PART 1

THE SHADOW

BEFORE

'They begin! The perfections are sharpened
The flower spreads its colored petals wide in the sun
But the tongue of the bee misses them
They sink back into the loam crying out
— you may call it a cry that creeps over them,
a shiver as they wilt and disappear . . . . '
— William Carlos Williams, Paterson

"Born down in a dead man's town"
— Bruce Springsteen

C H A P T E R 1

After the Flood (1957)

1

The terror, which would not end for another twenty-eight years — if it ever did end — began, so far as I know or can tell, with a boat made from a sheet of newspaper floating down a gutter swollen with rain. The boat bobbed, listed, righted itself again, dived bravely through treacherous whirlpools, and continued on its way down Witcham Street toward the traffic light which marked the intersection of Witcham and Jackson. The three vertical lenses on all sides of the traffic light were dark this afternoon in the fall of 1957, and the houses were all dark, too. There had been steady rain for a week now, and two days ago the winds had come as well.

Most sections of Derry had lost their power then, and it was not back on yet. A small boy in a yellow slicker and red galoshes ran cheerfully along beside the newspaper boat. The rain had not stopped, but it was finally slackening. It tapped on the yellow hood of the boy's slicker, sounding to his ears like rain on a shed roof . . . a comfortable, almost cozy sound. The boy in the yellow slicker was George Denbrough. He was six. His brother, William, known to most of the kids at Derry Elementary School (and even to the teachers, who would never have used the nickname to his face) as Stuttering Bill, was at home, hacking out the last of a nasty case of influenza. In that autumn of 1957, eight months before the real horrors began and twenty-eight years before the final showdown, Stuttering Bill was ten years old. Bill had made the boat beside which George now ran. He had made it sitting up in bed, his back propped against a pile of pillows, while their mother played Für Elise on the piano in the parlor and rain swept restlessly against his bedroom window.

About three-quarters of the way down the block as one headed toward the intersection and the dead traffic light, Witcham Street was blocked to motor traffic by smudgepots and four orange sawhorses. Stencilled across each of the horses was DERRY DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS. Beyond them, the rain had spilled out of gutters clogged with branches and rocks and big sticky piles of autumn leaves. The water had first pried fingerholds in the paving and then snatched whole greedy handfuls — all of this by the third day of the rains. By noon of the fourth day, big chunks of the street's surface were boating through the

intersection of Jackson and Witcham like miniature white-water rafts. By that time, many people in Derry had begun to make nervous jokes about arks. The Public Works Department had managed to keep Jackson Street open, but Witcham was impassable from the sawhorses all the way to the center of town. But, everyone agreed, the worst was over.

The Kenduskeag Stream had crested just below its banks in the Barrens and bare inches below the concrete sides of the Canal which channelled it tightly as it passed through downtown. Right now a gang of men — Zack Denbrough, George's and Bill's father, among them — were removing the sandbags they had thrown up the day before with such panicky haste. Yesterday overflow and expensive flood damage had seemed almost inevitable. God knew it had happened before — the flooding in 1931 had been a disaster which had cost millions of dollars and almost two dozen lives. That was a long time ago, but there were still enough people around who remembered it to scare the rest. One of the flood victims had been found twenty-five miles east, in Bucksport. The fish had eaten this unfortunate gentleman's eyes, three of his fingers, his penis, and most of his left foot. Clutched in what remained of his hands had been a Ford steering wheel. Now, though, the river was receding, and when the new Bangor Hydro dam went in upstream, the river would cease to be a threat. Or so said Zack Denbrough, who worked for Bangor Hydroelectric. As for the rest — well, future floods could take care of themselves.

The thing was to get through this one, to get the power back on, and then to forget it. In Derry such forgetting of tragedy and disaster was almost an art, as Bill Denbrough would come to discover in the course of time. George paused just beyond the sawhorses at the edge of a deep ravine that had been cut through the tar surface of Witcham Street. This ravine ran on an almost exact diagonal. It ended on the far side of the street, roughly forty feet farther down the hill from where he now stood, on the right. He laughed aloud — the sound of solitary, childish glee a bright runner in that gray afternoon — as a vagary of the flowing water took his paper boat into a scale -model rapids which had been formed by the break in the tar. The urgent water had cut a channel which ran along the diagonal, and so his boat travelled from one side of Witcham Street to the other, the current carrying it so fast that George had to sprint to keep up with it. Water sprayed out from beneath his galoshes in muddy sheets. Their buckles made a jolly jingling as George Denbrough ran toward his strange death. And the feeling which filled him at that moment was clear and simple love for his brother Bill . . . love and a touch of regret that Bill couldn't be here to see this and be a part of

it. Of course he would try to describe it to Bill when he got home, but he knew he wouldn't be able to make Bill see it, the way Bill would have been able to make him see it if their positions had been reversed. Bill was good at reading and writing, but even at his age George was wise enough to know that wasn't the only reason why Bill got all A's on his report cards, or why his teachers liked his compositions so well.

Telling was only part of it. Bill was good at seeing. The boat nearly whistled along the diagonal channel, just a page torn from the Classified section of the Derry News, but now George imagined it as a FT boat in a war movie, like the ones he sometimes saw down at the Derry Theater with Bill at Saturday matinees. A war picture with John Wayne fighting the Japs. The prow of the newspaper boat threw sprays of water to either side as it rushed along, and then it reached the gutter on the left side of Witcham Street. A fresh streamlet rushed over the break in the tar at this point, creating a fairly large whirlpool, and it seemed to him that the boat must be swamped and capsize. It leaned alarmingly, and then George cheered as it righted itself, turned, and went racing on down toward the intersection. George sprinted to catch up. Over his head, a grim gust of October wind rattled the trees, now almost completely unburdened of their freight of colored leaves by the storm, which had been this year a reaper of the most ruthless sort. 2 Sitting up in bed, his cheeks still flushed with heat (but his fever, like the Kenduskeag, finally receding), Bill had finished the boat — but when George reached for it, Bill held it out of reach.

'N-Now get me the p-p-paraffin.' 'What's that? Where is it?' 'It's on the cellar shuh-shuh-shelf as you go d-downstairs,' Bill said. 'In a box that says Guh-Guh-hulf . . . Gulf. Bring that to me, and a knife, and a b-bowl. And a puh-pack of muh□muh-matches.' George had gone obediently to get these things. He could hear his mother playing the piano, not Für Elise now but something else he didn't like so well — something that sounded dry and fussy; he could hear rain flicking steadily against the kitchen windows. These were comfortable sounds, but the thought of the cellar was not a bit comfortable. He did not like the cellar, and he did not like going down the cellar stairs, because he always imagined there was something down there in the dark.

That was silly, of course, his father said so and his mother said so and, even more important, Bill said so, but still — He did not even like opening the door to flick on the light because he always had the idea — this was so exquisitely stupid he didn't dare tell anyone — that while he was feeling for the light switch, some

horrible clawed paw would settle lightly over his wrist . . . and then jerk him down into the darkness that smelled of dirt and wet and dim rotted vegetables. Stupid! There were no things with claws, all hairy and full of killing spite. Every now and then someone went crazy and killed a lot of people — sometimes Chet Huntley told about such things on the evening news — and of course there were Commies, but there was no weirdo monster living down in their cellar. Still, this idea lingered.

In those interminable moments while he was groping for the switch with his right hand (his left arm curled around the doorjamb in a deathgrip), that cellar smell seemed to intensify until it filled the world. Smells of dirt and wet and long-gone vegetables would merge into one unmistakable ineluctable smell, the smell of the monster, the apotheosis of all monsters. It was the smell of something for which he had no name: the smell of It, crouched and lurking and ready to spring. A creature which would eat anything but which was especially hungry for boymeat.

He had opened the door that morning and had groped interminably for the switch, holding the jamb in his usual deathgrip, his eyes squinched shut, the tip of his tongue poked from the corner of his mouth like an agonized rootlet searching for water in a place of drought. Funny? Sure! You betcha! Lookit you, Georgie! Georgie's scared of the dark! What a baby! The sound of the piano came from what his father called the living room and what his mother called the parlor. It sounded like music from another world, far away, the way talk and laughter on a summer-crowded beach must sound to an exhausted swimmer who struggles with the undertow.

His fingers found the switch! Ah! They snapped it — — and nothing. No light. Oh, cripes! The power! George snatched his arm back as if from a basket filled with snakes. He stepped back from the open cellar door, his heart hurrying in his chest. The power was out, of course — he had forgotten the power was out. Jeezly-crow! What now? Go back and tell Bill he couldn't get the box of paraffin because the power was out and he was afraid that something might get him as he stood on the cellar stairs, something that wasn't a Commie or a mass murderer but a creature much worse than either? That it would simply slither part of its rotted self up between the stair risers and grab his ankle? That would go over big, wouldn't it? Others might laugh at such a fancy, but Bill wouldn't laugh. Bill would be mad. Bill would say, 'Grow up, Georgie . . . do you want this boat or not?' As if this thought were his cue, Bill called from his bedroom: 'Did you d-d-

die out there, Juh-Georgie?' 'No, I'm gettin it, Bill,' George called back at once. He rubbed at his arms, trying to make the guilty gooseflesh disappear and be smooth skin again. 'I just stopped to get a drink of water.' 'Well, h-hurry up!' So he walked down the four steps to the cellar shelf, his heart a warm, beating hammer in his throat, the hair on the nape of his neck standing at attention, his eyes hot, his hands cold, sure that at any moment the cellar door would swing shut on its own, closing off the white light falling through the kitchen windows, and then he would hear It, something worse than all the Commies and murderers in the world, worse than the Japs, worse than Attila the Hun, worse than the somethings in a hundred horror movies.

It, growling deeply — he would hear the growl in those lunatic seconds before it pounced on him and unzipped his guts. The cellar-smell was worse than ever today, because of the flood. Their house was high on Witcham Street, near the crest of the hill, and they had escaped the worst of it, but there was still standing water down there that had seeped in through the old rock foundations. The smell was low and unpleasant, making you want to take only the shallowest breaths. George sifted through the junk on the shelf as fast as he could — old cans of Kiwi shoepolish and shoepolish rags, a broken kerosene lamp, two mostly empty bottles of Windex, an old flat can of Turtle wax. For some reason this can struck him, and he spent nearly thirty seconds looking at the turtle on the lid with a kind of hypnotic wonder. Then he tossed it back . . . and here it was at last, a square box with the word GULF on it. George snatched it and ran up the stairs as fast as he could, suddenly aware that his shirttail was out and suddenly sure that his shirttail would be his undoing: the thing in the cellar would allow him to get almost all the way out, and then it would grab the tail of his shirt and snatch him back and — He reached the kitchen and swept the door shut behind him. It banged gustily. He leaned back against it with his eyes closed, sweat popped out on his arms and forehead, the box of paraffin gripped tightly in one hand. The piano had come to a stop, and his mom's voice floated to him: 'Georgie, can't you slam that door a little harder next time? Maybe you could break some of the plates in the Welsh dresser, if you really tried.' 'Sorry, Mom,' he called back. 'Georgie, you waste,' Bill said from his bedroom. He pitched his voice low so their mother would not hear.

George snickered a little. His fear was already gone; it had slipped away from him as easily as a nightmare slips away from a man who awakes, cold-skinned and gasping, from its grip; who feels his body and stares at his surroundings to make sure that none of it ever happened and who then begins at once to forget

it. Half is gone by the time his feet hit the floor; three-quarters of it by the time he emerges from the shower and begins to towel off; all of it by the time he finishes his breakfast. All gone . . . until the next time, when, in the grip of the nightmare, all fears will be remembered. That turtle, George thought, going to the counter drawer where the matches were kept. Where did I see a turtle like that before? But no answer came, and he dismissed the question. He got a pack of matches from the drawer, a knife from the rack (holding the sharp edge studiously away from his body, as his dad had taught him), and a small bowl from the Welsh dresser in the dining room.

Then he went back into Bill's room. 'W-What an a-hole you are, Juh-Georgie,' Bill said, amiably enough, and pushed back some of the sick-stuff on his nighttable: an empty glass, a pitcher of water, Kleenex, books, a bottle of Vicks VapoRub — the smell of which Bill would associate all his life with thick, phlegmy chests and snotty noses. The old Philco radio was there, too, playing not Chopin or Bach but a Little Richard tune . . . very softly, however, so softly that Little Richard was robbed of all his raw and elemental power. Their mother, who had studied classical piano at Juilliard, hated rock and roll. She did not merely dislike it; she abominated it. 'I'm no a-hole,' George said, sitting on the edge of Bill's bed and putting the things he had gathered on the nighttable. 'Yes you are,' Bill said. 'Nothing but a great big brown a-hole, that's you.' George tried to imagine a kid who was nothing but a great big a-hole on legs and began to giggle. 'Your a-hole is bigger than Augusta,' Bill said, beginning to giggle, too. 'Four a-hole is bigger than the whole state,' George replied.

This broke both boys up for nearly two minutes. There followed a whispered conversation of the sort which means very little to anyone save small boys: accusations of who was the biggest a-hole, who had the biggest a-hole, which a-hole was the brownest, and so on. Finally Bill said one of the forbidden words — he accused George of being a big brown shitty a-hole — and they both got laughing hard. Bill's laughter turned into a coughing fit. As it finally began to taper off (by then Bill's face had gone a plummy shade which George regarded with some alarm), the piano stopped again.

They both looked in the direction of the parlor, listening for the piano-bench to scrape back, listening for their mother's impatient footsteps. Bill buried his mouth in the crook of his elbow, stifling the last of the coughs, pointing at the pitcher at the same time. George poured him a glass of water, which he drank off. The piano began once more — Für Elise again. Stuttering Bill never forgot

that piece, and even many years later it never failed to bring gooseflesh to his arms and back; his heart would drop and he would remember: My mother was playing that the day Georgie died. 'You gonna cough anymore, Bill?' 'No.' Bill pulled a Kleenex from the box, made a rumbling sound in his chest, spat phlegm into the tissue, screwed it up, and tossed it into the wastebasket by his bed, which was filled with similar twists of tissue. Then he opened the box of paraffin and dropped a waxy cube of the stuff into his palm. George watched him closely, but without speaking or questioning. Bill didn't like George talking to him while he did stuff, but George had learned that if he just kept his mouth shut, Bill would usually explain what he was doing. Bill used the knife to cut off a small piece of the paraffin cube.

He put the piece in the bowl, then struck a match and put it on top of the paraffin. The two boys watched the small yellow flame as the dying wind drove rain against the window in occasional spatters. 'Got to waterproof the boat or it'll just get wet and sink,' Bill said. When he was with George, his stutter was light — sometimes he didn't stutter at all. In school, however, it could become so bad that talking became impossible for him. Communication would cease and Bill's schoolmates would look somewhere else while Bill clutched the sides of his desk, his face growing almost as red as his hair, his eyes squeezed into slits as he tried to winch some word out of his stubborn throat. Sometimes — most times — the word would come. Other times it simply refused. He had been hit by a car when he was three and knocked into the side of a building; he had remained unconscious for seven hours.

Mom said it was that accident which had caused the stutter. George sometimes got the feeling that his dad — and Bill himself — was not so sure. The piece of paraffin in the bowl was almost entirely melted. The match-flame guttered lower, growing blue as it hugged the cardboard stick, and then it went out. Bill dipped his finger into the liquid, jerked it out with a faint hiss. He smiled apologetically at George. 'Hot,' he said. After a few seconds he dipped his finger in again and began to smear the wax along the sides of the boat, where it quickly dried to a milky haze. 'Can I do some?' George asked. 'Okay. Just don't get any on the blankets or Mom'll kill you.' George dipped his finger into the paraffin, which was now very warm but no longer hot, and began to spread it along the other side of the boat. 'Don't put on so much, you a-hole!' Bill said. 'You want to sink it on its m-maiden cruise?' 'I'm sorry.' 'That's all right. Just g-go easy.' George finished the other side, then held the boat in his hands. It felt a little heavier, but not much. 'Too cool,' he said. 'I'm gonna go out and sail it.' 'Yeah, you do that,' Bill said. He

suddenly looked tired — tired and still not very well. 'I wish you could come,' George said. He really did. Bill sometimes got bossy after awhile, but he always had the coolest ideas and he hardly ever hit. 'It's your boat, really.' 'She,' Bill said. 'You call boats sh-she.' 'She, then.' 'I wish I could come, too,' Bill said glumly. 'Well . . . ' George shifted from one foot to the other, the boat in his hands. 'You put on your rain-stuff,' Bill said, 'or you'll wind up with the fluh-hu like me. Probably catch it anyway, from my juh-germs.' 'Thanks, Bill. It's a neat boat.' And he did something he hadn't done for a long time, something Bill never forgot: he leaned over and kissed his brother's cheek. 'You'll catch it for sure now, you a-hole,' Bill said, but he seemed cheered up all the same. He smiled at George. 'Put all this stuff back, too.

Or Mom'll have a b-bird.' 'Sure.' He gathered up the waterproofing equipment and crossed the room, the boat perched precariously on top of the paraffin box, which was sitting askew in the little bowl. 'Juh juh-Georgie?' George turned back to look at his brother. 'Be c-careful.' 'Sure.' His brow creased a little. That was something your mom said, not your big brother. It was as strange as him giving Bill a kiss. 'Sure I will.' He went out. Bill never saw him again. 3 Now here he was, chasing his boat down the left side of Witcham Street. He was running fast but the water was running faster and his boat was pulling ahead. He heard a deepening roar and saw that fifty yards farther down the hill the water in the gutter was cascading into a stormdrain that was still open. Ii was a long dark semicircle cut into the curbing, and as George watched, a stripped branch, its bark as dark and glistening as sealskin, shot into the stormdrain's maw. It hung up there for a moment and then slipped down inside. That was where his boat was headed. 'Oh shit and Shinola!' he yelled, dismayed. He put on speed, and for a moment he thought he would catch the boat. Then one of his feet slipped and he went sprawling, skinning one knee and crying out in pain. From his new pavement-level perspective he watched his boat swing around twice, momentarily caught in another whirlpool, and then disappear. 'Shit and Shinola!' he yelled again, and slammed his fist down on the pavement. That hurt too, and he began to cry a little.

What a stupid way to lose the boat! He got up and walked over to the stormdrain. He dropped to his knees and peered in. The water made a dank hollow sound as it fell into the darkness. It was a spooky sound. It reminded him of — 'Huh!' The sound was jerked out of him as if on a string, and he recoiled. There were yellow eyes in there: the sort of eyes he had always imagined but never actually seen down in the basement. It's an animal, he thought incoherently, that's all it is,

some animal, maybe a housecat that got stuck down in there — Still, he was ready to run — would run in a second or two, when his mental switchboard had dealt with the shock those two shiny yellow eyes had given him. He felt the rough surface of the macadam under his fingers, and the thin sheet of cold water flowing around them. He saw himself getting up and backing away, and that was when a voice — a perfectly reasonable and rather pleasant voice — spoke to him from inside the stormdrain. 'Hi, Georgie,' it said. George blinked and looked again. He could barely credit what he saw; it was like something from a made-up story, or a movie where you know the animals will talk and dance. If he had been ten years older, he would not have believed what he was seeing, but he was not sixteen. He was six.

There was a clown in the stormdrain. The light in there was far from good, but it was good enough so that George Denbrough was sure of what he was seeing. It was a clown, like in the circus or on TV. In fact he looked like a cross between Bozo and Clarabell, who talked by honking his (or was it her? — George was never really sure of the gender) horn on Howdy Doody Saturday mornings — Buffalo Bob was just about the only one who could understand Clarabell, and that always cracked George up. The face of the clown in the stormdrain was white, there were funny tufts of red hair on either side of his bald head, and there was a big clown-smile painted over his mouth. If George had been inhabiting a later year, he would have surely thought of Ronald McDonald before Bozo or Clarabell. The clown held a bunch of balloons, all colors, like gorgeous ripe fruit in one hand.

In the other he held George's newspaper boat. 'Want your boat, Georgie?' The clown smiled. George smiled back. He couldn't help it; it was the kind of smile you just had to answer. 'I sure do,' he said. The clown laughed. '"I sure do." That's good! That's very good! And how about a balloon?' 'Well . . . sure!' He reached forward . . . and then drew his hand reluctantly back. 'I'm not supposed to take stuff from strangers. My dad said so.' 'Very wise of your dad,' the clown in the stormdrain said, smiling. How, George wondered, could I have thought his eyes were yellow? They were a bright, dancing blue, the color of his mom's eyes, and Bill's. 'Very wise indeed.

Therefore I will introduce myself. I, Georgie, am Mr Bob Gray, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown. Pennywise, meet George Denbrough. George, meet Pennywise. And now we know each other. I'm not a stranger to you, and you're not a stranger to me. Kee-rect?' George giggled. 'I guess so.' He reached

forward again . . . and drew his hand back again. 'How did you get down there?' 'Storm just bleeeew me away,' Pennywise the Dancing Clown said. 'It blew the whole circus away. Can you smell the circus, Georgie?' George leaned forward. Suddenly he could smell peanuts! Hot roasted peanuts! And vinegar! The white kind you put on your french fries through a hole in the cap! He could smell cotton candy and frying doughboys and the faint but thunderous odor of wild-animal shit. He could smell the cheery aroma of midway sawdust. And yet . . . And yet under it all was the smell of flood and decomposing leaves and dark stormdrain shadows. That smell was wet and rotten. The cellar-smell. But the other smells were stronger. 'You bet I can smell it,' he said. 'Want your boat, Georgie?' Pennywise asked.

'I only repeat myself because you really do not seem that eager.' He held it up, smiling. He was wearing a baggy silk suit with great big orange buttons. A bright tie, electric-blue, flopped down his front, and on his hands were big white gloves, like the kind Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck always wore. 'Yes, sure,' George said, looking into the stormdrain. 'And a balloon? I've got red and green and yellow and blue . . . . ' 'Do they float?' 'Float?' The clown's grin widened. 'Oh yes, indeed they do. They float! And there's cotton candy . . . . ' George reached. The clown seized his arm. And George saw the clown's face change. What he saw then was terrible enough to make his worst imaginings of the thing in the cellar look like sweet dreams; what he saw destroyed his sanity in one clawing stroke. 'They float,' the thing in the drain crooned in a clotted, chuckling voice. It held George's arm in its thick and wormy grip, it pulled George toward that terrible darkness where the water rushed and roared and bellowed as it bore its cargo of storm debris toward the sea.

George craned his neck away from that final blackness and began to scream into the rain, to scream mindlessly into the white autumn sky which curved above Derry on that day in the fall of 1957. His screams were shrill and piercing, and all up and down Witcham Street people came to then — windows or boiled out onto their porches. 'They float,' it growled, 'they float, Georgie, and when you're down here with me, you'll float, too — ' George's shoulder socked against the cement of the curb and Dave Gardener, who had stayed home from his job at The Shoeboat that day because of the flood, saw only a small boy in a yellow rain-slicker, a small boy who was screaming and writhing in the gutter with muddy water surfing over his face and making his screams sound bubbly. 'Everything down here floats,' that chuckling, rotten voice whispered, and suddenly there was a ripping noise and a flaring sheet of agony, and George

Denbrough knew no more. Dave Gardener was the first to get there, and although he arrived only forty-five seconds after the first scream, George Denbrough was already dead. Gardener grabbed him by the back of the slicker, pulled him into the street . . . and began to scream himself as George's body turned over in his hands. The left side of George's slicker was now bright red. Blood flowed into the stormdrain from the tattered hole where the left arm had been. A knob of bone, horribly bright, peeked through the torn cloth. The boy's eyes stared up into the white sky, and as Dave staggered away toward the others already running pell-mell down the street, they began to fill up with rain. 4 Somewhere below, in the stormdrain that was already filled nearly to capacity with runoff (there could have been no one down there, the County Sheriff would later exclaim to a Derry News reporter with a frustrated fury so great it was almost agony; Hercules himself would have been swept away in that driving current), George's newspaper boat shot onward through nighted chambers and long concrete hallways that roared and chimed with water. For awhile it ran neck-and-neck with a dead chicken that floated with its yellowy, reptilian toes pointed at the dripping ceiling; then, at some junction east of town, the chicken was swept off to the left while George's boat went straight. An hour later, while George's mother was being sedated in the Emergency Room at Derry Home Hospital and while Stuttering Bill sat stunned and white and silent in his bed, listening to his father sob hoarsely in the parlor where his mother had been playing Für Elise when George went out, the boat shot out through a concrete loophole like a bullet exiting the muzzle of a gun and ran at speed down a sluiceway and into an unnamed stream. When it joined the boiling, swollen Penobscot River twenty minutes later, the first rifts of blue had begun to show in the sky overhead.

The storm was over. The boat dipped and swayed and sometimes took on water, but it did not sink; the two brothers had waterproofed it well. I do not know where it finally fetched up, if ever it did; perhaps it reached the sea and sails there forever, like a magic boat in a fairytale. All I know is that it was still afloat and still running on the breast of the flood when it passed the incorporated town limits of Derry, Maine, and there it passes out of this tale foreve