

[Home](#)

[Summer 2007](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Contact](#)

WHAT THE WIND BLEW IN BY LAURENCE KLAVAN

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"**B**ut why would they be *here*?" Alan asked, trying to keep his voice calm.

"I don't know," Annabelle, his wife, replied. "The government put them here."

"But it happened a long way from here. It doesn't make any sense."

"I didn't say that it did."

There would be no settling the issue, Alan knew, partly because Annabelle didn't know the answer and partly because she didn't care. If two survivors of a hurricane half a country away--almost the whole country, really--had been resettled in their town ninety miles north of New York, then that's what had happened, and that's all there was to it.

"The government doesn't know what it's doing," she said. "That's obvious, isn't it? So why would this make any more sense than anything else they do?"

Alan shrugged; she had him there. That wasn't the point, anyway, not to Anna: it was the fact of the couple's suffering and the fact that it could be eased and that they might help ease it. Alan didn't believe these were facts, but he didn't say. He just let Anna go on, establishing the basis for what she was suggesting they do.

"We have empty rooms. I can move my sewing stuff out of the den. Or you can move your toy theaters. It just seems criminal that two people who've been through so much should have to stay in a trailer park, and for God knows how long."

Now there was more that Alan didn't say. Like, for instance, that he'd never liked having the trailer park across the two-lane highway from their house, had wondered why it was there, if this was what their notoriously high property taxes were going toward. (And no one was fooled by its smiling daisy logo and its title, "The New Day Flexible Life Center." It was a trailer park!) He distrusted the people who lived in it, that was really it, didn't believe that most of them were actually in the dire straits they professed to be. He wasn't a blamer, he considered himself compassionate; there was just something about other people's pain that immediately made him doubt its existence, and the more pain, the more doubt. This man and woman had been suddenly upended, their home destroyed, their lives in a place ended perhaps forever, and so inevitably he felt the whole thing must be a fraud--especially since it had happened so far away and they were now here. *And* because Annabelle wanted the people to temporarily move in with them. But he said none of it.

A year before, he would not have been so discreet. In those days--that is to say, in the twenty years of their marriage leading up to a year ago--he would have railed, scoffed, "put his foot down," and

Anna would have politely endured it and then backed down or compromised in a way that pleased him more than her, for he was always more negatively "invested" in his argument than she was positively in hers. But that was before Anna got cancer and things changed.

The suspicion and petulance that characterized much of Alan's conversations had been all along, it turned out, a kind of voodoo, a way to ward off the pain he saw in others and dreaded experiencing himself, even the pain involved in considering their pain. It was a form of subservience to pain, abject weakness before it. So when pain visited him, as it was always going to, anyway, no matter what he did, visited Annabelle and so him, he had to switch tactics; now he did and did not question anything Annabelle wanted, as an equally ineffective way to keep the cancer and so the pain from returning. This was what closed his mouth or changed what he said--though it could not change what he thought, the pattern of suspicion being too well established within him not to be manifested someplace.

"You're being awfully quiet," Anna said, surprised.

Anna, on the other hand, had responded to circumstances differently. Before her diagnosis and treatment (it was breast cancer; she was forty-eight; the radiation was over now; she'd been clean for six months; no hair loss), she had been more open to and less frightened of life than her husband. In the time since, she had shown signs of passivity and depression. The hurricane couple's appearance in town had brought back--even increased--her old intrepidity. She felt a new and invigorating alliance with them because they also suffered, felt they deserved all the help they could get; and since she was still here on Earth, she was here to help. Others in town had merely had them to dinner: Anna was willing to complete the permits to move the couple. This was its own mystical trade-off--help for health--but whatever its motive it tested Alan's own superstition and new vow of silence. So far, he had passed.

"I wasn't being quiet. I was just thinking," he said, and this at least was true.

"And?" she said, apparently eager to get going with her plan.

"I--" And here he swallowed a hundred objections, questions, and jokes, effectively ending his sentence as it began. He placed a hand on Anna's hand, which was still as elegant and pale as the day they met, though he hadn't noticed until a year ago. "Sure. Whatever you want."

When he met the couple, he was no more convinced of their veracity, less so if that were possible. The Lynches were white, and hadn't most of the hurricane survivors been black? That was the first thing. Secondly, they both dressed as if they had stepped out of a photograph from the 1930s or something--the dust bowl, the Oakies, the WPA, or whatever: denim shirt and jeans with rolled-up cuffs for the man, a simple, sleeveless gingham dress for the woman. And even though they were probably in Alan and Annabelle's mid to late forties age range, they looked twenty years older with leathery skin tanned to a perilous crisp and rings beneath their eyes so deep they seemed to have been whittled out of wood.

The man in particular, Sam Lynch--and it was such an all-American name, wasn't it, appropriate to any decade, too right, Alan thought, too clever--had a sculpted look, six foot and *sinewy*, that was the word, with the skin of his forearms stretched so tight that the veins had a protruding and snake-like look, phallic, if you must know, and his ropey neck was the same way. It bothered Alan to look at him: basic man, penile all over, and unembarrassed about it; show-offy, he would have said, if he had said anything to Annabelle.

The woman, on the other hand, Dorothy, was less resilient looking, with lank brown hair, her arms muscular, too, but her breasts already the "dugs" of the elderly, her facial features hangdog, hopeless, and instantly forgettable, as if she had given up expecting to be remembered or had already been dead for decades. It all seemed an imitation: reverse ideals of the American man and woman, wax figures in a diorama of America's most miserable. Alan couldn't stop these thoughts; they were piling up in his head like planes on a runway, for they couldn't fly out of his mouth. All he allowed himself to say to them was,

"Welcome to our home."

And Anna seemed so glad they were there, clasping both of their hands in her own and then hanging onto and swinging them a little, girlish in her happiness. She even seemed to choke back a tear or two, and the sight made Alan place a fond and gentling hand on her back, cynicism falling from the holes in his head like sifted flour.

"You can have the downstairs bedroom," she said. "Alan's moved his toy theaters."

Alan winced a little, hearing this. His hobby--and Annabelle couldn't have children and they didn't want to adopt, so, yes, they both had hobbies, hers were sewing and dollhouses--suddenly seemed erudite and even effeminate before this couple of careworn, indomitable, apparently exiled Americans. Even the house itself seemed excessive and elitist (and it was only two stories and they had earned it; owning a hardware store wasn't easy, especially these days, with chains taking over, even upstate, just look at the Drugall's and Super Buy 'n' Fly in town). But who were the Lynches to complain? Hadn't they been plucked out of a government-issued trailer and, before that, supposedly, from the drink?

And they weren't complaining. They were very grateful.

"Thank you so much," Dorothy said, with--and Alan could have been wrong but it sure sounded like an old-style, pre-TV and the-flattening-of-American-speech midwestern or southern twang. Then, with dry, cracked lips, she placed a short, abashed but clearly sincere kiss on Annabelle's cheek.

For his part, Sam performed a physical gesture so difficult Alan wasn't sure he'd ever seen it done before. He winked with *feeling*, as a taciturn way of giving thanks. Winks were usually--weren't they always--a form of snideness or flirtation. To wink with *feeling*--and slowly enough to reveal veins in Sam's eyelids that were once again reminders of hardship and erections--that took talent. Alan, of course, didn't share this reaction, only reflexively--and it was a mistake, and he knew it the second before he did it, not after, before--winked back. This wink, of course, was a normal one and so completely inappropriate and seemed to cast a pall over the kitchen in which they all stood before Annabelle saved the day by saying,

"Well. You'll want to get moved in."

Minutes later, Alan couldn't help but peek in to see their belongings, whatever they had left of them: a few bundles wrapped up in old newspaper and tied with what seemed hay wire, sitting in an orderly line near the bed of the spare bedroom, placed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible, placed respectfully, that was it, *too* respectfully. In his and Annabelle's bedroom, Alan had piled his little theaters, modeled on Broadway houses, less carefully, a stage punctured here, a balcony bent there. (And don't ask him why he'd started building them, he'd barely seen a play in his life. Maybe they were dream-like expressions of his critical nature, temples in his religion of judgment; but Alan wouldn't have been the one to say.)

When Alan walked in, he saw Annabelle standing by their window, looking out absently at the backyard. Soon after her surgery, he would sometimes catch her standing like this, hugging herself, her arms crossed, her fingers in her armpits, her palm covering the place where the lump in her breast had been removed, looking weirdly Napoleonic, he thought, perhaps as a way to stop the heartbreak he felt in seeing it. He didn't know how to touch her himself in those days, didn't want to offend or cause harm but not seem too squeamish, either: again, pain's dithering supplicant. Today he was pleased that her arms were crossed normally, her hands at her opposite elbows. So he crept up behind her and fully embraced her, as if he could magically keep the rest of her from slipping away as one piece already had.

She placed her head back against his chest, perhaps casting her own spell but in any case breaking his. "I'm so glad," she said, "that they're here."

To keep himself quiet, Alan concentrated on smelling her hair, taking in deep inhales that he imagined filled his mind with her scent, freshening and obscuring his bad thoughts. "Me, too."

That night, Anna made a veritable feast, the kind of food the two rarely if ever had and certainly never had at home. It was a meal of "classics": pork chops, mashed potatoes, peas, what Alan thought Anna thought the Lynches would have eaten before all was lost. It was delicious, Alan had to admit, almost exotic after so much pasta and broiled chicken. He even delayed taking in a second hefty bite when Sam started saying grace, something no one had ever done beneath their roof before. Annabelle listened with a curious and appreciative smile, so Alan let it go, then quickly dug back into the juicy meat which he had painted with potato.

"That was wonderful," Dorothy, the wife, said, after a final bite of pecan pie.

"Absolutely," Sam said, leaning back and patting his stomach in overalls he had changed into. It

was clear to Alan that if the Lynches ate in such a way they hadn't done so in years, since way before the hurricane. So he didn't hold it against them when Sam now lit up a pipe with only the most cursory head cock to ask permission. Anna touched Alan's hand, secretly, to say allow it, though she hated smoke in the house even more than he did.

Perhaps to further show his appreciation, Sam then brought out a banjo and strummed and sang American standards, from "Polly Wolly Doodle" to "This Land is Your Land" and "Stardust." Sometimes Annabelle sang along in a voice Alan hadn't heard (or maybe just hadn't listened to) in years, one as pure and unaffected and touchingly flat as a child's. Then the Lynches said goodnight with a stalwart handshake (Sam) and a heartfelt hug (Dorothy) and went to bed.

As he did the dishes, Alan looked out the kitchen window at the clear night sky. A storm said to be crossing the country toward them was changing course, he had heard, maybe heading out to sea. Maybe the hurricane had been the worst of the "extreme" weather that summer. He heard Annabelle leave the table and, humming a little of Sam's last song, go upstairs.

When he reached their bedroom himself, Alan realized that he had left his watch downstairs. He tiptoed back to the living room, hoping that the creaks wouldn't awaken Annabelle, who had passed out--smiling--the second she lay down.

On the first floor, where the Lynches were, the bedroom door was shut, the light out. But a light still conspicuously shone from beneath the bathroom door beside it.

Alan looked for the watch in the places he usually set it: the side of the kitchen sink where pots still soaked; the arm of the living room chair on which the day's paper was piled--but he couldn't get to his third usual place, the rim of the tub in the downstairs john.

Then the bathroom door suddenly opened and he hid in the shadows of the dark living room.

The light stayed on for a second and displayed with almost vulgar overttness a naked Sam Lynch. His body was a map of a male physique devoted for decades just to action and forbearance: flat where it was not muscular, scarred, with no place for the results of self-indulgence, no spare flesh, all of it in use. Even his penis--"weathered" was the only word for it--seemed more a weapon or utensil than an instrument for his pleasure or anyone else's.

The one jarring exception was his right hand, which Alan swore gripped the glittery and frivolous gold of his watch. With his other hand, Sam reached up and--tortured bicep flexed--turned off the light; and everything, including truth, disappeared.

The next morning, when Alan was awakened by the clock radio, it was static-y and stuck between stations. He made out that the weather forecast had changed a bit: the storm might not pass the Northeast entirely. He turned it off, quickly.

He waited until Annabelle had cleared the breakfast dishes (bacon, toast, even an omelette, not just bran cereal). He studied Sam for any sign of guilt or any other kind of nefarious behavior--and Dorothy, too, for she might be if not his active partner then his acquiescent accomplice. But the couple did nothing untoward or odd; they ate with the same deep and quiet appreciation of the food as they had their dinner. And did they have to say grace before every meal? Wouldn't food sort of *stay blessed* from before? Watching and coarsely wondering was easier for Alan than looking at Anna, because her pleasure at serving (saving?) the Lynches made him feel ashamed. Still, his watch hadn't turned up and he instinctively rubbed his bare wrist now, in response. (It was a good one, waterproof, and a fortieth birthday present from his sister.) He hadn't mentioned it to Annabelle.

Alan excused himself before the others, drifted to the bathroom, then pivoted in secret to the spare bedroom. Standing in the doorway, he checked the space out: most of the bundles still sat where they'd been; some shabby clothes hung in the closet; the Lynches had made the least and most humble use of the place. Checking behind himself, he cautiously entered.

A chest of drawers was the only piece of furniture except the bed; its top was clean. Alan opened the skinny first drawer, saw just a few pairs of men's underwear, neatly folded, and one old wedding night-type slip, placed at a discreet distance from them. He closed it, then knelt slightly to open a bottom drawer more likely to be used for hiding.

"Wonderful breakfast," someone said.

Alan looked up, suddenly, and saw Sam in the threshold, looked *up* at him, for he was now unfortunately fully on his knees. The man stood casually cleaning his gums with a toothpick, one he must have brought with him, for they kept none in the house (or had Annabelle bought a box, just for them?).

"Yes," Alan said, blushing, awkwardly starting to stand and to close the drawer he had not had time to examine. It was his house, he could do in it as he pleased; perhaps the whole thing would go unmentioned?

It did not. "Did you leave something in here you wanted?" Sam asked with--unless Alan were crazy--a touch of insinuation.

Well, he had asked; why not answer? "Yes, actually," Alan said, now at his full height which was still less than Sam's. "My watch."

"Your watch."

"Uh huh. Gold. Engraved. Have you seen it?"

Sam seemed to snort, mirthlessly. He stopped using and merely rolled the toothpick around in his mouth. Then he answered but indirectly. "I had a watch once. An old watch. A gift from my dad. Even hung on its own chain. Fob, I guess they call it. It meant a lot to me. I have to admit that, when Dorothy and I were sitting on our roof after the hurricane, holding up our signs for help, that the watch crossed my mind. Funny, isn't it, since we'd lost everything we owned, even living things, our dog? I remembered it was kind of ironical how careful I had been with that watch. Even kept it in its own little box. Why? Why had I bothered when everything is so easily washed away? I should have been careless with it. I should have left it, I don't know, just sitting on the side of a bathtub or someplace."

At this, he looked directly and unapologetically at Alan, with eyes that said he had seen more bad times than his host--maybe more than anyone ever--and was angry about all of it and afraid of nothing.

"The government tried to give us things, to make it up to us," he said. "But they never can. There's no end to what we're owed. But, at any rate, this house is a lot better than where we were." He smiled then, and the toothpick stuck more obviously out of his mouth like a small second tongue, one more way to say, too bad and screw you. The veins in his neck grew hideously outlined, and Alan suddenly felt he could see inside him.

"Good luck in finding it," Sam said. This time, his wink was a mix of the snotty and sincere, which was much more disturbing than being one or the other.

Like one of those bible characters God tells to slay his son or something--Anna had been the occasional churchgoer not him and then mostly for the music--Alan felt he faced his greatest obstacle yet to mastering his new belief and its rituals. He was on the verge of blurting out what had happened, establishing why the Lynches must immediately leave--back-sliding, as it were, results notwithstanding--when Annabelle prevented it. It was after she saw him more agitatedly rubbing the faint white circle on his wrist where the watch had been.

"You might as well know," she said. "I gave your watch to him."

"What?" Alan looked up, now holding the wrist and hard.

"I'm sorry, but--maybe I'm not. He has so little--both of them do--and asks for so little. When I look at them and speak to them, I see that they've been made better--what's the word?--ennobled by all they've been through and the acceptance that there will be more: why wouldn't there, you know? Sam refused your watch at first, of course, but then I kind of folded it into his big palm and placed his fingers over it. Why not let them know that there can be good along with the bad? He almost wept--he wouldn't, you know, not him. But she did, though it was a dry kind of crying; maybe she has no real tears left. She hugged him from behind. Then we all stood embracing in a circle of what I can only call thanks."

She touched Alan's hand, to free the circulation-stopping chokehold he now had on his opposite wrist. "You can always get another watch."

Anna's face was--well, beaming, was the only way to describe it. Alan literally bit his lip as people are said to do in stories, to keep from speaking. Or maybe he wanted to cause himself pain--that self-flagellating thing that supplicants or novice nuns do--to remind himself of what he was trying to repel. When he finally stopped biting, it was at the same moment Anna separated his hands. Then he nodded, which meant it was okay, about the watch. In truth, he no longer knew which one of them was right, what was true and not, what Sam had really said and to whom: which one of their magics was going to work.

The next day, Alan crossed the highway to the trailer park. He looked up at the darkening sky; heavy rain was now being forecast from the oncoming storm, targeting New York directly. As he entered, he felt on guard, conscious as he almost never was of his class (which was what? Working-middle-upper?) and how it would distinguish him. But he found he was dressed virtually the same as everyone else, polo shirt, jeans and sneakers being a new American uniform. He didn't feel as observed as he had anticipated, less the detective or undercover agent as he had feared. He tried not to judge--or its flip side, fear--the people he saw beside the American flags, the clothes on lines, the cars on blocks. He tried to keep an open mind.

In truth, he wanted his visit to end as soon as possible and provide him with answers or at least more information. But he found, when he started asking about the Lynches, that they had made little impression on people except provoking a gossipy interest in some and in others doubts similar to Alan's own (were they hustlers looking for a government hand-out? Why white? Why here?). For a few, there was also an extra element of resentment: they hadn't liked their own hardships diminished by the Lynches' example. These people in particular were glad the couple was gone.

Only one person had more than a few syllables to say. He was a man about thirty, an inhabitant of one of the shabbier trailers. His wife--a hugely fat woman of twenty-five or so--was eager to introduce him to Alan, if only it seemed to be saved from being with him herself. She whispered that after having difficulty finding work, he had attempted suicide and a few days earlier been released from a mental hospital farther upstate. His memory of the event and many other things, including his identity, was now faulty. Her marriage had brought her more than she'd bargained for, but she distrusted authorities too much to completely relinquish the man to them, so she was stuck. As a reflection of his fragility--or was it her own embarrassment?--she kept him in the back of her trailer on a couch piled with pillows, as if he were a cat in a closet having kittens.

"I know all about them," he said, authoritatively, his head moving spasmodically now and then. "They cause everything."

"What do you mean?" Alan asked.

"Everything bad."

Alan looked at him: trim, almost handsome, the hair on his head growing back in patches after being shaved during his stay upstate. "Like the--"

"The hurricane. And that thing down in the city. And this." He rolled up a sleeve weirdly long for a summer day to reveal slash marks that started on his wrists and ran up to his elbow. "They made me do this. They came here from hell."

Alan couldn't help but be repelled by the display of his injuries and immediately dismissive of his "information." Yet it was so different from the beliefs he and Annabelle held that he found himself compelled and even a little frightened by it.

And he continued to be so when the man, shifting forward on the couch far enough to get close to Alan's face, ended with,

"Good to see you, Phil."

"That's his own name," the woman said, again outside with Alan. "Sorry."

"I see."

"Don't take him too serious. He harps on your friends for what happened to him. He thinks end times are near, and they're the cause. I think he'd have a pretty good case against his *parents* if he could remember something real."

She looked off, seeming to consider her options. Alan nodded, seriously, and thanked her. Then he hurried from the park. He felt as if he'd been to an old-style carny sideshow, complete with fortune teller (the country fair the town hosted didn't have them any more and had become benign and cautious with healthy food booths and hand sanitizer soap stands near the petting zoo). Yet he didn't entirely scoff. Did this lunatic know something he and Anna didn't? Preoccupied, he had to dodge cars coming in both directions to get home, rain already starting to fall.

Alan was pretty well soaked by the time he reached the driveway of his house, thunder sounding. On his way in, he saw the Lynches sitting dry beneath the roof of--his! his and Anna's!--porch, Sam rocking and smoking that foul smelling, piece of crap pipe, Dorothy staring off with a peacefulness he had not seen in her before and which he could not help but deeply resent. Yet mixed with his contempt was a little bit of fear of them now, as he again heard the claims and saw the rolled up sleeve of the crazy guy in the trailer.

Once inside, he slowed at the entrance to the spare room. Checking through the front hall window and seeing the relaxed backs of the Lynches, he walked into where they slept. Something immediately caught his eye through the--now half-closed--door of the closet. It was a burst of sharper color, sharper than the faded denim and dusty browns of the Lynches' wardrobe. He walked toward it, his fingers twitching with anticipation. Then he yanked the door completely open.

He saw his own purple button-down shirt. It was the one he'd bought down in the city one night, admittedly when he was a little drunk, after dinner. Still, he wore it, usually on special occasions, and mostly to prove to himself that it had not been a terrible mistake. What did it matter? It was his--his alone!

Alan turned on his heel and coldly approached the chest of drawers. As if he were a policeman frisking it, he pulled open the top drawer--and before he could even get to the more likely offenders near the floor, he saw Annabelle's amethyst necklace. It was the one that she--well, he couldn't remember where she got it, if he had even given it to her. He only knew that it was hers, just as the--what color was it? a funny name for green--ring beside it and the pair of pearl earrings beside *it* were hers.

Alan slammed the drawers, forgetting that he meant not to attract any attention. He glanced at the doorway, nervously, and, on the way, saw something else: a large leather bag sitting in a corner. It contained his golf clubs--the expensive set he had used only once and not well about a year ago, when he had decided to get more exercise. He cursed out loud but the sound was obscured by a shout of thunder that rattled the entire house.

Alan burst from the room and went into the main sitting area, past the dining room, convinced that everywhere he went he saw items missing--a glass ashtray owned by Annabelle's aunt from the coffee table, a pair of his nylon sneakers from under a chair, a broken umbrella from a stand--things that were now obviously rolled up in the Lynches' lousy bales of belongings. The rain fell so heavily on the roof it seemed like more anger and confusion trying to enter his mind, which was already stuffed to overflowing with them.

Out the window, through the obscuring sheets of water, he thought he saw Sam Lynch. He was standing and looking in with an expression of angry entitlement. Or was it something else, something worse? Like pride of ownership--of the rain itself? Alan felt faint.

"Alan?"

He stopped, suddenly, responding to the familiar voice. He had not even noticed Annabelle standing at the window and watching the storm. Her arms were not folded this time: one elbow was in one palm and the other palm was at her cheek, Jack Benny-style. It was her most benign and least anguished stance so far.

"Yes?" he said, thrown by seeing her.

"I want you to know," she said, smiling in a certain way that was, well, adorable to him and always had been and what it was like was not even worth trying to explain to anyone else, they would never

understand. "I felt they needed some more of our things." He was about to scream at Anna: maybe it was worse than that the Lynches couldn't be trusted, maybe they were to be feared. Maybe she had invited into their home the very pain they had been trying in their own opposing ways to scare off, that their guests were who or what had been spreading it around the world for centuries, ever since the start of time, ever since the day they invented death. But before he could open his mouth, a javelin of lightning was thrown against the sky, and it exposed and electrified the living room like an old-fashioned flash bulb from the world's biggest camera.

Then they heard the sound. It was more than a boom or crack or a funny sound effect from a cartoon. It was a tragic clash between giants equal in nature, the murder of something in the earth by something from the sky. Alan and Anna felt the house shaken, brutally--they were two tiny figures in a snow globe, that's how little power they had and had always had--as the top half of the old oak tree in their backyard, which had just then been killed by electricity, broke off and crashed into the roof, landing in their attic.

The lights flickered for a few seconds but stayed on. Soon the house settled and was still, though Alan felt in his feet what he was sure were aftershocks. They heard the rain again, which was letting up, as if having made its big statement and with nothing else to say.

Both the faiths they had invented had been removed from within them; all that was left was the physical reality that existed outside. Both Alan and Anna said nothing, only wept, overwhelmed by fear of her disappearing from the world in pain, of his following after, of their showing up again nowhere, of their being lost forever and never even knowing. The setting sun was suddenly and again revealed. They looked outside and saw no one.

But they heard something, and it wasn't organic. A car was being started. They both ran to the window and saw their Subaru pulling out of the garage. At the wheel was Sam Lynch, Dorothy beside him. They didn't wear seat belts, as if they were new inventions they didn't understand. Their things and many of Alan's and Annabelle's were stuffed in the back seat and overflowing from the trunk. Given? Taken? And what about the new storm clouds that Alan could swear he saw forming before them?

Alan reached over, as the Lynches drove away. His hand found and tightly held Annabelle's. Now these were mysteries for other people never to solve.

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Laurence Klavan is the author of the novels *The Cutting Room* and *The Shooting Script*, published during the past two years by Ballantine Books. He received the Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America for "Mrs. White," written under a pseudonym. His short story, "Hole in the Ground," was recently posted in *Cafeirreal.com*. FirstSecond Books will publish in 2008 and 2009, respectively, his graphic novels, *Germantown* and *The Fielding Course*, co-written with Susan Kim. He received two Drama Desk nominations for the book and lyrics to *Bed and Sofa*, the musical produced by the Vineyard Theater in New York. His one-act, *The Summer Sublet*, is included in *Best American Short Plays 2000-2001*.