

Gecko on table staring up at light

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“Gecko-scooter” with pump-action pedals.

Bingo gambling

The dangling lamp above me fascinated
White light
Moths and other night insects flying around
Wondered what they tasted like
Bitter

Lying on my circular table
Staring up at the light

Snare-drumming my fingers against the table
Left hand, then right, then left

Peeled off some old skin from my chest
Staring up at the light

My remaining “friends” had left an hour before
We had gambled using bingo-like cards
And plastic chips
No-one ate the chips this time
That I saw

They had all left
It wasn't the same
Without my friend

Friend's death

A couple weeks before
My friend had died
Lived in my ex-grandmother's house
With me

My house, her house, my ex-grandmother's house
Half fly-screen enclosed patio
A large green table in the centre
Above which hung a light
Against the wall was a sink
Run from water collected by the corrugated iron roof

The other half was into a single room was enclosed
My bed was on one side
Her bed on the other
She was closest to the sink and mirror 😞
Her bed was now empty

I stared at the light
Lying on the green table
It dimmed slightly
As my power box faded

Her body I buried two days after she died
A shallow grave a ways from the house
Her/my friends visited
Noted their respects to the grave
And went on with their lives

She was perfectly healthy
I'm not sure why she died
She was happy in the evening
A headache
Dead in the morning

The party conversation

What happened at the party?
Was there any conversation?

It may have revolved around alcohol (not quite alcohol, but the
same effect)

Or throwing gambling pieces around
Or where to holiday
Or who was losing
Or who was winning
Or "I saw you eat that chip!"

Got eyed by one of the "boys"
Nothing mentioned about stars
Nothing about getting off the planet
Nothing about our voice-only friends
Who didn't exist to her/my friends, then around the table

Hominids

Hominids lived nearby
No-one visited them
I won't mention why

On my bicycle
I walked it a kilometre down a small track
At a T-intersection with a road
I bicycled to the left
The Hominids were to the right

Reaching the hamlet half an hour later
Was a parts store
And a part-time restaurant
And a few gecko houses
And a food store

When in need of money
I worked at the food store
It paid for food I couldn't find in the wild
And a few repairs to my house, my friend's house, and my ex-
grandmother's house

Job

The light no longer lit
My power supply had died
They normally lasted for years

I returned left to the village
Accepted work at the shop
Taking money from people
Cleaning up
Stocking food

In a few weeks I would have enough money
I could purchase another power supply
And then stop work until I needed more

Nothing mattered much without my friend

I worked
Maybe a week

The offer

A hominid drove up
You'd call it a 1930's diesel pickup truck
In the tray were goods for the shop
Brought in by spaceplanes
Which they controlled

I unloaded the goods
He eyed me off, curious
He liked the look of my eyes
I could tell
The surrounding skin was exceptionally colourful

“I heard you wanted to get off the planet?”, said the Hominid.

Yes

“Are you sure?”

Yes

I was depressed

“I’ll stop by in a few days.”

A tube

Two days later he stopped by

He entered the store

Asked me to come out

This time his truck’s tray had no goods

In the back of his pickup

A glossy black cylinder lay

Elliptical

A bit taller than me

Wider

He pulled it off

Stood it vertically

Opened it like a oyster shell

“All you have to do to get off the planet is step in.”

“I’ll close it around you.”

“You’ll be on a spaceplane tonight.”

“I don’t know where you’ll go though.”

I stepped in

He closed the oyster shell

The trip

The tube’s inside was dark
There were some holes for air, and waste
Just above my eyes
A scratched-plastic window
Lit the interior
And showed the sky

The man raised me (and the tube)
Pushed me onto his ute
I didn’t mind
The space was too small
The air too stuffy
Gecko panic could have arrived
But I didn’t mind

I was depressed.

I was going to leave
My/her friends I hadn’t told
Nor the shopkeeper for whom I was working

I was depressed

The car door opened
The man climbed in
The car door closed
The engine started
And drove us away

My bicycle left behind

Twenty minutes of bumps later
The car stopped
Its engine ceased

Someone discussed me with the man
“A willing gecko”

Two pairs of shoed feet picked up my tube
I was carried across some dry ground
Up a clanking metal grate
And set down on a metal floor

“Are you alright?”
Yes, I said.
“We’ll get you food in a bit.”

Two hours later
The spaceplane hummed
We took off
I never was fed

Not an issue

The spaceplane was shot down
A casualty of war

It may have been for the best
I didn't know it then
And wouldn't have cared
I was collectable
Like a pretty pebble
Or a shell from the sea

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