

WHEN WE GOT BACK to Jake's the girls were watching the wedding video. They were deep into the thing, where everyone was dancing. Except for me. I was just sitting and drinking, watching other people have fun. You could make out the back of my head just above the time stamp. From that angle I looked less bald than I felt but every bit as fat. Then the camera zoomed in on Hannah's brother. His jacket was off now and you could see his little arm real clearly. He held the thing up with his good arm when he danced, tucking its three or four fingers under his chin so it wouldn't flop around while he moved. He was pretty comfortable. Shit, why wouldn't he be? He'd already had a lot of time to get used to things. I didn't remember him dancing, though. I must've been pretty far-gone at this point.

Presently I took a seat on the end of the couch, next to Kathy. Jake stood behind us, his face swollen, his eyes wet, his broken teeth stained with blood and mouth crusted with puke. The girls were too sucked into the video to notice us, really. I watched along with them, my head throbbing. The camera followed this crippled stranger, this brand new brother to my oldest friend, as he moved around the floor in these great sweeping circles, dancing with all the ladies, one after another: his sister, the maid of honor, his mother, and, eventually, my wife. Kathy's dress was black velvet with these knotted portholes that you could see her squeezed together breasts through, and where the velvet shined you could see the faint outline of her belly just beginning to swell. And they danced together for a while, this man and my wife and my unborn son no bigger than a baby chick inside her. They traced tear-shaped loops across the parquet, and he spun her this way and that with his one good arm. I sunk into Jake's couch and narrowed my eyes to focus. To try and stop the pounding. I watched the tiny tips of his shiny shoes catch the light, and hold the

light, and let go the light, and slide back and forth and back again. And, for a moment there, before Kathy saw all the blood on my face and in my hair, and Jake, and everything got ugly again, I thought he had something figured out, this dancing one-armed man.

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