

thrice great hermes

#57

by stanley lieber

nothing could change the fact that he was tired. an evening without travel, he worried his new boots would never get broken in. finally, he removed the foam inserts, and tied them tight enough to cut off the circulation in his feet.

a ticket came in asking him to make a two hour round trip to shut the front door on a surveillance shack. cleaning crew again, no doubt. he ignored it.

what had never been clear was why the mind tended to focus on discernible plots, as if the mere fact of a (somehow) legible progression from one discreet state to the next was in fact the primary appeal of the perceptive act. to what end, he always wondered. legibility was authorship, and who needed attribution? scared governments, was the obvious answer. étienne turned the problem over in his mind without ever reaching the forty percent minimum information needed to confidently make a decision.

other concerns included: what was the soul, and where was it located; who watched the watcher; what was the hand that moved the hand; why was it always so hard to see a mistake as you were making it, but always so easy to spot it in retrospect. he moved through the questions as he moved through the woods near his house—inexpertly.

he could see the back of his own head in his monitor.

after his lunch, étienne decided to tidy up his office. he removed the week's accumulation of garbage to approved containers, destroyed ephemeral notes, labels, transfers, and other related detritus. he drew the line at performing maintenance on the office's ladders, light fixtures, and doors. instead, he put in a ticket.

the dispatch center called, requesting information about one of étienne's peers.

for a night with no work, he felt he was doing a lot of work.

time to read a book.