

HOW TO KILL LIKE A MAN

AMY MILLER

Make sure they deserve it. Have two children and wake up at three in the morning and carry the diaper-stenched bag, the baby on your shoulder, down to the back porch and the garbage can. Stop to notice the night air, the calm, the soft scratch of raccoons feeding their own small families. Feel the kinship of God's creation, sharp stars, mysterious space between. In the morning, go out and shoot a buck and pause for a photo with its roughed head, limp neck, useless legs before you skin and harvest. Put the meat in the freezer. Give the rack to your older boy who stares goggle-eyed at your truck and the red mud you blast off it with the hose down into the storm drain to the infinite creeks you both love. Show the boy reverence for what is given of the Earth. Years later, pick up the phone and call him, grown now with two kids of his own, because it's Sunday and a pain in the ass is sacred, family is sacred, shouting was a holy symphony of righting and wrong and now you both have learned the lesson of civility, of silence. Sit with him in silence between talk of shopping and his wife who hurt her back and lost her job. Still later, in the checkout line, be watchful, be wary, for this is where everyone gets it wrong, where everyone least expects the danger. Feel the unwavering Glock tucked into the small of your back. The woman in front of you is safe. You will save her. She may be carrying

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the next savior. She may be carrying your own son's baby, the other son, the one you haven't talked to in years but think of whenever you look a rabbit in the eye, when you take aim and think, you're innocent, rabbit, it's fine, I'm doing this for beauty, for the better good, to thank God for this great Earth and all it gives me. And watching the news you say, I would have killed that bastard, all they needed was me and an automatic. You say, if only I'd have been there. If only it could have been me.