ragged, not unsightly but irregularly abraded by their palsied dentist far off in uninfected Warsaw.

Out of some deference to the few remaining other guests (the majority having already fled the rumored plague and its advance army of rats), those who carried him took him into the service elevator as if he were a chest of tea or a side of bacon—certainly not for the eyes of well-bred sojourners. Yet what was he? No more than a dandy with dyed hair and a fleck of carmine in either cheek culled from a rooster's comb. Of course, even as they bore him hor-

izontally, they were trying to spare him the sapped vista of a grand hotel minus its denizens, which might have set off in him an even more dangerous apoplexy: that of a Roman emperor who, flush with lions, had run out of Christians and now

