



Source: Ellen Knickmeyer, 'Radical group pulls in Sunnis as Lebanon's Muslims polarize', *Washington Post online*, 17/06/07.

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Daddy—our ultimate judge, vast and ancient carnivorous baby, painted egg of the universe, wizened larva perpetually unhatched. Who lives at the centre of the world, at the end of the world. Who is the meniscus that surrounds the world. Who spends his idle hours and millennia wreathed in the smoke of altars. Who is himself a chimney, wearing the smoke of his own offerings like a greasy veil. Whose eyes are stupid, sleepy and gluttonous, but ready to sharpen into watchful paranoia.

Daddy sleeps. His mountainous sides, forested with hair, rugged with scars and incipient melanoma, rise and fall, occasionally spasm, with the earthquake of his snoring. His two huge nostrils, twin damp caves, whistle with an occult wind that seems to bear an undertone of many voices mixed. His mouth is slightly open, shiny with drool and stinking of partly-cooked flesh, shreds of which hang and rot between the calcified formations of his huge yellow teeth. His ears sleep, their arcane convolutions leading to stopped tunnels, that when awake consume sound with a voracious suspicion.

He does not hear my footsteps approaching. I am not outside him, so do not approach. I am not any other but him, who encompasses everything. Nevertheless, I ascend his chin, traverse its ravined wilderness until I achieve the summit—the unspeakably gusting cavern of mouth. After crossing the spongy hinterland of his lip, I stand at the brink. I uncork the vial I am carrying and pour a thin green stream of emetic that trickles into the breathing hole. Nothing happens for a very long time.

It starts with an inaudible shockwave, that bursts the eardrums and makes the air thicken, warp and shiver, the bones resonate themselves into powder and sludge.

It vibrates through all the worlds that lie nested and folded within each other. In each one, Daddy is the same, the same everywhere, the same flat yellow eyes and

hungry querulous mouth, perpetually chewing. Matter then starts to hum, atoms to sing, then scream, then crack.

The vomiting is something terrible, roaring and twisting and tumbling out. Jaws gaping till they nearly split to let it all pass. There are buildings that pile up, there is rubble, limbs, broken bones and small plastic electronic toys with flashing lights but without their wheels. There are crowns, sceptres and Kalashnikovs. Flags and broken plumbing protrude from the mass. There are stealth bombers, petrol-air bombs, torpedoes and grenades. There are tombstones, urns, carved angels and a deluge of coffins.

There is blood, of course; rivers and lakes of it, steaming with the stench of the abattoir. Rafts with survivors and refugees cling to them, larger ships with chimneys and guns bob past. The dark purple of the current mixes with the darker brown of raw sewage, jewelled with methane bubbles and unspeakable solids.

Daddy voids the prisons in his belly. He empties himself of all; his furnaces, crematoria, factories, barracks, schools and housing estates, his ploughed fields, fallow ground and smoking rubbish tips. His planets and stars spew out into the void beyond every world, within every world.

He is stone, steel girders, geological time. His jurisprudence moves slowly, glacially. We are all on remand, our case will be heard when the backlog is cleared. This backlog reaches back to long before we—or anyone—was born. His judgement has the secretive small ticking of a wristwatch held close to the ear, where it confuses itself with the barely heard thrum of the blood—his judgement is forever suspended, approaching and stepping away, always and never arriving.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Robin Bale.*