*The night the millennium changes and the computerized world does not implode I will spend with Dan and Estelle and their families and friends. Estelle is not yet pregnant, but she is rambunctiously happy. There will be more than a hundred guests, many of them children, at the family’s compound on Johns Island, and we will eat fried chicken and biscuits and grits, and there will be roasted oysters and even a barbecued pig that required some twenty hours of tending and swabbing with a mop soaked in Tabasco sauce. When night falls, giant speakers will blast Chuck Berry and Tina Turner into the yard, and I will discover that all South Carolinians, black or white, like the wicked dance we call the shag. After midnight, we cheer that the millennium has ended without dreadful events to mark it, and we will share many hugs and awkward kisses. Estelle offers me the opportunity to spend the night in her blue room, a cabin just large enough to contain a double bed, an armchair, and a desk. She lights a kerosene lamp and leaves me there, surrounded by indigo walls and a pale blue floor and ceiling. Even the window shades are blue. “I’ve never let anyone else sleep in here but Dan,” she says. I doubt she ever tells Dan that we were once more intimate friends.*

*Not long after the New Millennium party, I will begin to pretend that I can’t speak at all, and I will converse only with my dog, whose name I sometimes forget, and for the next year and a half I will live quietly in my hexagonal house on the Isle of Palms as I write this account. I do not remodel my house, and I forget entirely about the alarm system because I am no longer angry or afraid. I am, in fact, oddly happy, serene, at peace, which seems like God’s final joke.*

*In the summer of 2001, I will return to Naxos, where I will be floating in salty water when the third stroke comes, staring down at the tightly fitted stones, and I will drift for several hours before anyone discovers I have gone.*