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## **A Way Out** Jonathan Blunk

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## **Jonathan Blunk**

### A WAY OUT

Cobblestones are edgy around blacktop. At first there's no one, only a hand parting a curtain, a sprinkler stuttering on. Streets curve gently out of sight, past well-kept houses on parceled lots of grass. The pachysandra and sculpted shrubs, the screened-in porches and flower beds—all of it caught in a mirror.

But the trees rise above it, a century older than the roofs and doors, the mailboxes and perfect stacks of cut wood—towering red oaks more than ten feet thick. The slightest wind sets them in motion, dropping seeds and leaves. They sway together, making again a forest of the place.

Here is the furniture of the trees, musty lawn chairs putting down roots. One man scrapes at the bark with steel wool, another grinds an axe. Neighbors crowd a picket fence when Isaiah mounts his stump, hopping frantically like a barefoot desert prophet, lit matches flying from his lips.