

.....I don't know this Bosmer after all: he could be the noble leaf of a particularly royal bush or a monkeytamer or the prized lover to some tree somewhere. Whoever he is, a single word had struck a visible chord... which seemed to be played by many different maestros at once...

"TRUTH?! What does your frost-smacked-herd know about truth? Our cousins in Alinor have, for generations innumerable to all but them, protected and preserved every last detail of every solid and immutable fact ever written in air by trapping them in glass. They fight the vapors of the changing narrative! They believe the eldest of the first ideas to be perfect and so must be preserved in systematically organized stasis! The-way-things-used-to-be is their pa rad is e! Bu t that p aradise wa s at le ast tru e O n c e <in some dream somewhere inside their stuck-in-the-crystal-past-minds>...

BUT WE? WE OF THE TREE SAP?! WE WERE MADE IN THE Y'FFRE'S OWN IMAGE!! THE BONES OF THE EARTH HERSELF!! SHE/HE TAUGHT US HER STORIES, AND HIS STORIES, AND OUR STORIES, AND HOW TO CHANGE STORIES WHEN THE STORIES AGREE TO IT, AND HOW TO KNOW THE HIDDEN TRUTHS WITHIN EVERY STORY, BECAUSE THE ONLY TRUTH THAT MATTERS IN A SEA OF MANIFOLD OTHERS IS THIS: Y'FFRE PROVIDED IT FROM HER BREAST, AND Y'FFRE PROVIDED IT WITH HIS SEED - UNCONCERNED WITH THE PAST OR FUTURE BECAUSE THOSE STORIES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ALREADY. **TRUTH** WHICH IS A-PEN-TO-THE-TAPESTRY IN THE UNBREAKABLE/UNCHANGEABLE MOMENT... OF... RIGHT...

NOW

even your changed neighbors brought their own truth and choke still on its ash and embers		
and that truth is a lie	I	until the liar endeavors to make it true
for the truth is a tower	I	until the liar climbs it
but the tower's just a tower	I	until the liar claims it
and a tower cannot change	I	until the liar makes it
so a truth is just a truth	I	except the lie is now true too

{reverb-dreamsleeve-whisper unheard by speaker or audience}

Truths, pah!

And don't get me started on the "truth" of the west

Persevere against !change!.

These truths listed, each of them, are rigid and non-negotiable.

The west gave in to !change!; infidels, the lot of them.

And the west was lost forever.

Punished, save for those faithful permitted to ride the TypHoon.

Thing is, Arena IS the western truth, perseverance past the EnDing.

{reverb-soundwallfade-hum until transmission is silent}

And now I turn to you, totem-breakers! You goat-mounting hypocrites! Does the All-Maker thrush-and-baah when you ring his bell from behind? Ysgramor was a dragon! Ysgramor was a man! Ysgramor never stops returning from the Elder Wood and Ysgramor never stops crying when he sees the never-stops-burning Saarthal! There's a new boat added to his fleet in every telling. But we were the bones of the Earth, all of us alive -- save those swamptrees who hold no truth sacred, and let us both acknowledge that the chaos Y'ffre put to stasis at the onset is no truth at all. We were giants! Our steps carved Nirn into our liking! We took forms only the dawnmagicks of the Wild Hunt can ever reinstate, which is to say: so long as the hunt lasts! It's over now, but my mind hasn't wholly recovered. I don't want it to -- a heresy against the Now, I know. Y'ffre forgive me --for the when that was then, we weren't limitations or defined by them or sundered by specificity when the world was all fallen stars and uncoiled worms. We were ada and un-adamantainted: we were slinking serpents and fiery sunbirds in chorus, and bulls that were men that were bulls, and we became eaten by dying wolves made of dead deer. Impulse provided 14 eyes, each connected to a different reason for seeing, and one of which was -- If I remember --for the tasting of colors and one of which was for seeing Nirn's newest memory: that now ancient Bone-Walker of the Elder Wood, whom one day Skyrim will name King. Rude formed and vicious at all angles: adorned with coral-stag antlerhorns, void-mouthed and toothy, breathing and coughing the metaphormush beneath him. The whole of him shamble-wrapped in a hide that had lost most of its fur, exposing a dried, scaly skin beneath it. His cervidae jaws were thin and flanked by two tusks always-covered in dried viscera, and marked with strange runes that meant "blood," all of it draped in a great grey beard. And we. We were his equals. We had purchased no power from heaven; we'd breathed heaven from our throats and our designs flowed from the everywhere to the only real border at the sky's rim. What? What are you doing?"

"Sketching a portrait. The monster who killed my king. I intend to pay him in Kind. He may have been a heretic, but he belonged to Skyrim."

"Are you an Orc now? I'd be happy to provide the shit, if you wish to smell the same as you speak. What will they do, I wonder, when the whole of Tamriel is in debt to their bloody curse?"

"Little green devil, you have spewed as much hate as I can swallow from that jagged-toothed hole in your face. Return it to polish your Y'ffre's most treasured earthbone beneath his leafy robes. This is Skyrim and Skyrim belongs to the Nords. Altmora, though. Those woods belonged to the dragons. Feared most of all the ada, for they gobbled up all meaning and sense. Fitting as much of next and before as they could in their greedy gullets. Spitting it out when they grew tired of its squirming, just so they could watch it crawl through its own primordial slime.

And the other "truths" you offered, bold demon. They're not mysteries. I'll offer you two more to hang in your halls of cabbage and leek. One is a true answer to an insincere question: when the bloody curse can fit no more names in spit and swear, Malak and Malooc and Mauloch and even the Old-Knocker Orkey, who have held all the curses in their mouths, will finally swallow

them whole, and in the same manner which the bruiser Boethiah improved gold-tarnished Trinimac, they will release the curses back on Tamriel one after the other in flame and ash and smelt. The other truth you may have is a never-was-a-mystery: All your other tales, which have bored me to anger and thirst, speak of purpose and defense. You vine-fairies are keepers of the Now, though you have done so as poorly as a horker sings and brings beauty to our snowy shores, which they do not and never have. So what, then, do the cat-folk keep as their most fevered interest? The answer is themselves, of course, unless the reward of a sweet is involved, which is still to say: themselves."

But you will never know what Saarthal means to the Nords, or why we Returned, and why we always will. You see the dawn-free-flow-river-kalpa-thought-without-direction-to-define-it as a paradise of unlimited ideas where anything could be, only then to be another thing or maybe even something else. Jhunal-talk. All that possibility is just a whole lot of nothing really happening at all. The tusk totems were the first of the things that tried to BE -- vague, indefinite carvings of coalesced spirit forms still yet to become be an image of anything specific, and the aka-Tusk was the greatest of them. When the Giantbones began to walk about the infinite wilderness, the tusk totems helped guide their way. Infinite is too big a thing, after all, and easy to get lost in. You and your ilk were pleased with the miasma, but many found it torturous not knowing themselves and wandered endlessly seeking purpose and identity. This led to more and better carvings, as the Giants wandered upon new ideas and gave them consideration, and the Giants knew the force of chisel-and-knife that would bring those ideas to life by the name, All-Maker. But naturally, these considerations became more and more specific, which you called a 'limit', which you mashed-together-like-dreughs resisted in your love of the manifold, and the awful fighting began at the first: Aldmeris was your kingdom of everything-just-is, but Altmora was a wilderness of survived-to-be, and yet despite the contradiction, you assumed authority over both, as if it was possible. Bone and Bone fought endlessly, shouting discourse that cracked and shaped the land - but infinite is too long a thing after all, and easy to get lost in. It had begun with Ysgramor, the first Giantbone to settle on a form, when he traded talon for finger and set them to writing in his library named Saarthal. With chisel and knife, he carved the first histories around a nirn-shaped runesphere, trapping some amount of the impossible dawn within it, so that his words would be permanent, and those words would be NORD. Now no matter how many times the Elf-devils sack our culture-city with their dawnmagicks, Ysgramor always Returns with our history flanking him on both sides, pushing the memory of Altmora further behind us, where it is cast off as all useless things must be, behind a veil of ghosts and forgotten memory, forever-freezing and unwilling to grow. And we must pray the Elder Wood never return in any of our days, for should the churning of the world stop to match its speed, its bone-walkers will wake again at the behest of their Ald-king, the Devourer, eating everyseason and everytime in sight. But to know this forbidden truth and dwell on it long enough to have ever given it real thought is to be lost in the Mnemjyherkel forest and its forever-long corridors of towering trees, preyed upon by the Woodland Man for eternity."

And with that pause, I looked again at my surroundings, seeing now that there was nothing left but endless and identical pines. I turned my head to where the Bosmer should have been.

Gone was his hooked, hag-like nose, and the countless warts that had pocked his face had been replaced with equally-countless golden eyes. This woodland devil was a different kind of devil after all, and I had fallen into his trap. .Hyrma MORA pado ADA oia NAGAIA aba AGEA cava APOCRA dena GORIA gandra ARCAN.

AE HERMA MORA ALTADOON PADHOME LKHAN AE AI