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How to Build a Telescope

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How to Build a Telescope

Abstract

: Look up. Follow the first thing that moves, unless it's cloud; thin-lipped, not to be trusted, they are known to move opposite progress. When in doubt, head west. Carry one ocean to the other.

Cover Page Footnote

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BOOTH



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How to Build a Telescope

by Brandon Amico

: Look up. Follow the first thing that moves, unless it's cloud;
thin-lipped, not to be trusted, they are known to move opposite
progress. When in doubt, head west. Carry one ocean to the other.

Take your great father's grand purple heart and your credit
cards, pack dice and broken wristwatches, everything

that glints. Relieve your luggage its burden of emptiness. Name
everything, then say goodbye. Go somewhere warm and star-flecked.
Be somebody, or give up now; if you will become a tree

then do it; stand with your arms up and hands open and wait for winter
where you needn't move or speak. Otherwise, keep going. The legs

that move till the land under them. This land is your land; buy a shovel,
kill snakes. It's supposed to be hard. The stars were dropped so far away
you must reach. Bills grow faster than crops and almost more naturally.

The heat will sap earth from your pores, lightning will try to punch your
teeth out, but sometimes you taste the metal of blood in surviving.

If you survive, you must build: a house where your limbs sense water,
a home big enough to forget your lover's face. Burn the tall grass where
she beds some other man, or so the play of moonlight between blades

suggests. Plant children on that spot. There are miles spooled in your ankles;
string a guitar with them. Play "Home on the Range" for the kids

then smash the thing when they move out. The moon will tear across
the skies, and you will have trouble remembering who you were and where
they went. You will look up for answers—and squint. You will think

you see yourself, or maybe your father. (There will already be an old man
in the moon; he climbed there and you didn't.) Maybe you will be glad

for the telescope—its body the hull of a scorched tree, tent-pole legs
and cacophony of hard wind in its gut—later, you will be buried
with a swollen tongue and a jar of whistles. For now, hoard mirrors

in the unfinished room down the hall, as many lenses as you can find, plate-glass,
windows, spoons or diamonds, scrap metal, anything that can reflect or

refract, can take distance and condense it, cram it into a light you can hold.
Swing the scope up and say, *Gods, I am a hall of footsteps, I am
carrying my father's father, and I come to you with his face*

*and the trumpet of a promise in our ears. I don't know what it is
but I have come to take what's mine.*

Brandon Amico is from New Hampshire. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, *New Ohio Review*, *Phoebe*, *Slice*, *Verse Daily*, and other journals. You can follow him on Twitter, [@amicob](https://twitter.com/amicob), or visit him at www.brandonamico.com.