

Gnats

It should go without saying but in case it doesn't, if you don't spend all your money on drugs, you'll have money for food. You'll feel so wealthy. For instance, this guy sitting at the window here, he can't believe how wealthy he feels. Attorneys in private practice, plastic surgeons nipping and tucking, senior civil service workers, they might think—he doesn't know what they might think. They might have trouble making their Porsche payments or finding decent help with housekeeping and gardening, but he has a bowl of peanuts. Salted and roasted Virginia peanuts.

Good food.

Fresh salads, other healthful stuffs, he has those, too.

He nibbles at a hangnail. Then another. Not part of any accepted food group.

Scratches his head. Digs the oily dead skin, the tiny bit of it, from under his nails with his front teeth. Chews it. Small chews, like nibbles. He likes the texture of it, the tiny, soft adhesion.

Wipes his fingers on the paper napkin—no wiping on the pants! Or on the shirt, none of that, he doesn't spend all his money on drugs, he has napkins.

Two gnats are at the window, the afternoon sun coming in. He reaches for the peanuts, eats several. Damn, they are good. Damn. He doesn't deserve this, this good stuff, after all the crap he's done. Good food, safe home, quiet, time to look out the window. Clean bathroom. Decent bed, though it sags a little. But clean sheets. And a washer and a dryer, right here on the premises, and clean clothes. He doesn't deserve any of this. He knows where the bodies are buried.

He nibbles at another hangnail. Chews the little bit of dried flesh that comes off. Eats more nuts. Looks out the window. Doesn't even think of eating the gnats.