

Sol

1. Earlier (Heard in the forest)

While the occasion for it now escapes me, I can tell you that I had started to head into the forest earlier in the day. Not as such to go walking amongst the trees (although I never mind doing so); but rather, I suspect, because the patch of woodland in question covered a nearby hillock with all manner of trunks, roots, branches and leaves. It requires no great feat of imagination then, given my propensity for elevation, to reach the estimation that my motivation may very well have been to crest said hillock - presumably to enjoy the view from there. I say this with no great certainty; it is merely my best guess.

In any case, it was quite by chance then, that my path should bring me into that small clearing where the following was to take place: That I at this point happened to look up, and by mere force of habit was able to ascertain that it was, near enough, midday. It was at this very realization, that I began to laugh vividly: a mirthful laugh, deep and warm, nearly half so vivid as that which had brought it on, and which at every moment threatened to blast my eyeballs right out of their sockets. In spite of my realizing this fact, gripped by an ecstatic hubris perhaps I nonetheless lifted both of my hands from their usual position near the hips, to hold up in front of my face (which was still turned towards the sky), as if by that ridiculous gesture to catch within their grasp that radiant circumference above, and even to control when and where it's brilliant rays of blazing light should be allowed to penetrate between their digits (those of my hands) to play across said face. This was insane. The very apex of absurdity. And yet, it had to be admitted, it was the very action I had come to perform.

"Yes, I CAN laugh now" I told myself inwardly then "at long last, laughter is available to me". And spurred on by that thought it was, that I drew a full breath of air into my lungs in preparation for what was to come next, which did not fail to raise my spirits further; but I lingered with this sensation only a single moment, as that great and joyous exaltation which was welling up inside of me like a fountain would not long be contained:

"Evening comes for me!" I cried triumphantly and at the top of my voice, which seemed to echo across the clearing, filled as it was with flowers and grass and other types of straw, amongst which could be seen the erratic jolting flight paths of certain types of winged insects. And in reply, there came not a single syllable, but the chirping of many birds, and

the rustling of leaves on the wind, and the buzzing of what I took to be many bees or perhaps crickets; of which all had been there all along.

2. Later (Heard at the coroner's)

"Indeterminate. No visible trauma, no apparent pathology, all organs appear healthy.

"Curious. Do we bring in the head examiner on this?

"That's him there on the table. He ordered the examination.

"Really? What for?

"That's what he wanted to know.

"When did this happen?

"He wasn't specific.

"Where was he found?

"I found him right here.

"Dead?

"His claim.

"Did he tell you anything else?

"No. There was a moment when I thought he was going to, but he hasn't said a word since I began to extract his organs.

"Suppose we were to replace them and stitch him back up?

"I've already tried it, more than once.

"And?

"Nothing. Not a whisper.

"Several times?

"For thoroughness. To make sure I wasn't missing anything.

- Eirik Senje, 2025