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July **4** 2012

Millet, Lydia. How the Dead Dream

Pulitzer finalist Millet begins a loosely connected trilogy with this deliberately paced character study of a novel. Real estate developer T. has always been obsessed with money; he was the first boy his age to have a bank account and he found creative ways to fill it. As a young man, he is already a success, building retirement resorts in the desert and vacation resorts on remote islands. But his entire world is shaken when he first falls in love with a woman and then unexpectedly loses her to a car accident. Now lost and alone except for his increasingly senile mother, his competent but distant secretary, and his secretary?s brash paraplegic daughter, T. becomes obsessed with things that are lost and things that are last?specifically, on animals close to the brink of extinction. He begins a series of late-night commando break-ins of zoos, trying to be close to the animals so he can attempt to understand how they feel and therefore, how he feels. When he visits his holdings in South America and attempts to track down the endangered jaguars living on a preserve nearby, his quest comes to a definitive conclusion as he is forced to come face-to-face with his deepest and most bare self.

A lyrical, vivid meditation on self vs world, self vs others, and humanity vs nature, Millet?s novel is involving, disturbing, and insightful.

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