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You aren't reading an editorial; you're walking amongst the trees. The problem is, there are no trees. Faded, depleted dirt leaves an unsatisfying, empty thud underneath your every step as you cross your backyard. Your neighbors' houses span your periphery, but the splashes of paint across their wooden upper stories do little to color the drab landscape. Your breath comes in shallow, frequent waves and the air you inhale does little to soothe you. Your heartbeat ticks upward nervously and you suppress your thoughts in a futile attempt to calm yourself.

This is your world, and it didn't have to be.

We don't often consider our world without trees, and those of us to whom the consideration occurs don't place much stock in it. Although the message of environmental protection is spreading, people still don't comprehend the notion that we could find ourselves in a situation without trees. While we fear the theoretical thought of losing trees, we have yet to grasp that it is a fast-approaching reality.

We make use of trees in countless aspects of life and production. Favor after favor we greedily demand of our trees: paper, paper towels, lumber, oxygen, shade, syrup, mulch, decoration, resin, certain spices, playground sets, firewood, flooring, cabinets, furniture; the list goes on! Trees give these things dutifully and sacrificially, all the while gifting us with that for which we never asked but on which we have always depended: calm. Their strong, wide trunks are reliable and supportive, and their annually replenished leaves remind us of the repair for which our often-broken selves yearn.

It is an assumption that these resources, which are so fundamental to the functioning of humanity, will never be entirely diminished... But they may be. More than that- they will, if we don't make moves to counteract our consumption. These moves range from nationwide conservation mandates to individual lifestyle changes, but each carries significant weight. You can petition your government to preserve the land of your country or state, vote for political candidates who are conservation-conscious, purchase reusable towels and plates, join or start a local initiative to plant trees in your area, donate to charities working to protect our trees, and conduct research to discover which aspects of your lifestyle are most detrimental to trees, as well as which are most beneficial.

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Trees are vital to human efficiency, happiness, and calm; they're vital to the successful continuation of our world. Allowing them to be eradicated means allowing the same of our neighbors, our loved ones, and our own inner peace....

You aren't reading an editorial; you're walking amongst the trees. Golden leaves are scattered beneath your feet and more flutter through the air from the branches that arch high over your head. You come to a stop and lean against a wide oak, inhaling deeply and feeling your lungs expand with fresh, clean air. You peer upwards, taking in the expansive form of the oak, which extends its branches in confident and irreplicable directions while emanating a sense of enduring calm. With another breath, you feel that peace blossom within your chest, and you break into a smile.

This is your world; and as of today, this is our world. So let's defend it.

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