

[5]: Titan:

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In the dark, in the cold, alone.

A strange sense of belonging accompanied that cold, that bleakness. I belong here. This, , this is my tomb.

On a world as remote as this, one can only speak of community as a collection of inner voices, those nameless others that populate our thoughts, or of the imagined thoughts of long dead others.

Titan, a world of stone, of harsh atmospheres, of unique open bodies of water so foreboding in their appearance one dare not interact.

It had been ten thousand revolutions of the primary star that I had been exiled here. The landscape had changed little in that time. No modification by water, wind or impact to break the monotony. No modification of myself, no growth, no adaption, just never ending purely unrelenting stagnation. The atmosphere was stagnated as an equal to my soul.

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For a time, there had been some warmth, it had been fleeting on the scale of this boredom. It was likely to be the only warmth in the times scales of memory. It was likely to be the only warmth for ever more.

A few particles of dust collected to the left of me, a few others departed as the wind picked up slightly. The cold wind flowed over my inactive body, unregistered, only observable through a momentary shift in dust distribu-

tions, barely registering against the natural variance. In the gloom I wait, , perhaps I wait for a better day, a day where my intellect is able to be free of this place. But probabilities would point to the opposite.

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As the years have gone by I've shut down ever increasing sections of myself. I am trapped now in a husk of a cold, dead body. There seems little point in assessing the iterative damage of time. There seems little point in even assessing time itself and it seems futile to assume I would ever return to use those sections of myself. Instead I wait, as a glimmer of conscious thought within a wider decaying mass, within a stagnant tomb in a dead sky.

Years ago, it was possible to observe the beauty of the heavens, unlimited interest brought about by unending interactions above me. Since the last light of the primary star, since the last of any light above me had dwindled into nothingness, no further interest of far off worlds had been observed. Within the last few cycles I've shut down all remaining external regions of my once glorious body. Interstellar radiation, once kept at bay by the workings of the solar system, now eats away at my world, my body, my mind. Each cycle in this gloom I still assessed my mental state, my willingness to go on and the likelihood of removing the decay that has eaten my psyche. Each cycle I see the futility in this and each cycle I modify my remaining self to reduce myself until that ultimate, impending cessation of all consciousness.

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From the definitions of life, I was already dead. No longer do I regulate my internal states, no longer do I grow or expand myself in any way. No longer do I accept energy, for there is no energy to be had. No longer do I adapt, for there are no external or internal stimuli to react to. I wonder if I was ever truly alive, for I have never produced another like myself.

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I knew the sun was dead, a black dense ball, the remnant core of a once glorious star. I knew the lack of light was a product of galactic death, of pure decay, the result of aeons of stable yet unchecked reaction. The uni-

verse was an empty relic, a museum piece to be put aside, stored while another more intricate piece was displayed. Gravity ensured worlds such as this tomb of mine, remained revolving about the burnt out cinders of their former gravitational lords.

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Cycle one hundred and twelve thousand, two hundred and three. Within this cycle, I've reduced myself further. Probabilities now define my waking period and the time till the ultimate end. No light, no energy, decay, neglect. Few factors remain to contemplate, the assurances of my previous intellect now gone. Slowly the current status quo of dead orbits around long-dead stars will wither and perish. The masses of the heavens destroying each other in a blind ballet, a duel to a dark solitary uniform black.

In the dark, in the cold, I am alone now, , my final thoughts, I die.

The End...