

Gauntlet

by Daniel Passamaneck

I was overfull with excess of everything. I sequestered myself on a straight-backed wooden chair at the littered table. They came over together and sat on either side of me. They bore earnest expressions of concern and reservation. The evening lay heavy on my lap.

The one turned toward me, setting her elbow on the table.

You know, we've got Jews here too.

She leaned in almost imperceptibly.

They bury their own.

She paused, briefly, respectfully, watching for my response. Her face was wrinkled like twice-used wrapping tissue.

So, she continued: you want some pie?

I, too, paused.

What kind of pie?

Her sister responded immediately:

That's okay, we'll get you some of each.

They returned with a plate bearing a quarter each of four different pies. The matter was closed.

