

One day while splitting wood, I came across a hollowed-out oak log. Ants had excavated the inside, yet there was solid wood around the perimeter. I decided to turn a vessel, hollowed on the inside by ants and turned on the outside by me.

To mount the log onto the lathe, I cut a plywood disc to match the log's perimeter and screwed it onto the solid wood that remained. I screwed a faceplate onto the plywood disc and mounted the assembly onto the lathe.

At the tailstock end, I turned a tenon and began shaping the outside of the vessel. I turned the log around to hold the tenon in a four-jaw chuck and con-

humpty dumpty

Joshua Friend

tinued to shape the outside. Large loose chunks of decayed wood flew from the lathe—slow speed and a faceshield was a must! And, I stopped the lathe frequently to check that enough solid wood remained to ensure stability.

Humpty Dumpty took on a life of its own and one thing led to another. I added ants and glued wood shavings to the scene to simulate the ants' excavation. I made several ants by

turning each body on three axes, and then added steel wire for the legs.

As I was working on this piece, the concept of impermanence was on my mind, as was the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty," a simple yet profound reminder of our fragile existence. I can appreciate what I have in this moment.

—Joshua Friend

Humpty Dumpty, 2012,
oak, pine, walnut,
steel wire, stone,
14½" × 20" × 20"
(37cm × 51cm × 51cm)



I screwed a plywood disc to the solid wood and screwed the disc to a faceplate.



I formed a tenon to mount into a four-jaw chuck.



The initial forming of the vessel began to reveal its ant-hollowed interior.



A new meaning for the term "hollow vessel."



The ant bodies were my first attempt at multiaxis turning.



These ants are deceased.