

closing in death, and the open eyes of this one guy I saw in the desert there, in that oil-smoke, perfectly intact, thrown clear by a bomb, clean as anything, staring up at the sky like he was wondering just what was coming next. *Oh, Lima Lima*, I'm thinking.

The guy turns to go, and I see T. Rex handing him back his receipt, but then she touches his arm, kind of this way that she has, like she knows she has won, like she's turning the lamb belly-up for the kill, and she's handing him also—what is it?—a deposit slip, with her name and her phone number.

I'm back in my head, quick as that, deep in blackness. I'm still in my vehicle. Everything's dark. But way up ahead, I can see Mr. Jerusalem and the little Pinocchio Girl, heading into the parking lot. I am the only one who can save them. I'm ready to do what they told me I'd do when I went to the Gulf, but they fucking lied, lied, fucking lied. I'm as nutso as Harrison Ford in *Mosquito Coast*, totally what-am-I-doing-here cool as when he was old Indy, and as laser-sharp smart and as perfectly innocent of any wrongdoing as Richard Kimble in *The Fugitive*. I am saving the world from T. Rex, and I'm starting with this poor sucker from Jerusalem.

In my mind I am revving my motor, I am laying rubber, and here I go crashing out through the glass doors. I can't stop the vehicle—there are no brakes, am I going to go all the way to the river?—but as I pass him I am screaming DON'T DO IT, DON'T DO IT, dear God, thinking of the damn come-on she has given him, the deposit slip, oh, poor man, even if your wife looks like Yasser Arafat, don't do it, and my voice doesn't sound like my voice, oh, wow, I guess that T. Rex and the part-timer know something's wrong, because suddenly I am down, smack, on the tile with the mud—I can feel it—all into my hair—and they've got me pinned down to the floor, and I'm thinking of B.J. Ezekiel, looneytunes, wishing him well, very well, and I'm thinking my breath smells like anchovies—there I am drifting, like out of the body—I'm thinking my breath smells like anchovies, that's all I'm thinking.