THE END OF EDDY



A NOVEL

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PICADOR

"Canny... Brilliant... A devastating emotional force."
—GARTH GREENWELL, *The New Yorker*

to whom he owed money—drug dealing—snuck up on him and attacked him to get his money back. He had broken all the windows one by one, his cries resonating in the still night air. He had broken them all, tried to set things on fire and yelling louder and louder, so that you might have believed he was trying to let the neighbors (and through them the police) know he was there. He didn't want to go to jail, to be sent back inside, just because he'd failed to respect the terms of his furlough. He wanted to do something to really deserve it. When the police arrived, they found him surrounded by shards of glass and pieces of the bricks and tiles that he had thrown against the walls. He had spray-painted *F.T.P.* in giant letters on the wall. He didn't resist when they put the handcuffs on him.

Sylvain appeared in front of the judge. He looked very calm, just as when the police had arrested him. Less agitated than one might have thought and than he might have been before. The prosecutor asked him the usual questions: why he had done it, why in that exact way, questions about his past, his children, his private life *As for your father whom you never knew and your mother who abandoned you, do you think that all of that, that all those details from your past, had anything to do with your delinquent behavior?* There were other questions he couldn't understand because of the language used, not just the legal language, but the language of individuals who had some education *Can you affirm that your acts are imputable*

to external influences of some kind or is it your feeling that you were in full control of yourself during this incident? My cousin stammered that he hadn't understood the question and he asked for it to be repeated. He wasn't embarrassed, he didn't feel the violence the prosecutor was exercising, the class violence that had excluded him from the world of education, the violence that had, in the end, led him to the courtroom where he now stood. In fact he must have thought that the prosecutor was ridiculous. That he spoke like a faggot.

The final question in the series the prosecutor asked him was—and this was a mere formality since everyone was sure they knew—what he had meant to say with *F.T.P.* My family had béen discussing it ever since the arrest *You know it's true he could never stand the cops, he really just hated the sight of them.* The prosecutor asked him why he hated the police so much, why he had made a point of going to his car for a can of spray paint while he was in the middle of ransacking the construction site (fragments of glass, brick, and slate) so that he could spray *F.T.P.*, which, as everyone could tell, meant *Fuck the Police,* on the wall, since that was an act that required premeditation and—consequently—didn't seem consistent with the deranged state suggested by Sylvain's behavior at the construction site. *But Mr. Prosecutor, sir, you've got it all wrong. F.T.P. doesn't stand for Fuck the Police. It stands for Fuck the Prosecutor.* That affront to the prosecutor's dignity still makes people in my family shudder when they