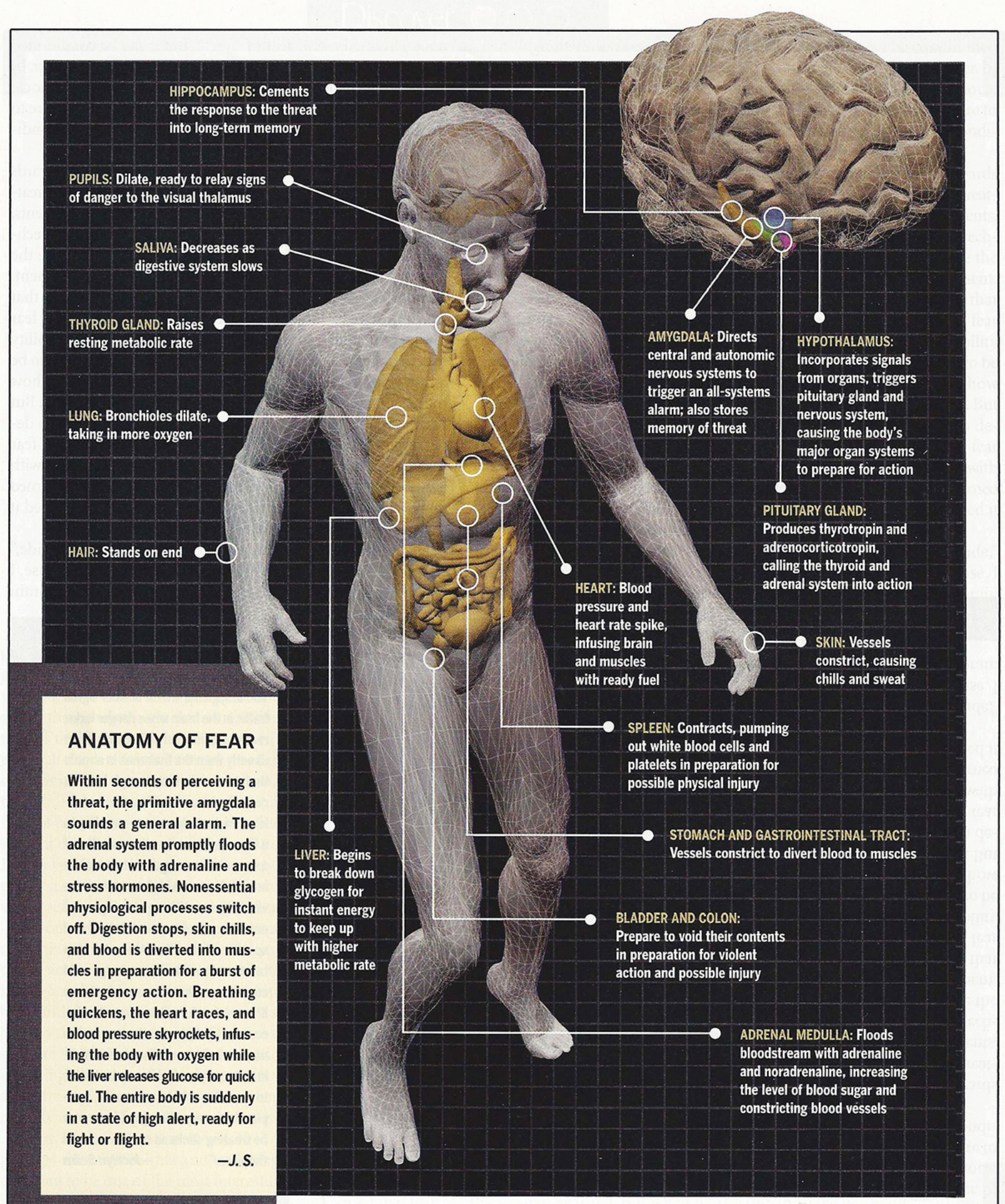

ANATOMY OF FEAR

Within seconds of perceiving a threat, the primitive amygdala sounds a general alarm. The adrenal system promptly floods the body with adrenaline and stress hormones. Nonessential physiological processes switch off. Digestion stops, skin chills, and blood is diverted into muscles in preparation for a burst of emergency action. Breathing quickens, the heart races, and blood pressure skyrockets, infusing the body with oxygen while the liver releases glucose for quick fuel. The entire body is suddenly in a state of high alert, ready for fight or flight.

—*J. S.*