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Writers use the universal traits of humanity to secure the passage of their intentions through simple symbols printed on a page. In one word: Empathy. The smitten reader uses their preconceptions to create a mental image of the tale. Cheever, Faulkner, Baldwin, and Welty

Complacency has plagued the middle class since its origin. When Francis Weed's flight crash-landed in the cornfield in the beginning of "The Country Husband", Francis inevitably made a very brief but very intense and honest assessment of his existence. Imagining the Weed family home I think of the home that stood to the south of mine, from ages five to twelve. Regularly polished wooden floors, into which no bare foot or shoe could step. The family, like Weed's in the beginning, was constantly bickering. Because Francis was restricted in sharing and living the philosophical epiphanies that accompany near death experiences in the presence of his loved ones, they were bound to find other avenues. As far as my young mind knew, the bearded executive who lived next door and purchased his children brand new automobiles on each of their four sixteenth birthdays, never struck his wife or attempted to get busy with the babysitter. This could be because there was already a pottery shop, a recreation room, and a home office all in separate buildings behind the house.

Emily Grierson denied the reality of death. A decision which is not at all unlike denying the existence of time. Death may not be exactly what we perceive, as those who perceive it cannot report back. Time too is unique in that it is a dimension beyond human perception. The two are inexorably linked. The denial of a natural force of nature is likely to result in slightly psychotic behavior. Aristotle's argument for free will against the "Sea-Battle" scenario which argues for Proof of Predestination reminds me of Emily's inevitable death. The mystery of

psychosis is far from being solved because sanity, like reality (and time), is relative. Death from the standpoint of the living is relatively clear though. Daydreaming about Mississippi's history, Emily's particular brand of psychosis was likely to have been somewhat kosher, as Mississippians have denied the death of countless victims of racial bigotry and almost entirely refuse to accept the concept of time.

Heroin is a sweet and tempting mistress known for being a powerful muse and an agent of death. Most who get involved in heroin use find themselves selling it to maintain their habits, and this leads to their inevitable arrest. Harlem, during the jazz explosion was an epicenter of heroin use and distribution. It was popular among musicians, but it was *also* popular among everyone else who tried it. Heroin works with natural opiate receptors in the body (mu, kappa, and delta have been identified) alongside its chemical cousins, naturally occurring opiate-like endorphins. Jazz's evolution into avant-garde was accompanied by a rise in the use of drugs all across the nation. If only the musicians were using them the music would have been a flop on the market. However, today you still hear people discussing Miles Davis, Thelonius Monk, and the like. Jazz is like heroin in that it is deeply complex and nurturing to the soul, while revolving around the deepest pains possible in the human experience. "Sonny's Blues" is a microcosmic portrait of all of life's pain and bliss.

I was a child of the fort. On any given day, walking into my house, one could expect to see an elaborate pillow-blanket bunker tucked into a corner, under the piano, or beside the sofa. These are psychologically akin to Sister's flee to the post office. It is hard for me to remember what my intentions were with the forts, but spying and seclusion were surely among them. When unconscious tensions are great enough to provoke extravagant lies (Sister's or Stella-Rondo's?) someone is forced to recoil. I am safe and happy in here. In here, away from them.