



*He used this the axe to cut down clouds, to stuff them in
his ears so that he didn't have to listen anymore.*

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THIS AN ANIMAL DREAM

The man he took an axe into the woods. He buried it in the ground, under moss, replaced with soil and it sprouted into a tree, this axe. And the axe into a tree, when it grew limbs and batted at the sky, the blades of leaves began to fall and humanity below it, this one tree grown from the man's axe, it hollowed out the world in ever smaller slices, unevening it all.

The man he took an axe into the woods and used it chopping against a stone in downward motions to make what was a spark. The spark was for a fire and the fire was for the man with the axe, his chest bowing in cold. The spark that was made crept into the wood, the pile the axe-man had bundled, and slept in its boughs. And though the spark dreamt of fire exploding in naked reams, no fire came. The wood it remained only a blanket to the spark, in the dream damps, and the man with the axe his skin, caving down into the darkness.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The woods were quiet. The woods were weeping. And the man with the axe he used the axe to break the code and splintered out the language of the woods, to ask it why it was so sad. The woods heard the axe and its song, the axe-man behind the rhythms, but it didn't answer. The woods they never shed their grieved panic, even to this man with his spoken axe, the sharp of his hands in their pockets going away.

The man he took an axe into the woods and came out new. He called to a man America, America and held in his ears the refrain. He called to a man Hey friend but the axe had gone by then and the difference

had gone by then and his strength had gone by then and the world had gone by then. It was just a moment with no axe exiting the words at night and recalling daybreak, pretending surfaces, mimicking how they used to play.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The man he took an axe into the woods and set it on its side. The man he took an axe into the woods and made it tea, caressed its back, found a flower and put it in a vase and put the vase on the forest floor and threw pine needles into the air, trembling out Hallelujah. The man he took an axe into the woods and found out about the will to live and unlive it, leaving the axe behind, on a rock, in a mist, with a dead flower and the stain of sap running over its hide.

The man he took an axe into the woods and the woods they brought a level to see. They measured and cut and worked into arrangements. The woods were unkind to the rain and with the sun made blankets with holes, failures. The woods with the sun spoke wind, chimed faults, and went into great bunches. The woods, the man with the axe and the woods, shattered to pieces, broke into moments, murmured to ashes, sweat the dirty light.

The man he took an axe into the woods and the work as he thought was progressing fairly. The foliage had signed no complaint letters and the sky was open again. There was no ceiling. The woods had reworked the ceiling. The woods had gone past a ceiling, the need for one. Sky crunched beneath his shoes, this man with his axe, the woods, and no better sound than broken openness, understatement, foundations mumbling.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The man with his axe and his hands and his feet he saw the ocean rising above his waist. His axe this man he made a plate of sardines and studded the floor with its

oils, screaming to the waves We do not doubt you. The ocean said Sea and it was a day the sun turned out the light and tunneled through the ground and went to winter beneath sheets of stars, praying for forgiveness, making bubbly echoes far below the drowning.

The man he took an axe into the woods and the woods they stirred the pot to boil. And the woods they brought up seed from their hands and scattered it at their feet and waited for the end of eternity. The level was off. The marker blown out. And the woods in disbelief just stood and stupored, unwilling to accept its errors, unwilling to placate its forces, unnerved by the lack of its own clear judgments. The axe and the man, blades cut sharp, water running over it.

The man he took an axe into the woods and was quiet when the woods piled together in song. There was a surge against romance, against light, and everything was whispered: The water will be here soon. The woods they brought the level to see and camped under its arches, culling the factual buzzing, un-worried about implications. The sun, in the sky, shining. The axe makings shards of moon, the man cupping his hands, the water overboard not enough to keep the woods out of suffocation.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The sky opened and into him went. This sky of blue. Its cousin of white, father of gray, mother of rattling haze. This sky that rains, snows, crumbles down on him, the man's head, as a kite. The sky flown as a kite, in the man's hand, and his mouth open wide to swallow it. Clouds past teeth, go down, rumble thunder in an empty belly.

The man he took an axe into the woods and the sky made in his sinuses a city full of lights, protest signs. A rail system gathered round his ankles, a train. People inside travel up and to his head, this man, his axe in his hand chopping down nothing, and the sky-city in his

heart. Lungs as sails, kidneys lakes of well-water mounting, spilling. The sky a hole, the hole an opening, the opening a mouth where the man and his axe and the woods all come out, followed by a train and passengers, followed by watery remains.

The man he took an axe into the woods and with it cut down trees and built a house. A cabin. Wood openings as windows and a woman carved in trunks, massacred in bark, and the man with the axe hacking at her until she breaks until she builds up until she splatters out and down and composed of rain. The axe a tool, the woman a house, the woods a heart. The axe-building man, the sun on a planked roof, the sound of rain in this sky.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The rain was coming down and his head was dripping and his heart was of spiders, crawling upwards. There was tissue in his hands, his hands of cut paper, his fingers torn open and issuing forth. There was a river. There was a lake. There was a cabin and it was his axe that built it, took it down, burned it back into the shape it first took, when there was an axe in a man's hands entering the woods and no rain, then.

The man he took an axe into the woods on a day when it was sun and light and not the darkness or the black of night. The man he took his axe and looked through it, telescope, and did not see the stars. The axe it looked on itself and saw deep down a home, a house, made of lumber and lumbering open, with window-holes and the mortar of cracks between. The sky seeing a man with an axe going into the woods, coming out a man built with splintered features, headless imaginings. An axe-man stumbling under a sky raining.

The man he took an axe into the woods and on his face grew a beard and cut the beard when it was long so that no one in the woods would recognize him anymore. It was a feat, the growing and the cutting, did

all with his axe, this man in the woods, when the sky looked above him like snow. White and powdered stems of crystal. The man in his clunking arms, wandering away from his body. Cutting off, going down, the hair softening the ground around him, when it fell, trimming the edges.

The man he took an axe into the woods and raised it up, the handle his hands, up and above his head. Brought it down, the axe, this way the woods, the sides, all cut and down and fallen off until the woods are an island and the man the only man left on its cliffs. This when the man says Adam and the edges of the world shrink to his toes and remove all ground to walk. The axe then a sad weapon, broken in its images, laid down. The axe cannot be a boat. The axe cannot be a bridge. The man cannot be an Adam.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The man gripped the axe. The woods made a forest, the forest a tree line, the tree line a mountain. The man and his axe in the mountains, on the mountain, swinging his axe into the sky. The cuts made arranged into a message, the message is Jump. The man in the woods on a mountain swinging an axe rocketed down through the slits in the sky, cannonball towards the moon, the sun, the cotton of a forever-bed.

The man he took an axe into the woods and from out of the woods came with a different face, a different name, trimmed and svelte, cut up and dragged out into something new. The woods becoming an ocean and the axe becoming a chariot and the man becoming a prince. Or the man becoming an enemy, chimed up and sparkling for his world-crushing or domineering. Or the woods a new sky, where white is the only. Or nothing. The axe a softened rag, clinging to a shore.

The man he took an axe into the woods. The man he took the sky into his pocket. The man took the sky out of his pocket, dusted from

it the snow, and cleaned up the ice on its paws. The sky whispering, thanks. The man in the woods with his axe shaving the crystalline face of the white snow sky, the opening up of a conversation. The man in the woods and his pocket of snow. The man with an axe in his hands and the sky hiding. The man shoring up the choices, making sure the moments. The axe a carving tool, shucking ice, holding tight to frozen skies. The man's pocket, these snowed-in woods, this an ever-frost.

The man he took an axe into the woods. He used this the axe to cut down clouds, to stuff them in his ears so that he didn't have to listen anymore. He used this his axe in these the woods to cut down the trees and to make for himself a coffin, a box that his hands and arms and legs and feet can go into, for when he sleeps. And the woods in their silence and the ground in its flooring watched the man stuff up his ears and cut down his box and make of itself, the man and the axe and the woods, a grave.

The man he took an axe into the woods. There was a quiet. Then there was a noise. The noise was thunder. The quiet was rain. The lightning that cracked, it cracked open the handle of the axe, spit sparks off the blade of the axe, burned the face from the man standing in the rain listening to the thunder with ears turned clean away. The woods in a thunderstorm, lighting up the man. The axe an arm to the clouds. The gray in the woods with the man and the axe and the leftover rumble of forgotten faces and humming static.

The man he took an axe into the woods and found a river. The man he took an axe into the river and found a stone. The man he took an axe into the stone and found the heart of a woman he had left and forgotten before, when he was alive, when he was still. The man turned from the stone. The man turned from the river. The man turned from the woods. The man turned from the axe and himself, walking away, going somewhere that isn't and will never be and wasn't home. ■