

The Planet

Almost unreal, the way his conversation clicked in even increments from one vacant subject to the next. Doctor Underwood and his distant eyes. The bubbly voice. Sharp college cheekbones standing against the red and flesh poster of the open man on the wall. Open like a suitcase, all intestines. Asking personal questions for the sake of asking them. To fill the space. A function of some doctor machine, I thought, with the nurse seating you and leaving you alone to think about what he was going to do when he came in with his white coat, the buttons on it. Cartoon buttons.

"Which one do you like?" that pointy light in my ear.

"I dunno."

"You don't know? You have to have one favorite."

TV shows, comics. Funny characters. Now checking boxes and making notes on the clipboard. Little league, the doctor, the check-up, turn and cough. A million of me, had the same conversation a million times, and disappear to wherever it is that doctors go to disappear.

But he found it. The information that got him whatever it was he got for it. I don't know, it must have been something. They have medical journals. An article, recognition, prestige. Something. Something that lit up the bulb. Got him paying close attention then. Eager to put the stethoscope to use. Giddy almost.

That "serious discussion" with my Mom and Dad the next day. Bringing them together in his office. Me, embarrassed. But not by what he found. By them, what they might say, or not say. The arguing. And the unreal doctor making me feel important about it.

"Lowest ever recorded and still... everything else working fine. Amazing. A couple of times a minute, not much more," he said. Amazing.

Squirming. My parents conspicuously not holding hands on either side of me. "The South," he said. I don't know if he even knew exactly what he was volunteering me for, going down there. My parents didn't. I sure didn't. Then Underwood disappeared with whatever it was he got out of it. Journal prestige. Whatever. Never to be seen again.

The government doctors. The psychiatrist Utterman, now. More serious. And his friend, or buddy, or sidekick, what's-her-name, I forget now. She disappeared after awhile too. They were the ones who told us. The ones who talked real friendly. And the other two with them. The guys who never said a word while the doctors talked to me, but really to Mom and Dad. The sides of their mouth. And yellow teeth smiling like cartoon characters.

"He's a bright boy. Very bright." Looking at me, my own reflection in the glasses. A tunnel of glass with beads of black at the end. "You understand what I'm- what we're talking about, son?"

I nodded. Really thinking I did. And then shuffled upstairs to my room.

"Tuck yourself in tonight, honey."

But I watched through the rails upstairs. Utterman's head, shiny but with the strands of gray running sideways across it. His hands gliding quickly over the papers on the table as he spoke. Another one giddy. But not as friendly as he was with me, talking to my parents. Fast conversation, but almost whispered. About "mankind." And "never done before." History, and my dad with that grave silence. His wheels turning. And my mother with the questions, the nervous questions.

"Are you sure?" with the morning sound of summer and Steven outside on his skateboard, my Mom looking into me for something I wasn't sure how to give her. My dad smoking heavily behind her. Leaving his scent in my things.

"You don't have to do it."

"It's important?"

Hesitant. "Very."

"I'm the only one who can?"

My mother looking to the side, a corner of the room. My dad nodded silently.

"I'll do it."

"OK." Restraining emotion, shaking her head. Smoke streaming out of his nostrils.

"What about--"

"We'll tell her. We'll explain. She'll understand."

"Some day," my father.

A slug silence. The house for a long time.

"Aren't you a brave boy, traveling all on your own," the perky smile, her breasts tight in her airline suit. What would they feel like.

"Uh-huh."

"Are you scared?"

"Nuh-uh."

"Well if you need anything, you just press this button right here."

I nodded, thinking I'd have to unfasten my seatbelt to do it.

"Don't worry. It's a short flight. It'll be over before you know it."

"Uh-huh."

Saying good-bye, she bent down and looked into my eyes, trying to bestow gravity on the moment. Make me remember. But maybe it was already there. It's hard to tell now.

"What you're doing is very important," again, like trying to convince herself. And then burst out sobbing. Like having an attack. And I look up at my dad, tall, must have been six-four, I don't know if he's alive any more. Or my mother. They can't be. And he kind of ushered her away from me. Faced her in a different direction.

"You're a good boy, You'll make a good man." The passengers walking every which way, trailing suitcases on wheels. The flight attendants. More sobbing from my mom's back.

"You're making it worse," he said to her, the familiar agitation. Family.

It was bad already. In the same house. But not married anymore. Technically they were, just waiting not to be. Angry all the time. Arguments about whose car's in front of whose in the driveway and who leaves first in the morning. And then me, in the middle of it, the doctors now and the mission, leaving for "the south," and then ultimately here. This god forsaken place.

Just trying to be brave. The airport and the intercoms calling me.

"You're a man now," he said. Getting on a plane and those guys with serious lines in their gray faces waiting for me on the other end.

"You were blessed." And I believed them in a way. Though they didn't believe it. Maybe they tried to.

"You're special. You're a special boy and we can't hold you back from- from what you were meant to do."

Acting humble. Just pretending. Someone else. I hugged them. I made sure to hug my mom and dad, I was at least that aware, and the photo of all of us, my sister, at the zoo, pressed into my hand, and then I stepped past the gate and into that corridor leading to the plane. I looked back. To make a note, a mental picture too. My mother looking at me. But for only a short, short second. She couldn't bare it, clenching her eyes with her hands and the black smudges on her cheeks. My father putting his arm around her. Couldn't believe it-- his arm around her. And nodding at me. Proud of his son. Never gonna see him again.

They went over everything. But they can't go over how you'll feel about things. The changes that happen. The way you change over five, ten, thirty years. It's imperceptible when you look at the mirror everyday, I bet. Back home, you make adjustments, little by little as you go, the mental adjustments. You get fat and convince yourself that you look ok. Baggy clothes. You're ok with it. Same with the wrinkles. The pubic hair. It comes and you deal with it. But that's not how it went. Not for me.

Just a week after I left, I climbed into the pod, the tomb "I was blessed to enter," just bored. Bored with looking out the big window. You'd think that it would be endlessly fascinating, but after a couple of hours, you just don't see much. The little dots of light after home receded into nothing. Then poking through some of the video files. The computer books. Wandering around the ship, pushing all the buttons it would let me press. And then, just curious, I slid into the pod. Like a game. I knew what it did. But still. I was just playing. She didn't even suggest I get in yet. It was that early in the trip. She would have started hinting at it maybe after a month. Why not take an extended rest, she might say. But I went in willingly. Playing. I hit the orange button and the glass case came sliding over me, clean and smooth like ice, a hiss. Pushed the purple one and her voice,

"Activation requires I.V. Arm Band and waste tube to be properly attached." So I did that, like they showed me, took all of fifteen seconds, snapping the tubes into my suit, and it said, "Ready" and what the hell, I pushed it again, thinking there'd be a final prompt. Maybe not thinking at all and that sweet smell came, like cotton candy at St. Mary's, but the thought was real dim, and I was sleepy, the air cool now, and the next thing, I was going under and looked at the screen and noticed, small in the corner, the duration was set to four hundred. But not hours or days the way it probably should of. It was months. Four hundred months. The calculation in my head, but never got there. 12, 36. Never figured it out in years. I was already gone.

The building was a museum. Shiny and white with sliding doors and a skeleton of bars holding up endless squares of glass, the blue sky above it hinting at things that went on forever. The lab coats and the rolling carts that everyone drove around because the corridors were so long, sprawled out for miles. And the shiny metal logo when you walk in, spinning around the globe, catching the light and reflecting flashes of purple and green.

I was Utterman's assignment, sitting next to him in the carts, everyone staring at me as we passed. They'd stop walking to wherever they were going to stare. I looked down at my shoes.

He never left my side. Stood outside the door of the bathroom. Ate with me. Stood over the other doctors as they checked everything out on me again. Again and again and again. Always marveling at my gift as if they couldn't really believe it. Then the psychological tests. And the endless explanations of how the ship would run.

"Even though you hardly have to do a thing," they said.

"It's appropriate that a child is being sent in some regard," I heard one of them say, looking over his glasses, dangling on the tip of his nose. Utterman agreeing. Giving me a reassuring nod. And then stepping close to me. Bending down.

"This next process is not a test. Not like you're used to," he said. "They're questions to see how you feel. There are no wrong answers. So just answer however you want to. Kay?"

"Kay."

It was just a small question... All the other ones were big in comparison, about whether I'd give money back to someone if I found it. What I think happens when you die. Questions like that. But tricky in a way, because you had to give them three answers. The answer you think they want to hear, the answer you think most other people would give, and your truthful answer. I just said the first things that came to my mind, like Utterman said. Got it over with, all of them looking into me. Utterman pacing behind the row of eyes. The eyes darting from the clipboards and then to me and back again. My head resting on my hand, propping it up from the table. The apple juice box in front of me. Apple juice always made me have to go, so I took just a small sip to be polite. After twenty minutes of it, just bored. And the mirror behind Utterman, with who knows behind that.

Told them a joke about a skeleton not crossing the road because he didn't have the guts. They laughed. But the questions after those questions, the more casual questions, and the one small one. Some of the doctors even left while they asked the small ones because they were so unimportant. My friends at school. My teachers. How I feel about my parents. I told them that they were happy. They love each other. It wasn't a total lie. It was like that once. It didn't trigger the scratching pin on the detector or raise their eyebrows and get the "are you sure?" reaction, so it must have been the truth. It was the truth as far as they were concerned anyway. It was just a small question after all.

Awake and a beard. Like it was maybe an afternoon nap it felt like at first. But my hair was long. It hurt to move. The other changes. Horrified. Really horrifying, but amazing too. Big. But with loose flesh. Not fat. Just loose. Hanging in bags around my torso. Under my arms.

Forty five years old, I calculated. My face looked no more than twenty. And I still felt like a kid. None of the numbers fit me. None of them mattered anyway. I stared at my hands for a long time lying in the pod, scared to move. The nails curled around in tight circles like a freakish claw. But I could see they were big like my father's. But not as tall. I wasn't that tall when I stood, finally, after falling onto the hard white floor, then grabbing onto the hibernation pod, straining against my own weakness to get up it. Just to lean took over two hours, the lady badgering me about how I feel and good morning and all that. I struggled to find my voice to answer her, buried somewhere in my throat. Deep with bass when it cleared.

She put something in the air that made it easier and soon I was able to walk and it didn't hurt so much. Days of walking. Eating and walking in circles in the exercise unit, the plants in the center, an island inside the track. Bubbling springs here and there. And the stars above me in the star dome. The lost years there too, trying to work myself up to a jog.

Two weeks' portion packages in a day. Anything I could get my hands on. Meat. Or what resembled it pouring out of the package and mixing with the synthetic water. Solidifying after a few minutes of agony until I could shove it in.

Her voice updated me. How far we've come. The repairs she made. Mostly things I didn't understand. Or cared to.

Cut my nails soon as I could. My beard with the scissors they had on board.

"There will be no razors for you to shave," they said. Me thinking it was funny at the time, shaving. The tiny bits of hair could get into a console. Risk jamming something up. But cutting it with scissors looked worse on my face than if I would have left it there. Patches, clumps. And when I tried to get close with the blade, it hurt. So I left it. Just grew a beard like some mountain man and downloaded the video messages one at a time.

I studied them close before clicking the 'next' button. Days went by without clicking it. Just watching the same file over and over and over again. Scrutinizing every second. The years peeling off with every minute, with every click of the button. My parents both remarried. I met their spouses briefly, while they shifted in their seats. My sister in college. And her wedding. Did she understand now? Her divorce a minute later, crying into the camera. How hard it was for her. A woman. Living. Her baby that came. My niece, I thought. Smiling. Hearing her say to please upload a file when I came out of the pod. She wanted to hear my voice. See how I was doing. The stranger in space. Funny the way her face changed. Logical that she'd look like that but surprising all the same. And my father getting sick. The reports. And then the messages stopping shortly after that. Frozen there. Everything frozen.

I wanted to tell my mom. Tell them all what was stolen from me. How they were stolen from me. But I couldn't send files out. Couldn't get more in either. I was out of range. Out of touch. Out of everything.

I touched the screen when it showed them together at Mia's third birthday party. My father not there. Closing my eyes, hoping that the connection with the screen might do something. Like I might feel like I was there with them. But I wasn't. It wasn't. It was just a flat surface, smooth under my fingers. So I opened my eyes again and watched. Just watched that last message. And while the screen cleaned itself, I tried not to weep, my hands, both of them, numb on my lap.

Thirty-three years, and I swore never to get into that pod again. I swore to watch the little planet on the monitor. To watch the number getting smaller and smaller as I got closer and closer. To wait. To wait with my memories.

"The memories are dangerous," Utterman said. "They will be your greatest danger."

But the boy with the heart for hibernation, isn't hibernating anymore. I said that out loud to her. "Gonna stay awake. Stay alive and live whatever life there is here."

"That is not advisable," she said. The dead ship.

The monitor said fifteen years, just over. Fifteen more years to get there. And me and the ship, her long mazes of white with the little chambers punctuating the halls. The chambers designed to fit my moods. But false, like exhibits in a museum. Rec rooms and dining rooms and living rooms and bedrooms... different styles, for children and men alike. All of them me, who I happened to be at the time.

And the ship shifting lights like day and night were coming and going. But I could override the light if I wanted.

"Make it night," I'd say.

"Are you sure?"

I'm sure. And she'd make it night.

It was almost always night on my ship.

"Your mother and I have decided. We're going to get a divorce," breaking the silence as he drove me to school that morning.

"Yeah. So."

"It's a sad day. It's a sad day for our family."

"Not like it's a surprise."

He kind of grunted. Trying to figure how to read me. What I was thinking.

It was silent until I got to school and he told me about the house. I knew there was no god in the sky anymore.

Somewhere in the middle of the country, somewhere in the desert far away from the south, somewhere I had never been, the red plateaus beyond the windows made me think I was in another world. And then I felt stupid, thinking where I was going. Looking up at the sky. The real other world.

They told me again that last morning, for the hundredth, for the thousandth time, the important things to remember. How to work the computer books and video files. How to use the bathroom and food dispenser. The help program. If I ever forgot, or needed anything, ask her. Just talk out loud. And above all how to act if and when I made contact with those, whoever it might be on the other planet. Be proud and open. Let them know that you come in peace. The boxes I was to deliver to them. The peace offerings.

"That you come in the name of love from your planet." And he looked at me, Utterman, with heavy eyes. Trying to find something he already knew was there. Or hoped. Love.

"It's up there isn't it?" I asked, finding it amazing, the blue sky and the black beyond it. Just wanting to break the silence. He nodded.

"I'm not coming back."

"In the coming years, we have programs, space travel will be more common. The technology- we'll follow- and-"

I nodded. It must have looked feeble. He bent down.

"Your destiny is one and the same with all of mankind. You are leading the way for us."

In their secret telescope- everything was secret- the planet seemed not unlike ours, they said, spinning around a sun the way our planet spins around ours.

"There's a high probability that there is life on that planet. We're certain of it, as a matter of fact." The radio signals, the patterns weren't random, he said. Everything was accounted for. They had been preparing for thirty years. Perfectly safe.

"It'll feel like a train ride, the long intervals between a week or so of consciousness. The help program will guide you, prepare you as you mature."

And she tried. But she was telling me things I didn't want to think about. Telling me even how I should think of those things. How I should think about thinking about them.

Then the advice from Utterman on the hologram platform, his advice with the increasing complexity as the programs progressed, carefully calculated, as the months and years passed, intended for the minds of men in different phases of life.

But he didn't know. How could he know? He was guessing. Just guessing. And guesses don't help unless you believe that they're not guesses. So I stopped listening to Utterman and his guesses. Stopped looking for help from him or the lady.

But I found it. Not in the voice of the lady, not in the hologrammed face of Utterman, but in the information files. Months, years of library files to keep me busy. Files to keep me busy forever. The writers and the poets and the philosophers, echoing through the chambers of the ship, their voices floating like me. Floating on some kind of mission to somewhere they don't know. They were the ones who kept me company. Who spoke to me while I ignored her... always asking if I

wouldn't want to read something else, or watch a popular video file, the kind they were watching back at home.

"No, this is what I want."

And the empty halls with the voices and the stars and that little planet I couldn't see with my eyes in front of me. And the planet behind me, also out of sight.

And the memories. The memories, dangerous and fading. Like home faded into the black even before the pod. The anger not at the loss, but at the fading, while I tried to hold on to what I had.

The first day of school getting in the pushing match with that boy in the orange shirt. What was his name? Jesse. And the amusement park with the water slide. I remembered the video of that. But not the actual experience. And the walks through the tunnel of trees asking my mother about the birds, holding her hand. My father showing me how to hammer a nail into a piece of wood. Not to hold anything together. Just to show me that I could do it.

But most were lost. Slipping into the black with everything else.

What difference if there is life ahead of me? What difference of life behind? How can it be proven? There is no way it can be proven even if they move and breathe and talk. I am not inside them. She is not alive. I am certain of that. And I am inside her. There is nothing in either direction now, back or forth or up and down. Only this, me a pinpoint in the center of something that is nothing.

Despair. Motionless despair and silence. How much time is passing now? The brown film covering my eyes. Oozing from somewhere inside my eyelids.

Singing out loud. Songs to the rhythm of the voices that filled my ship. My own voice, mixed with theirs, keeping me company as I cleaned the halls with the bath towels.

She asked me if I was hungry. I wasn't. I was never hungry anymore. The hunger was proof that I was alive.

"Those halls are already clean. This ship is equipped with functioning cleaning programs," she informed me cheerfully.

I cleaned them anyway.

Destruction red in my eyes as I tried to smash the destination console, the red lights flashing before I even got close to it. The immediate hiss coming angry from the vents, forced from her lungs fast and sinister. Two, maybe three seconds and the rod fell from my hands, clanged to the floor and echoed. I followed it quickly and went blank. I don't know how long she held me down. There is no time.

When I woke the hiss was still coming out of the vents but slow and even now. Everything covered in cotton. The prickles on my skin. The numbness in my mouth, like I couldn't feel my teeth. The brown film on my eyes, now white and shades of blue-gray. Moving skinny across the sliding turbine. So hungry I grinned buckles without knowing who I was.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked.

But she didn't answer.

"Turn it off." But still nothing.

I tried the environment control but was denied access. Denied until I answered the questions, she said, finally speaking. The questions I couldn't understand and couldn't get right after weeks of trying. The maddening riddles that had no right answers. There were no answers to her questions because the questions didn't make sense.

"They don't make sense!" I yelled at her and pounded at her with my fist.

The hiss increased as if in warning, so I relented. And it continued. The fog continued and the cotton grew from the walls until it filled the room and pressed against my cheeks and I could no longer lift my arms.

The black bent better than the fog.

I went back into the fog. The black, I mean. Into the pod. She played music for me as she watched. Sad music and the tomb of silence.

How long?

Just a few months, she said.

"Don't leave me," she said, clutching her doll in one hand and me in the other. "Who will I talk to when- when-"

"You can always talk to me. Just look up at the stars. See that one over there," I said, picking one at random. "When you get lonely, or mom and dad are fighting, just look up at that star, that's where I'll be. I'll hear you. Do you understand?"

Quiet.

"Please tell me you understand."

She nodded and clenched her little arms around my chest and wouldn't let go. I just let her stay there. Until she fell asleep and I was sent south.

The questions again when she woke me. But yelling now. I didn't think she was capable of it. Yelling.

"Imperative that you answer correctly," she screamed. Furious.

"Or else what?" I thought, but for only an instant because the blue ball was in the window now. Occupying my mind as I answered her questions. The questions that suddenly seemed clear in my half conscious mind.

And they were right, now. They must have been because the hiss was gone. I put my hand to the vent as the ship shook violently.

"Environment stable," she said. And she prepared for the landing. Rattling off statistics I was too slow to understand. Taking stock of my functions. No pain. Just a little soreness. The ball was getting bigger. Fast approaching.

"Atmosphere sufficient for human conditions," she told me. Urging me again and again to sit in the control seat as I stared dumbly at the planet. Looking not unlike ours at all. Utterman was right. And it was beautiful.

Flashing lights.

"Please strap into main control seat for landing!"

And then fumbling, coordination gone, in the blinding light to find the control seat. The new sun flooding all the windows now. Burning retina. The field of blue coming fast, my eyes too slow to adjust. And it filled the window. Not black anymore, I thought dimly. No pinpoint holes. And the ship rattled as it scanned the surface below, entering its outer atmosphere.

"Preparing for landing in water-like substance," she said.

I fumbled with the straps but never got them on. And the ship shook hard as we entered. And I plummeted. The noise. And then the water. A sheet of glass. Like the sea at home. As we hit. And I hit the big window despite her efforts to create the air wall.

And again black. But not the pod black. My black. Dream black with real images emerging. Images. More doctors. But not Utterman or Underwood. Different Doctors examining me. Shooting needles. "It'll be ok," one of them said. As clear as day, right before he stuck me with the needle. The warbling sound of other Doctors. And then again. Nothing.

He came home and sat in his car. Parked in the driveway for long time. My sister and I were in the pool, moving as fast as we could around the perimeter, and then floating on the tubes around and around in the whirlpool we made. Laughing. We heard the car door slam. And he walked past us on the concrete path.

"Hey Dad. Wanna come swimming?"

"Throw us up in the air daddy!"

But he ignored us. Or didn't hear. Just walked into the house and slammed the door.

"It's OK," I said. "Daddy just had a bad day."

And we swam and forgot about it until Mom came home and went inside.

"You guys stay out here, OK?"

"What is it?"

"Just stay out here."

The yelling with my ear at the door, hearing things I tried not to. And then the crash. And more yelling and then nothing. When we went in, the picture in the living room was shattered on the floor and mom was in the basement crying. We stood there in the doorway. A cigarette burning in his hand.

"Daddy's not feeling good." I said. "Let's go upstairs and go to bed."

"But it's still light out."

"Let's go upstairs."

Night. We were in the same bed and he tore us out and dragged me by my arm and carried her. It was hot and my feet couldn't catch up with his long legs as we raced down the stairs past the flames in the living room and out the door. Cold in our pajamas, my mother sitting on the sidewalk, rocking back and forth, hysterical and crying and squeezing us so hard it hurt. Neighbors looking.

"You son of a bitch," she said

"It was an accident," as the sirens came and the men in the trucks put out our house with the hole in it where the living room was.

No god in the sky just before classes.

"We're going to sell it," he said, as I got out of the car, "after it's remodeled. Fixed. We're going to sell it. It's over." Was he sad? Did he want to see his sadness in me?

"What difference does it make?"

Homeroom and the intercom with the meaningless announcements.

The ants were like our ants, doing things our ants do. Carrying the specks of the alien world into their hole. I watched the creatures for hours, lying naked on my back, arms outstretched, my head turned toward them.

My ship was gone. They took everything I came with. No box of peaceful tidings. No weapon they gave me to fight with (or kill myself with, just in case). No clothes. No ship or pod or big window with the pinpoints. No woman's voice to soothe me or antagonize me. Nothing but the scars where they opened me up. Where the aliens looked inside me. No pain anymore, I thought, just the scars.

I staggered to my feet and trampled the anthill with my bare foot. I felt them squirm.

Stumbling through the woods, I came to a highway with cars zooming past that looked like the cars we have home. And the big billboard, in the language, inexplicably, that I could understand. In the language we are taught in school. It said Ditech.com in big yellow letters against the black background. And smaller it said, debt consolidation, second mortgage, refinancing. The phone number. I inched closer to the road and saw a green sign with white lettering. A highway sign, just as our highway signs hang above our highways. I could read it as well. It said Dover 12, Hackensack 24, New York 43. I understood these words to be the names of their cities. I could be wrong.

I strained to look inside the windows of the cars as they sped by. The beings inside looked like us. Ears and noses and heads and bodies and hands clutching the wheels. In my terror, I stumbled back into the woods and walked, in a state of unconsciousness, until night fell. Not knowing where I was going. Not knowing why.

I have been living in what seems to be an abandoned Boy Scout camp for three weeks now. It is a series of dilapidated cottages, bathrooms, and dining halls or meeting rooms. I'm not sure which. I wear a greasy jumpsuit, presumably a mechanic's jumpsuit that was no longer needed, or wanted, by one of the inhabitants of this planet. For food I sneak quietly to the town below and rummage through the garbage of the alien homes. If not for my memories, and the scars, I would think that I was ransacking a town on our own planet. There are cars in the driveways, lawns, doorbells. I hear animals, animals that I can only understand to be dogs barking, while I sift for my sustenance.

I have not yet spoken to any of the aliens for a reason that I readily admit to be fear. Fear of the unknown, but also fear for not having anything to give to them as a peace offering in case they are hostile. And I have reasons to believe that this may be the case because I watch them sometimes through their windows. Sometimes their televisions are on and I see, at last, how these beings differ from us. How this world is different than ours. The stories they televise are those of murder and suffering. Pain and great sadness. And above all, mockery and cynicism. They seem to be mocking themselves for reasons that I cannot quite understand. This was no part of our world. Not to this degree.

Still, I am planning on making contact soon. When I am ready- when I feel that I am ready to deliver the message that I promised to deliver I will speak to them. Try to make them understand us through me as I have been instructed. Thereafter, I will attempt to transmit back to you by radio signals. Patterns that are not random. Of what I have been through. Of what I see.

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