

Webs

Nobody asked but ...

I did run into a spiderweb on my porch this morning. My blithe forehead snagged one or more strands of the silky stuff. But I don't know whether I have activated some god-like black avenger that will eventually see me in my grave. It's the not knowing that is the point.

I was asked about Robert Penn Warren's famous spiderweb imagery in *All the King's Men*. Do I agree with it? Well, yes and no. I agree that every action has an equal and opposite set of reactions, and that each of those reactions engenders even further reactions. The agitations spread ever wider.

What I don't agree with is that the web of our reality is presided over by a single awesome spider. If there are one or more spiders on the web, they are each subject to the rules of the web, the natural laws. There are no amendments that any acting agent on the web can make to overcome the natural law. No one has enough information.

As Robert Penn Warren points out later in the same book, we cannot know, in advance, the thing that kills us in the end.

— Kilgore Forelle