

PART ONE

BOOK FORMAT PAGES

PART TWO

BOOK ONE TITLE PAGE

waking up

1. CAST LIKE A STONE, ONLY TO LAND FAR AWAY

I awoke to the smell of blue-green spruce and sea salt, on a sandy shore so far from anywhere I had ever been before. There wasn't much for me to do besides start walking, so I picked a direction and walked a little, then picked another and walked that way along the beach. Eventually, I came across a stream flowing from the in-land forest, and getting a good feeling, I started to trek inward, inland, alongside the stream.

2. WALKING IN THE FOREST,

As I went further and further into the forest, I recalled how much I used to walk around the city with steep hills I lived in before I woke up in this strange place. I enjoyed the walk, to say the least, and the more I walked, the more it felt like that flower there, or the bend in the stream here, were deeply familiar, I felt like I had seen these green leaves and gray rocks along the stream bed.

3. A FOREST MEETING,

Lost in thought, I hardly noticed the three figures who sat upon chair-like stones next to a particularly nice part of the river. I heard something deeply electronic, and it

startled me to find myself facing an unlikely trio. A hunk of amorphous metal sat next to a mass of militarized rubber and kelp, while a small leaf, upon closer inspection, revealed a small ant wearing a sailor's cap. The kelp thing hailed me and I realized it was merely someone in a diving suit. I asked them where I was and who they were and they each told me more or less in unison that this was a place of waiting and that there was nothing for me to do but wait and eventually I would be carried away, back home or somewhere else. I tried to protest, but the metal hunk bleeped and the small ant began to yell polemics. The ant was especially eager to share its story, so seeing no other option, I sat down and thought that I might wait to figure out where I was.

PART THREE

BOOK 2 TITLE PAGE

Preamble to the First INTERLUDE,

And the small ant, who seemed so fiery
with passion for its craft, leaped at the chance
to tell its tale first, dancing about its craft:

PART FOUR

RUE THE MARITIME ANT

Preamble to the Second INTERLUDE,

And the Robot, with a great mechanical
heave, printed a scroll with its story, that I
picked up and read aloud to the others:

PART FIVE

LEGEND OF THE LAKE

Preamble to the Third INTERLUDE PART

3,

And the Subaquatic Diver, with a pleasant sigh, stood up wiping some of the soaking kelp from rubbery shoulders and began to speak the last story:

PART SIX

IT HAS BEEN 2 CLOSE TO THREE
YEARS

PART SEVEN

BOOK 3 TITLE PAGE

back to life

1. APPROACHING THE END,

Having heard their stories, I offered up my own, but the Diver shook its head and told me it was ok. I asked again where I was, and the Robot told me I already knew. I asked if I was dreaming, and the small maritime ant, who I admittedly loved the character of, said close but no cigar. The metal Robot turned to face me once more and told me that I was simply Somewhere Close but Far Away and that I should lie down.

2. THE ENDING,

I woke up in my bed and looked out at the hilly city I lived in. I looked at my hat and my desk with my books on it. I got up and started to write down what surely must have happened. There was something about that dream that told me those stories were telling me what I needed to hear. I just had to keep writing to figure it out. So I kept writing at my desk in the hilly city, thinking about the sun hitting the leaves outside my window swaying in the gentle breeze.