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From THE OCHRE WORLD

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(*In petto*)

He was writing for the common man, but the common man was sleeping in his favorite chair, was dragging his bread through the yolk. He was writing for the common man, but Michael Jordan was peripateticating spectacularly through the crepuscular den. He was writing for the common man, but the six-pack, the film starring the former bodybuilder, the *ha ha* of pure evil having its face thrust into the gaping machinery, the unalloyed pleasure of the home team (good) versus the visitors (evil). He was writing for the common man, secretly nursing his contempt for the common man. Wanting to *improve* him. Wanting to make him see, to acknowledge, to embrace the murkiness of human motives. To make him squirm in his favorite chair. To make him awaken in the claws of a dream. To make him walk out into the morning of fog-webbed pastures, creaking milk trucks, children called into the open with their readers and lunch boxes, the horses wickering in their undersized corrals. He was writing for the common man, but the common man was balancing his coffee between his legs, was sitting between two masons in a red dump truck. Had his feet up on the tool bag, his knees leaned far right, anticipating the long throw into third. He was writing for the common man, secretly thinking *all is lost*. But the sun in the east, the moon still floating, the *larval* moon still floating in the western sky. The common man already out, walking his property line. Already out, waxing the Camaro with the common woman. Already out, stopping the BMW to pull prayer plumes from the road-killed bluebird—so delicate, wings half extended, toes locked on (perched on) nothingness, the eyes shut tight against the promise of light and time. Already out, leaping from the scaffold—like a spider rappelling from ceiling to floor—vines wrapped tight around his ankles, then the sudden jolt, cloud of dust, the upside-down writhing, the whoops and shouts, the welcome into manhood. Already out, being struck by the poetries of transformation—sunlight fluttering on the truck hood, shadows puddled under junipers and piñons, crows arcing in the cymphanous dawn.