

Upside Dawn

Kneeling before the tiny altar of the sylvan path, you have just cleaned the last of its porcelain statuettes. The night is so clear you chose to go out without a torch and enjoy the soft crispness of its light. You get up. As you proceed to dust your apron, you find yourself subjugated by an otherworldly sight. A pair of white monkeys is carrying what looks like a long vessel made of cloth. They enter the dark woods without a sound.

1. Follow the monkeys.

You join their quiet march. They don't seem to notice you. As the forest grows darker, the clarity of their coat changes into a downy gleam. For how long have you been observing them, perfectly captivated and incapable of thinking? When you finally look up, a myriad of creatures forms a solemn procession around you, following this never-ending path as far as your eyes can see. You no longer recognize these woods.

2. Run away.

Horrified, you cut through the rye field to elude these spirits, but you soon find yourself surrounded by four pearly hounds. They walk slowly by your sides and you can't outrun them. Your feet leave the ground. Still rotating, your legs have become an absurd windmill as the dogs of nacre are already carrying you away from the field and from the earth. The world shrinks. The sky bloats. It's everywhere. You're floating across the cosmos.

1.1 Hasten.

You struggle to catch up with the head of this parade, scrambling between the phosphorescent visions it's comprised of. Their silhouettes are stretching up in disarray as they multiply. They are spineless and overwhelming. Their uneven rhythm distorts the monotonous and exhilarating scrolling of the limp trees behind them. You're about to falter. You can't see anymore when your breath ends and suddenly, you plunge. The procession carries you right through the earth in a suspended vertigo.

1.2 Try to go back.

Swimming against the tide now, you struggle to evade it. You panic, strive and ramp up, losing your breath. Your consciousness weakens; in a trance, you abandon yourself to the glowing waves. Gently, they carry you away, lifting you like a quiet spiralling breeze. In a minute, your ecstasy nullified the very idea of spatial orientation.

1.1.1 Dive.

Immersed in the subterranean depths, you observe the slow transformation of the parade into a voluptuous mass which envelops you entirely. Then, in a continuous movement, this impulse is reversed; the vast veil is torn to a million living pieces which bloom, shrink and disappear. A stellar disc appeared in front of you, inflating ominously. Penetrating it, you leave the underground and find yourself facing the altar once more, standing on the dirt path. There is no moon.

1.1.2 Try to grab the walls.

Your fingers seek a hold in the torrential soil, but it is too crumbly. You can only seem to peel off disaggregating lumps of dirt which are now dancing around you. Slowly, these scraps change into a multitude of colorful larvae overloading your sight. The animated pattern of these pulsating dots seems to compose a teeming fresco. This vision is getting sharper and sharper now. You can see the altar inside it; you can see the path and very soon, you are there. The ground is beneath you.

1.2.1 Try to regain control.

You abruptly emerge into consciousness. You must find a hold on reality. Now. Before it's too late. But you keep on drifting. Everything around you seems abstract. Your heightened senses keep bouncing on indistinct textures and unreal shapes. They scatter. The image of the concrete world seems to disaggregate entirely. Soon, its components are but a handful of dust vanishing into darkness. You open your eyes. You're standing on the path. The altar stands still. A statuette is missing.

1.2.2 Abandon yourself.

The infinite slowness of these eddies lulls you sadly. Your eyes are so wide open you can't see anymore. Inconspicuously, your rotation hastens. Its pace doubles every six centuries; then it's exponential. When you notice it, angst takes hold of you. It too increases consistently. You fail to gather your senses and inertia sweeps you away. You're now swirling at an infernal, ever increasing speed and your chaos cartilage body is being torn apart when everything stops at once. You're on the path –facing the altar. Standing unharmed.

2.1 Marvel.

This miracle makes you ecstatic. Your fears vanish. Forgetting about the world you're leaving behind, you embrace the drift of your body through the airs. A dense, thinly shimmering cloud appears on your way and you slide inside it delightfully. Its matter is so thick and grainy that your limbs cannot move. You're sinking deeper and deeper into these shifting sands, abandoning your strengths with exquisite peace. Their beige foam is the only thing you can distinguish now. You hear its continuous, seamless rustle.

2.2 Grab a specter.

One of the hounds has gotten closer. You seize its waist and an indistinguishable flash transports you into the depths of the cosmos. You're surrounded by the unreal flecks of worlds too distant to be imagined. There's no trace of the dog in your arms. The universe now seems like an infinite sum of solitudes. Filling your entire soul, an irremediable despair leaves it absolutely empty.

2.1.1 Rise up quietly.

Turning your back on the world, you let this smooth vapor lift you softly. You can feel the immensity of the universe in front of you. It fills your body. You don't weigh anymore. When you delicately emerge from the cloud's pinnacle, the sky appears. It is blank. You are aghast. Precipitated backwards, you traverse billions of miles each second. There's not a thought inside you. You're lying on the dirt path. A dark tree dances above you. The moon illuminates the altar.

2.1.2 Melt into the cloud.

You abandon yourself to this celestial matter as it penetrates you slowly. Its breath strengthens; it gets deeper. Its vibration, so low and so long, dissolves your strengths. Your consciousness expires. You belong to this universal, constant and rotative mass. Nothing exists outside its matter. Its whole movement—the dance of this universe—is pure inertia. It slithers... slithers... slithers... You emerge from the dirt path, naturally. The altar's slowness is infinite.

2.2.1 Nothing.

Indifferent, you bear witness to the cosmos's dispersion. In a single and definitive movement, celestial bodies disperse and disappear. The absolute inanity of the universe reveals itself in silence. Its void bloats limitlessly, dissolving the illusion of its existence. Void and death; from the onset and forever. But an absurd radiance quietly appears, drawing within the darkness the weakly illuminated outline of the altar and its dirt path. Its tree. Its forest. Its hollow field and then, beneath the field, the village. Where are you?

2.2.2 Everything.

You suddenly notice the dazzling overload of the cosmos. Vertigo takes hold of you. This matter keeps thickening. Space shrinks. Lights multiply, coming closer each second. In complete silence, a ballet of microscopic stars assembles into ever-narrowing swirls. Their lace tightens. Soon, you can only distinguish a single, perfectly continuous surface. As its radiance gets stronger in some areas, it evokes an infinite landscape. A field expands into the distance. A forest trembles. A path soars and the heavy concretion of an altar binds it to the earth. You're on the ground.