

## The Magic People (Working Title) – Cumbo-Floyd

A wind had been blowing all afternoon, and Jedidiah Wilson knew something might be coming up behind it.

The pines at the edge of the field in back of the barn were swaying and bending, and in the gold of dusk, they seemed harbingers. Jed wasn't sure of good or ill. He pretty much didn't care, just so long as something happened.

Homeover was one of those towns where so little happened that even small things – new hair cuts or fender benders by the IGA – became the talk at the post office, where most folks still picked up their mail every day.

Jed had been born in Homeover, well, technically over the mountain in the hospital at Lexington, 12 years ago, and so the locals considered him a native. But his parents, from way up north in DC, they were still “not from around here.” Jed wishes he could be “not from around here” anywhere else. Some days, he thought he pondered plucking out his arm hairs one by one just to feel something.

But this day, April 2, Jed tasted the change on that wind like he could taste the bacon his mama burnt every Sunday morning. It tainted the air and left the inside of his nostrils feeling just a bit raw.

He'd had hints of that taste before – that time up in the woods by the water tower when he'd seen that shadow moving among the trees and gone home to tell his dad he'd seen Big-foot. Or once, in the middle school after the buses left and he stayed back because he thought he'd seen someone under the bleachers. The air tasted burnt then, too, but not like this. Today, the whole world tasted that way.

Jed had been riding his bike up and down the driveway for an hour or two, just trying to keep his body busy. He had to stave off his anxiety somehow and moving was the best way he'd found. Some days, he built little villages out of twigs he gathered at the edge of the woods, but today, his body needed bigger swings of motion.