thrice great hermes

#53

by stanley lieber

      étienne awoke to find he had been transformed into a real human. his back hurt. he crawled from bed and pulled on his clothes from the night before.

      into the woods. violet would sleep for a couple more hours. it was saturday, so, no work. the sky was white. the trees were black. étienne liked rainy days, but maybe it had been a mistake to wear the suit.

      he walked his usual trail. the path continued past the remnants of an abandoned car lot, twisted through several properties, crossing more than one barbed wire fence strung between trees. today he went further, through a clearing he had never noticed before, wandering onwards through the brush until he came upon the ruins of what appeared to be an old house, connected to no road, adjacent to nothing but overgrown weeds and more tall trees.

      he decided to sit down.

      the shoes were definitely ruined. he dug in his pockets and produced only a peppermint, from the bar. seemed like it might rain again at any moment, but the sky stubbornly kept its own secrets.

      étienne impulsively checked his phone. nothing. of course nothing, he was in the woods.

      the house seemed to have burned down. charred beams exposed and fallen, there wasn't much shelter left. étienne picked through the rubble, looking for any extant personal effects. pieces of books, but not much was left intact.

      the rain started up again, and étienne felt stupid for walking so deep into the woods on a day like today. he frowned at his shoes and started home.

      violet was just waking up.