

GOLGOTHA

Know this: I've no love for mice, moles, voles, rats. Any of those. I mean more, in fact, by saying that: I mean I hate them. I wish they would leave me alone. We have mice. Perfect. We have mice and three cats and I get up in the middle of the night to let the cats out, let the cats in, let the cats out again. We

haven't had a good night's sleep in over three years. The plague arrived. It continues. I say "we" meaning "me." It was a decision, then, that one day I made, one day, a declaration of sorts. To be rid of mice. To that end, I went to the local hardware store. The store was supplied generously with various traps. I wasn't at all interested in the humanity of a gently dispersing

intervention. I wanted them gone, with decisive permanence: a banishment into the white-ice of extinction. At least as far as my radius was concerned. I mean my home. I bought twenty-five traps. The number excessive I hoped,

but still I thought better to err on the side of waste than meanness. It was thrilling in this way to determine the end of infestation. For I was sick of the scurrying at the edge of awareness. The sense that beings huddled behind my

walls. I'd heard somewhere that mice carry diseases detrimental to the functioning of the lung, the human lung. You could say of me: I was a man afraid on certain levels of damnation. At the check-out counter I stood before an attractive woman, young by my standards. Early thirties. She asked me was I having a nice day. Yes, I told her. I asked her how her day was going. She didn't answer. Back home I thought carefully over the proper arrangement: a constellation of wood and wire. *There is an art to everything.* Perfection is a form of terror. This was the first step in solving my dilemma. The setting.

The setting of these.

The setting of these traps.