

And at night there is the screaming. And it is always  
night.

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## I

In the far future, human beings explore the stars.

Technology has become so small, and so integrated into the bodies of these cosmic voyagers that it has become invisible.

Their ships no longer glow with the blink of buttons, plastic dials and shining screens. Instead, minimalist comfort is prioritised, and the interiors of these intergalactic vessels resemble 21st Century Berlin apartments. They calculated their orbital navigation not with screens of numbers, but by carefully drawing a perfect circle upon a notepad with a pencil.

There is no longer a meaningful distinction between “astronaut” and “ship”, so deeply integrated is technology into human bodies. These travelers constantly shift through different stages of consciousness, sometimes perceiving the world as the ship itself, other times surrendering their biological brain for the ship’s computations. As they phase

between different levels of consciousness, between “I” and “you” and “ship” and “us”, their slack muscles and defocused eyes take on the appearance of a ketamine high.

They grew these ships in the valleys of moons, huge ribbed exoskeletons slowly sealing like cocoons, nestled between the mountain ranges, like small Italian towns.

## II

As they got further from earth, the Voice of the Void became louder. They turned to He who whispers in the darkness, for He offered them passage amongst the stars.

And in the desperation of distance, faced with the years, decades and centuries of galactic journeying, they turned their backs upon God.

For the laws of physics are the laws of God. To bend the laws of physics they embraced He whose name is darkness and whose power blooms immeasurably in the silence of the vacuum. He offered perversions of time and space that folded the fabric of reality such that galaxies came close as lips, the burden of travel lifted.

He asked not for souls, for what were souls now? Every consciousness seeping from body-to-body, from life-to-life - blending, merged and overwritten. If ever there were souls, there were no more. So He asked only for eternal fealty, an endless bond for as long as a “you” existed in the sprawling collection of thought, inseparably blended with the minds of others and machines, like strands of hair stuck in candle wax.

And with each new sacrifice, it seemed the universe became smaller: journeys of decades were traversed in days, expeditions of centuries took mere weeks, as the rules of God’s time and space were rent assunder and remade in a twisted image.

### III

And sometimes the floors were drenched in blood.

And there was the pain. To please Him, to show their fealty, to fulfil the contract, as He bent the universe around them, guided them down the backalleys the Creator forbade.

And there was no “I”. So they felt not the pain of one body, but of all bodies. A whole crew’s worth of pain.

And they would tear at each other for Him, this was their payment.

And they could not tell if they were cutting or being cut.

And they knew only pain.

And at night there is the screaming.

And it is always night.