

(A FORTRESS #2)

I look up through the branches. The sound of hammering, distant carpentry, nails being hammered home and I feel for an instant like the condemned prisoner, witnessing the sound of their own death as a construction external to themselves. I lie there with my head resting against a tree and gradually my thoughts recede. I admire the motions of a hover fly, sporting a few inches beyond my nose and watch the occasional cloud passing through that gap in the leaves. My thoughts happen to go the same way: nothing for long minutes then a brief interruption: two swallows passing close; a twig or leaf landing by my ear; a lawnmower somewhere not too far away.

Perhaps they really are building down as well as up. A tunnel into the main buildings. Perhaps they are stripping the abandoned wood and utilizing all the timber to tunnel down.