

On Dashiell Hammett
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Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961) was an American author best known for his hardboiled detective fiction; *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man* are prominent examples. Hammett's enduring characters include Sam Spade and Nick and Nora Charles. His last writing, just before his death, was a 21,500-word fragment of a novel entitled *Tulip*. The fragment was published after his death in the collection, *The Big Knockover: Selected Stories and Short Novels* (New York: Vintage, 1989). The central character in *Tulip* is a soldier stationed in the Aleutian Islands during World War II along with someone nicknamed Pop, who is transparently Hammett himself. The last line of *Tulip*, and the last words of Hammett's writing career, has Pop saying, "If you are tired you ought to rest, I think, and not try to fool yourself and your customers with colored bubbles."

At Hammett's memorial service upon his death at 66, the eulogy praised his honor and bravery: "Never did he play anybody's game. He never lied. He never faked. He never stooped."