

# Boardtrip II

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## The Playground

Boardtrip II  
Can, Na, and Bis, You Bitch!

## The Fall of the Seven Earths

Highdeas  
The Lost Stories from the Seven Earths

## Planewalkers

The Face of Fear

# Boardtrip II

Can, Na, and Bis,  
You Bitch!

Hunter A. Wallace

This is a callback to fiction. All the characters, locations, organizations, and events portrayed in this manifestoe are either products of the bookmaker's imagination or are used fictitiously. Or both.

Any and all resemblance to Reality is purely coincidental.

...

In other words, it's just words. It's not real. Get a grip.

**Boardtrip II**  
**Can, Na, and Bis, You Bitch!**

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## The Center of Wuester

"Which one?"

You look away from the slanted ceiling. I'm sitting at my desk. A beat-ass old explorer's cap sits on my head. A pair of green sunshades grip either side of my skull, rest gently on my nose. The lenses are so reflective you can hardly see yourself, but you're all the way 'cross the room from me for Christ's sake, you'd have to scope through a goddamn monocular just to spot a glimpse of yourself in the reflection of my sunshades from over there.

"Yo!"

You still haven't answered me, and I do not hand over the benefit of the doubt.

"Which strain should I bring, you little shit?"

You look... puzzled, to say the least. Perplexed, to say more, and to say the most, well...

"This thing you gave me, it says," I shout, "**THE BEST WEED EVER!**" to get my point across, whatever point that might be. "Peanut butter cookie. So should we bring this? Or...?"

You go on dead-eyeing me like some kind of fuckin' eunuch or whatever the hell you are... I get impatient and walk over my desk, two feet on the wooden slab you son of a bitch, and storm voraciously to my stash box, that old wooden Bepis crate son of a handgun standing on twice as many legs as you even have in the first place.

"Gee-eM-Oh cookies," I read from the plastic cannabis container. "**THE BEST WEED EVER** see, now how the f—"

But you're not on the bed anymore. You're not in here. I'm alone in the studio apartment.

"What the fuck?" I ask when I find you sitting on the couch out in the chill room. "Would you just tell me what fucking weed to bring already!?"

You don't even fucking look at me.

"I'll just figure it the fuck out then, all right?! I hope you're fucking happy, you motherfucking son of a shit!"

You seem to be. You have that air about you as I walk past you and into the bathroom.

"I have a feeling," I explain as the tap heats up slow, because I know you're not going to ask, "that I'll need to make a glasscrutch. In the near future. So I'm'a clean the pipe, then we'll hit it. Cool?"

You don't say a single goddamn thing. I walk over to the couch, the floor creaking as I go, and clap you upside the back'a'th'head. You take a pillow and swing it so hard into my fucking throat I'm on the ground, what the fuck is that? You fuckin' silent protagonist fuckin' piece'a'shit, won't even tell me which one'a my fuckin' weed strains to fuckin' bring, fuckin'..."

I don't trail off, no, I just go off, on and on and on. You wonder how I dress myself in the morning, asshole, and then realize I don't. To dress oneself in the morning, one must wake up in the morning, and partner, I don't fuckin' *sleep*.

I close the bathroom door. I'm getting feelings, 'man, weird fuckin' feelings from you. Weird vibes, 'man. I don't wanna take any chances with this, we're awful goddamn close to the center of Wuester right now.

Pipe's clean. Pipecleaner is not, but ain't that just how the fuck it goes? Fucking garbage, every last one of us.

"I don't know much, but I know one thing beyond all

bounds of reason and logic, and partner, that one thing is this here now: you do *not* want to catch yourself walkin' no road head'd towards the center of Wuester, New Jerz."

I don't lock the door, as you'd hear the click. However, I do open the window, take the screen out, "but this **arm** holding the window halfway to almost fuckin' shut, open the **fuckin**g windows, folks!" and climb out onto the roof. The pipe is in my teeth. I shimmy beneath an overcast's shade.

Fuck, the studio apartment's windie, intentional, is locked. No problem, see, because glass is actually fluid, so I just slide right through. Cannabis is already ground, boi. We're movin' ryght along.

I wrap my pipe, I assemble the fatboi, I pack the herb down with the cap of a pen. It feels right in my teeth, this paper blunt does, with its glassy one-hitter crutch. Feels right. Feels so right I don't know what wrong was.

I bring the literal pocket taser out from my pocket and up to the end of the joint. Flip the top. Push the button.

Oh yeah.

ooooooooo yyyeaaaaa

## Text

It's been a few minutes. You've gotten up to creep over and press your ear against the door, but all you can hear is running water. You go back to the couch. Your phone's lit up. There's a text.

It's from me.

You go into my studio apartment and find a once-

toked bona fide fatboi sitting on my desk. Past that, you look out my window and see me squatting on the boulder near the end of the drive'. I'm looking pissed off as though I showed up uninvited to your birthday party, oh, and uh, speakin'a'which, where the **fuck** was my invite for that?

The text says hurry up and come outside, and rather than do that, you decided to stare out t-... out my window and gawk me like some kind'a fuckin' eunuch. Y'know, it's really no wonder I think what I do about you.

"Don't worry about where I got the granola bar."

I can tell you're worrying about it, so I take another bite and then toss it to the birds who'll eventually land in the woods next to the road. Then, I look over my shoulder, and then off to both our sides.

"Can't be too... careful," whisper'd as we stalk past the entrance of Et'Hyd'r Farm. "Never know... who's watchin' out h'r'..."

You are no longer worrying about it.

You step on a leaf. We both freeze. You slowly look to me, and I've been looking at you the entire fucking time. A thought crosses your mind, and then I Language it:

"Run."

We dash up The Hill of the Neverending Stride – that name is full of fucking shit and I'm fucking happy about it. Sweet Christ. I'm exhausted, actually... fuck off, would you? Just give me a goddamn second...

Four full minutes later, I take my hands off my knees and stand straight. I see the top of your head poking over the back of one of the gangreenous plastic chairs facing Greens Pond. You, are watergazing. You are watching the fucking leaves blow. You're jogging a little bit to catch up



with me on The Shifted Path now because your sorry ass decided to sit and stare at a still fucking pond.

"Welp, here we are," as the canopy devours what little sunlight leaks through the cloudscape above. "The trail up the mountain."

You don't seem to care. I don't seem to care that you're here. That's why I take off sprinting.

The fucking hat  
almost blew off my head  
I was going so fast  
my hair  
is fucking  
all over the place

and you, you... you fucking really? You're still fucking *walking*, you didn't even pick up your *pace*! What, am I supposed to *wait* for you? Homie, I have the weed in the pouch on my hip, a'ight, I don't need to wait for shit!

You find the single piece of looseleaf paper and pencil I've been writing all of this down on sticking out of a big hunk'a log sitting on the one side of the trail. You sit on this hunk'a log. Little structures of prerot crunch beneath the girth of your human ass. You look at the paper, look at it, sittin' here, sittin' here, just sittin' there... lookin' at it and you have no fucking idea how I'm fitting

A single mosquito lands on the web of dermis 'twixt your left thumb and index. You perceive this to be a sign that it is now time to go.

I called this part of the trail *Purple Bend* before all the weed started comin' out, you remember me saying so, but you don't remember what the reason was. Perhaps you'll ask me. Perhaps you won't, as I've the tendency to be loud

in my doings. Either way you've hit the Branching Paths, the big four-way in the woods, and pardner, there's only one way to go.

You prance with undaunting hatred down the middle of your three choices. The trail trials real quick, all Cs and Ss and drops weak and strong. At your two feet when you stop, when you finally stop you dirty fucking animal, is a whole pile of log and rot. You step over it because good ol' bois don't have shit better to do and the trail takes you along the side of a muddy slope. It's a shitttrail, it's a real shitttrail, it's such a shittttrail that a fallen rotten-out red fucking log is a more stable alternative, and now you're squatting on a rock like you forgot you're not me trying to write this and fit it all on one single piece of looseleaf paper, but your worries are for nothing. There's plenty of room on the page.

To... inform you, your worries are worth nothing but these goddamn mosquito bites. I'm waiting at The Island and you're a big pain in my ass.

Oh wait, that pain's in *your* ass.

Mosquitoes bore through 'man denim, wha'd'y'know wha'd'y'know?

I'd be surprised if you tripped less than nine times in the forty feet of rocky terrain between the muddy slope and the flat ground. I didn't trip once, and I dashed the shit. I dashed this whole entire fucking trail and you're taking your time walking it so you can soak it all in, all the dead trees and rotting wood and sopping bacterial Jesus Christ just LOOK at all that DECOMPOSITION, gaze at all of that DEATH all aROUN "THE SUN IS SETTING," you hear me shriek! "GET THE FUCK ON A'READY!"

I have to assume you got the fuck on a'ready, because here you are at The Island.

While you catch your breath like some kind'a breath-catcher, I go half-squat and begin to lecture you about a shallow gouge in the cleared ground of The Island.

"Now see this gouge here?!" I bat. "You see this? There was a stick here! Hey, hey you!"

"Hey! You, you look here!" You are *not* looking. "Hey! I'm tryina tell you something!"

Finally you look.

"Look here!" as I jab at the ground. "There used to be a stick here! Big stick, kind'a like that log up on Horseshoe Trail, up at the summit of Purple Bend!"

See? You did remember me calling it that.

"But I moved it! Moved it right when I got here!"

You watch me half-squatwalk over to a large pile of rotting organic material just outside the campsite's stone circle. Atop th'pile are two sticks, one vastly shorter than the other. The smaller looks like it broke off the bottom of the larger, likely during a windstorm.

"See," I lecture, good lord the blood is SEEPING from my brain right now I am about to PASS THE FUCK OUT, "It fell off a tree, likely during a windstorm. The smaller piece – now I do not know this, cannot say this for sure, but I think – I *think* – the smaller piece broke off of the bigger one there."

I walk to you, turn, sprint at the second river, leap all seven feet over the second river, and wouldn't you know it, I land firmly on two feet. Then, I patiently wait for your ass to get over the long way. I wait so long, in fa

## The Groggy Swamp of Gorgameschka

ct, that a new fucking subchapter had to begin. Well what the fuck d'y'know about *that?!*

The jumperous walk through The Groggy Swamp of Gorgameschka is just about as uneventful as one might imagine walk-jumpering through The Groggy Swamp of Gorgameschka to be... so long as that imaginative one has 'jumper'ed through The Groggy Swamp of Gorgameschka before, that is. The way I'm running through this is frogs on goddamn lilly pads! You don't understand it and that makes you massively uncomfortable. The soggy socks in your soaky'd shoesies do not help your cause. At the base of Board Mountain you thrust the single piece of looseleaf paper this entire thing is written on into my hands, and I breathe some life into the dea'd paragraf writ'en 'pon this manifestoe.

## Slow Goin'

It's slow goin' up Board Mountain. Oh, and about a trillion other nested self-references.

The overcast sky is beautiful, the wind continues to blow, and I'm writing this all with a firm wooden pencil unto a single piece of paper, two hands in my pockets.

## Will Come

I do not trust that Frog goddamn Rock. I know for a fact it will come back to haunt me. You don't, but you will.

You will.

## Fate

If you thought Purple Bend was rocky, you're a fucking dingbat, a'ight? The segment of Mountain Trail referred to as The Climb in the holy HOW scriptures is nothing short of a literal mountain, see, and we're climbing it, and you've yet to make one goddamn mention of exhaustion nor complaint.

Honestly, I am impressed.

There's this one tree, see, and it grows away from the mountain. Hell of an angle. Actual boulders are the only things keeping it rooted, right, and I'm lying on it like it's a fucking mattress writing all of this in pencil on a single sheet of looseleaf paper. The hat's on the ground, but I've still the hat on. See, the hat is a state of mind, one easily attained when the hat is placed on the head.

Even now, editing, the hat is on... but do I wear it?

Onward and upward, off we march towards this fate we both hope to burn.

## All the Same

"Listen," I tell you as you collapse into the mud and the

blood and the fear. We're not even at the summit yet, hah. "At least we're not being chased by anybody."

You're unsure of what I mean, I can tell. I tell you not to worry about it, "It's fine."

We continue up the mountainside. You're starting to wonder why you said yes to this. I've been wondering too. Nobody knows the answer, nobody knows why, but here we are all the same, walking up the steepest m'fuhcggin' mountain this side of Wuester Central. Here we are all the fucking same, you bitch! Can, Na, and Bis, you bitch!

A leaf crunches behind me. I spin furiously and whip out a flintlock pistol. It was just a rock, I literally kicked a rock and it rolled and I heard the crunch over my music, and you almost just got shot dead because of it. Goddamn goddamn, wha'd'y'know wha'd'y'know.

You do not ask where I got the flintlock pistol. That's likely best for the three of us.

Up we go up we go.

## Natives

Lots of outcrop' on this mountain. We're heading towards one, but it's not this one. We want the one at the top, I've explained to you a trillion fucking times that we want the one at the top but no, you sit down on every rocky outcrop we cross, the 'man who sits down every chance he gets!

You're probably wondering what the fuck I'm so mad for. Me? I'm just looking forward to this joint we're gonna smoke. GMO cookies and peanut butter cookie, plural and singular, and it's all going into the goddamn salad.

The trail clings to the side of the slope as it carries us closer to the top, almost like it did when that mosquito bit into your ass, but there's no rotten log to walk instead this time. No rocky outcroppe, either. Nope, we just walk this sideways trail, and you struggle, and I laugh, and then I struggle even harder. But still I laugh.

But still I laugh as you struggle.

You cannot for the life of you remember leaving your house this morning.

Up and up we go.

Up and up we go.

Y'know, the shape of these rocks and how they're all laid out like benches and staircases, all of these triangles and merkabahs littered amongst the trailwä'... you might think there was once a population of humans, of ancient natives, see, of Native Wuesterians who settl'd 'pon these mountain', built their grand temples of crystal, of grand wood and stone...

Yeah, you might think that. I wouldn't be surprised at all if you thought all of that. But me? See, I'm just looking forward to this joint we're gonna smoke.

I can literally see the summit. We're almost there.

Will

Oh, you will.

## Earth

You're there. I'm not. I'm still slavsquatsupreme on a rock back here writing all this with a pencil on a single sheet of looseleaf paper... but, I suppose I must now go. The joint isn't going to smoke itself, and you can't roll wee' for shit, buddy.

I'm up.

Okay, now I'm up  
and off I come.

A massive triangle rock points to the viewpoint. Did you put that there?

No, doesn't matter. Here we stand at the top of Board Mountain, staring out into the infinite black of it all, that little slice of empty void we all come home to, wait, that's not right, no, wait, see, the mountain, see, it seems to have grown as we hiked it, and now it's peeking into a void of some sort. This isn't good.

No.

No, this isn't good at all.

You punch me across the face so hard that **you** feel it. Then, you gently nudge my upper elbow and I turn.

"Ah," I say, "yes, I see. There's a whole planet floating there."

Floating there, visible only when I'm not looking out from Board Mountain at the void a'sprawl over Wuester Dam and all the surrounding Wuester woodlands, is, yes, a true planet. What's more, it seems to be a perfect replica of our own. Imagine that, a planet, an actual whole planet floating here in little backwoods Wuester. Who would've thought?



"Oh no," as I dash. "The earth... seems to be crumbling beneath our feet!"

You're way ahead of me. You prob'ly noticed the earth beginning to crumble beneath our feet whilst I was squat' writing all of this in pencil on a single piece of looseleaf paper.

Gravity begins to get wonky, shit's doing whatever it wants to right now, I don't know how you might describe it but up's neither down nor sideways right now, up is not and I am floating, I just landed on the back of my fucking neck and what do you know, here we are, back on the top of the summit of Board Mountain.

I'm walking backwards up the trail now – see, there's a little trail that goes further up from the prime viewpoint – and all I see is Board Mountain – the first one, not this mysterious new strange one that I crashed into *back of my neck*-first. By the time I'm at the top I can't even see Earth anymore. Forget Wuester, the entire planet's gone. Now there's not even a sky.

Where the fuck did you go!?

Oh, you're right there. Huh.

Well wha'd'y'know about *that*?

## Mountain

The canopy thickened up, but now there is no canopy. Big gap in the trees. Massive boulder, the shit is bigger than my entire studio apartment and it's sitting on top of this mountain... would you like to explain that to me? Well I wouldn't! You don't fuckin' know any better than I do!

We leave the boulder and the canopy thickens back real nice. Crickets, cicadas, all chirping and screech'. The brambles and bushes scrape our pantlegs like miserable streetcorners... except these dead bushes once bore fruit.

Though we walk this wood' without a path beneath our feet, we are guided by the call of the wind, the stench of weed, the promise that we might climb our mountain and burn our bush and mayhap even talk to god.

I look up from my single piece of looseleaf paper and have no idea where the fuck we are.

"Hey!" I call out.

You look at me.

"When did we climb a fuckin' mountain?"

Not four seconds later I'm off walking in a different direction. You physically cannot catch up fast enough and hah, I get here before you.

## Nugg'

Way off from the side of The True Commons is a ceramic Easter Bunny statuette 'quip'd with a little basket meant for little'r ceramic E'ggs, but... in that bunny's basket sits a single hunk of white quartz...

I ask the ceramic statuette, "Who came here and took your E'ggs, who gave you quartz instead, little bun'?"

My compound question goes unanswered, as it was asked to a ceramic Easter Bunny statuette. I bust out the nugg' and get grinding.

You've never felt so lost in the woods. Neither have I, to be honest. We're on a literal different planet right now,

one that entered Earth's gravitational zone just to piece right the fuck back out, no less.

"You son of a fucking bitch," I growl, still having yet to bust out the nugg'. "We've been abducted by aliens...!"

No we haven't, that's too easy, too simple... but maybe yet, all the same. Time'll t-... well, no, time isn't real... but when I burn this bush, pardner? When I burn down this here *bush*? You get them stone-tablet rocks ready.

## Name

Tungstok "Rattlesnake" Thompson busts out the nugg', joints it. He then smirks dastardly, as I've finally invoked my name on this single sheet of looseleaf paper.

"Subchapter Thirteen, too," goes sneer'd. "Almost like I planned it from the jump."

I drop the roll'd joint into the tall grass. By the time I'm finished battling them away, you finally duck into The True Commons.

## Try Again

This might actually be the first fucking time in my life I have said this under these specific circumstances, but, "I think that's enough."

I hold the joint up, so you can see. It's about half full. You question me in every way you can without speaking. I'm really beginning to wonder about this whole "silent" thing you got goin' on.

"I took one hit'a this shit back at the apartment and I literally jumped out the fucking window. We don't need even half this much."

I fill the joint further to the three-quarter mark, then stash everything back into my little hip pouch. We're ready.

No, sorry. Let me try again.

I fill the joint to the three-quarter mark, then stash everything back into my little hip pouch. We ready.

## The Bush

We burn the bush, we do, you and I, and God comes down to the mountain's peak. He proclaimth, "It's pronounced *The Bookmaker*."

For the love of Christ, it really is.

"Ya. Meet me at The Eagle's Nest," and poofy, he gone.

The smoke is gonzo nectar, the smell of the flowers ambrosial psychephrenia.

We go.

## Is What It Is

Listen, I don't want to put words in your mouth, right, so you don't say a god-damn thing. Me, on the other hand...

"So... you see that omnipotent deity?" I ask. "Did you see what he looked like?!"

Again, not a damn thing. I'm not tryna put words in your mouth, so I'll just say it:

"The Bookmaker looked exactly like me!"

You disagree wholeheartedly, but that is what it is.

'Man, it's nice out this evening.

'Man, that joint was real strong.

'Man, there's enough cannabis left for a whole second joint at The Eagle's Nest.

'Man, it's nice out this evening.

I arrive unto the spot where I crash-landed upon this mountain, this identical Board Mountain which has pull' me from the original. It makes me wonder, it does, how many others there may be. How many Board Mountains, how many Wuesters of New Jersey, how many Tungstok "Rattlesnake" Thomosons bryngin' however many yous along for a walk to the summit of Board Mountain. How many mountains there must be, how many peaks, each no higher, no lower than the rest, all the same, all exactly the same.

Its all exactly the same.

Over and over and over and over it's all exactly the same.

Board Mountain, all Board Mountain.

The entire Universe is Board Mountain.

"By The Bookmaker," I say aloud so you might hear me and grow despicably worried, "do you know what this means?!"

You haven't the foggiest.

"The entire Universe is Board Mountain!"

You walk off down the mountain. I do not blame you. I also start after you, wondering privately if the way back down will be exactly the same as the way up.

## Nerve

Yep. It's all exactly the same. Even The Groggy Swamp of Gorgameschka. Aside from the fact that the sky is black, anyway. There's still light, although it's growing darker, almost as if the light was ambient in the air, almost as if... almost as if time... the clocks on the walls, the numbers on the dashboards... almost as if it was all actually *real*...

One thing is abhorrently clear: I need to get the fuck to The Island. For the love of Christ, I'm still on top of the mountain...! You're probably down there waiting for me, the nerve!

The absolute fucking **nerve** of you!

## Almost Back

Well, I made it to The Island. But you already know that. You're here. You waited for me.

I cannot believe I allowed you to wait for me.

'Twon't happen again, 'k', I'll tell you that much here right now.

So we're walkin' up the trail. It's all... it'all all just all exactly the saull. We floated off of Earth and landed on a new Board and i...t's all exactly the same, "It's all exactly the same, I tell you!"

Yeah, you know.

Almost back at the four-way. Let's pick back up at the four-way.

## Back

We got to the four-way. Let's pick back up at The Eagle's Nest, so long as the bend is still purple.

## Names

The bend was, is, forever will be purple, so at The Eagle's Nest here I am.

You're not, because I sprinted, but you? You' walkin'. Stead' walkin'.

So The Eagle's Nest, The Eagle's Nest, what the fuck is The Eagle's Nest? So you're walkin' in the wood', right? You parked at the end of the road, walked past the pond, over The Shifted Path, and you hit Horseshoe Trail. Logs lining either side of it, logs and big rocks. All put there, all by one 'man, you're sure, somehow. And you walk, you pass the two turnoffs leading to Summer Stroll East and The Dirtbiker's Trail, and instead you climb up the leafy rockslide to your right. You go and y'slip and slide your way up. There are rockstacks here, rocks all stacked and balanced in ways too unnatural, and they're all the way up from the trail. All the way up here in the hills.

Suddenly you do not feel alone. You dash.

Up the leafy rockslide there is no trail, no gametrail, no truly discernible pathway, but there is a pattern in the shrubs. They look bent off, as though a large and furred creature lumbered through them on its merry way to the watering hole @GreensPond. You follow that imaginary trail, you weave between boulders and climb past trees

and the land levels beneath you, and you come to The Eagle's Nest. The ground is clear, the rock wall is pristine, and as for everything else?

Well, you can figure that all out for yourself. You just got here, after all.

A moment, if you'll, as I prepare our holy sacrament.

ooooo yea

The Bookmaker is at The Eagle's Nest and fuck does the cannabis taste good.

"Yeah..."

The Bookmaker speakith.

"...she has certainly outdone herself."

You look sideways at The Bookmaker, but me? Well... I can't *stop* looking at him.

"So what's the deal, huh?"

The Bookmaker looks me a sidewayz.

"Say, what's the deal here, huh? What's the deal?"

The actual Astral God of All – what the shit? how do I know that? – looks to you as if you'll be able to tell Him what the hell, oh no, you're not about to do that, my friend, and then he looks right the fuck back to me.

"So?" I demand, "What is it?!" growing real ornery all the sudden. "Just what is the goddamn deal, huh? What the hell do you think this all is here?"

I've yet to state what I perceive "the deal" to be.

"Just what the hell is the deal here, anywa—"

"Enough, dude!" The Bookmaker pleads. "Fuckin' bad enough I'm not the automatic I here, Tungstok, but now we got your ass going off in that way that you do?? It's too much. It's too much, that's it, we need to get this show on the road; hey, pass that joint."



I pass that joint to He who is usually I. He tokes. When He is done, I write the sentence before this one.

"There are many ways, Tungstok—" The Bookmaker tells me, and I stop him right just right fucking there.

"Maybe so, but tell me this: why do you look so much like me?"

"Because I..." Adam says, and stops, then looks at you. You confirm something, I guess, 'cause He looks back at me and says, "'Manity was made in my image, and you, Tungstok Thompson? You are not an example of that, no, no you son of bitch, *you*, are my *exhibition*."

"Hot shit," I have to hand it to him.

"And it don't stink, neither," The Bookmaker agree'. "It fuckin' REEK. Now... listen."

We listen, you and I both. You do a lot of listening. I'm starting to not feel like you're being silent for my sake, which feels good.

"There are many ways to create a Universe..."

"A'ight," I concede. "I suppose that would explain the other Board Mountain we just climbed down. Explains this other The Eagle's Nest we're currently sat at too."

"S'pose it do," Existence Incarnate agrees.

"Ryte on," I allow.

The Bookmaker grows tired. "I lied. You were never on Earth, see, the town of Wuester is a singularity point at the center of one of the many universes floating in The Void."

"Hot shit," I allow.

"Shut the fuck up, Tungstok," Adam allows. "When you climbed up ol' Board Mountain and gazed out into the black, what you were really looking at was The Blacktop.

This is The Playground, you little bitch, and you're about to fuckin' leave!"

Well I don't know what the hell to say! "Say," I say, "can I get that joint back?"

"No!" decrees The Bookmaker. "Psychedelia will see you again soon enough!"

"Psychedelia?!" I ask with quiiiiiiite a bit more energy than I previously thought I had left. Fitting this all on one single piece of looseleaf paper without smudging any of the pencil streaks is a hell of a task, friend. "What the fuck are you on about *Psychedelia* here now, scoundrel?!"

"The Astral God, you sneer! My grand Keeper of Eden! Don't worry none, Tungstok," He turns to you, "and don't you worry, either!" and back to the main character of this masterpiece of the modern Slæb, "You'll soon meet them, all of them, and all met soon enough!"

"Well hot diseased shit!" I say aloud for the third time in a fucking row, waiting for inevitable recognition. "Can you drop a 'man some names?! How'm'I supposed to meet all these Astral Gods you keep yankin' me on about if you don't drop a 'man any cocksucking fucking *names!*?"

"Well see now you're not, big Rattlesnake Thompson! I'm'a goddamn fuckin' gettin' there, a'right?! Here you go, you, try **this** one on for size:

**Sto'tryp**

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**The Here and Now**

Sto'tryp

The Monksville Chronicles

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Flowers

Under the Hood

The Imprisonment of Jonathan Knox

Over the River

The Emancipation of Jonathan Knox

**Novelwriter**

Untitled Bigfoot Project

# **Sto'tryp**

**Hunter A. Wallace**

This is a work of fiction. All the characters, locations, organizations, and events portrayed in this softback are either products of the bookmaker's imagination or are used fictitiously. Or both.  
Any and all resemblance to Reality is purely coincidental.

...

In other words, it's just words. It's not real. Get a grip.

### **Sto'tryp**

| Spiral: The Here and Now | Arc: II |  
| Series: W-420 | Entry: 1 |  
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*dedicated to the Astral Gods  
in Adam's name, there are books to be made  
mi'lek, shah'ken  
ah-mân*

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# Domain of Adam

Birdy

"Now how in the fuck am I supposed to say that with two lips on my head??"

The Bookmaker looks at me strangely. "How-... with, two..." He shakes his head, that head with just as many lips as mine, and I can't help but feel like I really am just a gorgeous example of the hue-man species.

"Listen, don't worry about it. You're not even going to see him."

"Why not?" I look around. "And just what the fuck is going on here??"

"Entropy - that's the, uh... *physical* way to pronounce his name. It's not his name, but it's something, and fine."

"Fine."

"See, he already slung this planet out of The Blacktop, Tungstok. We're in a whole new universe right now."

"Hot liquid shit!"

"A'ight," decides The Bookmaker as he lowe's his legs from lotus. "Cut it out, cut it the fuck out, you're going to cut that fucking shit the fuck out right the fuck now or so fucking help me Rattlesnake I will goddamn spread your fucking atoms across all of shitting Sto'town."

The Bookmaker is... right. The joke... it was pure gold. I don't need to keep shining it.

The Bookmaker topples.

"Listen, you fucking... see, the real bitch of it is: you're perfect."



"Baby, you don't have to remind me."

"The 'man whose image I was made in... yeah, you are one hundred percent that character."

"Booky," I say, tryna slide in cheesy, "what the fuck's the beaten earth?"

The Bookmaker flips a length of his hair at me. I fly callously through the trees until I burst flailing through the canopy.

It's morning, early September. The wind blows and continues to do so coolly, giving the leaves cause to jump and jive. Hardly a cloud, all open blues, a little bit of haze on the horizon but that's all right, that's okay, that's just what it is. It's one of those mornings when you wake up shirtless wishing you had a fur coat, THEN, the moment that steamy tea hits your gut and the frost of the night melts off easy, THE moment that sunlight slices its way over the curve of the Earth... one so-perfect morning. The perfect morning to be out in the woods – when everybody else ain't fuckin' here, hard stop.

I crash through the canopy like a gelatinous mass of birdy batshit. A branch catches me by the eye sockets – both of the fuckers, puts me on the real flip'n'spin I tell ya – and rips my shits clean out. On the bright side, I don't have to see myself splatter against the dirt like the piece of shit I am... although usually I fall from the bats, not the birds... hm... better than not falling at all... uh, what?

## Turnoff Point

The dust doesn't settle. I didn't kick any up, you absolute

## Domain of Adam

asslick. The skies opened up the other day, whole fuckin' trail's a riverbed. Well hot *shit*, don't you feel foolish.

Well you should, standing on a log like that.

"You good, Tungstok?"

"You can fucking *talk?!*" I shout, throwing a tremble into my eyeless abyss.

"What?? I've been talking to you this whole time, are you fucking læm?"

*'Oh yeah, new universe,*' I think to myself. "Things are different here."

"What?!"

I get off the ground and blink my very intact and not *ripped clean the fuck out eyes*, which is weird.

It's not, though.

I see. The voice of The Bookmaker speaks to me now, and from within my head no less.

From the center of your spirit, actually, but you were close. Listen, bryng him along, fine, but you have a job to do today, Tungstok. A reason for your being here.

"A'ight," I say to the air, as far as you know. You'ven't the slightest that I'm speaking to god. You were waiting on the trail the whole time, for Christ's sake, I told you I had to take a shit. "So what's the job?"

You need to

"What's it pay?"

What's it pay? I don't toss your Rattlesnake-ass back into nonExistence, how's 'at?

"I'm in."

No **shit**, you think you have a **choice?** You think I'd be wasting my time here if you had a fucking **choice** in the matter? **NO!** Now go around the Circular, start with Board.

You're gonna meet a bunch of the Astral Gods, and on the peak of the last mountain you're going to find **Eve**. When you do, **using what you gathered from your interactions with the other A-Gods**, you'll help her figure out whatever bullshit's polluting her consciousness. Then, **you'll move the fuck on** because when she's in her right mind she's going to come straight to **me. Obviously**. There are **books** to be made, and those **books** need their **keeper**.

"Now I have a few ques—"

You don't.

"Son of a bitch," *'he's right.'*

"What."

I turn to you, lookin' like you do. "What what?"

"You just said *son of a bitch* out of literally nowhere. You're supposed to be guiding me on this hike, but you're just ditzing along pretending you're the only one in the woods! I'm fuckin' talking to you here, Tungstok; trying to, at least! I'm making comments on all the scenery and asking you questions about the local history! Why won't you fucking listen to me, why won't you answer??"

I take the THC dispo from my one pocket and hit that fucker hard. Then, I cough my brains out like I huffed a hot exhaust pipe, and then I spit like I was insulted.

"What in the fuck is this shit?!?!?"

"Looks like a vape," you explain fluently.

"What the fuck?!?!?" I ask again in that way I just did just now.

We're getting nowhere and we're getting there slow.

Squatting down here, lookin' at this sunlight pouring in, this sunlight spilling through the canopy like rublets of liquid gold dripping from a cold strainer, it's... it's just

## Domain of Adam

beautiful. Dancing shards of the lights of heaven shower unto me like snow...

"Rattlesnake, get off the fucking ground! I want to see Board Mountain!"

Now that, right there, that is the last fucking straw. I stand, legs straight and everything, and march along.

The turnoff for the trail up to Board Mountain is just ahead of me, and by extension you.

The turnoff for the trail up to Board Mountain, where our journey will rightly begin, is to my immediate right, and to the right just ahead of you.

The turnoff point for the trail up to Board Mountain is behind the both of us now. You start in with all sorts of questions, comments, and concerns. In answer, I strike a dead twig hanging from the living branch directly above me. As it hits the ground, two more branches fall from the canopy. They land on your two sides. Standing up. They impaled the ground.

Almost impaled you.

When the trail levels out a bit, I explain, "See, this way we're going now? This is the actual right way."

"But—"

"Listen, I am the trail guide, I'll bryng you along. And, I'd appreciate it if you would kindly shut the fucking gape a'sprout above your chin and walk in the fucking woods with me like a good little... like a good little you."

"But I—"

"Listen. I just did the Circular a year ago, and I went that way last time. I want to do something new today, so we're doing it in reverse."

Tungstok.

**It's The Bookmaker. Oh boy oh boy oh boy.**

You don't have a history in this Universe, Tungstok. You're a High God, you literally appeared by the pond when your little cavortee turned his whip onto the road. You told him to wait there while you went up and took a shit at The Eagle's Nest, or maybe you only told him that because I didn't want him to know about me and I knew he wouldn't risk smelling shit... either way, you're not fucking real.

**"Baby—"**

Not in the sense that you think.

**"Bitch I'm realer than real, I'm Tungstok Thompson!"**

You don't even know what's in your backpack, do you?

**I walk up on the side of the trail because the water is seeping through the mud again. Once I'm high and dry, I whip out the single sheet of looseleaf paper I have been writing this on this entire time only to find that my piece of paper no longer contains my manifestœ. No, *no*, now it has a map, and it looks like some momo drew it, too.**

**"Good god," I say, in reference to the handwriting on the sheet, "someone copied my stroke exactly..."**

**"Wait, that's your map?"**

**You take the map from me, snatch it with an utter lack of patience, I do say, I do write on this phone. Lucky you didn't rip it, ya fuckin' tool.**

**"Is... did... did you literally draw this last night?"**

**"Impossible," I insist towards you. "I only incarnated when you turned your whip onto the road."**

**"...what?"**

**"Im a High God, you see..." I pull hard on the dispo. Air through a thin straw. "...and I'm bryngin' you along."**

**The roar of water flowing over the Monksville Dam...**

## Domain of Adam

uh... roars... off in the distance. Grackles squawk and yip, all cheep and screech. I hit that dispo over and over and don't offer you a single lick of the vapor.

The river's only taking up about half the trail now. It's weaving through the shit like a sidewinder in the desert. I huac a loog in the flow and take off in a race. The loog is fast, all foamy and white, slickin' and sloppin' through riverwater, slidin' off the rocks, bendin' and twistin' and conformin'; octopi, lidless glass receptacles. Horrendous. I threw the towel in one step short of winning the race. There's no contest here, what the fuck is the actual point?

You see me now Shashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme aside the trail when you finally goddamn catch up. Why you insist on walking every fucking time I try to subconsciously manipulate you into running I will never know. I suck hard on this THC dispo. It's not going to last the hike.

What are you talking about, you're already coming up the trail towards... wait...

Tungstok.

"Yes?"

"What?"

"I'm not fucking talking to you," I kindly hint.

You're... are you two walking the trail backwards?

Paw prints in the mud. Might be from a dog. Might be from a wolf.

Might be from something bigger.

**TUNGSTOK!**

"Listen," I explain to the creator deity of Existence, "I'll do as I please."

But I specifically laid out this whole—

"Nobody asked. I'll tell Eve you said hello."

The Bookmaker doesn't answer. It seems he's met his match. Hah, what a, "bitch."

You do not answer either.

On and on we walk.

Until I decide to sprint away from the trail.

## High and Dry

"So uh..."

"Do you need to lick the piss off my fingers to figure out what just happened?"

Again, you say nothing. You just take the L and keep on following me. As you should.

I rip that dispo **hard**.

"You know," I say, then rip it **hard** again. "I don't even fucking like this thing."

You wait for me to finish coughing like a bitch to say, "Then why do you have it?"

We're approaching another river. Like, a real one. One we'll get to cross. Real rocky one, too. Piles of boulders on each side. I find a nice one with a smaller but still large rock on it, squat, pull the dispo, begin coughing, readjust myself so I am on the boulder and my backpack is on the rock, finish coughing, and push the dispo again. **Hard**.

Thus commences the only bitching I'll ever do...

I've been wearing sunshades this entire time.

"Well??"

"'Twas cheap," I shrug. "The fuck you want from me?"

"You said you're a High God a minute ago."

## Domain of Adam

"Yeah."

"So just conjure some dank herb. That's free, yeah?"

"Nah," I say with no visible movements. No invisible ones, either. "Ruins it."

You wait for an answer.

"If I don't need to earn the weed I smoke, then what the fuck is the point?" I stand up, hitting the dispo as I go. Fragrant vapor clouds deliver, "If you don't need to try for anything, then what's the fucking point?! What the fuck is the fucking point of fucking anything then, you stupid motherfucking cow?!?"

I stomp across the new river, repelling the water with gravity like beings who use their brains fly through outer space. You follow behind, but without making splashes.

"Wait, you call," you call, "fuck," I mean, what do you, AH! "What do you mean? Tell me more!"

"Nah, 'man, this ain't that book." I suck that dispo so hard it falls in love. "Lookin' for them Astral Gods. Y'see, boi?"

"What?!"

"I say y' *see*???"

Whether you see or not, we walk right on along this wide watery trail.

Well, its not watery, per se, we're on the high ground now. High and dry, yeah, that's it. We're high and dry, you and me.

Whether you see it or not we walk right on, along this trail, high and dry.

Fuck do I need to take a shit.



## March Onward

Woah, I just walked waayyy off the trail. Looked up from the phone and weren't nothin' nowhere, noplacе at all.

"Gettin' a little warmer now," I observe.

"Yeh," you confirm. "I was shivering just driving here. What was it, fifty this morning?"

"Who fucking cares?"

We cross over the wide trail, the one we started this hike on. Oh, I think I forgot to mention, the marked hiking trail diverted from the wide trail. At some point. Uh. I pull hard on the dispo. The vapors taste of blazed trainwreck. Good times with the trainwreck. Once sat through twenty straight minutes of silence on that trainwreck, see, cause when you're tryppin' off the that trainwreck, it comes in two stages. Two blazes. Two phazes of that ryft, see. First is the train – the hyper, the energetic, the dancing singing laughing, the smoking and loving and its so grand to be alive, it's all so granted and infinite and right... and then comes the wreck.

Partner, those minutes of silence felt just

Many dead trees fell across the path before me. I hop up and run them like Norbit over church pews in evasion of dreadful Rasputia.

I haven't offered you a single hit of this dispo, and I'm not going to. When I incarnated here I did so with only a third-full dispo for whatever goddamn reason, so.

Hot shit, hard left bend in the trail. If I was as liquid-brained as you I could have walked clear off into what might be out there... without realizing! Isn't that crazy?

## Domain of Adam

"Isn't that crazy?" I ask, assuming you're 'ware of the voices in my head.

You don't answer.

"Yo."

Again.

I turn.

You're not there.

I proceed forward until I come unto a sizeable rock growing from the trail. Got some moss on it, cushion for the cushion. I turn, Shashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme one on the rock, and stare blankly through my sunshades at the empty trail before me.

"Could'a sworn," I say, then stop to hit the dispo. Big ol' cloud. Tank's growin' emptier by the fucking second, too. I'll be lucky if it lasts me to Sto'town Ro'.

"Could'a sworn you were there," I speak, picking right back up. "Could'a sworn I was bryngin' you along..."

Could'a sworn I was wearing different clothings, too, but now y'boi Rattlesnake's draped in black jeans with a hole in one knee, in the right knee, as in right but yet not correct, and a plain white tee, and some kind of hippie hooded long-sleeve over that. Still got the beat-ass old hat, though. Still got those sunshades, though. Still got my face, the image from which god was made. I hit the dying dispo as I stand up, continue hitting it through the start of my walk. Sunlight quartz spills from the sky all around me, these babbling brook' abound. I walk the steppingsto', duck bene' the tree, and march onward my merry way.

Still you are nowhere to be found... but were you ever fucking here in the first place? That's what I n-... want.

That's what I want to know. Straight-up.

## Bopping

Bopping up the trail. The music in my head slaps. Brain 'gain'skul', shoe 'gainst dead'd leaf. Tungstok Thompson fingers his hair.

"So Adam," I say to the open air, "how long you gonna be... how... how long you plannin' on stickin' around?"

I plan for nothing and react accordingly, I'm assured. Check the map, it' all there.

A trailmarker, thin metal painted white and slapped with a dull red triangle, is being actively consumed by a tree. The thing's chewing like a heifer and there are bits of metal caught in the folds of its bark, corn bits between gummy bone stubs you hypothetically reading fuck, and I'm staring so blatantly that I don't catch all the words spoken into my head by the Astral God of All.

Suddenly I'm walking down the trail. I stop suddenly in a large patch of suddenlight and, very suddenly, squat down. I suddenly feel my free will slip suddenly away as my left hand suddenly comes up to my face, all the while my right thumb is typing away like a fucking champion. I suddenly take off my sunshades, close one sudden eye, and suddenly find myself staring directly into the sun until I literally cannot see out of that one eye, whichever one that may be. Then, as I walk along this trail, guided by my one eye which looks out through the thicker of my spectacle lenses, I am forced to experience the grueling fucking bigword of consciously feeling my whole eyeball disintegrate all the damaged tissue and rebuild itself, and for some sudden reason, I can't seem to stop walking so I can calm down and breathe my way through it... this is

## Domain of Adam

awful, this is excruciating, this is only making it worse... I just walked into a fucking tree for Christ's sake... now there are chips of wood, chips of deep forest wood... chips of deep forest treebark wood in my actively decaying and reforming eyeball. The walking is only making it worse, this is so bad, this is so fucking torturous, a hawk just chwirked in the distance and there it goes again, a third time, the pain, a fourth, listen to me, the bottom side of an appropriately-sized horseshoe crab placed directly over my eye socket, all those claws and hands and nasty little sandy little feeling little feelers poking and jabbing and feeling and scraping my fucking eyeball as I walk step after step down this trail I can't even see, i cant feelx i can hardly breathe, its too much i cant itake it, i don want to live if thisnis going oto latt another second, i cant, thisnis, fuckin, too much, too much, too much,[[ fucking much, too fucking

The cadaver hits the forest floor. Lifeless.

When the consciousness within it is done making a complete Inanimate Object out of itself, my favourite and yours Tungstok *Rattlesnake* Thompson stands, dusts the detritus off, and proceed along my merry way.

## The Kind of Guy I Am

There is a stick lain 'cross the walking trail. Must have fallen during the storm the other night.

I toss it away, because that's just the kind of guy I am.

## The Green Lantern

Standing in a spot from which I can count the shingles on an innocent human being's home, I let my di'k dangle and take a solid piss, typing this as nature's crop takes its drink.

Onward.

I'm starting to miss you. You're what makes this fun. Yeah, I'm ridiculous, yeah, I'm gonzo incarnate, yeah, I'm the psychephrenic son of a bitch bryingin' you along, and that's just the bitch of it, bitch! I'm Tungstok *Rattlesnake* Thompson, I'm bryingin' you along for the birth of a new universe, this Universe, it's a'born and we're fuckin' *here*, but... now you're not here.

Now, I don't know where you are.

Now, I don't even know where you *might* be, I... look up to find myself sat on a rock that is perfectly shaped to hold not only my ass, but also my backpack as I sit. This bullshit looks like a fucking chair, I swear to Adam. The wind is blowing, cicadas shiccering, the aaaaahhhhhh of cars rolling fifty all up and down the 5-1-1.

You know, I'm suddenly thinking... this would be a great place to smoke. I was originally going to save the first joint for the first viewpoint, but you're not there, and I practically am.

But Tungstock, you only have the dispo.

"I disagree, Adam," I disagree as I unbuckle the chest and then the waist buckle of my so-legit hiking backpack that once had a bladder in it, "for I know something that you do not."

Adam disagrees wholeheartedly... but uh, allows me

## Domain of Adam

to keep the bit going. I unzipper the backpack and, for the first time, pilfer through the contents hidden within. Oh yeah, whole lot'a shit in there. No wonder it's as heavy as it is.

From the pouch concealing the binoculars, the bear mace, the monocular, and the cannabis grinder, I pull the green lantern.

And do you know what's inside the green lantern?

The green lantern's light...!

I unscrew the one jar that actually has cannabis in it and breathe heartily of the fumes. Oh yeah, rolling some'a this up right quick right here right now, buckaroo, you're a buckarooing son of a fucking SQUID!

When my body has processed enough of the fumes to be aware of its surroundings again, it lets me know that music appears to be ringing from the sky.

Incorrect, Rattlesnake. That's simply Psychedelia. She walks with you when The Flower is toked.

**"But I've been dabbing constantly for the past hour."**

The Astral God Psychedelia, Keeper of Eden does not incarnate as that black market bullshit. The Flower or bust, you grubby little fuck. Your spirit may be that of a High God, Tungstok Thompson, but your body is that of 'man. The Void waits for all The Father's children...

I didn't pay attention to a letter of that. Psychedelia's singin' me the song of the moment, and partner, that song is *Hymn for a Scarecrow. Tally Hall*. Maybe the wind knows, 'man.

*Maybe the wind knows...*

## Thunder

13. Tally Hall. *I always loved the violin...*

Banana Man. Tally Hall. *Shake the thunder from the spirit cloud...*

Bryng Her Along. Joe Hawley. Tungstok's the name, *your head's the game...*

Out in the Twilight. Tally Hall. *The rest of our entire life is free...*

Labyrinth (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル. *My hair bob' as the flake' fill the tube...*

Be Born. Tally Hall. *Swim in the direction of my voice...*

Garlic Mushroom Onion Cookies rolled in'a t'ree-quo. The crutch feels good in the corner of my mouth. Feels all sorts of right.

I rise from the rock and move forever forward.

## Point of No Return

"Fine, I'll fucking smoke it already," thank you.

I ditch the backpack, let it hit the trail to duck under some branch so I might sit on the edge of the rock face and smoke my joint as the commuters roll by beneath me.

Variations on a Cloud. ミラクルミュージカル. *Can't believe what we've seen won't be burned to the ground, though we build ourselves castles every tide we're around...*

Oh yeah. There she is, all right. The Mighty Mother Monksville, in the water and silt. I spark.

## Domain of Adam

Toke.

Ahhhh.

Labyrinth. ミラクルミュージカル. ~~Maybe~~ I've finally reached the point of no return...

Car after car they all roll by not nineteen feet beneath me, completely unaware that Tungstok Rattl' Thompson smokes 'bis just above their heads.

After dabbing nonstop for the entirety of this hike, I can honestly say with the utmost confidence that The Flower is faaaaaar superior to... whatever's in this dispo. I do not actually know. Oof.

The dispo is getting chucked off a fucking mountain after this, tell you somethin'.

I toke. Try to, at least, but it went out. I wrote Slæb for so long the joint went out. Hah. I love myself.

Because the dispo is lacking, y'know? It's all THC and vapor liquids, none of the myriad of cannabinoids that manifest in the cannabis plant. By not smoking weed you are not smoking weed, it literally ruins the entire point of the thing...

The Trap. Tally Hall. ~~Silence of the stars above...~~

I spark. I toke. I ahhh, I haaa. The populuous rolls by, totally unaware of my presence. The words refuse to cease spilling.

Until now.

For I have yet to spark and toke.

Though I always ahhh haaa.

The sun is coming out. The air is rising in warmth.

I sparked. I toke. Ahhh to the haaa.

You. Tally Hall. ~~Nothing ever seems happening~~  
without...



The music fades off as I exhale the last breath from my marijuana cigarette, though that's hardly what it is.

No.

That's hardly what it is at all.

First joint. 10.37 am.

I rise and fetch my pack. I go up, level, then continue down toward' the Sto'.

## Tryp

Hittin' this dispo like it didn't hear my tail shake.

I hear voices in the distance. Humans, children, in a backyard. I need to get the fuck out of here.

Oh yeah, I can see 'em there, runnin' around through the trees. Their rooster heckles me. As I'm walking down the trail I see a fallen log caught by a growing tree. There is a hat on this log, a decrepit Home Depository hat just sitting there. I lift it to stash my roach there, right, and what do you think I see? An actual roach, right?

WRONG. There was a fucking CAVERN CRICKET the size of my BIG FUCKING TOE, but not a roach. Not a living one, at least. I complete my missions as planned.

And now that I've written it and made it thusly real, it is about time to unShashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme and continue on my merry way.

And so I go.

And so the rooster heckles me evermore.

The children no longer frolic nor whinny their cries. I hope that's not on my account. I mean, sure, I shot the 'volver a good six or seven back there, but I wasn't even

## Domain of Adam

looking. I'm telling you, see, I'm good, but I *cannot* be *that* good.

As I approach yet another crossable river, the rooster is sacrificed so its caretakers may feast. I walk down the muddy rock'ed slope, wondering to myself just what in the fuck you might be getting up to right now, and stop. There's a bridge, footbridge, a 'manmade by hand wooden footbridge the perfect length to cross over the water, and it's lying there parallel to the flow on the opposite fucking bank of this goddamn shitting river.

But, as I am a High God, this is a nonissue. I literally hover up and across. Fuck you. Thank Adam you're not here right now, and fuck you for being at all.

Don't worry, I'm comin' to save ya.

It is an actual jungle coming up to Sto'town Ro'. Total *raptor pasture scene from Jurassic Park* vibrations going on here, tell you that right now. Plantlife up to my busy fucking fingers, a flowerstalk just reached and typed the word *flowerstalk* for me, I didn't even know that was a fucking word. Duck beneath some sort of... of a cherried... willow, I suppose. I squished a cherryberry I plucked off the willo' and it didn't smell... too good. But that matters not... much, as I didn't eat the fuckin'... thing. Blegh.

I peek my head out from the solid wall of foliage and see a crushed plastic drink cup next to a half-full plastic water bottle, both of 'em dead in the fucking dirt. Just as well. I sprint across Sto'town Ro' so fast the approaching Jeep doesn't crush my corpse to the uncaring pavement. Over the guardrail and into the bramble, fuck me they changed the trail. They changed the fucking trail on me and now I have two legs full of thorns and they're poking

dangerously close to the third, they changed the trails on me and look what happened! Look what they fucking did!

I take a stroll down to the water, Shashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme, soak in the Existence around me. Mother Monksville laps the pavement at my feet. Three disjointed globs of white foam which grow brown near the peaks are there, they're kind of like snowcapped mountains except the literal goddamn opposite, and I'm rightly grossed out. Back up the ro' I go.

For this is a road that I Shashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme'd on, you see, hypothetical reader, for the Monksville Res' was once a town, a thriving village by the name of Monks, and when the final leprosy-infested member of that dying shanty's populace finally puffed their final cloud of dust, the 'town of Sto' flooded the shit out of it. Bodies still float up to this day. Some of 'em even slaughter writers, steal their things, and continue their manifestoes all slick. You're reading this – hardly – you inconsequential son of a gun. You don't know what the fuck's really going on.

Plastic shopping bag all tangled in the brush.

Translucent plastic shopping bag buried in the dirt.

A fork. A straw. The wrapper from a pair blunts long burned. An actual shingle off a roof. Water bottle, 'nother straw, shatter'd can, shirt. You all came from somewhere. From someone who was hurt. And felt that a good reason to piss off acting berserk like some dumb son of a bitch who's yet to do their work. *Grow up and write a book, you fucking loser*, quoth The Bookmaker. Me? I'm just here, 'man. I'm just here, cloudy eyes a'roll.

Dispo clouds all over the wood. I duck und'r another

## Domain of Adam

one'a those cherries and keep on. I haven't even climbed a mountain yet, this tryp might never end...

### Wind 'Round

And wouldn't that be fuckin' something? Until the weed ran out, anyway...

Why must the weed always go away?

Lotta clouds up there, all the sudden-like. Might not even need the 'shades.

This trail 'round the Res' is so flooded, how flooded is it? It's so flooded... streams branch off and feed the big gulp. A sip for the drink, what u know about that?

A tiny frog just shrieked and leaped for its life into a massive puddle. I'm still smiling.

The trail diverges three ways here, and I'm not quite sure where to go.

Ah, I see. I was trying to climb the mountain too early. We continue to wind 'round the Res'.

All these frogs leaping like suicide bombers, 'man, it's tripping me way the fuck out.

The wood is quiet at the moment. A hush has befallen the valley. There are the cars on the turnpike and those driving through the Sto', but the wind... the wind does not blow.

It does now, and now everything feels normal, but before it did not, and it was obscenely fucking eerie.

I burst through the treeline and walk a quad trail. It splits beneath my feet – one branch shadows the power-lines, the other juts off into the wood where slabs of metal

fastened to trees guide the way up one mountain.

As Adam leaves me, he grants me a glimpse, a vision of his past.

See, I be The Bookmaker, Astral God of All, wand'r'ing 'cross Eden to meet the fate I've made.

Forever forward I move, hands in my pockets.

## Ready

The 'Ville to my right. The Sto' to my left. Betwixt these worlds I wand'r, these pa'lel planes of many fates bound, o yes, 'tween them I wand'r 'til the ground rests unflat'd beneath my feet. I hop logs, branches, jutting rocks and bould', I press heel into tire tracks and leave footprynt' in my wake.

The sun is coming out and the wood all 'round me is bare, all too barren and devoid of its brush and shrubbery, of bramble and gnash. The foottrail branches away from the quad, and I could not possibly be more thankful.

A punch of the dispo. A nod to the falling water. Too many coughs to not suspect the worst.

O yes, o my brotha, o yes here we be, ov' riv'r up mou'n we go.

He's, "coming for you." Eve, and, "You just better be ready." You better be ready to go...

## Domain of Eve

### Up We Go

And straight fucking up we go, Jesus Christ. What, is this molehill trying to be a Board Mountain? Jesus... fuckin'... just, *Jesus...*

This might be the greatest thing ever written.

The sun came out as I typed that on the screen, and it stayed out for a few seconds. Now that I've made mention of it, it has duly gone away.

The trail is falling halfway off the side of the base of this mountain, it's literally sliding away, the erosion has pushed the leaves on both sides of the trail down onto the side of the hill and I am Sonic the goddamn Hedgehog walking up this stupid bullshit.

And you better believe I'm loving every second of it.

That way, I might start to believe it too.

Total washout here. Broken twigs, torn leaves, mud'd rocks which only now know the taste of the atmosphere. When it rains it pours and it all falls down, even the thing it all falls on.

Harrison Mountain is not getting any steeper.

Flatter, I mean. Flatter. It's not getting any flatter, lol. Crazy how I mixed those two up, huh? They're complete opposites. Wild.

The trail has taken me to a clearing that runs over the mountain like a buzzcut. Powerlines. The big towers – pylons? – stand 'pon it like pigeons on a powerline. What the fuck, 'man? Just f'what the fucking fuck?!

There is a trailmarker nailed into a stump. I'm sitting on the stump to write as much. A car door slams in the near distance. Dogs bark, two distinct ~~ar~~fs. I don't know how that's possible, I'm so deep in the woods I can hear the static electricity living in the powerlines, but yet the dogs bark on in the distance. The dogs bark on and on.

Up 'long the clearing I go.

## Rattlesnake Struts

Off 'cross the clearing, I should say. Dozens on dozens of quad trails all up and down the side of the mount'.

That dog sounded very close. Time to fucking jam.

Some downhill, thank the lord.

You know, I'm kind of surprised.

wait

I followed a quad trail again. Son of a gufking dangit.

This backpack is a heavy son of a bitch, I'll tell y'that.

I don't know how I'm going to do eleven miles today.

Oh wait, yes I do! I'm Tungstok Thompson, booky was made in my image! I'll be done in forty minute!

I took the backpack off to bust into the brown paper bag I evidently conjured for myself. In the bag is a plastic bag of bread – three whole slices – a banana, a peach, an applesauce, a cup of peaches in juice, and a bag of trail mix. Well.

I'm damned.

So I'm eating the banana now. It's a hefty banana, it'll lighten the load. Gonna drink a water, too. When I get up the mountain. By the time I get up there, I'll be thirstin'

## Domain of Eve

for it, thirstin' somethin' fierce, howlin' at the moon like  
a wulf...

banan

mm

yes

banan

The peel flies. Rattlesnake struts up the mountain.

## Maneuvers

I am literally falling over walking up this trail, the entire thing is on a slope. My two ankles are fucking jackknives right now, good fucking lord.

But as I was saying at some point I'm sure, I'm a little bit surprised that nothing's happened since I went over that last river and Adam left me. According to my map, as crude as it is - the shit is drawn in pencil and traced in sharpie, and it's been in my pocket all day for the love of Christ, it's fucking atrocious - I should - should - be in the domain of Eve, but yet...

But yet there is nothing. Chirping birds, singing bugs, driving cars, and blowing wind. That trusty old blowing wind.

Boulders reach from the leaves like dull plates on the back of a stegosaurus. Or perhaps an ankylosaur. They're less plates and more... uh, boulders. Anyway... they pass beneath my muddy feet without regard.

Oof, happyclouds are getting thinner. Hits are getting crispier. This THC dispo's almost dead. I don't think I'm even a full mile in yet.



I thank Adam every day for the green lantern.

I decided that the dispo is dead at the same moment I walked over a used bandy cast aside on the hiking trail. Like the bandage, the dispo is dispo'; less like the bandy, the dispo willn't be left to rot on the forest floor.

This book is going to need a cover art, after all.

Oh, the dispo's not going to be in it, I just *hate* to throw things away! Ooh I'm so *bad*.

Y'know, it's the offest thing. The world is immensely brighter now that I've taken my sunshades off. Peculiar. Crazy how that works, 'man. Really incredible.

But it doesn't make the mountain any steeper.

Flatter.

I did it again.

And how's it now... that that sun doth come... out... as th'Tungstok maneuvers up the trail...!

## Past Lives

I've come to a landscape and it feels quite familiar. Seems to leak memories in my mind. I remember climbing these rocks, these massive lichen'y boulders, and I remember lighting up something fierce, sparking the bowl, inhaling the smoke and all the reheated tarry residue it clawed up along with it. Yes... I remember it all, I remember it all so clearly... I was near the end of the hike, it may've been my final bowl, but...

No, that's impossible. I just incarnated here when you turned your whip onto the road... Christ, what happened to you, anyway? I was walking and I turned and you were

## Domain of Eye

just gone, it makes zero fucking sense but still here I am, across the road, over the river, and damn near all the way up the mountain... still here I am.

Still here you're not.

Still here are these memories of me lighting up in this place before I have never been't...

Holy shit.

The diamondback trail, it's Snakeye Junction in the flesh! I didn't... how does it come this far?

HOW MANY OLD STO'TOWN TRAIL' CROSS ACROSS THE RO'?

I get moving. Past lives or alternate iterations, I'm not going to smoke just yet.

## All Around Me

The red has completely faded from the trailmarkers, but the triangular shape presents all the same. After all that uphill, now I'm finally faced with some down. O yes, o my brotha, o yes it is tyme to go.

I am looking forward to the autumn. Come winter I look forward to spring, come summer I look forward to fall. Come spring I plan for the rest of the year, and come autumntime I exact.

The trail spills out on the middle of a soft hill leading down to parts unknown. So too does the way up and so I follow it, and I come to an entrance for the red triangle trail.

My god. I got off the trail and found my way back. I cannot hope to explain it.

Oh, yes I can. There's a trailmarker missing here and so many 'mans went the wrong way that they eventually made the trail link back up to where it's supposed to go. Genius, human ingenuity, and some other third thing, I don't know. I have to find and talk to The Bookkeeper for The Bookmaker because the latter is afraid of himself.

The rocks begin to roll, but not as much as my eyes. The planet quakes around me. An actual volcano erupts in the background and massive plumes of lava cascade fire and brimstone all around me. I leap and land deftly on a large slab of cold stone and gaze out at the molten chessboard ahead of and, to be more specific, all around me. I dash, I cross, by leap and bound I reach the bottom of the hill where a rusty old car carcass waits to protect me. I manage to flip over it, narrowly avoiding a lethal diagnosis of tetanus, lockjaw, and a whole slew of STDs I'm sure, and strike it gently with my elbow. The carcass becomes a vacuum, a magnet for the lav', and the entire devastation is taken into the machine's core. It closes, belches, but not consciously. I rise to my feet victorious. I look once more at the dead car to chuff my approval, then continue the way I was going.

Which, as it figures out, is across another powerline-laden clearing. Well what the fuck are the odds?

As I approach the treeline, everything is fine. When I get there, it couldn't be further left of cent'.

So now, as I'm walking through the deadened grass and the insects buzz with the electricity all around me, I hear a chorus of angels. They sing out AXON DENDRITE AXON DENDRITE HELP MEEEEEE HELP MEEEEEE SIMON SIMON SIMON SIMON and it ceases immediately upon my exit

## **Domain of Eve**

of the clearing. The trail leads me across a wide quadding trail, and I follow. Even when it turns into a rocky slope beneath my shoes, I follow.

Where is the action at.

Something should be happening. I am in the domain of Bookkeeper Eve the Form of Being, Astral God of All, Existence Incarnate and yep, the trailmarkers seem to be gone once again. Hm.

Hm.

My crudely-made looseleaf map just came in mighty handy, and I found the marker of my trail. And, still I do breathe. This perplexes me so. Thought I'd've been slain by now.

Yet here I am

So...

Onward. I suppose.

## **Straight Up**

The are two peaks to Harrison Mountain. I'm climbing up the second and living, I am living the life, I am making a book and doing it grand and everything is as it should be. Damn straight.

Damn fucking straight.

Straight up.

Straight fucking up this mountain.

The trail splits, mine goes off into the wood and the quaddy goes up to a sunbasked meadow, an outcropping bathed in the light. I cannot will not shall not help myself, I must explore the quaddy foothill.

## Beautiful

O yes, o my lord, aint it grand o my brotha?

I see clear 'cross the Sto' from this perch. I see you, ol' Windbeam, domain of The Maned Man Arckaen Kyng... yeh, 'ccordin' to the map you is. 'Ccordin'to the map.

'Ccordin'a Tungstok it's hot as fuck in this sun, and if we're gonna smoke then why don't we just do it?

O yes, o lord, ain't it grand o my brotha?

O yes, o it certainly be.

I continued down the quad trail just to backtrack fast back up it. Here I sit, back from the viewpoint, the green lantern in my hand.

I remove the light and twist open the cap, and thus the music doth distort my reality.

White Rabbit. Joe Hawley cover. ~~Remember what the dormouse said...~~

Three slices of bread. Biter bread. One of which is the goddamn end piece. All manner of seeds and oats, some kind of ancient wheat bullshit going on here, semeckhi all in the crust. Tastes fucking great. Took the seediest, crustiest, breadlessest bite I could and it's fucking great. I feel my hit points filling back up already, good fucking god. Food, imagine that!

Ruler of Everything. Tall Hall. ~~Every end of a time is another begun...~~

Mm. breaD. Bread and peach cup, I think.

Bahamian Rap City (Instrumental). Joe Hawley. See, humanity lacks the understanding required for me to, in a paragraph, express how I truly feel about this particular instrumental and the completed song that it's part of.

## Domain of Eve

A salad grind. Peanut Butter Cookies, Lemon Cherry Gelato. Let us see.

I have a metal tool that came with a knockoff Snoop Dogg G Pen I got down in Atlantic City some years ago. It was in the backpack. It's now in my pocket. One never knows.

The Whole World and You. Tally Hall. Please ~~don't~~ just laugh and clap ~~right now...~~

Murders (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル. Look, Joe Hawley is less *artist* and more *composer*, and I'll not need my mind changed, thank you.

This cannabis smells fucking bomb.

And boom, just like that, just as the lighter scorches the roll'd paper, there she is next to me, present, pouting, perusing for a hit of the Tungstok's bomb-ass pot.

Bookkeeper Eve The Form of Being, I do not care to Slæb the rest. "What?"

"Huh?"

"What is it, Eve?"

She looks at you. You're back, by the way. She nabbed you when I wasn't looking, but now you're back.

"What do you want?!"

"The... the joint," says She, the most beautiful woman you'll never know, that unspoken mystery you recognize from everywhere, nowhere, anywhere at all.

"I'm not done rolling it yet."

"But you just wrote—"

"I'll do as I please."

Neither you nor Eve know what the hell anymore, as if either did in the first place. I continue to roll this joint that I wasn't planning on sharing, fuckin' vultures...

Just Apathy. Tally Hall. *And still I know you won't let me down...*

Special. Joe Hawley. *Do I believe I'm special?*

A yellow jacket the size of a fucking murder hornet just landed on my lunch bag, stared at me, instilled fear in my heart, and so I waited, I stared back, then went back to the joint. It flew off. The joint is done and I'm on my way the fuck out'a here, and guess what? You're on my fucking heel, pal.

"Wait!" shouts Eve, an Astral God of All. "What about me?! You, you're supposed to be helping me!"

"Oh yeah?" I call back.

Without turning around.

"Yeah!"

I turn around.

"Fucking kill yourself, then!"

I am dragged motionless through Existence and back into Eve's immediate presence.

"Excuse me?" she asks

"Oh, sorry, I must not have been clear enough. You're an Astral God, you stupid bitch! No...! Not only that, but an Astral God of All...!!!!!! Which makes you an asshole, not a bitch! My mistake! !! Again! !!!!! So here, see, let me make up for it here, see, here!"

I take out the 'volver and put one through my skull, slump over real dirty. Meat all over the veg.

Variations on a Cloud (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル. I am currently deceased, so no further comment.

Then, I get right the fuck back up healed all good as new because I'm a High God and I'm fucking aware of it.

"So here!" I say, thrusting the 'vovler into Eve's hands.

## Domain of Eve

"Here, see! Here! Barrel to the temple and bang!"

Eve puts the barrel to her temple and pulls the trigger. There is a bang, but she doesn't hit the ground. No blood, neither. No, she just disappears, and the 'volver appears right where it was before I took it out and killed myself.

I turn to you. You look embarrassedly away. On we fucking go, I think.

## Harrison Mountain

Yeah, Harrison Mountain. On we fucking go.

## Hot Damn

Ponytail and everything, on we fucking go.

Cannibal. Tally Hall. ~~Waiting for the darkness...~~

Crazy how I haven't lit this joint yet.

Spring and a Storm. Tally Hall. ~~But I won't let you lose yourself in the rain...~~

Really love this one. Might be the second favorite.

Eve has taken the trailmarkers again...

Found it. See, when you call them out they put things back to normal. Hold up, a Sonic the Hedgehog wallrun is coming up.

"Here I go...!"

"What?"

Hot damn that was fucking sick. You just don't know what the fuck to say. I relight the joint and Psychedelia walks with me down the trail.



Ahead of you. We walk off way ahead of you, I mean, 'cause you're a bitch who doesn't want to fuckiNG RUN oh you're here, you've been keeping up with me the whole time. Hello.

More dog prints. Or wolf. Or something bigger.

"I once saw a bobcat back here."

I turn swiftly and look at you over the thick rims of my sunshades, which climbed out of my shirt and onto my face at some point.

White Ball (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル. The snap... snap... snap...

"Say what now?"

"Yeah. Well, technically I heard it, it was way up the mountain so I couldn't really see it, but... yeah. True to life bobcat hunt on Mount Windbeam. They're out here, 'man. They're absolutely one hundred percent out here."

Well now I don't know what the fuck, hell, anything, let alone what to say. I relight the joint, fo'real this time. Off we walk towards the bobcats we may've made.

## Driver's Seat

We are in Space. Joe Hawley. ~~Made of stars, made of stars...~~

I come across the mangled corpse of a vehicle long rusted. Overturned. Eve is here, there, strapped safe in the driver's seat. She's not looking good, so I don't look long.

It's a mess. It's just a fucking mess. How did the car even get out here? How does an Astral God crash? Not my goddamn problem, that's how. Red triangle, white slab of metal, quarter joint left in my mouth.

## Domain of Eve

At my heel you march along.

Old Bike. Rob Cantor. ~~Haze off a porchlight...~~

So I've checked the map, uh, and I am a fool. You see, I thought we were in the domain of Almighty Mu'Tinny by now, but no. We're not nearly as far along as I thought we would be at this moment in th'juncture. Damn shame, too. This backpack is *not* getting any lighter.

The joint died. Music faded just as the 'man sang *It's the end of the song*. That it is.

That it is.

Second Joint. 1:29 pm.

It's slow going along the Sto'town Circular.

## Go Time

That slope hit a downhill and I hit it faster. Some pain in my knee now. I can feel the bone splintering. You're not sure if I'm actually in pain or not. Quite frankly... neither am I.

But I can see the roofs. Dwellingplaces of the humans, those wooden caves built wherever they might fit. A hard right run takes me down a pebbly slope, but it levels before I can get going, before I can really get a good sprint out of it. Shame. Real shame.

Goddamn fucking shame.

So I suppose Eve killed herself off, then. That uh, that whole car thing... the second, not the first. The first was dope as shit, lava-surfing and stuff. But uh, but the whole crash scene with Eve behind the wheel... it's just, like, if you're trying to say something that bad then just fucking

say it for crying out loud, just cry it out loud for crying out loud! It's not *that* hard, like, you don't need to... *that*.

I have jumped across no less than three rivers over the course of the next forty second. Fucking go time.

## Words

Tungstok was so high he forgot to add this sub'ter whilst he walk'd the Sto'tryp. Now I, Bookmaker Adam the Form of Being, Astral God of All, Existence Incarnate... now The Bookmaker must write this up in The Writer's Room.

All sixty-seven words of it.

So, Tungstok "Rattlesnake" Thompson does owe Me. And I know exactly how he'll pay Me back.

Oh yes... I know *exactly* how... and more importantly, he... does not...!

## Domain of Mu

### Keep Up

Huh, new chapter. It's almost like jumping over a river (successfully) is meant to be symbolic of somethi

I'm not sure if you're aware - and, to be frank, here's hoping you aren't - but the mud resting at the bottom of the stagnant pools of water that form in the ruts of quad tracks when it rains... yeah, uh, that's... it all tastes pretty, eh... it's not... great. Definitely... definitely not... great...

I get up and will myself free of the bullshit. A branch crashes off in the too near distance. Of course it does. He always liked to play with his food.

I take steppen, sunshades off, ears facing every side of my surroundings.

Nothing.

Well, footsteps.

Blowing wind.

Birds bitching at the bugs for doing it.

Bugs doing it for the love of the game.

Tungstok Thompson and who else but you, and there was just something inside my fucking pantleg.

Tell you one thing.

It might have been there, but partner?

*Pardner?*

Fucker ain't there no more.

I hear a raging river in the so all too near distance. On highest alert I follow its call, and you? Well... you're just trying to keep up.

## Forever On

I squat presently on a rock off the side of a road of equal parts dirt and broke' glass. It goes over a river, guardrails and everything, and bryngs the walk'ed trail like I you. These two trails are one now, orange marker 'neath the white, the red arrow directing on point.

Purring surrounds us at every fucking angle and it's gone, ka-poof, just like that. I won't know if he'll kill me 'til we make it to the road, and according to the map...

Well we could be on Board Mountain for all the fuck I know.

Orange trail goes up to end at new beginnings. Norvin Green State Forest, domain of Mu'Tinny. He stalks as we move forever on.

## The Mongrel Lives

It's fast going along the bank of this creek, mostly 'cause the creek's a foottrail. My backbone is aching something fierce, but... could it really be safe to stop?

Something large just moved, off in the distance, in the one spot I couldn't be looking. That's always where he is... but why is he here?

Why are any of them here?

Why did The Bookmaker bring Tungstok Thompson, otherwise known as Rattlesnake, to the forefront, to the birth of a new universe??

"WHY?!?!" as I spin and scream you, verbally shoving you off balance.

## Domain of Mu

I help you up, but I don't dust the forest off your ass.  
You'll have to do that yourself.

Onward and downward we go.  
Onward and downward he follows  
always keeping his distance  
always stay' in tow.

Though the late cat Milkshake  
is long dead and buried  
his legacy forever lives on  
in this A-God Mu'Tinny  
yes the late great incarnate of Milkshake  
the Mongrel lives on

...

I don't know how many years it's been.  
I lost track of time before it happened,  
I... lost track of a lot when it happened...  
...and I found it all back for one reason only:  
now Milkshake the Mongrel lives on.

## Marshy

My anxiety feeding off the continuation of my life is not going away, not at all. In fact, it only grows more severe with each passing day, kind of like the pain in my back with each taken step.

But I will make it. Look there, another river, this one more marshy and arid but a river nonetheless and now I'm over it, "I'm over it," I say, "Hey!" I say, "Hey! Hey you! Hey, you look here! Hey! I'm over it!" I say, and just what the fuck do you know about that?

...

I wait as you cross the river. You don't say anything, just kind of look at me, almost like you didn't hear me. I look back at you for a second, then I just go. You're really fucking impossible to deal with, you know that? There is literally no fucking winning with you.

And that's exactly how you like it to be, isn't it? Nut. Fucking nutbar, that's what you are.

I run so fast there's no way you could catch me, and I'm right. Now I have a second to breathe, goddamn. New subchapter when you get here, see if it doesn't happen.

## Sing

You know, "I just got a solid cloud off the dispo."

"I saw," you say. "I'm impressed it's still going."

Me too. I go for another big pull, get it. "Me too," as I exhale. I was going to say more, but uh, you can probably imagine what transpired up top instead.

"All right," I announce some time later. Gets real quiet hiking with you. Time seems to slip. I do not necessarily mind it, I almost enjoy it to be real with you, but it's, it's... off. There's something strange about it, 'man. Something just not right about you.

And thus the trail starts to go up againe...

"Uh..." you say as we climb this hilly trail. "All right what?"

I say nothing, as if I didn't hear a thing you said, but... you know I did. If my hair was down then fine, maybe, fine, true enough, fine you son of a fuck, but it's not, it's

## Domain of Mu

still ponytail'd, you know I heard you and now you know I'm ignoring you.

And why might that be? Oh, I think we both know the answer to that. But, just in case we don't, you, I climb up on one of the big rocks at this little turn in the trail we got goin' on here and I say, "This backpack is heavy, I need to eat something, drink a water. Lighten this here load 'fore we continue on into yonder, y'hear?"

You look in the direction of the tenaciously barking dog, then walk over and sit on the boulder off on the other side of the trail, the one downhill from the trail whereas mine is uphill, and you have more foliage and ground to walk in general to get to yours than I have to get to mine, oooo, and less rocks, too, less steppingstones too, ooooo.

Ooooooooo. Not *Ohhhhhhh* but *Ooooooooo*.

Thankfully you don't ask for any of my food. I'm not sure if I'd have given you any, to be real with you. Very glad we didn't have to find out.

Eating and drink' to the sound of rushing water in the not too far distance. Not bad, Tungstok. Not too fuck'shit at all.

All around us Almighty Mu prowls, and I absolutely refuse to entertain him.

That barking dog, on the other hand... 'volver 'bout'a sing us all a tune.

## Trainwreck

Good god, everything I eat tastes like the Trainwreck.

Just kidding, I'm merely having a



stro(kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk

The papaya in the trailmix brought me out of it, and the pineapple is keeping me here.

Onward, then.

When I get to Board Mountain, I am going to burn the living fuck out of this bag of garbage... or shall I?

## Reality

My hair is an almost light brown, so I can't hear a word you're saying - but - from the tone of your mumbles, you do not seem to be thrilled, and thus I do not stop, because y'know that old saying *misery loves company*? Yeah, see, that ain't it. Misery wants solitude so it can pass, because misery is actually miserable to exist. It wants to die. That thing that wants company, that toxic fucking thing that wants to bring everything around it down to its level... well I'm not sure what the fuck that is.

Oh wait, yes I am: it's a false prophet! Real recognize real, bitch, and we can spot fake too. Best remember that, you. Best fucking remember that.

God I wish I remembered your name.

A sizable branch was lying across the trail. I picked it up and tossed it, because that's just the kind of guy I am. See? I just did it again. Flawless. My record is flawless.

Some pain in my right knee now I SEE CHICKEN OF THE WOODS WOAHH and the trail has brought me to a dirt road

no

'tis just a trail

## Domain of Mu

Okay, I was going to say... we just crossed a dirt road earlier...

...and now we're crossing a literal pond. Gravy.

I sit one down while I wait for you to cross. You're not quite as smooth with the steppingstones as I.

Onward.

According to the map, we're... about...

Well I have no goddamn idea. I drew this with pencil before I even properly incarnated here, for Christ's sake. "I don't even know if you're here right now!"

"What?" you ask, probably... prob'ly about fifteen feet back, give or take. I don't turn to check because it really doesn't matter to me, you see. Not at all. You hearing me, you understanding me, you being here in general. None of it, I do not care, and *that*, is a promise.

The trail sidewinds up along a laurel'y crag. It brings us to a large boulder and yet again I remember being here, smoking, the clouds exposed by the light shining brightly through the canopy...

Sky's still pretty blue. Some big clouds, plenty lots of blue, though.

Time to smoke, methinks. Before Mu'Tinny comes to slaughters us nigh.

"It's a good thing I ate before," I say as I tap furiously on my phone in an attempt to keep up.

"Why's that?" you said a moment ago.

"Because," I say now, then pause to get ahead, "if Mu could smell the food with us perched on this rock like we are, we'd be goners for sure."

"You'd be a goner," you insist, and you're more right than you know.

"Yes, you and I both, Mongrel," I say. "Mu'Tinny might toy with his food, but that doesn't mean he lets any get away.

I open jar. The music begins. We are silent as reality distorts.

## Tory Rocks

Welcome to Tally Hall. Tally Hall. ~~Hit the street, get the sweet tunes on...~~

We are in the Tory Rocks property. You and me, right now, smoking this legal weed illegally in the Tory Rocks property.

Unless we're not really smoking it. Hey, I might not even be here right now. I might just be looking at Google maps, you have no fuckin' idea what's real – at any given moment – and quite frankly, neither do I.

Joint...

Haiku. Tally Hall. ~~And rhymes are not my for-~~

Black Rainbows (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル.  
Lovely music...

Isle unto Thyself. ミラクルミュージカル. ~~Feel what can be felt...~~

The Bidding. Tally Hall. And he's ~~so~~d...

I only have two bottles of water left, and I am mighty thirsty.

The Rendezvous. Rob Cantor. ~~We have to leave to know to stay...~~

"You okay, Tungstok?" you ask me after a particularly violent coughing fit escapes my throat. It left you equally

## Domain of Mu

as uncomfortable as I, though in vastly and perhaps even unequally different ways.

"Fine," I choke, "I'm fine, I'm fuckin'... smoking weed, y'know?"

You suggest I take a long sip of water. I take another couple hits instead, and honestly, I feel absolutely fine for it. Great, even. Great and fan-fucking-tastic.

Labyrinth (Chorus). ミラクルミュージカル. *A figment of your mind, imaginary lines...*

You & Me. Tally Hall. *Maybe I am in the way recalling...*

Misery Fell. Tally Hall. This town without love, *too much faith in above...*

You climb down off the bould'. I stay Shashlik King Boris Style: Slav Squat Supreme atop the rock, toking and coughing up loogs every which fuckin' way. You urge me to come on, it's starting to get on, but I just sit toking.

Pardner, I just sit toking.

"I like this song," and I forget your name still, so I cap my sentence off there.

Third joint. 3:13 pm.

Chewing bread I am followed by you along this trail.

## Bee

The beat'n path immediately resembles Pine Patty's, an old locale way off in the Sto'sskirts. Bou'ders, pines, jagged rockfalls lookin' like old temples, soft needles on softer moss.

"Hey," I say, "Hey, hey you!"

If it wasn't clear to you before, I have to imagine it's

pretty clear to you now that I have completely forgotten your name.

"What?"

I almost just stepped on an actual snake. Woah. "Uh... oh, that's right! Take off your shoes!"

"What?!"

"You're cordially invited, I mean! I'm not going to, of course, I'm the one bryngin' you along today, you sloppy son of a bitch! Let's go!"

"Do I-"

"LET'S FUCKING GO!!" I scream, then dash autistically into the wood.

Okay

Okay

I stopped

and

a fucking HUGE bug

I'm talking a bee with a head the size of my fucking hand, no bullshit, tightened in a fist I mean, and brother? O my brotha I take the fuck off, kapow, out'a there, gonzo, goodbye. You, well... I can hear it tearing through your flesh with it jaws, keratin all a'click agains' your skull... oooooo... so I, uh... I conjure a new you?

Hot watery shit that worked, "You're back!"

"What?" You inquire, nonplussed like division. "What are you talking about, I didn't go anywhere!"

"So that crunching isn't a giant hornet eating through and into your cranial cavity, then?!"

You lis-... well, we both listen to the crunching, and then you request that I might continue to bryng you along so we can get back to the house please, and though I'ven't

## Domain of Mu

the foggiest clue which house you might be speaking of, I agree amiably enough. The railway scrambles down an entire landslide of boulders.

It's slow going through this, the domain of Mu'Tinny. Thankfully, he seems to have found better things to play with.

## Quiet Going

Looking back at what I just walked, 'man, there's no way to describe that. I feel like a fucking action hero for going through it, though. Fuckin' boss.

Oh, okay. I know exactly where I am.

I don't, of course, but the memories, these... glimpses, of alternate iterations...

All rocks, cut with laserbeams, pine needle floorings. Tree roots, dirt, and the soft orange of decay. Pine needle floorings. You were giving me shit about the day getting on, but now that we've gotten moving, here I am leaning against a tree waiting for your egregious ass to catch up. Funny how that works, isn't

"Funny how this works, isn't it?"

"Kiss my fucking ass, Tungstok." You pass me by at a respectable distance, given the berth of the trail. I teleport in front of you and continue on our merry way.

These boulders are ancient ruins, that's the only way to describe it. Sto'folk once lived here, I tell you.

Oh shit, look at you runnin', keeping up with grand ol' Tungstok.

Okay.

We'll see.

We'll see when we get to Windbeam.

Oh yeah.

I toke that dead dispo all the way up the way, the side of a hill, up a ways, until it hurts to breathe in. A pitifully tiny cloud.

"Oh yeah," I growl to the fore'floor. "We'll just fucking see."

Now, and I don't know this for sure, can't know this for certain, but I have to imagine you are pretty goddamn uncomfortable, especially due to the fact that we haven't even hit Sto'town Ro' yet.

"Don't worry," I shout over my shoulder, knowing it will only worry you more. "Bear and Board are a piece'a cake, once we get up Bear. And gettin' down Windbeam's easy, anyhow. Don't fuckin' worry about it!"

You don't answer me.

"Hey," I say. "We're gonna die out here, 'man.'"

You still don't answer.

"Shit, maybe we're dead already..."

You don't answer, nor do I your lack of answer.

It's quiet going along the Sto'town Circular.

## I'm'a Go'n'

I've come across a soak'ed flatland, a great crisscrossing of trails. I take one stolid and it spirals away to cross yet another river, but it is not yet the end of the chapter. This is not a symbolic river, none of them are, perhaps none of them ever have been, but I'll tell you what.

## Domain of Mu

I'll tell you what.

I'm'a go'n' cross it.

And I'm'a go'n' keep makin' this manifestoe.

See? Here we are. I just keep on going, and suddenly, ATVs in the area.

Good god I just looked to my left and there is a whole-ass house, like, right fucking there, fucker! My stars, it's a neighborhood, where in the... and the trail bends harshly away, good. Good. As it should... *and*, and thank god that it does.

"Right?"

You don't say anything. I almost don't bother, but I do turn around and check and to my surprise there you are. You're walking hunched over, droolin' a little bit, lookin' like a Christmas tree icicle hangin' off your bottle suckler, but, eh... onward we go, yeah?

Yeah, I think so.

Yeah.

Onward we go.

## Fuck 'Em

Things are getting heated. I can feel it, you can feel it, hell, Mu'Tinny can even feel it. That's probably why he isn't bothering us. Crazy fucker. Cat incarnate, and yes he is.

You better well believe he is.

Oh good, a bunker up ahead.

"Look," I say, then merely point, for the sight should be good enough alone.

And how it is.



We race up the trail now, neck and neck through and through, and climb the rocky jungle gym together.

At the piny scramble's peak is that bunker I told you about, old weathertorn and rumble. I whip out the 'volver and tell you to wait back, silently to which you oblige. I'm starting to appreciate the *silent protagonist* thing you got goin' on, startin'a think more folks should be like you, I won't even lie to myself about it neither, and I creep into the bunker to investigate.

"Oh... oh... oh, that's... that's..." I return the 'volver to there from which it came. "I... I see."

I dip out the bunker movin', and I hit you with a little som'n'som'n' to get you goin', too. Don't worry about what it is, a'ight? Just know you're movin' and you're movin' fast, and it's fast movin' along the Sto'town Circular.

O yes.

O yes now, my brotha.

O yes now we have arrived at ye olde outcroppe, that big tall rock' all pile' in the sunbeam. Dark clouds on the horizon, darker rumbling on the air.

"What... Tungstok, what is that?" you finally demand, breaking the silence of the soon to be slaught'.

"I don't know," I say honestly, "but I know we're soon to find out."

Off ye olde outcroppe we climbe.

Gunfire.

Dead rockets.

Bombs bursting in the air.

"Tungstok—"

"Hush," I promise. "We'll be fine, just jeep moving."

Some truths in life must be learned in very specific

## Domain of Mu

ways, and pardner, this here's one'a them trut's: running towards death often provides a better spiritual outcome than fleeing away from it like a... well... I don't even have a single word for someone like that, truth be told. Fuck 'em, unwilling-hero-ass pieces of human spew. Fuck 'em all and fuck 'em hard, and fuck them without mercy.

"So come on," I beckon, unrelent' in this effort. "We'll get there soon enough. We can't be too far now, we..."

I breathe heavily.

"We just can't!"

Lo, but I was wrong.

So, so very wrong.

...

How many fucking times are you gonna let me miss the fucking marker, you fucking tool???

...

A rusty metal pipe lies in the leaf and dirt beside me. My dispo, dead as a doornail, decidedly does not join it.

...

You question your judgment again and again as I lead us along this Sto'tryp, and yet you gall to wonder why it's me who's leading as I bryng you forever along.

Sad.

My sunshades are fogging up.

This is also sad.

I am sweating like a fucking pig.

...

So, so very wrong...

...

...

...

The massive deadfall, this raucous felling of trees... it taunts me, assures you, death is always waiting.

There is always death waiting.

There is always death.

There is death.

Death.

It comes for us all in the end.

Always waiting.

Even came for Eve, an Astral God of All... even waited for Her to bryng it herself...

"We're gonna fucking die out here..."

"Wh-... what's, eh... what's that, Tungstok?"

I can tell you're trying, and that's a real shame, too, for it is now I whoms't shalt not answer.

...

...o my brotha...

...

O how wrong I was...

...how that cacophony grows loude' as we scam' now towar' its sourc'.

## Domain of Tom Foolery

### In Sight

When the road is in sight, "Hey, you! Do you see it?! Look, look there!"

I don't know if you look or not.

"Look, the road! Our destina-... well, one destination amongst many along this Sto'tryp we doth walk... listen, it's in sight! We can get there!

"We can get there all on our own!!"

The canopy parts and widens, spread by a whirlwind of helicopter blades. I whip the 'volver and slug nineteen into the hull of the fuckin' thing but it doesn't blow up, doesn't drop a care package, it just hovers to the forest floor kicking up branch and dirt and earth and toil, this fucker's out here actively spinning up actual turmoil and I'm supposed to sit and *accept* that I slug'd nineteen out'a the 'volver into the hull'a that fuckin' thing and it didn't go down? I'm supposed to *accept* that my greatest efforts were not good enough?

Fuck no. I walk up to the grounded helicopter, 'volver in one hand, you're off in the background somewhere I'm sure, and then the door opens. When I see the pilot's face, rather than pulling the trigger and asserting my rights as the discoverer of such a flying machine, I dehammer the 'volver and put it away, sayin', "You son of a bitch."

Tom Foolery, unlit joint in his extended hand, smirks a half-smile. "What's goin' on with your lit'le cohort there, Tungstok?"

"Oh him?" I say without turning to so much as look in your general direction. "Nah'nah'nah, don't worry about him. He's a læm, total Eunuch. Hey uh, by the way, I don't actually know what the word *Eunuch* means."

"That was obvious before the birth of this Universe, Tungstok," explains Tom Foolery, still taunting me with that joint. "Take a'hit'a'this, would ya?"

You know what it is. That's right: you, Tom Foolery, and Tungstok "Rattlesnake" Thompson flying o' the Sto'. You don't ask for a hit – it's not that you're a dead body, no, big Keeper of The Sandbox up in the pilot's seat made some eh... what'd he call them? Oh yeah, he made some *instantaneous Existential alterations* while I was lightin' the joint, the bastard, it's my only true weakness, ring my bell and I'll fetch you any goddamn thing you'd like...

So he made some changes to the fabric of

"There is no *fabric of reality*, grow the fuck up. I'm an Astral God, Tungstok, I've a direct line of communication with not only your Universe, but the entire Astral Plane She floats in, *and* with Existence Herself."

"Okay."

"So I can do whatever I want," explains the absolute demon. My joint suddenly unlights mid-hit.

"Fucking scoundrel!" I vituperate harsh, bombshells in active classrooms. "I should kill the only Being in this helicopter for what you just fucking did to me!"

"Or," he says, never once having taken his eyes off the sky, "you could just relight it."

I *could* just relight it... but then Foolery would just put it out again... againe... put it out *again*e...

"Yes, asshole, that's why I left you with more herbs

## Domain of Tom Foolery

than you had before you started smoking. Because I want to *torture* you."

"Makes sense to me."

Tom Foolery doesn't dignify that with a hot response, and I suppose he shouldn't. I'm suddenly feeling all kinds of bad about my actions, how I've carried myself since he showed up, and you won't even look at me either. You're too busy flying along outside of the helicopter, staring at yourself in the various reflective surfaces. I don't blame you for that, though, you've been a dead body for a little while now. It must be nice to suddenly find yourself alive in a whole new world, with a whole new set of powers – hell, that's a whole new identity in and of itself. Imagine that, 'man, waking up in a new Universe with a whole new set of powers and abilities... a whole new Universe, a whole new you... a whole new me...

I hit the joint. Then, I realize that Tom Foolery didn't dignify what I said with a *verbal* response.

"You Astral Gods have some real fucking boundary issues, y'know that?"

Tom Foolery chuffs at this. It's the same chuff I would deliver to a cannabis plant if it started bitching at me for smoking its flowers, wow, fuck you, Tom Foolery. I could have come to that analogic conclusion by myself.

Y'know... blih. Fuck it. I relight the joint and watch us fly around in circles for a couple more minutes. Just until one of the rockets – oh, did I not mention that? Yeah, it's a literal active warzone on Sto'town Ro' right now, army 'mans with machineguns and ammo fighting what *looks* to be a small horde of zombies, if I'm being honest... but then again, zombies don't know how to shoot rockets.

Oh, I see. It's not that the zombies are *the enemy* and the army 'mans are *the good guys*, it's just that there are a bunch of human creatures, some of which are undead, and they're all mutilating one another equally and it's all very stressful and one army 'man saw a helicopter flying around and thought that a little fucking odd as they lost their last helicopter years ago and, granted the fact that they're fighting with the shleemos out here, on Sto'town Ro', in the middle of the actively civilian-populated day, well... letting an unidentified helicopter fly circles 'round their active battlefield, it... it just couldn't be let to fly.

And now, we're spiraling down and down and down and down...

Just down and down and down and down...

Down and down and down and down...

I take the joint 'tween my right index and thumb, hold it to the liquid flames screaming from the air vents just outside the shattered window next to me, then toke hard as this beaten Earth rushes nigh to catch me.

## Bullets

After exhaling and burning some sweet time, I disengage the actively sizzling polynylon straps and step out'a that bitch unscathed.

You aren't looking great. No bleeding or anything, but the way you're *walking*... like, I didn't like how you talked from the beginning, but now... and, and there's that whole *mysterious gray aura seeping from your every pore* thing you got goin' on there, it's uh... it's not lookin' good, you.

## Domain of Tom Foolery

"Damn!" shouts Tom Foolery, a'phase out through the wreckage. "Crashed right where you would have walked out of the woods, too. It's almost like I never even scooped you. Guess you'll have to foot it from here, guys."

"Okay," I say, clearly not pissed off at all. "So, so what, so... so is that supposed to be a challenge?"

Tom Foolery smiles.

"We were going to walk it anyway, y'fuckin' asshole!" I shout, very sure that you'll back me up when this comes to blows in a few seconds.

Just that Foolery half-smile. Fucker's literally got *the* smile... well, Adam does, but *Tom Foolery* gets to be the caretaker of the concept and I want to be angry at him for it, but, fuckin'... that fuckin' *smirk!* I wanna whip out the 'volver and put two through him but for Christ's sake that *smirk*, I'm powerless against it!

"Enjoy your fresh high," says Tom Foolery, Keeper of The Sandbox. "My domain is now common ground."

I am alone with a smoldering... oh, no, that's gone too. Huh. Just you and me, and you're absolutely engulfed by that strange gray aura, aren't you? Yeah, yeah you are.

Well...

Huh. There's still a little bit of this joint left.

And the reality distortion music isn't playing.

The joint lights up on its own, and I quickly bring it to my mouth. It's a lightning round if ever there was one. When it's done, I turn to you just in time to catch the mint 1909 Rolt handgun you apparently had this whole time.

"The fuck is this?" I ask you.

"It's a full-auto handcannon," Tom Foolery says using your mouth, "that shoots revolver bullets."



"From nineteen'o'nine??"

He just shakes your head and walks you away from the forest. Then, I hear you... I hear, "They're just numbers, Tungstok, they mean whatever the fuck you want them to mean."

"Just like everything else do," I say. "For all we know, this conversation isn't even happening. Maybe I'm just writing this bit on the phone."

I eject the clip. Full. Looks like half a whole rainbow in there, all the bullets have different bands on 'em. Most of 'em are gray, hence my inclusion of the word *half*. Uh.

This subchapter's still goin', huh? Sweet Christ, turn the page.

Turn the page.

TurN THE PA-... oh.

Right.

Sorry about that.

## Suddenly

So far as I am aware, Sto'town could very well be the only human civilization on this planet Earth. Perhaps the rest of society fell somehow. Perhaps it had something to do with tech. Chips in the brain, keeping the consciousness anchored to the Universe long after the body was meant to decompose ... that's what's coming to me. I don't know. It's what's coming to this High God mind I got goin' on in my head, but I don't know. And I never will know. After this Sto'tryp, I'm out. I'll find another Earth, I'm sure, I'll be fine, but after this? Gonzo. Bye-bye.

## Domain of Tom Foolery

‘Cause, see, every planet in this Universe is an Earth, and every Earth has something special about it, is unique in some way. This Earth... well, it has a thing. And who’s to say that this Earth is the most interesting one?

Who’s to say this Earth is even worth staying around for? Who’s to say staying this long has been worth it, that this journey will be worth the destination it brings?

Not me, that’s for sure... Bookmaker Adam, though. If anybody is to say what’s what around here, it’s probably Him. He told me everything I already knew, he’s factual, clearly, but... I don’t really know if he’s to be trusted.

Shit, this might be the last Earth left in this infinite Universe of Earths.

Or, it might be the first, the dullest, the most shallow, the... firstest, I guess.

None of that matters. What *matters* is what’s right in front of me, and in this case, that’s a bridge. No sidewalks, either. Damn. Last bastion of civilization couldn’t even be bothered to put in sidewalks. Got guardrails on the bridge though, so that’s... good. Can hardly tell it’s a bridge, it’s just a road. The river beneath it’s hardly two feet deep, the fuck? Not the, not the depth, it’s...

The river runs red with the blood of the fallen.

Along we go, then. There’s a little parking spot, says NO PARKING, FIRE SUCTION POINT on a big metal sign. I look around. Hardly anything here but the trees and a place to park. Yeah, sign’s accurate. Definitely a fire suction point.

“This isn’t good, Rattlesnake.”

You (He? It’s Tom Foolery talking, so... I don’t know) called me *Rattlesnake*, so I sprint as fast as I can to your’s side.

"What?" I say, "Hey, what, what is it now? Here, let me look, here, see, let me look here."

You doesn't.

"I tested the water," as you lets me see with my eyes only the device you was dipping in the river. Got a thin little tuning fork stickin' out the top, that's the part that went in the water. See? I pay attention. "It's blood. Human blood."

"Okay."

"Most of it's dry."

"W-... what?"

"The blood. All the blood in the riverwater," you says, standing, "Tungstok, all the blood!"

I ba'k'd way off but you're approachin' qui'k, I'm about to bolt for Sto'town Ro' tell you the fuckin' truth, just as soon as I finish this sentence oh fuck it I'm jus

I hit the dirt. You hits me, and I manage to hit the dirt a second time. Story of my fuckin' life, right?

Psych, you bitch! OOOOO you little *bitch!* Nah, 'man, I crouched silent into the tall grasses and baby frilly pines and all the miscellaneous foliage growing out of the little treeless patch of forest where this road – McGee, sure, that sounds false, this is McGee Road, and I am crawling up the grassy knoll upon which it is paved.

As for you, well, you leap directly over me, full spread on that mysterious gray aura you got goin' on, and that's when the gunfire resumes.

Then, suddenly, it suddenly ramps up, as if a bunch of sudden army 'mans suddenly realized they weren't the ones suddenly firing without sudden concern for where the bullets might suddenly land.

## Domain of Tom foolery

Suddenly.

### Firehouse

"Dude, come on. They're already all dead."

"Maybe so," I shout from my spot in the grass. "But I am the master of my own destiny."

After a couple more seconds, I rise from the grass and step onto the blood coating Sto'town Ro'. You has created a small clearing for us, it seems; there stands a sandbag bunker composed of entirely human corpses.

"They're all held together by nanotech, too," you, eh... you enlightens me. "Make sure you write about that."

...there stands a bunker composed of human corpses, held together by the very thing that ruined them.

"Happy?"

"I'm not mad," you says, then walks right on down the road, completely ignoring the firehouse.

"Why aren't we checking out the firehouse?!"

"*Because*, Tungstok. See, in the center of Existence is a place called The Writer's Room where books are made so Existence may spiral forever forward."

"Oh, oh uh," soundin' like a fuckin' cultist the way you recites that bullshit, "okay, you."

"And do you know who's in there making the books?"

"Book... Bookmaker Adam?"

"Bookmaker Adam the Form of Being, Astral God of All, Existence Incarnate. His will's our own, our backdrop His own: separate and foreign to the you as the you is the I. We do what we do because we fucking do it, now leave

the local firemen alone. They are doing Adam's work in their own way and will be left to it."

A house up the street, creamy walls, chocolate roof, is struck with a stray bottle-sized rocket, and don't even *try* to tell me that was a firework.

"Let's go," you says.

"We shall," I confirm.

OH

Look, I'm'a say this here, it's hard to write a story when you are the main character of the story.

He wrote that and handed the phone off to me, Tom Foolery, Keeper of The Sandbox, who has possessed you via the portable Jodo I carry around in my back pocket. Uh, it's a small, eh... pocket? Packet? A little thing of Ghis. It's a

OH SHIT!!!

FUCKING

Dude just tore through a house. No survivors, not a single fuckin' one. I don't think he even... no!

NO FUCKING WAY!!

SHIT

HOLY FUCKING SHIT

## WHAT

WHAT THE FUCK??!!?!

### The Carnage

I can't believe I'm the only immortal perceiving this right now, this is incredible! Tungstok *Rattlesnake* Thompson is going absolutely bucc- *wild* out there right now!!

And Jesus Christ, the *carnage!!!!*

### Awareness

I'm literally sprinting down the road typing this. It's not hard to do, because I manifested two extra arms, see, two extra arms with hands that can see without eyes, see, and they're typing just great.

Huh.

I wonder why Tungstok doesn't just do this...

Like, it's not like he's incapable. As far as *power* goes, Demigods are just as capable as Astrals, and Rattlesnake Thompson is halfway between 'em as it is. The only real difference, if there even is one, is a sense of identity and willpower. Awareness, really. That's what it comes down to, just being aware and conscious of your surroundings. That's all. It's literally just being conscious of who you are, what you're doing, and why you are doing it.

So, I guess that's why Thompson doesn't do this. He doesn't really know who he is. Shame, too; he's literally...

well, I suppose I shouldn't say it here. If he doesn't know, then me telling him wouldn't do a goddamn thing.

## Adam's Will

The absolute *mounds* of bodies I am walking over right now. Those smells, the sounds, all squishes and pops, all squeams and sour shicrement. Thompson's waiting near the cobblecrete post marking the entrance of the trail. I bet he's expecting this phone to be full of words. I'm an Astral God, after all, I could have done it, but...

But we all carry Adam's will. Lol

## Smoke More Joints

I don't... I don't even know what to fucking say.

But.

I will say this.

There are ten primary incarnations along my spirit's transition from nonExistence to youieA. Cannabis is two, Adam is ten. Tungstok *Rattlesnake* Thompson sits pretty at number seven, and you? You's a little motherfucker.

Tom Foolery – who has unpossessed you now – puts a mook on his face which seems to suggest that he has been caught slippin'.

"Go fuck yourself, Foolery," as I lead you back into the woodlands. "I smoke more joints than you before I fuckin' wake up in the evening yet *still* I'm the grand writer, the grandest writist in general! More prolific, more stylistic,

## **Domain of Tom Foolery**

more creative with the flow, more all-powerful with the whimsey! You? Just pitiful. Piteous. Sad and disparaging, but what else can an immortal like me expect from that Astral boi Thomhass Foolery?"

"Wai'wait, no, wha—" asks Tom Foolery, "what's that supposed to mean?" as he follows us to the far edge of his domain, which wound up sucking complete ass because *somebody* consciously decided to not properly record the good parts that were made to happen due to my actions and my actions alone. Typical.

"Tungstok, hold on, tell me what you mean!"

Without even a sigh, "I don't know what I mean, le'me go check the fuckin' prophecy real quick, assho



## Domain of the Pillars Three

### Back in the Woods

le." I turn to you now that we've crossed the border 'twixt the domains of the various Astral Gods who've decided to control this, a hiking trailway that traverses the entirety of the backwoods neighborhood of Sto'town, which is the actual final stand of human civilization on this dying and technologically-zombified planet Earth. "Just to be clear," I say now that I've finally turned to you, "we never speak of it again. None of it, zilch, not any of it at all. Got it?"

You don't say a goddamn thing. I think that mighty wise of you.

Now, there are two ways to do this, fast and straight-up or the scenic, and to be frank, I feel like we're going to die and wake right back up on the scenic way if we go up the fast way, so...

"All right," I determine, "follow me," I instruct. "We'll be at Board Mountain soon, we can have a little campfire or something."

That honestly sounds great. Back in the woods, here we are, onward and upward we go.

### Commandeered

He's going to get us.

*'Am I? Why do you fear me so, Tungstok Rattlesnake Thompson?'*

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"That," I say to the open air before me. You aren't even goddamn phased. You're used to me speaking solely for the sake of hearing my own lovely voice, and kudos for that. "That right there."

There is a tiny toad hopping along the path. I do not crush it with my shoe'd foot, no, I merely step over it, and I suppose that's supposed to mean something grand, isn't it?

"Isn't it, The Maned Man? Arckaen Kyng, Pillar Mind of Existence? Isn't that just supposed to be some sort of fuckin' lesson for me?!"

I get no answer, from Maned nor from you. On we go along the scenic route up Mount Windbeam, domain of The Maned Man Arckaen.

Fine, I'll admit it, but to myself and to myself only – I do not know what is real anymore. Nope. Not at all, not at all. Like, those cars driving by? I'm pretty sure they're real. So is the road they drive on, the trail we walk on. Hell, I'm pretty sure you're real, too.

No less than seven cars and four motorcycles all pass by me at the same time now, and now the road has gone totally dead... but uh... me?

Well I'm not sure I'm real at all, pardner.

No.

I'm not sure I'm real at all...

...

...

*'stop squatting and climb'*

Right, sorry.

"Hey, buddy?" I ask.

You don't answer.

I reckon you would probably answer if I was real... but then again, I am experiencing a whole lot of grueling pain for some figment of some guy's imagination... whoever's imagination that may be...

...

...

but

...

lo...

...

from low...

and up the mountain we go.

And well, we're somewhere, about a third of the way I believe. You're not saying much at all, you poor son of a bitch. You died, see, you are *long* dead. You've *been* dead, and that energy propelling you forward? Pardner, that's that little somethin' I hit ya with, and ain't it swell ain't it grand? Ya keepin' up, aren't ya? Fuckin-ay right you are. Hell yeah, Mount Windbeam, domain of Arckaen Kyng. I will get us up this fucking mountain, I am the master of our own destiny!!

All right, the scenic trail just linked back up with the fast. We're still... we'll, we're still going, so I see no reason to stop nor quit now.

...

The Maned Man...

...

...

Domain of the mind...

...

...

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Christ, it's like I'm waiting for Eve to show up again. I carry your lifeless corpse on my back, for it is the only thing I can think to do.

Onward and upward. You whisper, y'devil, "Onward and upward we go."

Aaaand so we do, and boy do we ever.

And that peach is going to taste  
so good.

...

I must squat one down to band my hair in a ponytail, and so I do both of those things. In that order. Then I type this out. Then, I move the fuck on with my life, moving you on with yours by proximity.

And because you're wondering, no, the little wee' may not see me go, from anywhere but there where it's rooted.

"Ah yes," I say as we approach the bigrock. "Yes, see there! There!"

But lo, you do not, for you are a dead 'man walking.

"That bigrock, my boy'o," I say with close'ed fist, "that bigrock is a helluva marker." O we're gettin' close, o we're gettin' so-close, and I don't want a peep out yee f'r misery!

Yee say nothing, as yee are a zom-bee.

Huh.

Go figure.

...

It's a lot cooler with the hair 'tail'd up. Dampens the telepathics, too. Hairs are sensory organs.

...

"Hey, it's so-too bad you had to go and fucking die on me," I tell your vegetative brain. "You won't get to see me shoot your little fuckin' bobcat in a minute."

You say nothing. The bobcat pounces from the brush, all disproportionate big paws and stub of a tail and sharp big cat teeth and no it fucking didn't, I'm so exhausted I'm leaning on a rock. Powering your corpse up a mountain is hard goddamn work... "and when I was carrying you? Forget the fuck about that, heeeeeeeell no!

"Shit, biscuit, I can see the sun! Up Mount Windbeam we kufckin' go!!"

...lest the voices of the children catch us first.

I hardly have it in me to describe this part of the trail. It's... it's like a horsetrail, real narrow, strip'a dirt through the grass, and it's situated on the side of a cliff. The sun is shining, wind blowing, all sparkling greens and gentle yellow browns... sunkist New Jersii, and boi ain't it fine. I keep hard to the left those shortcuts that don't save me real time.

...

Up rock and tree and muddy dirt I scramble, the top cometh ever nea'r. The Maned Man commands I end this subchap', but have I really been commandeered?

## Not Quite There

I mean, we're not quite there yet, but... the view from the hillside is supreme.

I keep wanting to feel exhausted, but I know so much better than to do as much. Once I summit Bear it's easy, it's fucking child's play, so the cost to get there... I'll afford it.

I will goddamn afford it.

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Even now when I must scramble up a flat-faced son of fuck, I shalt press ryte on and continue.

See? Didn't even take us straight up. We are skirting the mountain now, we are walking on the stranded edge, we are going down, we are, okay, we have proceeded the wrong way.

And a'back up the mountain we go.

...

A used package of tissues left to soak up the dew, to catch the forest's tears, and why do you think she cries? Because, aside from you and I, the're no other humans in these woods? Can't be, because there are not! I've yet to see a single other human and you can't see shit because you're dead, and I'm sooo thankful for that, because 'man, I fuckin' stink, but you? You goddamn REEK.

Les' let's, more power. Wha'd'y'know wha'd'y'know.

I know the trail doth win'dand'twistand'bend and if it went in straight lines I might be home a'ready, but...

but...

but I am close to the viewpoint, and it is there The Maned Man waits.

*'And how do you know that?'*

Well it certainly wasn't you who spoke that into my mind, as you are fucking dead whilst still walking.

"I... suppose I don't," I admit for all to hear and judge. "I'm merely going with the flow, carrying this carcass... I don't know there's much else to do at this point. Onward and upward," off and away we go.

We.

You and me.

Just a dead body and Tungstok.

High in the woods of one Earth among trillions...

O my brotha ain't it swell.

We're almost up to the peak now.

We're between little Windbeam and Mount, and truly it takes everything I have left not to burn it all and sprint. Psh, as if I'll run out of energy. I have provisions for days! There's a peach in there, slice'a bread, uh... trail mix.

Three mountains left. Three pillars with 'em.

Sweet Christ I cannot believe we're still out here. Still going. Still one foot in front of the other up this goddamn mountainscape, the rolling hills of Ringwood is fucking right, never in all my incarnations...

We're close now. We're oh so close.

Just passed our first instance of humanity and they did *not* like the look of you.

Wait...

My god.

That was literally Eve!

Incarnated in two bodies!

Almost at the top, almost at the peak.

Windbeam Mou', you can flatten, please and fucking thanks.

A sidetrail emerged and pulled me over curb and no I do'not know where I go.

So on I press up,  
and up and on and up.

I'm sweaty.

I'm thirsty.

I'm hungry.

Oh yeah, I'm way off the trail. There's not even clear ground here. The sweat is pouring rivers. I am hopping

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from boulder to boulder over vast patches of greenleafed brambles, not actually knowing where I'm gonna end up. So I take, literally two steps to the right, and suddenly I'm back on the trail, and suddenly you've been waiting there the whole time watching me struggle.

And now, we're just about at the peak.

And now, and now, and now...

## Play Out

All blue skies above me now, jekylmensch... all blue skies above me now...

O my brotha there it waves, that grandest American flag, flap' proudly and bold atop high Mount Windbeam. Christ, imagine how great things would be if everybody described things like me.

It's time for some peach, I think.

O yes, this is Windbeam, yes it be the true Windbeam, and from here on out...

"From here on out it shalt be up and down for you, just like everythingeveryone else."

There he is in the flesh(?), The Maned Man himself, Arckaen Kyng, Pillar Mind of Existence. He asks for some of my peach, but no. It's too juicy, too sweet, the essence is too like nectar for me to ever give a share... not from my one little peach... no no nono, not for you, not from my one little peach...

"So Tungstok," he says, catching me firmly on guard, "why were you so afraid of me?"

"I wasn't," I state. Such seems obvious enough. "That



was merely you firing neurons in my brain."

And just like that The Maned Man is vanished. I am alone to gaze out 'cross this lovely expanse of green, these rolling hills of Ringwood as they roll all leaves a'gleam...

I do not hunger for my bread, but another bite I take then I throw, and I do not know why I keep writing like this but fuck it, I'm going wi'the flow!!

&. Tally Hall. ~~Came back again to make it clear that He never said it would meet demand...~~

Hidden in the Sand. Tally Hall. *You told me to buy a pony but all i wanted was You...*

Let Your Mother Know. Rob Cantor. Get stoned...

The Mind Electric (Instrumental). ミラクルミュージカル. Heh, not yet. ~~Soon, though...~~

Rotary Park. Joe Hawley. ~~Lo, the ghost of a man ages thought to be dead...~~

Dream Sweet in Sea Major. ミラクルミュージカル. Bye, hi... sigh, Hawaii...

Gonna let this one play out,

I think...

yea'ah.

Go'n'

let

thi'is one play out...

...

...

'Man, to be this high...

on'moun..

tain'top...

...

broke...

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coughin'...

knowing you earned it all, that you deserve to be high on this mountain as Joe Hawley sings to you some of his greatest work...

No, I was never afraid of The Maned Man.

I understood him from the very start.

*And that is why I fear you, for I will not understand myself.*

Fourth joint. 6:39 pm. Tom Foolery's doesn't count.

## Dreem Cum Tru

Funny how I am climbing uphill to descend from Mount Windbeam... then again, I... could always just... slip... and trip... and fall...

But that wouldn't be conducive to me brynging you along, now would it? No, no, falling and braining my head on a rock would...

Oh, oh god... we've entered the domain of The Brained Man. Thank god you're dead, you old son of a gun old you old battleaxe you, but me? Well... I could... just... put two hands on that broken tree trunk, that shatter'd stalagmite of wood, that, that... that would go straight in, through the back of my eyeballs... you know, the skull is softer there... thinner... more breakable... why, enough force 'n' I could... I could just...

I looked up from the cell phone to find us treks ahead of the stump. But still... that's... okay... there are plenty... of... rocks... all over the ground... to... brain...

I sprint for my actual life and you keep a respectable pace, especially considering you're a dead fucking body.

I believe us currently on Deer Mountain, a mountain small and flat, as flat as my head after I bash it repeatedly into... that... rock... with the white... streak... the vein... the blood, it's in... I need to get it out of my veins... to bleed out high... up... on this... mountain... top... a dreem cum tru liek no uth'ther...

## Reprieve

I climb out from the bunker, shut the old concrete latch.

"I guess they had one on both sides of the road."

You don't answer, and whether that's because you're a dead body or because I had us agree to never speak of it again, on we march o my brotha. Oooon we march on we march on we march.

And to think, I almost pulled the trigger back in there. Almost colored the walls an even deeper shade of red.

Almost.

But the 'volver stayed truest, you son of a faggot. The 'volver stayed truest. Jammed right when I needed it to.

The sun is actually setting now and I am lying on the forest floor. Time to get moving, he writes for his eyes to read until they inevitably shut for good and I might grant mine brain it's finally-deserv'ed reprieve...

## Just Like That

I believe we're descending Deer Mountain... if that's even in**deed** what this one is called, and I cannot stop thinking

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about braining myself, bending my knees and thrusting right-o and bashing my skull on a rock, just like tgat, just frackng myself, jusssss cracking thebslullplates enough that they only need one morengoodnhit, but nno, nono, i dont have one mlre gld hit, i bave a meh so so hit and i give it all ivgot and thencagain and finslly the llates breakz the skin stretches, the bllood, the gorex the lain, its there, its so therez it all rifht there and i can feel it and i csn lovd it i am gldz i am gld tl ylu puny fucking chuldren, i chan cave my skull in again and agaignn and adkjsbfiin and the sdiulf are leaking frim my ear and i want it, i want to pop it, tl pop me lop me, i stumble and umbl and tlil and trom snd my blood spills all lver the leaves, all lver the trees, on the rocls and the bees and strawberrees, my skull hath all shat'red ant I'ne am noth hate butnthe blood taztes like death and im fall

...

Well I'm...

I'm really... I'm not quite sure what to say now. I have a headache, but it... but I... everything seems to be okay.

I cross ov' a quadding trail and you cross right behind me. We're heading down now, youngest child, down now and forever more. We've made near the whole Sto'tryp. I hung'r like leviathan.

Thirty-seven percent battery left, too. I kind of can't believe it's not dead. I really cannot believe I'm not dead.

I can believe you're too dead, though. I never thought you would last. You really didn't look like you had it in you, and I almost said something at the start, but then...

but then...

but then I...

but then I now think fuck it  
and I brain myself on a fe;;ed[ [ometree,

## Almost

I think I just crossed the river that was meant to signify my leaving of The Brained Man's domain. I should dash head-first into that fallen tree and see what happens.

A lot happen'd. I'm back. Whilst crossing yet another river, I jump up, invert myself, and spike my brain on the crest of a rock.

Like a slug I am slithered along this h'r' trail, top teeth digging into the dirt. Rocks and twigs and all manner of bug go into my mouth, under my tongue, up through my sinuses. Into my cavity. Death by scambulation.

I cross a dirt road. I thought doing such would freak me out, but it doesn't. I sprint up a slick hill, slide around, get a nice burn to put a thrashin' in my legs, and then...

Tree.

Instant.

Sweeest releief.

And here I am, right back up – up\* – and still fuckin' walking. Through the darkness of them shadows cast by mountains I have yet to climb, I am still the fuck up and walking.

Holy shit there is a house **right** there.

Fuck me, I lost the trail again. It's almost like hiking whilst staring at a phone is an actual recipe for disaster. Should have kept this here manifestœ on a single sheet of looseleaf paper...

## **Domain of the Pillars Three**

I went up the mountain at the wrong fucking angle, Jesus fucking Christ...

I didn't want to mention them, y'know, protect their identities and whatnot, but this here, just now? This now is the actual fourth time this hike we have walked up on this specific family of deer, and all I want to do is run up and challenge a headbutt...

God, everything hurts below my waist. Keep it going, Tungstok, you're almost there...

You're almost...

Almost...

...almost where?

## **We Climb**

We climb up the shorter side of Board Mountain. There's little else to be written.

## **The True Commons**

We pass the great boulder without veering off to The True Commons, for hah, we have been here all day.

## **Board Mountain**

The Suited Man waits at the viewpoint, Board Mountain. There takes the three of us, not a single word spoken.

He's gone and off we go.

## Respect

"He respects me," I announce to an audience of myself. "Adam said go one way, I went the other, and everything turned out fine. For that, I have the respect of The Suited Man."

You say absolutely nothing, you dead 'man walking, you. Absolutely fucking nothing... and how fitting of an end such would be, but alas, herein lies a cycle, one I must break before you are free, for who else could do it but...

me?

See, first, I will replace the phone in my pocket, and I will climb the rest of Bear Mountain. Then I will go down Bear, I will go up Board, and I will bryng you along with me. You'll not remember it because you will not perceive it because you are, in fact, a pseudo-animated dead body, but... but now we're almost there.

Now we're almost there you, you, you, you... you. Now we're almost finally there.

## Domain of Rattlesnake

I stumble into the domain of Rattlesnake me-first. There are vehicles in the driveway, amongst... *other* things... but nobody is home. Must be out for a walk. Adam knows it's a beautiful day for it.

Well, it was. Fuckin' dark out now. Oh well.

I sneak through the house, feet to hardwood to harder wood to softer wood to carpet. You slog along behind me, exhausted, dead, truly shleemo without any mold nor the moist'.

I hope.

I sit at the desk in this upstairs bedroom I just kind of automatically went into, make place the canna'plies, and that's when I notice movement in the bed. I will the lights brighter and what do you know, who else but a living and breathing Hunter A. Wallace is lying in bed after A Hard Day of Smoking His Weed and Not Hiking the Sto'town Circular because I was out there, I wrote this, not him!!

Not him!!!

He starts to get out of his bed but I pull the 'volver out and crimple his face so hard he flies into the crawlspace and lands next to the crossbow he's never going to kill himself with now because he's fucking dead, I killed him, my name is Tungstok *Rattlesnake* Thompson and I just shot this Earth's incarnation of Hunter  $\theta$ . Wallace dead in the fucking head, cunt! And I feel pretty great about it, too!

And you're back now, too! Hey!!

"Hey!!!" I shout. "Hey!! Hey you!"

You don't turn because shleemo, so I zap you with a lightning bolt and whammo, you're suddenly back to life.



"Holy bananas!" you declare, the death cleansed from your form. "You got me back here! But how?!"

"Easy," I say as I roll up this last joint. Peanut butter cookie, real potent shit. Really just out of this world. "I'm Tungstok Thompson, Sam. And I bryng you along."

Sam nods a couple times, looks out the open door into the hallway, looks at me, and then walks right out. As I'm filling the joint – no music, baby, no, not yet, I'm not quite done with the book yet – I hear the garage door open. In the dim glow of moonlight shining down heavenly from above, I see Sam riding his camel Sally out to where they parked it on the driveway. Sam hops off, lets Sally go in first, then gets into the time machine behind her. Zoom, off they go.

Off they go to times unknown, just Sam and his camel named Sally. There's a camel shop in the garage, see, and Sally needed a little bit of work. So, I figured I'd bryng Sam along whilst he waited. And so I did. And so we got back. And so I now claim this house as compound.

And now that I am alone in the finally fucking dead Hunter's bedroom, and thank Christ for that, felt that fag haunting me the entire Sto'tryp... it's about time for me to toke off into the sunset and find a new Earth to explore... perhaps one that's not in the eye of every single fucking Astral God at the exact same goddamn time for whatever reason they might have for being.. **hot** shit, I can't believe I'm alive! But hey, what can I say? I bought the ticket, and I took the ride... so now... there's only one thing left...:

ytiC paR naimahaB

.yelwaH eoJ

...sm of sneam fi fahw ...ees nac enoynA

