

felt an undeniable surge of realization in that moment: that if I opened the book that it would be a solid brick of blank pages.

So let's agree on this: SACRED CLOWNS is not real. And if you see it in some fellow's library, just say, "Ah, SACRED CLOWNS. Nice try!"

And let's say the fellow goes, "Oh, you know that one? Well I forgot it was there."

Then you must be very grave about this and you must say, "I happen to know that it's a blank book. The book is entirely blank."

He might go, "No, I don't think so," and he might reach for the book and you must say, "Stop! I beg of you. The book is blank. Just leave it!"

And you must do everything in your power to stop him from opening that book. Please just promise me you will. I don't ask much, but I do ask this.

I ventured through the forest and came upon a meadow which led me to another forest at the base of a cliff. I headed north from there, knowing that south was surely all water, and I ran into a wire fence winding through the forest. I circled around the wire fence and it ended at a row of blackberry bushes, which I followed into another meadow.

As I ate the blackberries at their conclusion, I saw a man hailing me from across the field. He was a lone fellow, moving briskly with a tall walking stick, light flashing across his glasses as he trod along. He motioned to me many times, each time I looked at him he made a friendly wave or a nod of the head. As he came closer, I could see that he had a pipe in his mouth and the beginnings of a pointed brown beard. Slender white smoke issued from the corner of his mouth.