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[The history of this materialistic world is highlighted with strange events that scientists and historians, unable to explain logically, have dismissed with such labels as "supernatural," "miracle," etc. But there are those among us whose simple faith can--and often does--alter the scheme of the universe. Even a little child can do it....]

to remember charlie by

by ... Roger Dee

Just a one-eyed dog named Charlie and a crippled boy named Joey--but between them they changed the face of the universe ... perhaps.

* * * * *

I nearly stumbled over the kid in the dark before I saw him.

His wheelchair was parked as usual on the tired strip of carpet grass that separated his mother's trailer from the one Doc Shull and I lived in, but it wasn't exactly where I'd learned to expect it when I rolled in at night from the fishing boats. Usually it was nearer the west end of the strip where Joey could look across the crushed-shell square of the Twin Palms trailer court and the palmetto flats to the Tampa highway beyond. But this time it was pushed back into the shadows away from the court lights.

The boy wasn't watching the flats tonight, as he usually did. Instead he was lying back in his chair with his face turned to the sky, staring upward with such absorbed intensity that he didn't even know I was there until I spoke.

"Anything wrong, Joey?" I asked.

He said, "No, Roy," without taking his eyes off the sky.

For a minute I had the prickly feeling you get when you are watching a movie and find that you know just what is going to happen next. You're puzzled and a little spooked until you realize that the reason you can predict the action so exactly is because you've seen the same thing happen somewhere else a long time ago. I forgot the feeling when I remembered why the kid wasn't watching the palmetto flats. But I couldn't help wondering why he'd turned to watching the sky instead.

"What're you looking for up there, Joey?" I asked.

He didn't move and from the tone of his voice I got the impression that he only half heard me.

"I'm moving some stars," he said softly.

I gave it up and went on to my own trailer without asking any more fool questions. How can you talk to a kid like that?

Doc Shull wasn't in, but for once I didn't worry about him. I was trying to remember just what it was about my stumbling over Joey's wheelchair that had given me that screwy double-exposure feeling of familiarity. I got a can of beer out of the ice-box because I think better with something cold in my hand, and by the time I had finished the beer I had my answer.

The business I'd gone through with Joey outside was familiar because it *had* happened before, about six weeks back when Doc and I first parked our trailer at the Twin Palms court. I'd nearly stumbled over Joey that time too, but he wasn't moving stars then. He was just staring ahead of him, waiting.

He'd been sitting in his wheelchair at the west end of the carpet-grass strip, staring out over the palmetto flats toward the highway. He was practically holding his breath, as if he was waiting for somebody special to show up, so absorbed in his watching that he didn't know I was there until I spoke. He reminded me a little of a ventriloquist's dummy with his skinny, knob-kneed body, thin face and round, still eyes. Only there wasn't anything comical about him the way there is about a dummy. Maybe that's why I spoke, because he looked so deadly serious.

"Anything wrong, kid?" I asked.

He didn't jump or look up. His voice placed him as a cracker, either south Georgian or native Floridian.

"I'm waiting for Charlie to come home," he said, keeping his eyes on the highway.

Probably I'd have asked who Charlie was but just then the trailer door opened behind him and his mother took over.

I couldn't see her too well because the lights were off inside the trailer. But I could tell from the way she filled up the doorway that she was big. I could make out the white blur of a cigarette in her mouth, and when she struck a match to light it--on her thumb-nail, like a man--I saw that she was fairly young and not bad-looking in a tough, sullen sort of way. The wind was blowing in my direction and it told me she'd had a drink recently, gin, by the smell of it.

"This is none of your business, mister," she said. Her voice was Southern like the boy's but with all the softness ground out of it from living on the Florida coast where you hear a hundred different accents every day. "Let the boy alone."

She was right about it being none of my business. I went on into the trailer I shared with Doc Shull and left the two of them waiting for Charlie together.

Our trailer was dark inside, which meant first that Doc had probably gone out looking for a drink as soon as I left that morning to pick up a job, and second that he'd probably got too tight to find his way back. But I was wrong on at least one count, because when I switched on the light and dumped the packages I'd brought on the sink cabinet I saw Doc asleep in his bunk.

He'd had a drink, though. I could smell it on him when I shook him awake, and it smelled like gin.

Doc sat up and blinked against the light, a thin, elderly little man with bright blue eyes, a clipped brown mustache and scanty brown hair tousled and wild from sleep. He was stripped to his shorts against the heat, but at some time during the day he had bathed and shaved. He had even washed and ironed a shirt; it hung on a nail over his bunk with a crumpled pack of cigarettes in the pocket.

"Crawl out and cook supper, Rip," I said, holding him to his end of our working agreement. "I've made a day and I'm hungry."

Doc got up and stepped into his pants. He padded barefoot across the linoleum and poked at the packages on the sink cabinet.

"Snapper steak again," he complained. "Roy, I'm sick of fish!"

"You don't catch sirloins with a hand-line," I told him. And because I'd never been able to stay sore at him for long I added, "But we got beer. Where's the opener?"

"I'm sick of beer, too," Doc said. "I need a real drink."

I sniffed the air, making a business of it. "You've had one already. Where?"

He grinned at me then with the wise-to-himself-and-the-world grin that lit up his face like turning on a light inside and made him different from anybody else on earth.

"The largess of Providence," he said, "is bestowed impartially upon sot and Samaritan. I helped the little fellow next door to the bathroom this afternoon while his mother was away at work, and my selflessness had its just reward."

Sometimes it's hard to tell when Doc is kidding. He's an educated man--used to teach at some Northern college, he said once, and I never doubted it--and talks like one when he wants to. But Doc's no bum, though he's a semi-alcoholic and lets me support him like an invalid uncle, and he's keen enough to read my mind like a racing form.

"No, I didn't batter down the cupboard and help myself," he said. "The lady--her name is Mrs. Ethel Pond--gave me the drink. Why else do you suppose I'd launder a shirt?"

That was like Doc. He hadn't touched her bottle though his insides were probably snarled up like barbed wire for the want of it. He'd shaved and pressed a shirt instead so he'd look decent enough to rate a shot of gin she'd offer him as a reward. It wasn't such a doubtful gamble at that, because Doc has a way with him when he bothers to use it; maybe that's why he bums around with me after the commercial fishing and migratory crop work, because he's used that charm too often in the wrong places.

"Good enough," I said and punctured a can of beer apiece for us while Doc put the snapper steaks to cook.

He told me more about our neighbors while we killed the beer. The Ponds were permanent residents. The kid--his name was Joey and he was ten--was a polio case who hadn't walked for over a year, and his mother was a waitress at a roadside joint named the Sea Shell Diner. There wasn't any Mr. Pond. I guessed there never had been, which would explain why Ethel acted so tough and sullen.

We were halfway through supper when I remembered something the kid had said.

"Who's Charlie?" I asked.

Doc frowned at his plate. "The kid had a dog named Charlie, a big shaggy mutt with only one eye and no love for anybody but the boy. The dog isn't coming home. He was run down by a car on the highway while Joey was hospitalized with polio."

"Tough," I said, thinking of the kid sitting out there all day in his wheelchair, straining his eyes across the

palmetto flats. "You mean he's been waiting a *year*?"

Doc nodded, seemed to lose interest in the Ponds, so I let the subject drop. We sat around after supper and polished off the rest of the beer. When we turned in around midnight I figured we wouldn't be staying long at the Twin Palms trailer court. It wasn't a very comfortable place.

I was wrong there. It wasn't comfortable, but we stayed.

I couldn't have said at first why we stuck, and if Doc could he didn't volunteer. Neither of us talked about it. We just went on living the way we were used to living, a few weeks here and a few there, all over the States.

We'd hit the Florida west coast too late for the citrus season, so I went in for the fishing instead. I worked the fishing boats all the way from Tampa down to Fort Myers, not signing on with any of the commercial companies because I like to move quick when I get restless. I picked the independent deep-water snapper runs mostly, because the percentage is good there if you've got a strong back and tough hands.

Snapper fishing isn't the sport it seems to the one-day tourists who flock along because the fee is cheap. You fish from a wide-beamed old scow, usually, with hand-lines instead of regular tackle, and you use multiple hooks that go down to the bottom where the big red ones are. There's no real thrill to it, as the one-day anglers find out quickly. A snapper puts up no more fight than a catfish and the biggest job is to haul out his dead weight once you've got him surfaced.

Usually a pro like me sells his catch to the boat's owner or to some clumsy sport who wants his picture shot with a big one, and there's nearly always a jackpot--from a pool made up at the beginning of every run--for the man landing the biggest fish of the day. There's a knack to hooking the big ones, and when the jackpots were running good I only worked a day or so a week and spent the rest of the time lying around the trailer playing cribbage and drinking beer with Doc Shull.

Usually it was the life of Riley, but somehow it wasn't enough in this place. We'd get about half-oiled and work up a promising argument about what was wrong with the world. Then, just when we'd got life looking its screwball funniest with our arguments one or the other of us would look out the window and see Joey Pond in his wheelchair, waiting for a one-eyed dog named Charlie to come trotting home across the palmetto flats. He was always there, day or night, until his mother came home from work and rolled him inside.

It wasn't right or natural for a kid to wait like that for anything and it worried me. I even offered once to buy the kid another mutt but Ethel Pond told me quick to mind my own business. Doc explained that the kid didn't want another mutt because he had what Doc called a psychological block.

"Charlie was more than just a dog to him," Doc said. "He was a sort of symbol because he offered the kid two things that no one else in the world could--security and independence. With Charlie keeping him company he felt secure, and he was independent of the kids who could run and play because he had Charlie to play with. If he took another dog now he'd be giving up more than Charlie. He'd be giving up everything that Charlie had meant to him, then there wouldn't be any point in living."

I could see it when Doc put it that way. The dog had spent more time with Joey than Ethel had, and the kid felt as safe with him as he'd have been with a platoon of Marines. And Charlie, being a one-man dog, had depended on Joey for the affection he wouldn't take from anybody else. The dog needed Joey and Joey needed him. Together, they'd been a natural.

At first I thought it was funny that Joey never complained or cried when Charlie didn't come home, but Doc explained that it was all a part of this psychological block business. If Joey cried he'd be admitting that Charlie was lost. So he waited and watched, secure in his belief that Charlie would return.

The Ponds got used to Doc and me being around, but they never got what you'd call intimate. Joey would laugh at some of the droll things Doc said, but his eyes always went back to the palmetto flats and the highway, looking for Charlie. And he never let anything interfere with his routine.

That routine started every morning when old man Cloehessey, the postman, pedaled his bicycle out from Twin Palms to leave a handful of mail for the trailer-court tenants. Cloehessey would always make it a point to ride back by way of the Pond trailer and Joey would stop him and ask if he's seen anything of a one-eyed dog on his route that day.

Old Cloehessey would lean on his bike and take off his sun helmet and mop his bald scalp, scowling while he pretended to think.

Then he'd say, "Not today, Joey," or, "Thought so yesterday, but this fellow had two eyes on him. 'Twasn't Charlie."

Then he'd pedal away, shaking his head. Later on the handyman would come around to swap sanitary tanks under the trailers and Joey would ask him the same question. Once a month the power company sent out a man to read the electric meters and he was part of Joey's routine too.

It was hard on Ethel. Sometimes the kid would dream at night that Charlie had come home and was scratching at the trailer ramp to be let in, and he'd wake Ethel and beg her to go out and see. When that happened Doc and I could hear Ethel talking to him, low and steady, until all hours of the morning, and when he finally went back to sleep we'd hear her open the cupboard and take out the gin bottle.

But there came a night that was more than Ethel could take, a night that changed Joey's routine and a lot more with it. It left a mark you've seen yourself--everybody has that's got eyes to see--though you never knew what made it. Nobody ever knew that but Joey and Ethel Pond and Doc and me.

Doc and I were turning in around midnight that night when the kid sang out next door. We heard Ethel get up and go to him, and we got up too and opened a beer because we knew neither of us would sleep any more till she got Joey quiet again. But this night was different. Ethel hadn't talked to the kid long when he yelled, "Charlie! *Charlie!*" and after that we heard both of them bawling.

A little later Ethel came out into the moonlight and shut the trailer door behind her. She looked rumpled and beaten, her hair straggling damply on her shoulders and her eyes puffed and red from crying. The gin she'd had hadn't helped any either.

She stood for a while without moving, then she looked up at the sky and said something I'm not likely to forget.

"Why couldn't You give the kid a break?" she said, not railing or anything but loud enough for us to hear. "You, up there--what's another lousy one-eyed mutt to You?"

Doc and I looked at each other in the half-dark of our own trailer. "She's done it, Roy," Doc said.

I knew what he meant and wished I didn't. Ethel had finally told the kid that Charlie wasn't coming back, not ever.

That's why I was worried about Joey when I came home the next evening and found him watching the sky instead of the palmetto flats. It meant he'd given up waiting for Charlie. And the quiet way the kid spoke of moving the stars around worried me more, because it sounded outright crazy.

Not that you could blame him for going off his head. It was tough enough to be pinned to a wheelchair without being able to wiggle so much as a toe. But to lose his dog in the bargain....

I was on my third beer when Doc Shull rolled in with a big package under his arm. Doc was stone sober, which surprised me, and he was hot and tired from a shopping trip to Tampa, which surprised me more. It was when he ripped the paper off his package, though, that I thought he'd lost his mind.

"Books for Joey," Doc said. "Ethel and I agreed this morning that the boy needs another interest to occupy his time now, and since he can't go to school I'm going to teach him here."

He went on to explain that Ethel hadn't had the heart the night before, desperate as she was, to tell the kid the whole truth. She'd told him instead, quoting an imaginary customer at the Sea Shell Diner, that a tourist car with Michigan license plates had picked Charlie up on the highway and taken him away. It was a good enough story. Joey still didn't know that Charlie was dead, but his waiting was over because no dog could be expected to find his way home from Michigan.

"We've got to give the boy another interest," Doc said, putting away the books and puncturing another beer can. "Joey has a remarkable talent for concentration--most handicapped children have--that could be the end of him if it isn't diverted into safe channels."

I thought the kid had cracked up already and said so.

"Moving *stars*?" Doc said when I told him. "Good Lord, Roy--"

* * * * *

Ethel Pond knocked just then, interrupting him. She came in and had a beer with us and talked to Doc about his plan for educating Joey at home. But she couldn't tell us anything more about the kid's new fixation than we already knew. When she asked him why he stared up at the sky like that he'd say only that he wants something to remember Charlie by.

It was about nine o'clock, when Ethel went home to cook supper. Doc and I knocked off our cribbage game and went outside with our folding chairs to get some air. It was then that the first star moved.

It moved all of a sudden, the way any shooting star does, and shot across the sky in a curving, blue-white streak of fire. I didn't pay much attention, but Doc nearly choked on his beer.

"Roy," he said, "that was Sirius! *It moved!*"

I didn't see anything serious about it and said so. You can see a dozen or so stars zip across the sky on any clear night if you're in the mood to look up.

"Not serious, you fool," Doc said. "The *star* Sirius--the Dog Star, it's called--it moved a good sixty degrees, *then stopped dead!*"

I sat up and took notice then, partly because the star really had stopped instead of burning out the way a falling star seems to do, partly because anything that excites Doc Shull that much is something to think about.

We watched the star like two cats at a mouse-hole, but it didn't move again. After a while a smaller one did, though, and later in the night a whole procession of them streaked across the sky and fell into place around the first one, forming a pattern that didn't make any sense to us. They stopped moving around midnight and we went to bed, but neither of us got to sleep right away.

"Maybe we ought to look for another interest in life ourselves instead of drumming up one for Joey," Doc said. He meant it as a joke but it had a shaky sound; "Something besides getting beered up every night, for instance."

"You think we've got the d.t.'s from drinking *beer*?" I asked.

Doc laughed at that, sounding more like his old self. "No, Roy. No two people ever had instantaneous and identical hallucinations."

"Look," I said. "I know this sounds crazy but maybe Joey--"

Doc wasn't amused any more. "Don't be a fool, Roy. If those stars really moved you can be sure of two things--Joey had nothing to do with it, and the papers will explain everything tomorrow."

He was wrong on one count at least.

The papers next day were packed with scareheads three inches high but none of them explained anything. The radio commentators quoted every authority they could reach, and astronomers were going crazy everywhere. It just couldn't happen, they said.

Doc and I went over the news column by column that night and I learned more about the stars than I'd learned in a lifetime. Doc, as I've said before, is an educated man, and what he couldn't recall offhand about astronomy the newspapers quoted by chapter and verse. They ran interviews with astronomers at Harvard Observatory and Mount Wilson and Lick and Flagstaff and God knows where else, but nobody could explain why all of those stars would change position then stop.

It set me back on my heels to learn that Sirius was twice as big as the Sun and more than twice as heavy, that it was three times as hot and had a little dark companion that was more solid than lead but didn't give off enough light to be seen with the naked eye. This little companion--astronomers called it the "Pup" because Sirius was the Dog Star--hadn't moved, which puzzled the astronomers no end. I suggested to Doc, only half joking, that maybe the Pup had stayed put because it wasn't bright enough to suit Joey's taste, but Doc called me down sharp.

"Don't joke about Joey," he said sternly. "Getting back to Sirius--it's so far away that its light needs eight and a half years to reach us. That means it started moving when Joey was only eighteen months old. The speed of light is a universal constant, Roy, and astronomers say it can't be changed."

"They said the stars couldn't be tossed around like pool balls, too," I pointed out. "I'm not saying that Joey really moved those damn stars, Doc, but if he did he could have moved the light along with them, couldn't he?"

But Doc wouldn't argue the point. "I'm going out for air," he said.

I trailed along, but we didn't get farther than Joey's wheelchair.

There he sat, tense and absorbed, staring up at the night sky. Doc and I followed his gaze, the way you do automatically when somebody on the street ahead of you cranes his neck at something. We looked up just in time to see the stars start moving again.

The first one to go was a big white one that slanted across the sky like a Roman candle fireball--*zip*, like that--and stopped dead beside the group that had collected around Sirius.

Doc said, "There went Altair," and his voice sounded like he had just run a mile.

That was only the beginning. During the next hour forty or fifty more stars flashed across the sky and joined the group that had moved the night before. The pattern they made still didn't look like anything in particular.

I left Doc shaking his head at the sky and went over to give Joey, who had called it a night and was hand-rolling his wheelchair toward the Pond trailer, a boost up the entrance ramp. I pushed him inside where Doc couldn't hear, then I asked him how things were going.

"Slow, Roy," he said. "I've got 'most a hundred to go, yet."

"Then you're really moving those stars up there?"

He looked surprised. "Sure, it's not so hard once you know how."

The odds were even that he was pulling my leg, but I went ahead anyway and asked another question.

"I can't make head or tail of it, Joey," I said. "What're you making up there?"

He gave me a very small smile.

"You'll know when I'm through," he said.

I told Doc about that after we'd bunked in, but he said I should not encourage the kid in his crazy thinking. "Joey's heard everybody talking about those stars moving, the radio newscasters blared about it, so he's excited too. But he's got a lot more imagination than most people, because he's a cripple, and he could go off on a crazy tangent because he's upset about Charlie. The thing to do is give him a logical explanation instead of letting him think his fantasy is a fact."

Doc was taking all this so hard--because it was upsetting things he'd taken for granted as being facts all his life, like those astronomers who were going nuts in droves all over the world. I didn't realize how upset Doc really was, though, till he woke me up at about 4:00 A.M.

"I can't sleep for thinking about those stars," he said, sitting on the edge of my bunk. "Roy, I'm *scared*."

That from Doc was something I'd never expected to hear. It startled me wide enough awake to sit up in the dark and listen while he unloaded his worries.

"I'm afraid," Doc said, "because what is happening up there isn't right or natural. It just can't be, yet it is."

It was so quiet when he paused that I could hear the blood swishing in my ears. Finally Doc said, "Roy, the galaxy we live in is as delicately balanced as a fine watch. If that balance is upset too far our world will be affected drastically."

Ordinarily I wouldn't have argued with Doc on his own ground, but I could see he was painting a mental picture of the whole universe crashing together like a Fourth of July fireworks display and I was afraid to let him go on.

"The trouble with you educated people," I said, "is that you think your experts have got everything figured out, that there's nothing in the world their slide-rules can't pin down. Well, I'm an illiterate mugg, but I know that your astronomers can measure the stars till they're blue in the face and they'll never learn who *put* those stars there. So how do they know that whoever put them there won't move them again? I've always heard that

if a man had faith enough he could move mountains. Well, if a man has the faith in himself that Joey's got maybe he could move stars, too."

Doc sat quiet for a minute.

"*There are more things, Horatio....*" he began, then laughed. "A line worn threadbare by three hundred years of repetition but as apt tonight as ever, Roy. Do you really believe Joey is moving those stars?"

"Why not?" I came back. "It's as good an answer as any the experts have come up with."

Doc got up and went back to his own bunk. "Maybe you're right. We'll find out tomorrow."

And we did. Doc did, rather, while I was hard at work hauling red snappers up from the bottom of the Gulf.

* * * * *

I got home a little earlier than usual that night, just before it got really dark. Joey was sitting as usual all alone in his wheelchair. In the gloom I could see a stack of books on the grass beside him, books Doc had given him to study. The thing that stopped me was that Joey was staring at his feet as if they were the first ones he'd ever seen, and he had the same look of intense concentration on his face that I'd seen when he was watching the stars.

I didn't know what to say to him, thinking maybe I'd better not mention the stars. But Joey spoke first.

"Roy," he said, without taking his eyes off his toes, "did you know that Doc is an awfully wise man?"

I said I'd always thought so, but why?

"Doc said this morning that I ought not to move any more stars," the kid said. "He says I ought to concentrate instead on learning how to walk again so I can go to Michigan and find Charlie."

For a minute I was mad enough to brain Doc Shull if he'd been handy. Anybody that would pull a gag like that on a crippled, helpless kid....

"Doc says that if I can do what I've been doing to the stars then it ought to be easy to move my own feet," Joey said. "And he's right, Roy. So I'm not going to move any more stars. I'm going to move my feet."

He looked up at me with his small, solemn smile. "It took me a whole day to learn how to move that first star, Roy, but I could do this after only a couple of hours. Look...."

And he wiggled the toes on both feet.

It's a pity things don't happen in life like they do in books, because a first-class story could be made out of Joey Pond's knack for moving things by looking at them. In a book Joey might have saved the world or destroyed it, depending on which line would interest the most readers and bring the writer the fattest check, but of course it didn't really turn out either way. It ended in what Doc Shull called an anticlimax, leaving everybody happy enough except a few astronomers who like mysteries anyway or they wouldn't be astronomers in the first place.

The stars that had been moved stayed where they were, but the pattern they had started was never finished. That unfinished pattern won't ever go away, in case you've wondered about it--it's up there in the sky where you can see it any clear night--but it will never be finished because Joey Pond lost interest in it when he

learned to walk again.

Walking was a slow business with Joey at first because his legs had got thin and weak--partially atrophied muscles, Doc said--and it took time to make them round and strong again. But in a couple of weeks he was stumping around on crutches and after that he never went near his wheelchair again.

Ethel sent him to school at Sarasota by bus and before summer vacation time came around he was playing softball and fishing in the Gulf with a gang of other kids on Sundays.

School opened up a whole new world to Joey and he fitted himself into the routine as neat as if he'd been doing it all his life. He learned a lot there and he forgot a lot that he'd learned for himself by being alone. Before we realized what was happening he was just like any other ten-year-old, full of curiosity and the devil, with no more power to move things by staring at them than anybody else had.

I think he actually forgot about those stars along with other things that had meant so much to him when he was tied to his wheelchair and couldn't do anything but wait and think.

For instance, a scrubby little terrier followed him home from Twin Palms one day and Ethel let him keep it. He fed the pup and washed it and named it Dugan, and after that he never said anything more about going to Michigan to find Charlie. It was only natural, of course, because kids--normal kids--forget their pain quickly. It's a sort of defense mechanism, Doc says, against the disappointments of this life.

When school opened again in the fall Ethel sold her trailer and got a job in Tampa where Joey could walk to school instead of going by bus. When they were gone the Twin Palms trailer court was so lonesome and dead that Doc and I pulled out and went down to the Lake Okechobee country for the sugar cane season. We never heard from Ethel and Joey again.

We've moved several times since; we're out in the San Joaquin Valley just now, with the celery croppers. But everywhere we go we're reminded of them. Every time we look up at a clear night sky we see what Doc calls the Joey Pond Stellar Monument, which is nothing but a funny sort of pattern roughed in with a hundred or so stars of all sizes and colors.

The body of it is so sketchy that you'd never make out what it's supposed to be unless you knew already what you were looking for. To us the head of a dog is fairly plain. If you know enough to fill in the gaps you can see it was meant to be a big shaggy dog with only one eye.

Doc says that footloose migratories like him and me forget old associations as quick as kids do--and for the same good reason--so I'm not especially interested now in where Ethel and Joey Pond are or how they're doing. But there's one thing I'll always wonder about, now that there's no way of ever knowing for sure.

I wish I'd asked Joey or Ethel, before they moved away, how Charlie lost that other eye.

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