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& (thirteen)

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The man is in bed now. Dying now. Trying to cough, but unable. To breathe, an impossibility.

The Other watching him die. No face in the darkness of his body. No hands. Sitting, rocking in a chair of a mother of a mother of a mother. Rocking. Waiting. This Other, the Other, an apparition in a room closing down, the man's, air no longer necessary.

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A girl, flying, tracks through the blue of a sky, the ungray of his world. Her, his girl, rowing.

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To him, the earth has become a story. This will be the story of the earth. This will be the story of the earth becoming a story. This will be the story of a man, dying, as his girl flies to him or away from him or into the sun, wings of wax, dripping back into it all, tracing her lines into his, the rings of a tree, lumbered and down, made into a chest, his chest, holding his heart.

And this will be the story of a story. And this will be the story of a man, dying in his bed, unable to breath, blinking into motionless space, nothingness, the intrepid shadow of a world. And this will be the story of people made into rings. A man made into wood. Sculpted, him, into a statue of himself. Him, made into a box, a square, the corners of his window, the growing outside dusk, the dusted lines of gray and the limbs of trees leafless and staunch. Him, with his stiff legs and the blood trickling. This man, dying. This will be the story of that and him, breathing last breaths.

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The birds arrive outside of his open window, watching him. They see through him. They are the opposite, the ultimate, the foil, the failure. They drip into him. Their cawing sounds scrape his ears, draw a blood black and dark. They readjust and reposition, mimicking the dusk, the impending senses, the death. These birds, their small claws gripping branches and strings of wire strung out between him and the rest of the world.

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Him, dying, he is an imagined body now, restless in its lack of motion, ending.