I am older than you can imagine. I can’t say with any certainty just how old I am. And no, I do not come from a far-off world, or eat people. There are no far-off worlds, and there are no species of people-eaters. I should know — when I was born, the population of this planet was numbered in hundreds of thousands, not millions. And no, I do not really exist. That is not to say that I am no more than an author’s invention; I have a past. What it means is that I have so long since passed from the world as you know it that what you see as existence has no meaning left for me.

I will probably never know the science of my being. It is only in the last hundred years that enough was known about reality that I could begin to piece together the explanation for who I am. Here is what I can piece together: at the most fundamental levels of reality, matter, energy and thought coincide. Through a mystery of entanglement, my fundamental reality has never dissipated. My parts remain in contact somehow. That is all I can tell you, and all that science will ever be able to determine.

How this happened to me is a mystery. Perhaps it happens to many people, but I doubt it. I have never encountered another. It is nothing but chance that I was born in a backwater of time, where the pattern that is me could cohere and choose to last forever.

I have had many loves, and seen them all die. I keep a small memento of each, and let a century or ten pass before I seek another. It gets harder with each passage to allow myself to feel.

And I am not always corporeal. I have learned, when I tire of dissolution, to pull myself back together, to draw in the strings and blobs that are me. I try sometimes to die, to allow my being to become so attenuated that a planet has barely enough surface to contain me. It does no good. Having lost movement and speech, I never lose thought. My pattern remains in the underworld, and there is no respite.

There is no philosophy I have not known, nor politic I have not essayed. I have been a brutal warrior, a sadistic slaver, a cultured lover, a godly hermit.

At present, I remain invisible to you. I leave you this message, before I make my final effort at dying a true death. I have scattered atoms containing the essence of my thought throughout the body of a craft, a flying telescope that will face the depths of space. I will fly into the vacuum, and allow myself to dissolve on the solar wind. Perhaps my being will finally find an attenuation so extreme that I can no longer think. The quantum entanglement will be broken at last, and I will rest. Perhaps, and perhaps not.

And so this. I have only one thing to tell you: I have seen the past, and it is the future. Everything you know is wrong. In the fullness of time, I may again live to answer your questions.