

The Investigation

They led him into a room that felt small and very warm, perhaps it was a thimble or a bottle full of smoke. They told him that there were many women in the room and that they were all undressed. He was supposed to recognize her by touching her. He could touch as many women as he needed in order to recognize her, but the point was that he should find her. This was made very explicit. He was not allowed to make any sound, nor could he attempt to elicit a sound. What they wanted to discover was how well he knew her. They were also curious about how satisfying his knowledge was. For this reason, they placed her nearest him, so he would encounter her first. This way he would have nothing to compare his first sensations with. They were interested in finding out if he would explore the other women even if he did recognize her at first. It was not possible to deceive them.

As they watched, he knelt down before her, moving his hands down her naked back. He brought his hands around to the face of her hips and rested them on her hipbones. It was already clear to everyone that he had recognized her. There appeared to be something curious and revealing about the way her hips disappeared into legs, and then too about the way she carried between her legs the cave of creation. He circled his arms around her hips and pressed his cheek into the soft circles of hair. Then he began to weep. He pressed his face very closely to her stomach. He held her so tightly that everyone in the room began to feel too naked. He was begging forgiveness. This is when they came and took him to another room. A few others came shortly afterward and removed her to a different room. It seemed probable that they would be released.

-- Robert Horan

Bloomington IN

Provisional Ending for a Father and Son Novel

Five days after he
left, my oldest daughter
started putting together
a photo-album of her
baby- and growingup-
pictures.