

You wake up to the sky.

Before your eyes lies a circle of blue, perturbed only by the presence of clouds. You breathe, and feel crisp mountain air. The sun is bright, and ringed about your vision are the tops of trees. You take in the sight, and move on to your next movements with deliberation.

You raise your head, the angle of view shifting downward toward the ground. The first thing that you notice are the trunks of trees, though you suppose you could have guessed that from your prior perceptions. Spliced between rough bars of brown are fuzzier areas, bushes and ground and leaves and the like. All of these things are higher up than you would expect them to be. There is disorientation.

Another second passes. You spy before you dark, loamy earth, seemingly untouched by vegetation. The area forms a circle, with the edges defined by trees standing guard. The wind blows, and you feel the coolness upon your skin intensify. Leaves rustle in the breeze; some of them are of the trees, other ones are your own.

Gradually, your attention shifts downward. As you look down, you spy two short, stubby little mint-green legs. You remember your hands, and raise them. They are as green as a leaf, and as fine as blades of grass. You stare for a little while at them. They are small.

The eyes drift further. There is a shirt you are wearing, blue like the sky, and with short sleeves. On your bottom you wear a simple white diaper, and your feet are protected by a pair of shoes. The breeze picks up again, and you shiver a little. It is cold.

After only a little while, your gaze rises once more. Gingerly, you place your hands before you on the ground, and then try to scoot your legs backward a bit. Unsteadily, you manage to rise to your feet.

The forest before you is wide and deep. There are, of course, questions. What has happened? Why are you here? Where should you go next? They are there, but they do not press hard against the mind. You begin to walk.

Walking is a bit difficult. Your gait is quite wobbly, and the ground is not always as solid as it appears. You hear the crackle of dried leaves breaking beneath your shoes, and hear the odd twig or two split from your movements. You have to be deliberate with the way in which you walk, but it does not seem too hard.

The ground slopes gently downward. Towering redwoods and other perennials fill the area. The ground is relatively compact, and bushes seem few and far in between. You breathe in some more, and your lungs are filled once more with cool mountain air. It is vibrant.

As you walk forward, you examine your surroundings a little more. Further ahead, shrubbery becomes more common, though it seems like the spacing of the trees remains the same. Light shines through the canopies, the bright, pale light of the early morning. The air is clear; you see no fog. You are still cold, but it seems like the wind has gone. Having settled into walking relatively well, you hasten your pace somewhat, aiming for what looks like flat lowlands below.

The slope vanishes after only a little while, and you arrive at the area you had spied. Bushes abound here; many are go all the way up to your head. You see pine needles on the ground, and spy a few round stones. You look at them intently for a few moments, before turning back to continue surveying

the scene. Before you lies a space largely bereft of clear ground, with greenery abounding practically everywhere. Smaller trees grow here too, ones that crowd amongst one another for any scrap of light. It is difficult to see far into the distance, as the trees and the vegetation obscure many things from view. To your sides rest ridges of the mountain side, gargantuan agglomerations of stone and soil that effectively form insurpassable barriers. After taking in the sight for a little bit, you continue your walk.

Things are a fair bit harder down here, you find. The bushes grow all over the place, and there are few clear, direct paths. Oftentimes you have to gently push a branch out of the way, or go around a spot that is too densely packed with plant life. Leaves tickle your face here, as you crouch and squirm and walk through all sorts of greenery. As you continue, you hear a certain sound develop, one that is distinct from the usual sorts of rustlings and cracklings that you have become accustomed to. You hear the faint trickle of water. It is not very loud, all things considered. But it still sounds like a stream. You move a little faster, now spying hints of grey and darkness behind the vegetation before you.

Eventually, the plant life thins a fair deal, and you are able to see what you had suspected with your own eyes. Before you lies a small but steady stream, one which travels over a bed of many small rocks. The evergreens maintain their distance, but smaller plants do grow by the river's side, lapping up what water they can. The river moves quite fast, even though it is shallow. You look around a bit, and spy a few stones that look wide enough to support your feet. None of them are in particularly good positions for crossing the river, however. Going still for a little while, you eventually begin to look at the ground. There are a few stones that seem promising, but they are quite few in number indeed. You eventually decide to try one particularly thick, saucer-shaped stone. Crouching down to the ground, you try to pry the rock from the soil, but you are only able to get it a little ways out before your muscles give out and you drop it back to the ground. It seems like carrying it would be out of the question. So, you decide to try another approach. You squat down, and try to leverage one side of the rock. You are eventually able to shift it from its place on the ground, and get it to fall back down on the other side. This only displaces it a little bit though. You still need it to reach the river, not to mention the exact place in the river where you need it to be. And so you continue in this rolling motion for a little while. It is not easy. Wet soil and grime accumulates on your hands, and you feel your hands growing cold rapidly. The movements themselves are also rather hard to affect, even if they are easier to perform than lifting up the rock wholesale. It is only when you reach the river, however, that you stop your efforts entirely. The first splash of water is a shock. It after only a couple of seconds of having your hands underwater that you run back from the river towards the bank.

You look on at the river, spirits sinking a little. You will not be able to walk all the way across it using rocks. You will have to enter the river.

Warily, you approach the river after a few minutes of waiting. You can hear the sound, the weak but unceasing flow of water against stone. You have to be even more careful with your walking here, as the river rocks shift more uneasily than the dirt did before. At the very tip of the shore, you jump, and land with both feet on one of the rocks that juts out from the water. It is a very hard jump, and you almost trip when you land it, but you do land it. You are able to do another one from there. This one is easier, and involves landing each of your feet on separate rocks. That is about as far as they go, unfortunately. Having crossed half of the river already, you tighten your resolve and take the first steps into water.

The rest of the trip passes by very quickly, mostly because you are so shocked by the cold that you dash straight for the shore. The water is frigid, for you, at least, and it is deep enough that your shoes are submerged. You almost trip a few times on the way out, both because of the rush of the water and because of how it messes with the timing of your movements. You don't stop moving once you reach

land. You just keep going around in a circle for a little while. Because it is cold and your feet are wet and you cannot think of an easy way to solve either of those issues. You stay for a decent while on the water's edge, trying to stay in what spots of sunlight that you can. It is when you begin to build up a resistance to the discomfort that you continue walking.

The forest here is thick, and at times it almost feels as though you are in a miniature valley. Some deciduous trees grow in this area, their leaves contrasting against the needles of the evergreens. They are short in comparison to the redwoods and others, but they still find their own little spots of sunlight. Shrubbery is also common here, with rampant vegetation growing in any spot that will support its life. You see some fallen trees and logs covered with moss, evidently left from the passing of trees in the past. There are also little vines and things along the ground. Even though the ground is tightly packed, you find it hard to move just because of all the stuff in the environment. That same factor also makes it hard for you to see, to the point where moving through the woods at this point feels like moving through a miniature maze. Which takes your mind back to a certain question: where are you going?

At one point in your walk, you begin to feel a warm wetness down below. You turn your head downward, and spy a faint clumpy patch beginning to develop on your diaper. You must have peed, but you did not notice the feeling typically associated with it. You stop moving for a little bit just from the surprise, but you do not really know how to feel about it, and soon continue your walk.

Eventually the bushes thin out, though the trees seem just as present as ever. The light seems a bit different now, and it seems warmer in general. You guess that noon is coming up. You continue to walk, something which feels different now with a wet diaper, albeit not overly so. The warmth faded quickly, leaving only a heaviness that rendered navigating a tad more difficult. Mostly, though, you got used to it quickly.

You stopped when the sheer rock face appeared on your left. Not because of the sight. You stopped because your feet were getting tired. You carefully toddled up towards a redwood and gently sat down, dried leaves rustling beneath you.

You look at your hands a bit. They are very small.

You look at yourself a bit. You are quite small.

You wonder what you should look for in this forest. You feel alone, and that is not bad.

You get up after a fair while, and continue to walk. The rock wall looks bare, apparently consisting purely of stone. You notice that it is a little bit hotter than it was before, but not much more so. The trail appears more clear here, and another downward slope begins to present itself. This one, however, is far steeper than the other one. You start to go down it carefully. At first you still walk down it, but it is not long before you get on your hands and knees and start to move down it as though climbing. Not that you are actually climbing, really. It is not too steep. But you feel safer doing it like this.

After a short but surprisingly exhausting journey down, you find yourself at yet another flat area of ground. You wonder how much more you have to go, briefly, but dismiss the thought relatively quickly. Mountains are huge, and you probably did not cover much ground. And that was just going by the normal laws of geography. You still did not know precisely what was going on here.

The wind picks up again. You find yourself once more assaulted by cold, even if the Sun counteracts its

effects somewhat. Your diaper now is cold and clammy. Not that it is bothersome.

As you continue your walk, you begin to spy a darkness to the ridge on your left. You turn, and find the mouth of a cave that goes into the mountain. The opening is quite tall. You could not touch the top of it, of course. You look on for a little while at the sight. You stick in a hand, and find that it is even colder than the environment outside. As would be expected, of course. You think for a little while, but eventually decide not to enter the cave. Apart from the mouth, the place looks quite dark.

As you walk, the deciduous trees become less and less apparent. Soon enough, the redwoods stand alone once more. This looks like one of those homogenous stretches of the forest. You let your hand touch some of the trees as you pass by, feeling the soft, fibrous bark. It is nice.

For a brief moment, you feel something strange down below, but then the feeling vanishes. Other perceptions soon become apparent, however. You feel a warmth just below your butt, along with stickiness. And a smell. You must have pooped yourself without realizing it, you realize. You take in the perceptions for a little while, before you continue on your walk.

The light shining through the canopy is still bright. The forest is silent. There is a certain stillness to everything, and it feels like there is something more behind that. Your walk continues, but your pace has become slower. You are quite tired.

After a little more walking, you decide to rest for a while. You spy a pile of leaves, and languidly toddle over towards it. The leaves are dry and dessicated, the orange-red leaves of autumn. Absentmindedly, you rest your butt upon them and the rest of your body falls upon the leaves afterward. You rest there, lazily moving your arms and legs a little bit. Stretching and thinking. You are resting on softness, and there is warmth around you. The sky above is still a piercing blue. The Sun must be somewhere up there.

You do not fall asleep, but you do lie down there for a good while. Eventually, though, you do begin to lift yourself up off of the ground. You crack some of the leaves with your shoes as you meander off of the bed of leaves. And then you continue to walk.

There are more redwoods, and there is more dirt and greenery and mountain air. The bushes have returned, though. In general, there is more vegetation here. Navigation is a little bit more hard, but not overly so. You breathe and live and walk for a while.

The light comes slowly, but surely.

It is there on the horizon, a patch of soft white light that seems to absorb everything. You cannot make out anything at all behind it. The forest just sort of melts into it. It is in a certain space of the forest, as though it has defined boundaries and edges, even if those are permeable. It is not very scary, or even that awe-inspiring. You walk towards it.

There in front of you is white light. You are not sure of what it is.

You look behind you, and spy the forest. You look around the mass of light, and find more of the forest. You think for a little while to yourself, and come to your decision.

You walk into the light.