H. P. LOVECRAFT

THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE





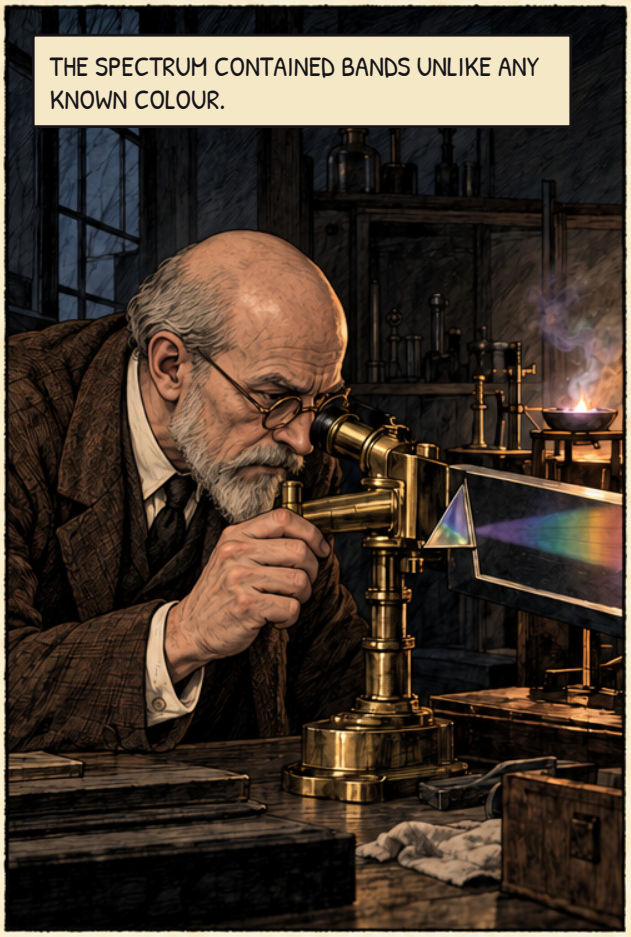


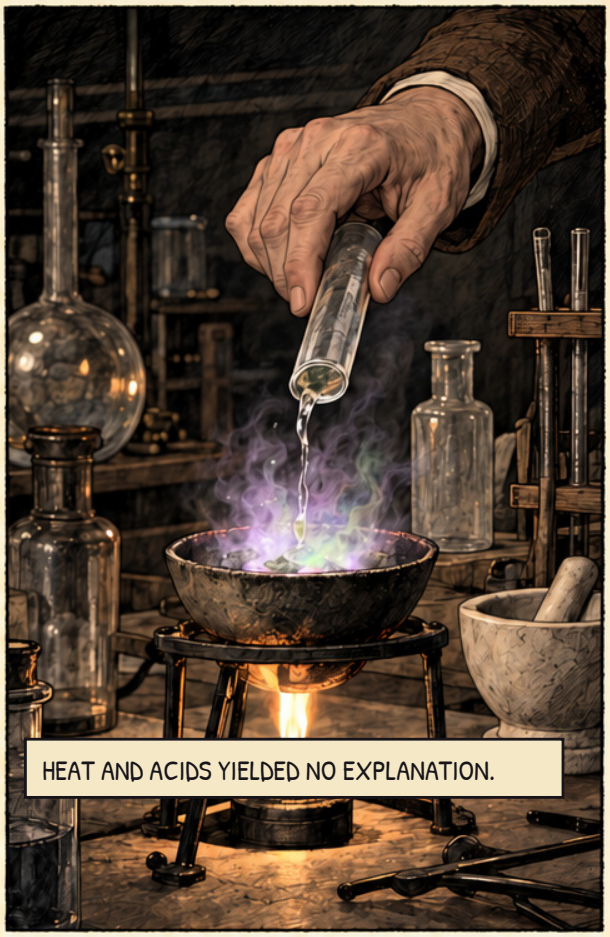

FIVE ACRES WITHOUT A BLADE OF GRASS. IT LOOKED BURNED, BUT NOTHING HAD GROWN BACK.
NO WIND SEEMED TO DISTURB THE DUST.
THE LIGHT ABOVE THE WELL WAS WRONG.


THEY SAID AMMI PIERCE WAS NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD. THEY ALSO SAID HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERED.
THE RESERVOIR WILL COVER THIS WHOLE VALLEY.
BETTER UNDER WATER. SINCE THE STRANGE DAYS, IT BELONGS UNDER WATER.
IT BEGAN WITH THE STONE. JUNE OF 1882.


NAHUM GARDNER LIVED THERE WITH NABBY AND THEIR THREE BOYS: ZENAS, THADDEUS AND MERWIN.
A WHITE CLOUD. EXPLOSIONS OVERHEAD.
BY NIGHT, ALL ARKHAM HAD HEARD.

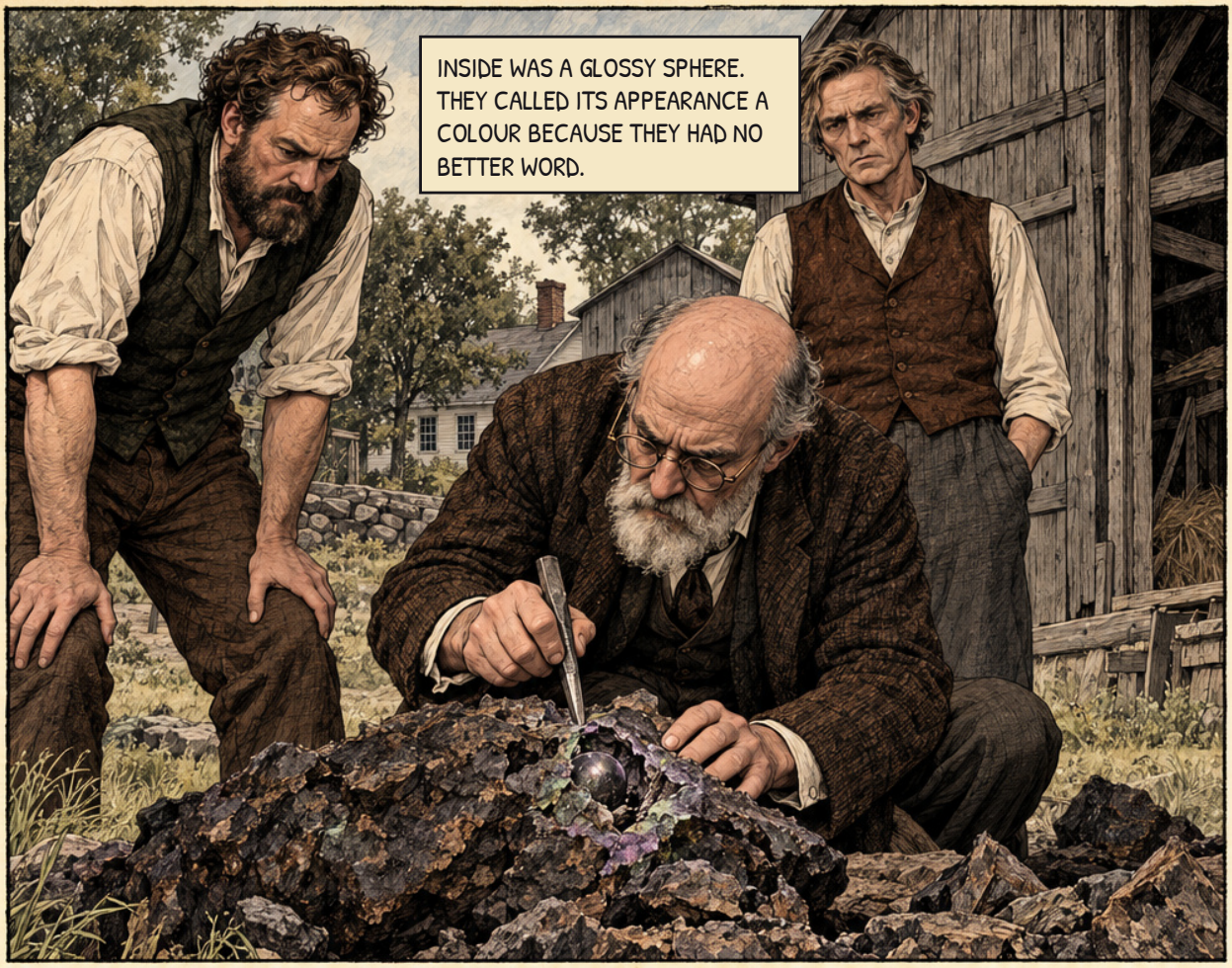

THIS IS THE STONE YOU DESCRIBED?
IT WAS LARGER YESTERDAY.
IT STAYED HOT. THEIR HAMMERS GOUGED IT RATHER THAN CHIPPED IT.
YOUR PIECE IS SMALLER, TOO. AND IT IS BURNING THROUGH THE PAIL.

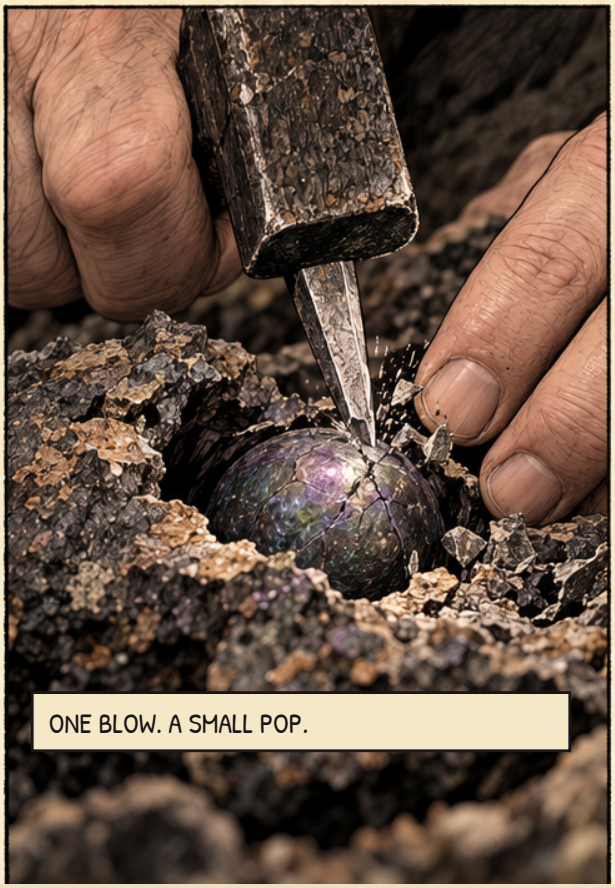

THE SPECTRUM CONTAINED BANDS UNLIKE ANY KNOWN COLOUR.

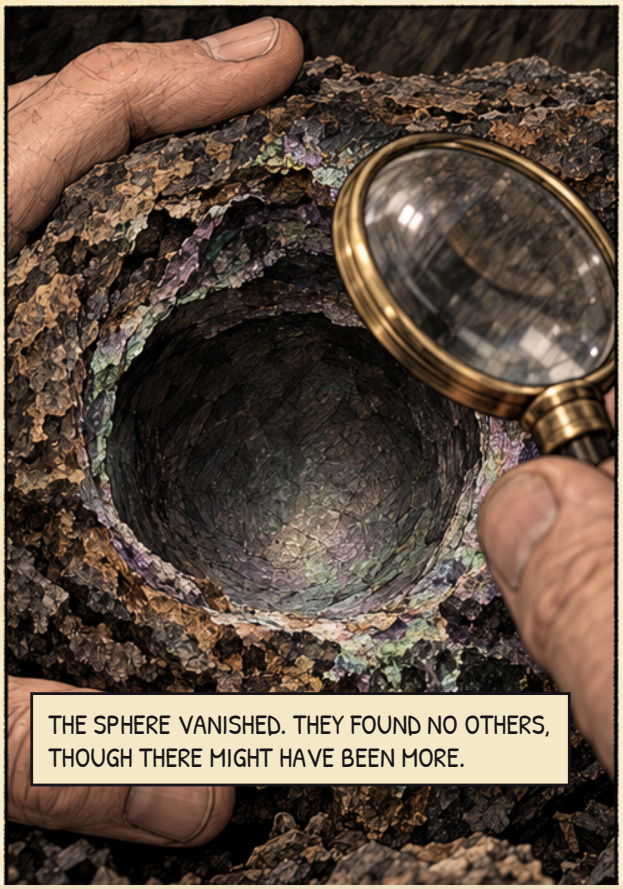

HEAT AND ACIDS YIELDED NO EXPLANATION.


THEY LEFT THE FRAGMENTS IN GLASS.


THE GLASS IS GONE AS WELL. NOTHING REMAINS TO TEST.


INSIDE WAS A GLOSSY SPHERE. THEY CALLED ITS APPEARANCE A COLOUR BECAUSE THEY HAD NO BETTER WORD.


ONE BLOW. A SMALL POP.


THE SPHERE VANISHED. THEY FOUND NO OTHERS, THOUGH THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE.


LIGHTNING STRUCK THE FURROW SIX TIMES IN AN HOUR.


NOTHING LEFT. NOT EVEN WHEN WE DUG.

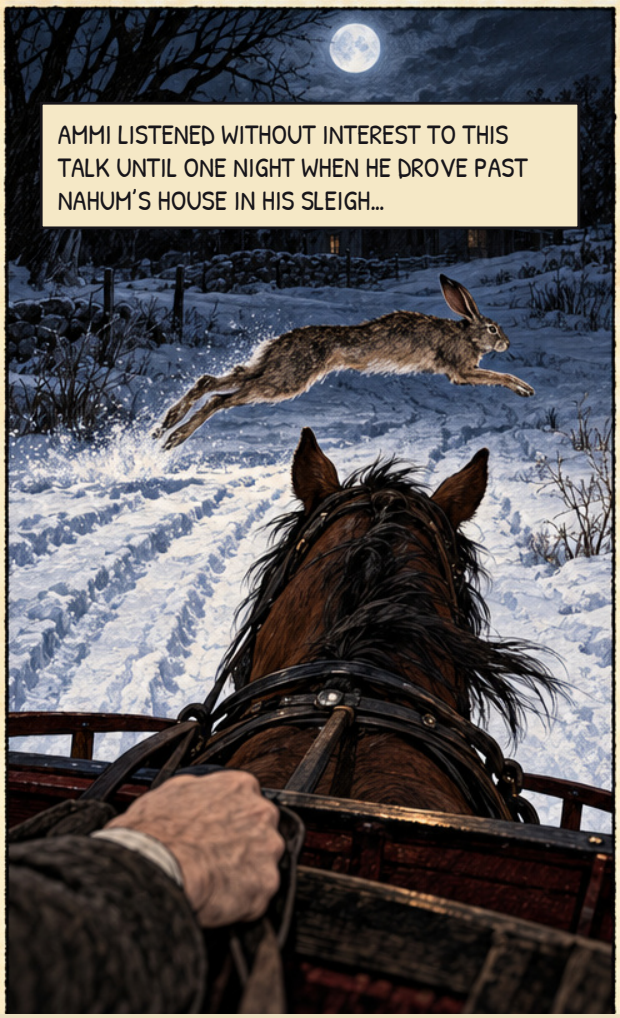

THE LAST LABORATORY SAMPLE DISAPPEARED WITHIN A WEEK. THE MYSTERY GRADUALLY BECAME YESTERDAY'S NEWS.


FOR A LITTLE WHILE NAHUM WAS FAMOUS.
THE SUMMER WORK TIRED HIM MORE THAN USUAL. HE BLAMED HIS AGE.
WE SHALL NEED MORE BARRELS. I HAVE NEVER SEEN FRUIT LIKE THIS.

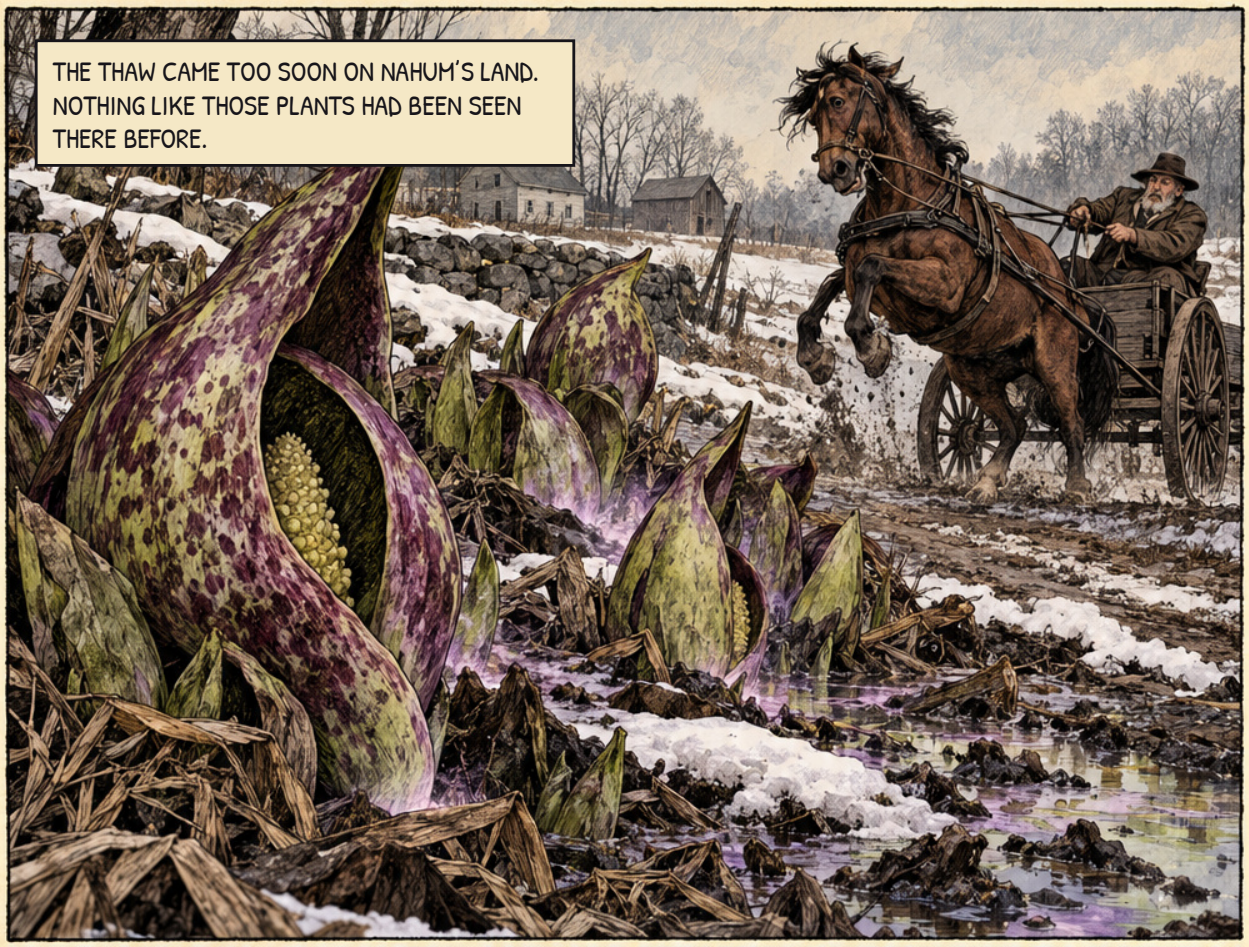

IT LOOKS PERFECT.
NOT A MOUTHFUL COULD BE EATEN. BENEATH THAT BEAUTY WAS A SICKENING BITTERNESS.
ALL OF IT?
THE STONE POISONED THE GROUND. AT LEAST THE UPLAND CROPS ARE SAFE.

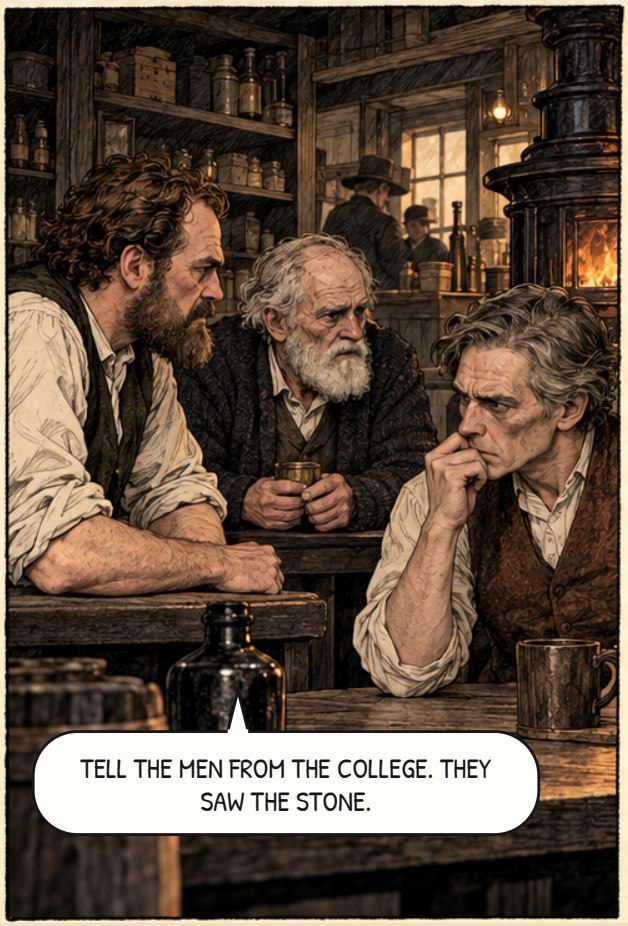

WINTER CAME EARLY. THE GARDNERS STOPPED JOINING THEIR NEIGHBOURS.

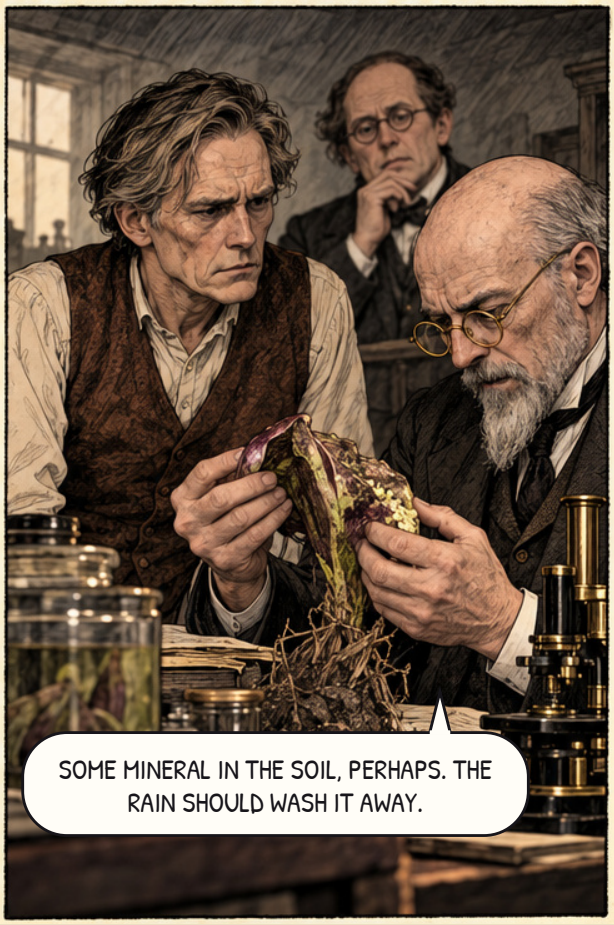

THOSE ARE NOT THE STEPS THEY OUGHT TO TAKE.


AMMI LISTENED WITHOUT INTEREST TO THIS TALK UNTIL ONE NIGHT WHEN HE DROVE PAST NAHUM'S HOUSE IN HIS SLEIGH...


THEREAFTER AMMI GAVE NAHUM'S TALES MORE RESPECT...


THE THAW CAME TOO SOON ON NAHUM'S LAND. NOTHING LIKE THOSE PLANTS HAD BEEN SEEN THERE BEFORE.


TELL THE MEN FROM THE COLLEGE. THEY SAW THE STONE.


SOME MINERAL IN THE SOIL, PERHAPS. THE RAIN SHOULD WASH IT AWAY.


EVERY NEW FLOWER CARRIED A VARIATION OF THAT REMEMBERED TINT.
THEY MOVE WHEN THERE IS NO WIND.
YOU ARE IMAGINING IT, THAD.
THE FAMILY BEGAN TO LISTEN FOR SOMETHING THEY COULD NOT NAME.


NAHUM TOOK FLOWERS TO THE GAZETTE. THE PAPER TURNED HIS FEARS INTO A JOKE.


THEY USED TO STOP AND VISIT.


YOU ARE LEAVING THE GARDEN UNSOWN?
LET THE STRANGE GROWTH DRAW THE POISON OUT. NEXT YEAR MAY BE DIFFERENT.


BY MAY, NABBY HAD SEEN THE BRANCHES MOVE TOO.
THE INSECTS CAME IN SWARMS. THEIR HABITS WERE AS WRONG AS THEIR SHAPES.
A PASSING SALESMAN SAW THE VEGETATION SHINE. THE GARDNERS FIRST READ ABOUT IT IN THE PAPER.


THE MILK TURNED BAD. MOVING THE COWS UPHILL HELPED—FOR A TIME.


THE GREEN LEAVES BECAME GREY AND BRITTLE.


WHEN SCHOOL CLOSED, THE FAMILY WAS ALMOST CUT OFF FROM THE WORLD.


MAKE IT KEEP AWAY. IT IS TAKING SOMETHING FROM ME.
NABBY, THERE IS NOTHING THERE I CAN SEE.


SHE COULD DESCRIBE NO SHAPE, NO THING—ONLY MOVEMENT AND THE SENSE OF BEING DRAINED.


WHEN THE BOYS GREW FRIGHTENED OF HER, NAHUM LOCKED HER IN THE ATTIC. BY JULY SHE HAD STOPPED SPEAKING.


ONE NIGHT THE HORSES BROKE INTO A PANIC THAT NOTHING COULD CALM.
ALL FOUR WERE FOUND. NONE COULD BE SAVED.
MINE WILL NOT GO NEAR THE BARN.
THE FRUIT GREW GREY AND SMALL. EVEN THE STRANGE INSECTS BEGAN TO DIE.


THIS WATER IS BAD.
DIG ANOTHER WELL. HIGHER UP, AWAY FROM THIS SOIL.
WE HAVE ALWAYS DRAWN IT HERE.
THEY KEPT DRINKING IT. THEIR FEAR HAD WORN DOWN INTO A TERRIBLE RESIGNATION.


IN SEPTEMBER, THADDEUS WENT OUT FOR WATER.
THE COLOURS! MOVING DOWN THERE!
A WEEK LATER NAHUM PUT HIM IN THE ROOM OPPOSITE HIS MOTHER. MERWIN HEARD THEM ANSWERING EACH OTHER THROUGH THE DOORS.


I CANNOT NAME THIS DISEASE. THEY HAVE EATEN NOTHING FROM THE BAD GROUND.
THE LIVESTOCK SICKENED AND CRUMBLED.
BY HARVEST THERE WAS NOT AN ANIMAL LEFT. THE CATS HAD GONE; THE DOGS VANISHED IN A SINGLE NIGHT.


THAD IS GONE. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED. NOTHING COULD HAVE GOT IN.


NAHUM BURIED WHAT HE FOUND.


DO NOT LEAVE US WHEN IT GETS DARK.
WHEN NIGHT APPROACHED, AMMI MANAGED TO GET AWAY; FOR NOT EVEN FRIENDSHIP COULD MAKE HIM STAY IN THAT SPOT...


THREE NIGHTS LATER, MERWIN WENT OUT FOR WATER.


NAHUM HEARD ONE CRY.


BY DAWN HE HAD FOUND ONLY THE LANTERN AND THE IRON BANDS OF THE PAIL.


IF I GO NEXT, ASK AMMI TO LOOK AFTER NABBY AND ZENAS.


FOR OVER TWO WEEKS AMMI SAW NOTHING OF NAHUM; AND THEN, WORRIED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED, HE OVERCAME HIS FEARS AND PAID THE GARDNER PLACE A VISIT.
ZENAS! FETCH MORE WOOD FOR AMMI.
WHERE IS ZENAS, NAHUM?
IN THE WELL... HE LIVES IN THE WELL...


NAHUM SAID NABBY WAS BESIDE HIM. AMMI TOOK THE KEYS AND WENT UPSTAIRS.
WHAT REMAINED IN THE CORNER WAS STILL MOVING.
AMMI WOULD TELL ME NO MORE ABOUT THAT ROOM. WHEN HE LOCKED IT AGAIN, NOTHING IN IT MOVED.


A THUD BELOW. A DRAGGING SOUND. THEN SOMETHING LIKE SUCTION.
AMMI'S HORSE BOLTED. THEN CAME A SPLASH IN THE WELL.
NAHUM! WHAT HAPPENED?


NOTHIN'... NOTHIN'... THE COLOUR... IT BURNS... COLD AN' WET, BUT IT BURNS...
...IT LIVED IN THE WELL... I SEEN IT... SUCKIN' THE LIFE OUT OF EVERYTHING... IT MUST A' COME IN THAT STONE...
...IT BEATS DOWN YOUR MIND AN' THEN GETS YE... CAN'T GIT AWAY... DRAWS YE... YE KNOW SUMM'AT'S COMIN' BUT TAIN'T NO USE...
...WHAR'S NABBY, AMMI?... IT'LL GIT HER EF WE AIN'T KEERFUL...


THAT WHICH SPOKE COULD SPEAK NO MORE BECAUSE IT HAD COMPLETELY CAVED IN.
...NO STONE WAS MISSING FROM THE RIM... THE SPLASH HAD BEEN SOMETHING ELSE—SOMETHING WHICH WENT INTO THE WELL AFTER IT HAD DONE WITH POOR NAHUM.
WHEN AMMI REACHED HIS HOUSE THE HORSES AND BUGGY HAD ARRIVED BEFORE HIM... HE SET OUT AT ONCE FOR ARKHAM AND NOTIFIED THE AUTHORITIES THAT THE GARDNER FAMILY WAS NO MORE.


THREE OFFICERS CAME WITH THE CORONER, A MEDICAL EXAMINER AND THE VETERINARY. IT WAS ALREADY FOUR O'CLOCK.
THEY COLLECTED DUST. LATER IT SHOWED THE METEOR'S STRANGE SPECTRAL BANDS—UNTIL, A MONTH LATER, EVEN THOSE VANISHED.
WHY DO YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THAT WELL?
PLEASE. LET US LEAVE BEFORE NIGHT.


THEY WOULD NOT LEAVE. THE WATER WAS LOW, AND THEY EMPTIED THE WELL.
THEY FOUND MERWIN AND ZENAS, AND THE REMAINS OF ANIMALS.
THE POLE KEEPS GOING. THERE IS NO SOLID BOTTOM.


POISONED WATER, PERHAPS. BUT WHY THE GREYING? WHY DID BOTH BOYS GO DOWN?
LOOK OUTSIDE.
THAT COLOUR. IN THE STONE. IN THE FLOWERS. I SAW IT UPSTAIRS THIS MORNING.


THERE WAS NO WIND. EVERY MAN SAW THE BRANCHES MOVE.
DUN'T GO OUT THAR... NAHUM SAID SOMETHIN' LIVED IN THE WELL THAT SUCKS YOUR LIFE OUT.
IT SPREADS ON EVERYTHING ORGANIC THAT'S BEEN AROUND HERE.


THE WAGON TEAM BROKE LOOSE. POOR TETHERED HERO COULD NOT. AMMI TURNED AWAY AT HIS CRY.
THE BACK DOOR. FOLLOW ME UP THROUGH THE FIELDS!
THEY WALKED AND STUMBLED AS IN A DREAM, AND DID NOT DARE LOOK BACK TILL THEY WERE FAR AWAY ON THE HIGH GROUND.


...NOW IT'S GOIN' HOME...


THE COLOUR VANISHED AMONG THE STARS. THEN THE FARM CRACKED APART BENEATH IT.


AMMI HAD LOOKED BACK AN INSTANT... HE HAD SEEN SOMETHING FEEBLY RISE, ONLY TO SINK DOWN AGAIN UPON THE PLACE FROM WHICH THE GREAT SHAPELESS HORROR HAD SHOT INTO THE SKY.


BY DAYLIGHT, ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT HAD EVER LIVED THERE WAS GONE.


PEOPLE SAY THE BLIGHT STILL SPREADS. PERHAPS AN INCH A YEAR.


THE WATER WILL COVER IT. DEEP WATER.
I RETURNED TO BOSTON AND GAVE UP THE POSITION. PERHAPS THERE WERE OTHER GLOBULES. PERHAPS SOMETHING IS STILL FEEDING.
I HOPE THE WATER WILL ALWAYS BE VERY DEEP...
...BUT EVEN SO, I SHALL NEVER DRINK IT.