

Transformation

I am drifting high above a dense forest, and there is a tall tree towering above the rest. It looks from a distance as if there should be an eagle's nest on top of this massive oak, one that has grown a good twenty feet over a forest that is already seventy feet high. Yet, as I approach from above, there is no eagle. There is no mighty bird claiming this strategic perch. The branches seem artificial from this distance, like they are coated with a magical frost sparkling off starlight in a blazing moonless sky. There are no city lights here, and darkness under the cover of the forest is black, with no visibility at ground level on this clear and brilliant night. I circle around it. Perhaps I am the eagle who is destined to find this lonely perch, and conquer its power and command its territory. I wonder how I can think as I was, yet question my being as another species. Am I still myself?

A shaft of white light seems to emanate from the trunk of the oak and blast skyward, straight up like the light display they created to memorialize the twin towers after they fell. The shaft is narrow, but intense like theatrical klieg lights on a sci-fi movie set. I slow to an exploratory circling, and find myself bathed in the ambient glow around the pillar of light. As I move closer, there is a power, a force so strong I have no desire to resist it as it pulls me into its mystic influence. I look downward to the ground. The shaft seems to begin at ground level, and permeates the trunk of the tree so intensely that it seems to merge with the vertical rod of luminous energy that reaches the stars above. I circle around the foliage on top, leaves that now look like glowing silver, with crystalline branches holding them close to the ethereal light beam blasting skyward.

As I circle in a long spiral towards the ground, I can see that there are no branches below the neighboring mantle of trees around this massive shaft. The trunk of this mystery source is a straight shaft, with glowing muscular veins slightly bulging from its vertical pillar. But the five-foot diameter trunk is not wood. It is not oak, though the shape of the leaves convinces me that it was most like the red oak species I knew. The trunk seems to be made of glowing glass...or perhaps luminous ice. I can see through it and notice other trees nearby, as if I am peering through a strange vertical magnifying glass.

I spiral lower towards the ground, and I can now see some of its surface roots, also glowing with light, as if the source was far below, under what may be the earth. The roots seem to pulsate; now stronger, sending rolling surges of luminous energy up the trunk of the tree and into the sky. When I land at the base, I can feel its warmth and energy. I still wonder whether it is glass or ice. It appears more like the realistic ice sculptures I had seen at an ice palace festival in Minnesota one winter, with giant ice eagles carved out of massive blocks by an artist with nothing more than a chainsaw.

I am perplexed. How can this energy tree be made of ice when there are palpable signs of heat and energy emanating from the trunk? The vertical convex lens makes the trees behind it appear warped like a funhouse mirror, yet the only tree in the forest that possesses this magic is this glass oak. Strange that it seems to shimmer a little, like plasma, solid, yet clearly fluid with moving energy. Hollywood would be proud.

I approach it tentatively. I refuse to be afraid in this bizarre environment. It seems to react to

me, as if to acknowledge my presence. I carefully embrace the trunk at the base, hugging it as if it were some sensuous being I loved. I feel its warmth, and it consumes me into its trunk, a strange metamorphosis of my body with the shaft of energy, glass, ice—whatever this existential plasma is. I am digested into it, inside the trunk, and am projected upwards by the energy pulsing to the top. The speed of the journey quickens as I rise higher. I glance at my hands to see if I am still human, but they've turned to glass, the bones, blood and ligaments translucent. I meld with the trunk as the light consumes me. As I shoot towards the sky, I have a feeling deep in my groin like the most powerful orgasm of my life, consuming every nerve in my body. My hair shoots straight up. My skin seems to tingle and then quake with powerful outbursts of energy.

I look straight up through the trunk, and raise my arms to the sky. There is a tearing feeling through my hair, like a wind tunnel, yet I don't feel damaged or hurt as I blast upward through the transparent plasma. I see the branches speeding towards me, and I know that soon I will burst out the top and into the sky. I see past the mantel of the giant tree, and for the first time notice the tiny connective trickles of light touching the farthest galaxies. The light increases in intensity until I can barely stand it even with my eyes closed. The world glows through my eyelids. I almost beg for the transformation, the consummate experience of my journey. When I burst out the top, it will be the last thing I feel as a human.