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# Jack Underwood

## The Novel

So there's a man, or a woman, ok,  
a person, and this person has a problem.  
Not so much a problem as a yearning.  
They live in a city but yearn for  
the quiet of the countryside. No,  
they yearn for the geometry, the voltage,  
the violent anonymity of the city. Or  
they yearn for the selfish, fat simplicity  
of their childhood. Ok, something  
more specific. They yearn for the silence  
that follows the call of the mother-owl  
out across the misted glade that morning  
in June. Or the silence of a blown-out  
filament like a ruined suspension-bridge  
in a snow globe without snow.  
That silence. That is what the person  
yearns for. Only they don't know  
that this silence is what they yearn for.  
Instead they cast around, throwing  
their yearning over everything  
like holy water, not knowing that  
the attainment of surrogate objects  
of desire only frustrates or aggravates  
their yearning, since the act  
of attainment itself eliminates an object  
from the category of desire, throwing it  
into severe relief, so that immediately  
it takes on a figurine aspect,  
a repulsive resemblance of the silent

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moment that the person does not  
know they yearn for. Thus abandoned,  
the search continues, the world always  
ready with fresh and bright distractions.  
And this person is just like us.  
It could be us. Only it isn't.  
But you do know this person.  
I can tell you that much.  
Though of course, I needn't tell you.  
You know exactly who I'm talking about.