I WAS in bed when I heard the gate.There was light enough so that I could see everything in the yard--lawn chairs, the willow tree, clothesline strung between the poles, the petunias, the fences, the gate standing wide open.Sam picked up a toy shovel, and scooped the slug into it, and dumped it out in the jar.Cliff's breathing was awful to listen to. His mouth gaped open and his arms hugged his pale chest.Sam was leaning with his arms on his fence, there being two fences to lean on. He raised his fist to his mouth and gave a dry cough."Look at this," Sam said, hitching his pajama trousers and squatting down.He had the beam directed onto the dirt under the rosebush.Everything lay in moonlight, and I could see the smallest things.I smoked one of Cliff's unfiltereds.The moon lighted up everything--houses and trees, poles and power lines, the whole world.I peered around the backyard before I stepped off the porch.A little breeze came along that made me close the robe.THERE was a noise at the fences that separated our place from Sam Lawton's place.He said, "I didn't hear anything. Haven't seen anything, either. It might have been the wind."His hair was silvery in the moonlight and stood up on his head."I just gave them a dose of this," he said, raising a can of something that looked like Ajax."An awful invention, the slug. I save them up in that jar there."He chewed on whatever it was he was chewing.I said, "Same as ever." Sam said, "Sometimes when I'm out here after the slugs, I'll look over in your direction."The slug was twisting this way and that.Then it curled and straightened out.I didn't hear anything else.It was a white moon and covered with scars.The clothespins on the line, for instance.But I couldn't get to sleep.But he just groaned.I got up and got my slippers.He was chewing something.

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