## SPECULATIVE: FICTIONS, FUTURES, FORMS

Illinois State University Visiting Artist Seminar: Lee Hunter Winter 2018

## SPECULATIVE:

FICTIONS, FUTURES, FORMS

This seminar will explore ideas about speculative futures. As a class we will imagine what different futures could look like. Throughout the seminar students will work on defining the parameters of a speculative world, creating material culture for the worlds. To do this, the class will read a selection of readings by artists, scientists, writers, and cultural theorists. The class discussions and activities will consider thinking about utopia and dystopia, life in a rapidly changing environment, and imagining different futures with science fiction. In class exercises include imaginary mapping, drawing organisms, and writing a short story. For the final project students are asked to make artifacts from the world they have built.

## **DISCUSSION THEMES:**

Deep Time
The Anthropocene
Utopia/Dystopia...Something Else?
Science Fiction

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Ray Bradury, "There Will Come Soft Rains," Collier's, 1950

Octavia Butler, "Blood Child," 2005 web version, 1-22.

Donna Haraway, "Introduction", Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene, 2016 p 1-8.

Nalo Hopkinson and Alondra Nelson. "Making the Impossible Possible: An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson." Social Text 20, no. 2 (2002): 97-113. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed February 16, 2018).

Winona LaDuke, "Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Environmental Futures", Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law and Policy, Vol 5, 5:127, 1994.

Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," 1973.

Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene", Public Culture, Vol 26, Number 2:73, Spring 2014, 213-232.

## **ASSIGNMENT:**

Create a Map of a world
Draw Organisms that live in the world
Write a short story
Make an artifact from the world

## ARTISTS FROM LECTURES:

## Introduction/Deep Time

Juliana Huxtable

Zach Blas Jess Johnson

Rachel Sussman Trevor Paglen

Brian McGovern Wilson

Nancy Holt

Mark Dorf

Layla Curtis

## The Anthropocene

Beverly Buchanan Agnes Denes Helen Mayer Harrison & Ana Mendieta Newton Harrison Mary Miss **Robert Smithson** Mel Chin Jessica Segall Sean Raspet Non-Food Mark Dion Post Commodity Mary Mattingly **Future Farmers** John Sabrow

Fallen Fruit

Olafur Eliasson

Utopia/Dystopia Something Else

Superstudio Archigram
Ron Herron Lebbeus Woods

Hannah Black Cao Fei
Tacita Dean Andrea Zittel
High Desert Test Sites Kadar Attia

Hito Steyerl Elizabeth Blackwell
Ernest Haeckel John James Audubon

Luigi Serafini

## Science Fiction

Movies Artists
Soylent Green Moebius

Logan's Run Jonathan Monaghan

Blade Runner Yael Kanarek

The Fifth Element Francesco Lo Castro

Guardians of the Galaxy Saya Woolfalk Dune A.K. Burns

Desiree Holman

Graduate Assistant: Ryan Paluczak

## LIFE PLANT

This world people are born with a life plant. This plant they are completely tied to these plants for their life. The plants keep people happy and they clean the air inside of their houses. Plants are not allowed to be planted outside because the land is being used for other resources. In this world humans can hear the frequency that their life plants speak. Everyone knows their plant's origin story and and what it's like for them to live inside, in pots, away from their family, etc.

Plants keep people happy in this world, but it comes with a price.

The price at first may seem obvious: the plant dies, and the human dies. But it lay in their care takers: Plant doctors. These doctors, developed out of horticulturists, were spread thin. The reckoning of plants and humans becoming linked came fast, horticulture had been specified down to GMO varieties of corn, soy, a closed field. When the loop closed, the link opened.

The relationship with a life plant is complicated. Hinging on life, death, empathic care, and slow tending. It's hard to remember a time when humans weren't linked to their life plant.

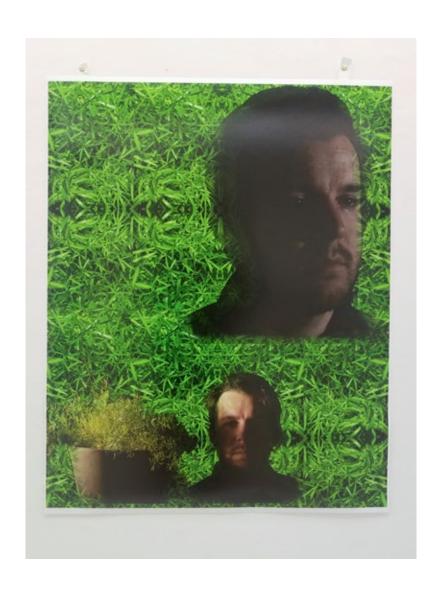
Those were darker times. Darkness came from the light.

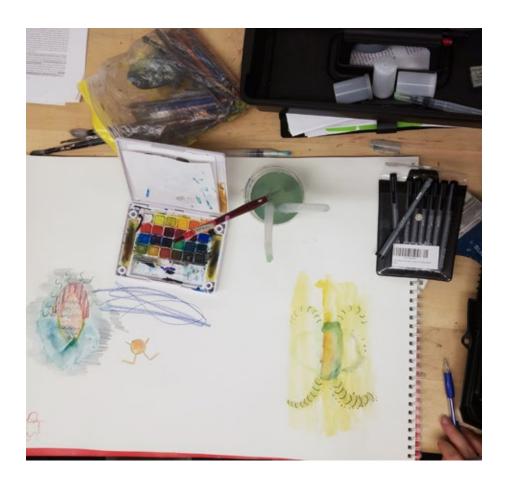
It also put emphasis on larger universe systems. It mattered how much the sun was out. This resulted in efforts to dissolve clouds to improve the potential for full sun plant growth. Global warming rapidly accelerated, water became scarcer from salination. Desertification spread rapidly. It was still getting hotter as the planes flew over head with filtered vacuums to extract clean water directly from clouds (think of giant dehumidifiers). This pure water was then distributed to those who could pay. And pay they did. Because to survive, the life plant must drink. As long as the life plants were alive and cared for, why would anyone care about warming temperatures, disappearing rain, and shrinking biodiversity? Life plant first, human second, earth third. Is this world with life plants really that much different than our own?



Lumpy the Life Plant

## Molly & Tony





#### Camila

"Camela? Camela Pasqual?" I hear someone yelling from the front of the room.

"Did they really say my name wrong?" I murmur to Janella, who is beside me.

"I think so. HAHAHA! Go up there, it's your turn!" She says to me.

"Camela! Camela Marianela Pasquel Salazar?" says the angel in a flower-like voice. She has red hair, chubby cheeks, and brown eyes. Weird, I never thought angels would have brown eyes.

"That's me." I say to her, as she points me to a man sitting beside her. I've never seen Him before, but somehow, I feel like I know Him. He has curly hair, dark skin, probably weighs around 180lbs, and smells really good.

"Hey Camila" He said my name right, He knows me! "It's me, Jesus." He's staring right at me, but I can barely see Him because my eyes are filled with tears.

"I know where you have been, and I know what you have done, but I will, like I promised, stand before My Father in behalf of you. Welcome to Heaven." Jesus says to me.

I hear the crowd of humans fading behind me as I walk straight through these rainbow doors. That, much like what we'd expect, sound like the heavenly "Ahhhhh" from cheesy movies back on earth. Behind the rainbow doors is a really tall girl with a map, and by 'really tall' I mean as tall as a tree. She bends down to show me her map, "Hey Camila, where would you like to stay for your first night in Neoearth? You could pick any country: Pink, Purple, Green, Blue, Turquoise, Red, Orange, Brown, or Yellow? Yellow is my favorite one, that's where God lives."

"Umm, I don't know... surprise me" I say to her.

"Okay, close your eyes" she says to me. I waited a little before I closed them. I was mesmerized by the fact that there was nothing around us. There were no colors, no sound, no walls, no clouds, no cars, no people, nothing. We were

nowhere and somehow still existed. I remember trying to comprehend the idea of "nothing" when I was on earth. I couldn't imagine a place without color, not white nor black, just nothing. This was probably what it was like before God created the world. Unless this has always been and earth is only a small fracture of this never-ending space of nothing. Weird... I close my eyes before I drive myself crazy with all these too deep, high-on-weed, drunk-on-wine, staring at the stars with a friend type of questions.

I open my eyes and everything is pink. Pink trees, pink bananas, pink rhinos, and wait... pink me? What! That's awesome! Tree girl didn't tell me I'd turn pink! How cool! I wonder around for hours looking through this new country called Pink. The ground is like sand on a 75 degrees day on a beach; The perfect type of texture and warmth, except pink. The trees are pink and have pink apples, HA! That's great. As I sit down for a little, I see a dog-size cat walking



Map & creatures from Heaven

### Camila

towards me. "Hey" he says to me, as if it was normal that cats can talk.

"Uhh... hey, what's your name?" I say to this cat who is starting to look oddly familiar.

"Big Cat" he says as I pick up all 18lbs of him and start to ugly cry at the realization that this is my cat; Big Cat, from when I was sixteen.

"How long have you been here?"

"How would I know I'm a cat?" He says with a sassy smirk on his face. "Come here I have something to show you." I follow him. We walk through a lot of pinks hills with lots of crazy pink stuff around us, until we arrive at Green. The first thing I see is an overweight fluffy bunny who just sits in his fat, not in a sad way though, but in a *I-am-fat-and-I-love-it* type of way. Beside him is a baby I don't recognize. "Hey little guy, what's your name?" I say.

"Matteo" he responds. Oh, good God, this is my baby brother! The one my mom miscarried when we were on earth. What a handsome little boy he is, I can't wait for mom to see him.

"Come, Matteo let's go find mom, I know she's somewhere around here."

We walk through Green, and Blue, and Purple, until we get to yellow. When we get to Yellow, I somehow forget what I was looking for. We're on God's land now. I walk towards Him and find myself whole, like nothing is missing. Like, nothing else matters. Like, I never want to leave. I guess this is what the bible was describing when it said, "No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, no mind has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him."

I stop myself for a brief second and look over to my right, to my surprise, I see Janella. I run to her and hug her as tight as I can, "Jam! I'm so happy you're here. Come, I have so much to show you!"



Artifacts from Heaven

#### SUN, SAND, ROCKS, TRILOBITES

## a shortish story by demetri

Mother was off-site. Phalcon was on station as the 0800 inhibitor tech. I am operations 483 on a satalite campus of Excern. Before the crazy data stream and all hell breaking loose I was away from my pod and on my break having lunch. Now there were no more lunches. Nobody left the campus anymore. We were on a level 3 quarintine with prejudice. Even Mother was concerned because need to know on this level often meant probable termination for science techs and other insiders to contain any suspected breech. Mother feared for our lives whenever the project was over.

I was bored after filling another 12 hour shift monitering all sorts of data streams. My tired eyes glazed across a dusty project jacket cover months old. Snapped to the clip read mission stickers randomly attached to the outside.

This one read..."EXCERN: Plasma Regeneration Quantum Entanglement Future Displacement Protocol." I sighed. I caught sight on one from earlier this year STATION: Inception and Inversion of Temperal Distortion Electro-Mag Wave and Visual." Quickly a stroke of dread tore against the walls of my stomach. The jacket from only two weeks ago read..."PROBATIVE YEAR: Random Chaos Adaptation Wave/Bend Unstable- Experimental." And...DEEP TIME: Earth 4026.

I cracked open the jacket again because I could still hardly believe the reports I was seeing, The data I was interpeting, the awuful unreal information we were getting. But the equipment we were invested in was state of the art. Stuff Tesla himself would be scared of. And calabrations were to a thousandth of an atom. Dead accurate. I began to read over the cover report for this segment:

..."We have performed from randomized accelerator oscillations through use of charged particles and quantum entanglement fields, flash electro-mag split



Fossil from Excern

shards of chaos projections in real time. Ripping into far flung dimensions and splitting plus energy charging slices of space time, we have acquired through the employ of 3090 D-16 moto-WAVE processors information, crunching the data in order to gain accurate intercepted impressions of Earth 4026."

My stomach groaned again. I'd read this and read this and still I can hardly (dry gulp):

..."Our data show that since men (no longer present on the earth), there have been fourteen other sustained extinction level events that have transpired. In the year traced 4026 on earth trilobites a creature long thought extinct by men but later found to still exist on the bottom of the ocean have become the dominant life form.

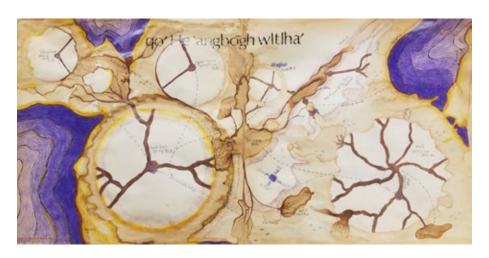
This occurred because during one specific extinction event trilobites in an effort to survive developed the ability to metabolize silicone. Silicone

as it turns out is a far more efficient conductor of bioelectricity than carbon which is the traditional material base for all prior earth life forms. Trilobites thereby developed more complex brain conduits and synaptic connections, while they already had a physiology perfected by billions of years of terrestrial adaptation.

Phased twinned particle placements for constant scan-through entanglement fields enabled us to obtain a flow of time distortions, bent into data waves depicting trilobites involved in some sort of automated reproductive activities using forms of exotic technologies."

I viewed again in a more sickened state the images graphed and coded from the data streams, scratchy, chalky vague images of pink and black exoskeleton and fleshy images of creatures doing painful things. I couldn't hold it anymore and threw up in the garbage can beside the desk. END.

## demetri



Map from Excern





Details from Special Agent's case

Special Agent from Excern explaing artifacts

#### Eleanor

# IMAGINARY UTOPIAN ENVIRONMENTAL WORLDLUCCA, ITALY

Our town was original founded by the Etruscans, and then become a Roman colony. The rectangular grid of the historical center preserves the Roman street plan. Remains of the ancient forum and amphitheater are clues to the history of our community. But it's different now. A massive stonewall built during the Renaissance surrounds our town, initially it was used as a defensive rampart. However military protection is no longer important. Nobody will attack us. The wall is now a pedestrian and bike trail- walking and biking are the main forms of transportation here. We retain the Italian name for this trail- Passeggiata delle Mura. Now only the ambulances and authorities are allowed to have vehicles. Oil and gas have been banned so the few automobiles used are electric. People have become accustomed to relying on their own bodies for transportation. Nobody is as sedentary as they used to be, nobody is as fat.

All of the piazzas and squares have been outfitted with large planters. Our leaders issued local artists to create them- huge ceramic and stone boxes. Some are decorated with pattern and color to enhance aesthetic qualities and contribute to a relaxed and visually appealing atmosphere while others have educational messages. One is dedicated to the periodic table with drawings and descriptions of all of the chemical elements. Another planter has a detailed geographical map of the world. However all of the planters in the public spaces are filled with edible plant such as tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, spinach, cucumbers, radishes, and different herbs. Even though all of the roads are lined with cobblestones, there is green everywhere. Flowerpots, and planters dot every corner and all of the piazzas function as small community gardens and farms. Urban agriculture is treated as a community responsibility here. Everybody cares for the plants together, and anybody can take what they need. All of the fountains have been renovated for the use of aquaponics- that provides fish (for special occasions) and even more edible plant food. Even though meat is rarely consumed, nobody goes hungry here.

Churches and cathedrals, examples of medieval and Romanesque architecture such as Duomo di San Martino and San Michele in Foro have been repurposed as public centers and are used for events, performances, and educational opportunities. Our community promotes freedom of religion, however it is not a priority. It is considered a personal choice and is not funded or impacted by government regulations. The government is a feminist social democracy and provides free healthcare and education. Large corporations such as McDonalds and Wal-Mart are banned, and there are tax breaks for small businesses. Drugs are decriminalized, and natural and herbal remedies largely replace pharmaceuticals. Most homes have gardens that grow marijuana, aloe Vera, thyme, lavender, and rosemary. The government is a socialist democracy, and health care and education are free. Citizens are highly taxed but nobody minds because the well-being and success of the community is more important then individual wealth. The government is run predominately by women- a refreshing change to the patriarchal system of authority that has dominated most of Western civilization for all of history. T



Map of Lucca

## Eleanor



Main Transportation in Lucca





Flag of Lucca

## **Emily**

## SPONGE PORE

Sponge world is in our world, it is a part of our world. A part and apart at the same time.

Sponge world is a place in which the things we loose, forget about and drop reside.

Things coagulate there. Things correspond there. Things become old and new again there.

Inside the pore of the sponge you find a very small very particular world of organisms. Some sentient some not. Some feed on the sponge. Some feed on one another. The organisms living within the sponge do not procreate. They are okay living and dying and knowing that their kind will not go on. This is because they do not often think of the future. This is also due to the fact that they cannot procreate as they do not have the organs to do such (some are rice, some are hair). They do however know that eventually in years and years from now when the entire sponge has been consumed they will die. The creatures know this and accept this. They are happy to live in the present and to enjoy the soft smelliness of the sponge.

The world inside the pore affects them. Once they enter the pore of the sponge they become affected with an agency that deems them an importance that the outside world fails to acknowledge. Inside the pore they are with and among their kind who have been forgotten, lost and overlooked. Inside the pore of the sponge they find hope and happiness.



## **Emily**





#### **Emma**

## THE GLOW ZONE

1.0067.3098

I ventured close to the Glow Zone this eve. Though it's the season of Frostfall the Glow Zone was devoid of any frost at all. In fact the Glow was warm, inviting, enticing maybe. D'art convinced us all to go. We were all so curious. I was shaking the entire trip, partially from nerves and partially from frost. The scariest part was sneaking out of the city. We managed to blend in with the last of the Rai'gt traders leaving town as they moved through the gates. As long as we kept out antenna covered we were invisible. I wish I could describe it better...You couldn't see where it ended, just a vast plane of neon glow. We should visit again sometime.

1.0067.3100

I need to go back to the Glow Zone. I find myself longing for the warmth of the Glow again. I'm a little nervous though, I mean there must be a reason we aren't allowed to go there right? I know I've heard the stories from when the Glow first arrived, but when I was there it was empty. There was nothing. No Agapi plants that released poisonous spores, no Wa'ill fighting each other to the death, just nothing. I don't understand what everyone is so afraid of.

1.0067.3108

D'art agreed to go back with me! We ventured much further into the Glow this time, and it felt better and better as we walked. There was a dense fog that muted some of the Glow that eve, then it began to rain! The ground squelched beneath us as we moved. We found remnants! There's a hole in my sweater now when it snagged on a dead Qilpi tree. I'll need to patch it up, I can't let anyone see the damage to my sweater, they'll think so much less of me! Sweaters mean EVERYTHING!

1.0067.3115

It burns all over my body. Oozing lumpy sores have appeared over the eve. As they pop they release the Glow. I can feel the hot neon seep into the air. I can't let anyone see this! They would ridicule me! They would kick me out! My sweater might get taken away, I've worked so hard for it they can't do this! I'm so scared right now, I won't go outside today. I hope D'art is okay...

I need more Glow. They can't keep me from it! I don't care what the others say, I NEED it! It would never hurt me intentionally, it was just welcoming me. They just don't understand. D'art has sores too, never wants to go back. I don't care I am going back! 1.0067.3130

I think someone has been watching me sneak to the Glow Zone. I keep seeing shadows all around me every time I step outside. They're watching. They know. Or am I just being paranoid? No, they want to keep me from it! They hate the Glow, they hate me! I DON'T CARE I NEED IT.

1.0067.3155

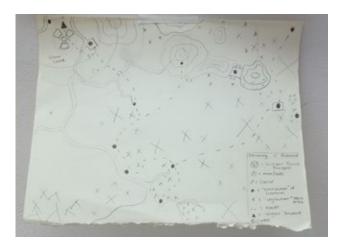
My sweater was taken from me today. They noticed my glowing lumps. I am no one. I am nothing. D'art watched as they kicked me out of the city. The Glow is my only option now. They say there are Others in the Glow somewhere. I hope I can find them. The lumps burn all over my body yet I am freezing in this frost!

1.0067.3167

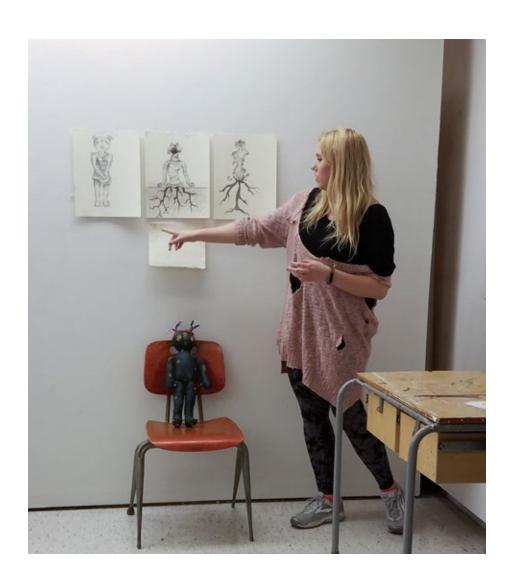
I am INFESTED. Whatever, what does it matter anymore?! Without my sweater I have nothing else. I am the Glow now. 1.0067.3200

I found the Others! Their Glow led me to them! I felt their heat as I ventured closer. Every eve we lay together and chant, "One with the glow!" Oh how wonderful! The lumps don't even hurt anymore! Everyone's Glow is so beautiful, it radiates out so divine! SO WONDERFUL!

## ONE WITH THE GLOW ONE WITH THE GLOW ONE WITH THE GLOW ONE WITH THE GLOW



## Emma











A person from the futures explains the Glow Zone

Creatures from the Glow Zone

### Hannah

#### TIME 0450. DATE 3065 06 24

We landed three days ago on a territory with rocky terrain and lifeforms. We made contact with the native civilization. They call themselves the Danes from Daneland. They embody a collective consciousness. There are genderless and sexless humanoids. Slight figured but relatively short. Their environment has similar characteristics to Earth. Their atmosphere has similar levels of oxygen and pressure to ours. Captain Eli made the mistake of taking his helmet off too soon after finding out their atmosphere contained oxygen. Five minutes later he fainted due to oxygen toxicity.

The natives show more curiosity towards every day. Major Wong recalibrated our translators. We are communicating with pictures we draw in the dirt and with our hands. Two hands clapping in front of our face means "Hello". Waving an index finger in a circle means how are you. Pointing your index finger to the left twice means I am fine. We are getting closer every day with understanding their language but we are still learning.

So far, the samples we've collected yield positive results for consumption and growth. However, the natives are reluctant to share resources. We have to keep our terra suits on because there is not enough oxygen for us to breathe. We are still taking air samples to see if their air is compatible.

They are willing to help us maintain power supply with exchanges of our excess minerals from Earth. Their figures are stout. No hair but are covered in spotted markings. They have an interest in alchemy and are active herbalist. Every day we are gaining their trust but they are not making it easy. We are doing the best we can and avoiding being too stupid. Anyway, I have to get back to work. They agreed to allow us to collect blood samples for the minerals in our wedding rings and jewelry. I'm sure you can find another ring at the commissary when I get back.

PS: I'll attach samples of their soil and terrain in a pod. It should arrive no later than 15 days.

Love Dave

#### TIME 1132 DATE 3065 07 06

I am writing to you from our Wisconsin home in Montana. The Great Falls research facility received your samples yesterday. The data we unpacked bypasses all of our expectations. Unfortunately, you will have to keep your flight suit on. The atmosphere is not compatible with out physiology. We will be shipping more materials and trade goods. Maybe another wedding ring if you're lucky.

We are understaffed but we can stay here as long as we want to complete work. We are running out of time and resources down here too.



Daneland

## Hannah





## Jake

The spectrums of visible light, electromagnetism, sound, and vibration need not be concerned Anthropocentric knowledge and conception does not intersect with such phenomenon What arrogance to even begin writing about what cannot be known Yet, we can conceive that we cannot conceive And thus, we dream of a dimension beyond our own Consciousness has no form of manifestation, even so, existence is present To call this death would be once again, our pride in anthropocentricism No, this is not like living and dying, like 1's and 0's Tempo and time, rhythm and pulse, are not submitted by our constructs But where? Adrift? A space? A blank? A void? But what? Not so much creature, but entity Not so much who, but whole Neither all nor power, but whole as in any No god nor spirit, no almighty Just any

And still, we conceive that which we cannot conceive

And thus, we desire a dimension beyond our own



Creatures







#### Janella

In an early spring afternoon in the city of Roseville, Josef decides to cut geology class and head home early instead.

"And all of the Earth's ice caps melted, and the sea level has risen, and they did this and that. Ugh! Is there anything you can teach that I haven't learned yet?" Josef grumbles to himself while exiting the school's front doors. He decides to walk home to simmer down.

The city of Roseville is a place dominated by white-colored buildings, white-colored roads and bridges, and white-colored vehicles. With white surfaces generating higher albedo, the heat caused by the ever-growing sun gets alleviated. Josef blends in with his white jumpsuit and shoes. He opens the door to his house and gets greeted by a robot cooking.

"You're home earl-"

"I already know what the professor's going to say before he could even finish what he's saying, mom. I know about today's lecture like the back of my hand," Josef said defensively.

"Well, don't think that you're gonna get away that easily," said Josef's mom – her voice emitted by a built-in speaker inside the robot. "I won't be home till dark. I need you to pick up the flowers your father ordered for me. Now, go on. Be safe, honey," she sends Josef a virtual goodbye kiss, and Josef leaves grudgingly.

Josef takes the bullet train to get to the flower shop located in the out-skirts of Roseville. He sits on the window side and looks out unenthusiastically. As the train moves further away from the city, the roads transition from clean white surfaces to rugged gray asphalt, and the smooth white buildings of the city change to old musty establishments. Upon seeing this, Josef smiles. He likes it when the pictures in the books he reads come to life. The outskirts of Roseville still hold traces of the past world from 500,000 to 1 million years ago, and Josef is fascinated by this. He gets off at Carolstream station with a satisfied mood and heads straight to the flower shop.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Wight!" Josef said as he entered the shop.

"Why, good afternoon to you too, Josef! Let me guess, your mom sent you to pick up these lovely solacactas," said Mr. Wight as he showed a bouquet of what looks like sunflowers with thick prickly stems like cactuses.

"They're beautiful, Mr. Wight. Thank you!"

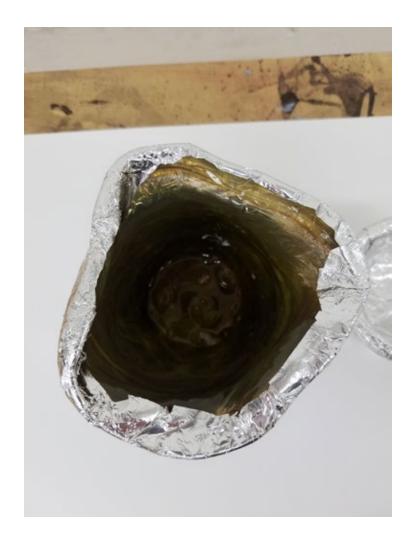
"Do take care of them, dear," said Mr. Wight as he bade goodbye.

Josef returns to the train station and sits under a waiting shed, carefully holding the solacactas. "I still can't believe you guys used to have thin stems," he says to the bouquet. "I mean, were you able to hold enough water in this kind of heat?" He continues. "Well, I guess it wasn't 150 degrees back then, but..." Josef babbled on with his questions until the bullet train finally came.



## Janella





Artifacts from Roseville Detail from Artifact

## CLICK, CLANK, KRUNK

the plushy ground quivers from the strange thing sitting there... there in the middle of a shining field of copper. its movements seem odd; awkward from the mismatched proportions of what can only be described as its arms and legs. perhaps I want to personify the thing, I can hardly help myself from doing so. there is something sexy about its movement, relative to the silk-like pillow on to which it sits. it bounces up and down. it comes forth. it recedes. I feel a bit bad for it, but at the same time feel like it is happy in this place. (maybe not happy, but perhaps more like pleasant. or not unhappy.) the thing doesn't seem to mind me staring at it, but it is hard to tell how it truly feels.

I notice a collection of us are sitting around it now, where we all came from...I have no idea. there is a similarity between us, but at the same time I feel different from the rest of them. I do wonder where they came from, but at the same time time I feel apathetic to the need to get to know them. I feel a bit self-conscious about my body in space around them as every one of us is stoic, static. perhaps about to speak, or readjust, or lean slightly. yet we all seem tentative to do so. maybe we wait for someone else to move first. someone else to tell us it is ok to do so. a yearning for permission.

I notice the thing in the middle again. its movements seem sporadic, but they are constant, cyclical. a melancholy feeling strikes me, I don't know why. I just feel it. others must feel it too. they must. I must. the thing rumbles again, its leg awkwardly moves in a way that must feel painful. I feel its pain. I walk towards it.

Click, Clank, Krunk

111111



Mapping



Kinetic Sculpture

## Δ TO>(IC NILE RUNS THROUGH THE GARDEN

It cannot be seen, nor heard, nor smelt. SO MAKE DEDUCTIONS! It has no taste, further it cannot be grasped by any anthropomorphic appendage. Don't be fooled because it can and is sensed but only by special organic machines.

Plantae, the universe is exactly the same to us.

Just as the Bohr model replicates an atom (or doesn't) marks on contrived maps try to replicate this living world. It is the world as you know it played by a different set of rules. Take the map. It may not mean much at first. Stay persistent. Search and search through it. Plot things out. Study this abstract environment through the mind of a human only because I'm assuming you lack the "mind" of a plant.

Take your Time, but be wary because even that is a product of human thought. Artists and Mathematicians, great human minds, they'll find a way to navigate this hot mess of a map. Look, meaningless patterns abound spinning, shaking, and swirling. It's just motion. Patterns here and there, all we can do is make meaning from patterns. Motion is made from linear time. Motion is frames in a movie, Life. Follow the sun and make order from an infinite sequence of landscapes. This you will never unlearn. It's a logical process. Your brain is the latest OS. Keep scouring the map. This looks like that and that looks like this. Put them together, make categories. If given enough examples, then surely those witty academics will make some meaning out of this.

Submerse. Leave them there for centuries in the minds of plants. VR is on the rise; drown in a Bohr model map. It's 2218 C.E. and those academics are still under. The world is beginning to look a lot like it used to.

There is no alternate reality for the current state of human sentience. Sci-fi reality could be a quick adaptation period and an aesthetic twist away from the physical world you currently experience. Plants or Animals?

Humans of higher knowledge. Who can tell the difference?

Good and Bad are not quite absolute.

Is life sacred? I suppose the universe remains whether you are sustained or not.

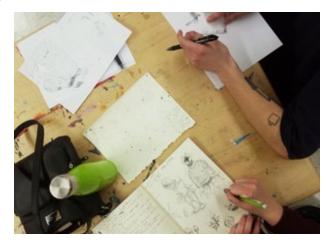
They say climate change sucks; I say yes. It makes me fucking anxious. Sometimes I faint and wake up tangled in the shower curtains.

Climate Change Bad (it has something to do with the human narrative)

Climate Change Bad (I'm sure those of Kingdom Plantae feel the same)

Keep searching.

The field of data rest under you and around. Put good in, get good out. These worlds are only separated by different means of processing. We are Chthonic Kin living in two different worlds, facing the same imminent extinction.



Keagan and Emma Drawing



Keagan discussing his video

## WORLD NARRATIVE

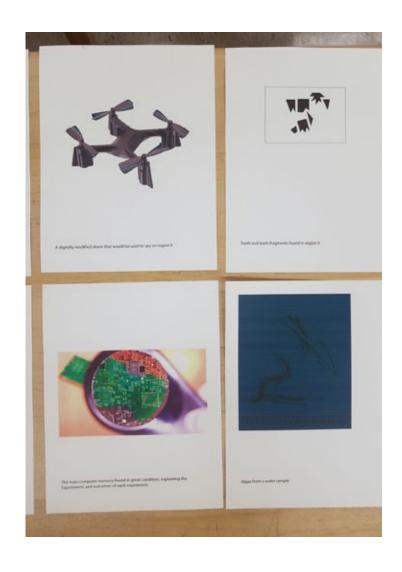
In the year 3000 a world of experimentation and development was far underway. The world was broken up into four regions. All regions being separated by water, the people of region I constructed bridges to connect each region to another and continue their experimentation. The first region had the most people, mainly scientists that experimented on the living, in region II. People inhabited region II at first, but after the fatal gas outbreak, the residents that could get out did and the rest of the residents died an agonizing death. After this outbreak the bridge that connected them to region I was destroyed. Some of the plants and animals also died, but most were able to adapt to the new living environment, changing their forms completely. The mutated species were able to feast on those that died and gained more power in the process. The scientists in region I could not understand why some animals couldn't adopt but several could. Therefore, they walled up region II to continue their study with the new species and they were able to finish the wall without any of them escaping. Keeping these species contained in this region. Region III and IV were the over flow regions for where the people that did escape (people, animals, even plants) were able to build a new life for themselves.

Life went on just fine with no one entering region II except for drones that provided live feed back to region II. It wasn't until year 3403 that World War Seven had officially broken out again regions I, III, IV vs. the ever so power region II. These new species have continued to multiple, each new generation gaining more strength. This generation was able to dig and just keep digging until they were able to get under the wall. They invaded Region I first to take their revenge on those who built the wall. (Describe the attack here). Moving on to region III and IV to kill and take over their land. Ending with a massive feast of the human and animal remains.

This world had been completely taken over by the new species, as their new developments for the regions continue. These species are very smart and able to construct a new life for themselves. For now region I was where the upper class lives since it was the most developed. And region II, III, and IV are the rest of the residents no order to where one was place. As they start to create their living quarters, they develop the structure of neighborhoods with having no neighborhood the same. These creatures have now become the dominant species.



Artifacts from the 4 Regions





Artifacts from the 4 Regions

Artifacts from the 4 Regions

## THE LAND OF THE ZOBRIST MICROBES

In the happy place of Landaff, microorganisms of the Zobrist tribe thrive. The clump of skin flakes they call their home live behind the ear of a host, Steve, unknown to them. They have not reached the technology or know how to know of the world outside their existence. They do not seem this mind this fact.

Zobrist are not an advanced group, but one that lives in their simple lives. They live and feed off of the sweat waters that surround their skin flake land, and sometimes eat from the land itself to survive. The organisms never have to worry about their lands disappearing from consumption, for the musty sweat tides rolls in more skin constantly. The landscape is ever changing. Landmasses that float around and attach to each other are held together with the oils of the sweat seas. Metropolis are formed when a mountain range of dirt drifts along and are lodged together. They become gathering places where cities are formed, and rulers keep the microbes safe.

Unbeknownst to them, the host body that their world thrives is about to get a deep clean. Steve never usually cleans behinds his ears, but his mother insisted he do. Was it punishment? Torture? Steve doesn't know. But he knows his mom will check if he doesn't. She's a weird mom like that.

The steaminess of the hot water surrounds the lands. Living in shade their whole lives the Zobrist didn't see it coming. The ancestors have passed down the stories of natural disaster and destruction of which only a few survive. The Zobrist had only heard of this phenomenon in legends.

Hazy hot atmosphere starts to liquefy the lands. Landscapes start to split at a devastating rate. The dirt mountain cities rumble and rip apart. The sweat seas that used to be their safe haven have now started to engulf them in the lands.

Some survivors stay in groups to try and protect themselves from the destruction, but the worst was yet to come.

A rolling foam bigger than their mountains grows casting darkness that they have never experienced. Along with the threating sight, a change in their atmosphere starts to occur. A new refreshing scent surrounds them, more horrible and clean then their world can bare. The Zobrist know when the darkness comes, the deadly fresh scent comes with it. It becomes the poison in this atmosphere that tries to kill them. As the foam engulfs them, chaos ensues. Zobrist cling to each other, hoping the tsunami of cleanliness won't take them.

After 15 minutes of the disaster, only few Zobrist remain. They will have to wait to see what skin landmasses bring in the next few days. They will hope to find more survivors as well as rebuild their civilization.



The Land of Landaff

## Kirsten





The Zobrist The Zobrist of Landaff

### Michael

## A SHORT STORY

The balmy nature of my sweaty hands, my furled brow, and my racing heart tell me that I 've been running full tilt for the past few hours. It's fucking happened again... I'm still lying in bed slowly waking up from last night's sleep. The story is still there in my mind, appearing in quick flashes,

- I will remember it this time -

I find my notepad to write down their names, to write what I saw and where I went,

and just like last time, it appeared again anew, sitting on my bedside table where I normally keep my pen.

It's slightly different from the others I've received. I wonder what message it holds. Do I have the patience to see, hear, and hold it? The residue sticks to my hands, it feels glossy, it's textured yet soft. It seems to bend in the light and form to my hand.

(takes out the artifact: a spherical globe, made from wax, flocking, and with an individualized message inside)

Why can't I remember?

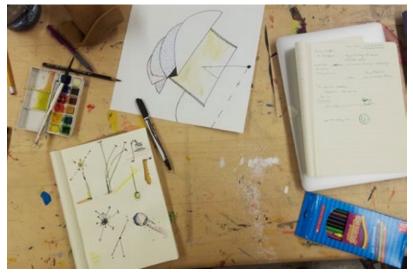
As I hold the artifact, it reacts to the heat of my hand still warm from just having woken up. The once coarse outer shell slowly smooths down through constant play as I weave it through my fingers and caress it in my hand. The residue leaves a faint dye on my fingers that slowly fade just like my memories of the unconscious world.

I can only go when I dream or meditate but nothing is remembered. Just like

the fading narratives of experience, all I am able to write down disappears like the memory, only leaving moments of sensed experience and déjà vu. I know I've met others, fallen in love, lived lifetimes, I've fallen to my death, been robbed, been reborn, discovered god...how do you describe the feeling of these moments when no memory remains, and all that is left is a sense of knowing that something has been experienced. A feeling of something greater, that leaves only silent whispers that emerge from the smallest tokens of what I know to prove it real.

## The World Itself:

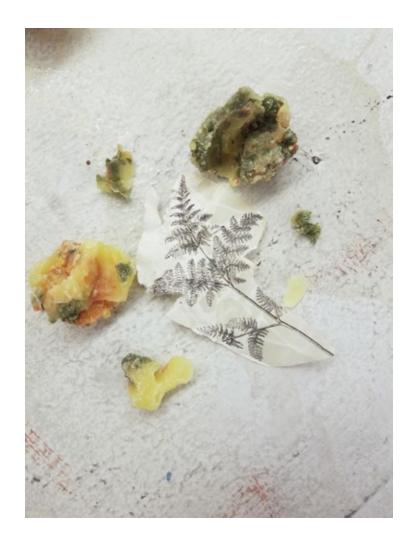
My world exists in the unconscious mind. It is the place that everyone goes to when we dream, meditate, or lose ourselves in moments. We enter the world and have full experiences only to wake up and either remember very little to nothing of our time there. The world can be shared as well as individually experienced but there is little control over how our experiences unfold. There are times when we wake up and remember friends, enemies, lovers, or strangers in our dreams. These moments are real and you did experience the unconscious world with these people. However, when we wake to our present world, only one person is gifted with the flashes of memory of the experience. This means that you, and all others within the world have experiences together yet only one person is gifted with the memory, it is slightly cruel. The artifact is what is left behind from the forgotten moments, it is the documentation and proof of where we have been.



Map and Creatures

## Michael





Artifact: Dream Wax

Artifact: A message from the Dream Wax

## Molly

I wish this was not a grotesque tale, but Earth does not have a pretty end. Let's begin with year 2050. Some humans continued to participate in the environmental revolution that began in the 20th century, while others did not. People were living while the environment continued to suffer. The emission output of humans was increasing, causing the toxicity of the atmosphere to now be an irreversible entity. Temperatures were rising, which only accelerated glacial melting. As fossil fuels continued to be burned, more heat was trapped in the atmosphere. The ocean was absorbing 90% of the increased atmospheric heat, and as a result, expanding. The water became a destructive force. Shorelines began to erode while storm surges pushed inland. Due to the high population density of coastal areas, floods and storms resulted in mass deaths. Large numbers of humans fled inwards in attempt to survive, resulting in overpopulated areas of filth and sickness. To make matters worse, it was getting hotter. These atmospheric conditions were uninhabitable for all land species, so most died off within the next few hundred years. With most of the world largest cities being located on a coast, all were eaten by the sea. Pollution and other waste material associated with these cities was now part of the water. The ocean was creeping inland on every continent while consuming the rotten remnants of land beings and their activities. Ice cap and glacial formations continued to melt, causing the sea level to rise about 60ft a year. Earth's surface is now one hundred percent water.

Humans were wiped out by water, filthy living conditions, and the heat. As to be expected, all other land beings were wiped out because no species could adapt to a water environment fast enough. Insects and birds were killed off soon after when the heat was uninhabitable. It is now 3400, and not a particle of water on earth isn't polluted. The water surface atmosphere is 700 degrees (F) and is toxic. Consisting of emissions that have been trapped in the atmosphere for over a thousand years, the air is polluted and stagnant. Due to the extreme heat of the atmosphere, the ocean temperature has increased drastically. All evidence of human life has contaminated the farthest reaches and depths of this water covered planet. Many marine species became extinct, due to rapid condition change, but others adapted well. Over the years, the underwater cities of waste and pollution have become ecosystems. All beings of this planet have evolved to survive in this murky world.



## Molly





### Pam

## COMMISSION FOR PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF PLANETARY ADAPTATION POTENTIAL (PAPAP)

#### Scheduled Surveillance Report: S: L<sub>10</sub>3.28869 P: 3

This report describes results of the most recent surveillance pass of S:  $L_{10}3.28869$  P: 3, providing an update of the previous routine pass at t-500 orbits.

#### **Background**

The planet was placed on this accelerated 500-orbit surveillance schedule after a series of catastrophic events was detected locally at about t-2500 orbits. An off-schedule pass at that time was able to reconstruct the catastrophic sequence, based on direct observations and collection of cultural relics of the planet's Apical Sentient Species (ASS). See Citations below for references to all prior full reports.

At t-2507 orbits, an iron-dense asteroid 12.8 km in diameter approached P3 with predicted impact near the center of a stable tectonic plate on crustal emergent area 3 (landmasses numbered in order of decreasing area). ASSes of landmass 3 launched a rapid fusion device (FU) toward the asteroid, apparently attempting to deflect the object's trajectory to the large H<sub>2</sub>O/ electrolyte zone ("marine" zone) along the trailing edge of landmass 3. ASSes of landmass 1 (which would have suffered coastal surface surges with the altered trajectory) launched several rapid binary fusion (FU2) devices in an attempt to destroy the FU before it reached the asteroid. Faulty calculations in all launches (failure to consider the mega-FU-bar variable) caused all devices to trigger simultaneously on contact with the asteroid as it entered P3's outer atmosphere. The main mass of the asteroid contacted the surface at the unstable conjunction of three tectonic plates on the trailing edge of landmasses 3 and 4. A fragment approximately 2 km in diameter struck near the original contact point (at the site of a nuclear spent-fuel deposit), and a large field of debris carrying plutonium 239 and other isotopes was created outside and within the atmospheric layer.

Consequences of these occurrences over the next 200 orbits included:

 Atmospheric particulate debris and volcanic clouds caused abnormal temperature fluctuations and reduction of stellar radiation reaching P3's surface, profoundly disrupting energy-exchange cycles of

- ASSes, Other Sentient Species (OSS, "animals"), and stellar-radiation sentient species (SRSS, "plants");
- Radioactive contamination and ozone faults caused widespread genetic defects and reduced reproductive success in most autogenous forms ("life forms");
- Disruption of P3's magnetic field by the asteroid's large eccentric iron mass caused geographic disorientation of many OSSes and ASSes.
   Destruction of artificial ASS satellites by incoming debris further impaired orientation of ASSes.

Follow-up passes of P3 at 500-orbit intervals have documented the profound alterations of P3's geomorphology and the gradual recovery of habitability as radiation has diminished and temperatures and magnetic field have stabilized. The current pass confirmed this process of recovery.

#### Methods

During the course of twelve rotations, the laboratory scanned and took samples from the six largest land masses, two H<sub>2</sub>O bodies and four marine bodies on P3. Details of methodology and results of the analyses within H<sub>2</sub>O bodies are found in an accompanying report. Within each land mass, rasters were completed of randomly sampled areas within eight major topographic zones representing variations of temperature, H<sub>2</sub>O concentration, and elevation. First pass remote screening probes detected nonrandom motion, constant-temperature anomalies, elevated stellar radiation absorption, carbon and nitrogen fixation, radioactive emission and CO<sub>2</sub> emission.

When screening revealed areas with levels varying from background, fine pass probes were used, and samples of surface material were retrieved for examination on the laboratory ship. After examination, sample materials were returned to the area from which they had been taken. The short form ASSESS rating was completed.

#### Results

- Radiation levels: Radiation levels were still elevated compared to adjacent planets and pre-catastrophe results for P3. Total point radiations were approximately 25,000 millirems/orbit, with plutonium 239 present in all samples tested.
- Plants: These forms are essential to complex communities of life forms on P3 as they are the principal autotrophs, capable of capturing radiant energy in chemical bonds. All forms were sessile and fixed carbon. A wide variety of plants was found in most areas with >

## Pam

 $15\%~{\rm H_2O}$  from equator to subpolar latitudes. Though most forms were small and lacked vascular tissue, enough biomass was present to support multispecies communities. The number of larger vascular plant types (mass up to 50 kg) has increased significantly since the last pass (t-500 orbits), with some multi-orbit forms present.

- Animals (nonrandom motion/temperature anomaly forms): The number of types of one-cell organisms, some with distinctive one-strand reproductive molecules, was increased since the last pass. Most multicellular animal forms were detected through nonrandom motion paths and did not have constant body temperatures. Energy pathways for these involved consumption of plants, other animals, or breakdown products of formerly living forms. Animals ranged in size to about 400g. Two groups which had been pre-catastrophe dominants, nematode worms and insects, have diversified to fill many new niches. The absence of larger (1 500 kg) animals, which were common in the pre-asteroid era, was still notable. A few small bands of ASSes were located on landmasses 3 and 5, widely separated from each other. Genetic drift is still evident in these groups, affecting vigor and reproduction.
- The short form ASSESS rating for P3 ASSes was 11.0, unchanged from the prior pass (see Appendix 1).

#### Discussion and Recommendation

P3 is recovering as predicted from the asteroid/ASS catastrophe. While high radiation levels, atmospheric particulates and ozone gaps were still present, they are no longer sufficient to prevent the initial stages of recovery of autogenous communities. The absence of larger organisms is attributed to bioaccumulation of radiation and other toxins during energy transfer when several levels of predation occur.

Based on current ASSESS ratings (see Appendix 1), the PAPAP Commission recommends a future pass of P3 after about 350 orbits. By then remnant ASSes will probably no longer be an issue, radiation levels will be acceptable, and other life forms will be robust enough to sustain settlement. Settlers from Empathia would be appropriate, as they are tolerant of the high levels of atmospheric  $\rm O_2$  and  $\rm N_2$  on P3, are also capable of living in the marine areas, and have an ASSESS rating of 28.5, much higher than the native ASSes of the planet.



 $\begin{array}{c} Appendix\ 1 \\ Apical\ Sentient\ Species\ Evaluation\ and\ Scoring\ System\ (ASSESS) \\ Current\ Pass\ Results\ for\ ASSes\ of\ S\ L_{10}3.28869,\ P3 \end{array}$ 

Category	Score (max 5)	Rationale
1. Acceptable habitat range on P3	0.5	Both orbital and planetary zones limited; adapted to inhabiting only 12.5% of P3's surface (galaxy ASS habitat mean = 59%)
2. Decision-making	1.5	Routinely capable of predicting consequences of behavior, but this input frequently not used in decision-making
3. Longevity	1.0	Short lifespan, frequently adversely affected by behavior (see #2); long learning period
4. Reproductive regulation	1.0	Fertility not controlled physiologically by population density (though this common in OSS of P3); see also #2
5. Sensory input	2.0	Limited to narrow ranges in 5 modalities; no synesthesia; technological augmentation frequently needed even for activities of daily living
6. Intraspecies communication	2.0	Effectively limited to 2 sensory modalities; geographically fragmented with significant signifier/signified slippage
7. Interspecies communication	0.5	Generally lacking; most attempts are ASS to OSS transmissions which do not detect OSS replies
8. Intraspecies altruism	1.0	Primarily limited to isolated cases of learned behavior; weak genetic component is recessive, evidently not X-linked (much stronger evidence in P3's OSS)
9. Interspecies empathy	1.0	Occasionally, isolated toward domesticated OSS (see #7)
10. Planetary stewardship	0.5	Score had dropped dramatically even before catastrophe; linked to aggressive resource extraction, poor waste control, and population spike (see #2, #4, #6)
Total Score	11	

Note: Planets with ASSESS ratings of  $\geq$  25 are evaluated with the ASSESS long form and may qualify for supportive interventions. Planets with ASSESS ratings less than 15 will be passively monitored at more frequent intervals to determine if scores trend upward or if the ASSes become extinct, making the planet available for resettlement.

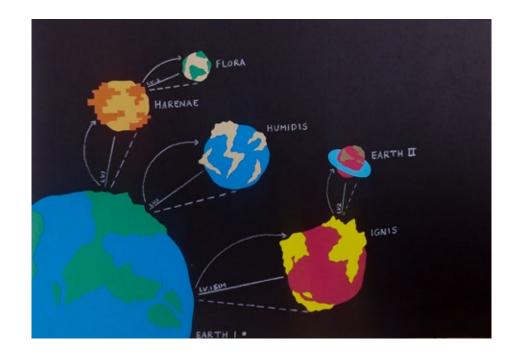


## Tyler

The wind ripped across my face as I made my way down the winding path from the village, searing my tears into my cheeks. The low hum and crackle of the lamps clicking on and off as I passed gave rhythm to my steps as I made my way towards the Great Plain. From the hilltop I must have looked like just another light bug finding its way in the night. I felt about just as significant as one at that time. I wanted to get away. The wooden slats that made up the paths were treacherous in the low light. The sun belts emitted an ominous blue glow that, while beautiful, did little to provide ambient light on my journey- forcing me to rely solely on the lanterns of my forefathers. I counted my blessings as the paths were at least dry. The rising waters would fully submerge the lowlands at least two or three times a cycle. Luckily the Sky has been happy with the village's actions of late and provided the Land with moderate rains. I tried to console myself- the wind only picks up more out in the open.

I could hear chimes faintly twinkling in the distance from the Elder's tent. Damn them. All I've ever known is this field and the nonsense they've perpetuated for as long as time has known our people. The elders once told me of the White Sphere, a disk in the night illuminating the paths of the shepherds who came before us. A story told in jest at the time, poking fun at my evening walks. Some of the Greater Elders told of men with great aspirations who once stood upon the White Sphere and looked back on their people from above. As much as I don't believe them, I certainly wished it were true for the sake of light.

The raised wooden paths slowly turned into dirt roads as I made my way out of the lowlands- a sign I had made it out of our village's boundary, but also their protection. I clenched my hands tightly on my staff and looked back one last time. A warm glow radiated from the peak where the village sat. The flicker of flames painted the sides of the tents, making the village appear to sway and dance, almost as if to celebrate my departure. I knew things would go on without me, and I would go on without it. A new world surrounded me, and it was mine for the taking.



## Tyler



Currency





Creatures Landscape