

## EMMANUEL'S SPRING

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*Chris Haven*

Terrible Emmanuel plants. He has seen what can come of the earth and he digs. Rotting peels and tin cans first. Blue shirts and sweat. He considers his wing but refrains. This is a crop. Sequins and stone. A diamond. Fourteen tree stumps and he needs a bigger hole. A checkered rag and Jimmy Carter's teeth. Black beards. Anthracite coal and light sweet crude and a ticker machine. The hole goes deep. It is transformative. Knives and the buttons from every machine. A glass jar. Window screens. A dusting of his own dominion. It occurs to him the hole is incomplete and he wishes he could take the happiness he sees but that's outside his creation. It should always be buried, he thinks, because of what the darkness can do. The last in is black smoke. He fills the hole and regards the mound with disdain. His earlier optimism saddens him. He realizes that the child he was, the one who believed in the earth, is buried in that hole. He considers his hand. The shovel has bitten into his skin. It has left ragged marks like teeth around an apple. Terrible Emmanuel turns and sniffs the air. Spring will have to wait. There's more burying to do.

# TERRIBLE EMMANUEL DESTROYS THE EARTH BY FLOOD

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*Chris Haven*

Because destroying the Earth by fire is too quick. Because ash is too fertile. Because floods take longer. Because he didn't like the way that guy looked at him. Because he's bored. Because he can. Because they deserve it. It's the only thing they deserve. This is not the first time. He's done it three dozen times. One time, he made a guy build a boat. But it was a pathetic boat and the guy died anyway. Maybe, this time, he'll keep a guy around, make him write about it. Or maybe not. What's the point? Because story is nothing. Because birds are nobler than fish. Because escape is nobler than endurance. Because destruction is greater than creation. Because in the end, dust wins. Sometimes he wonders why he made grief in the form of water. Sometimes he wonders if maybe he shouldn't try so hard. Because it's embarrassing. Because water should be the form of regret. Because everyone needs to start over.

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## TERRIBLE EMMANUEL REGARDS THE SUN

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*Chris Haven*

Terrible Emmanuel understands the sun. There is the outside and there is the core. Recurrence and redundancy. The arc of distance. The shape no other can visualize. Almost like flying. He remembers flight but does not miss it. He will find a wing or make another from the dust, if it comes to that. He will remember how it is done. This is not what worries him. It's core, shape of a ball joint. He touches his bone above the missing wing. Position the concern, the core and its condition, when it might shoulder its way through. The smallest pain in the body, arising like an echo. Warmth has its place. It strikes, a distant voice. Every creation a redundancy. A touch. A depression. Every recurrence a redundancy. Every core the same shape. Every creation a redundancy. Every shape. Every core.



## EMMANUEL AND THE LION

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*Chris Haven*

Emmanuel found the lion. Few things brought Emmanuel joy, but the lion turned out all right. This lion was injured. He could not open his eyes. Emmanuel came near, felt heat on his chest and in his neck. Not fear but it helped him understand what others felt. Emmanuel felt it was still in him to heal but he wasn't sure of the approach. The lion smelled the wound from Emmanuel's missing wing on the air between them. The tongue of the lion searched his teeth, retreated with a snap. Emmanuel tried the sound with his own tongue. It was a small, thin sound. He drew near and put his hand on the lion's brow. The lion seemed to agree and tilted his head. There are five infinities. This may be one. Even the all in all is not alone at the table. Emmanuel removed his hand. The lion still blind, his eyes the lightest blue, a new color in Emmanuel's palm. Emmanuel tied a rope around the blind lion's neck. You will do something for me, Emmanuel said. The lion licked the wound on Emmanuel's back. The tongue scraped the tender flesh from the bottom up. The flesh was not lion. It was good to have turned his back. It was good to have a space inside of him, not Emmanuel but lion.