

Ambitious

by Cooper Renner

Why do men become explorers? he asked. Because they want to cannibalize the unknown; to leave the chemicals, the furniture (and, yes, the shrew) behind; to make their way hi ho into the brush, whose weeds and lianas remain empty of the exhortations of Jesus Christ, whose roots and trunks have never felt the sappy coagulant candle-wax, whose steam rises solely from the exhalation of leaf and beast and man, and never from the bang of the Stanley engine.

And there they affect the gratuitous tremble of the asshole. They adore the brilliant flirt of the loincloth, the ambitious hat fixed of believable feather and frankly unlikely divine nail-clipping. They eschew their drop-in-the-bucket trust in the intellect, their unexamined faith in the single-shot rifle, the lush head-cloths of their cameras. They clammer for the milk of the human breast.

There is no end to this story, the worm ouroboros of consciousness. Even when I settle into my desk chair and lean forward to dip the pen into the inkwell, the image defeats me, my unreflective hound curling inward upon his rug to lick his phallus clean.

