

The Close

I don't know how long I've been awake. But I'm lying on the ground. I feel that I am naked though I cannot see my body. Slowly I sit up, my hands and feet and buttocks pressing into something sand-like yet unyielding. I look up, and see neither ceiling nor sky.

In the dank dinginess, I search for something I know. I find nothing of meaning so I stand and walk. After many steps, I do not encounter a wall.

I walk on, slowly and carefully, feeling the grit dig in between my toes. The ground occasionally undulates, with serpentine guttering and round ridges. The light does not change. There is no colour here, only shades of black.

I walk on, calling out occasionally for help, but the space must be so vast for my voice is absorbed immediately.

After a long while, maybe hours, maybe days, I stop and sit, wearied by my efforts.

Will my hands remind me of who I am? I hold them in front of my face though of course they are still invisible, and running the fingertips of one hand over the other, I inspect the palms, knuckles, wrists, fingers. They are mine, yet unfamiliar. The fingers seem too slender, or perhaps too long.

I touch my scalp. Bald, not even stubble. My torso feels neither male nor female, again smooth and hairless. My hands wander slowly downwards, sliding over my abdomen. Upon stroking the area between my legs, there is nothing but a crude mound of skin-covered flesh. There is no opening, only a close. I reach up quickly to my face, and find that there is no nose or mouth, and bowing my head, I find no ears or eyes.

Note:

This is not a complete story, just an exercise to take me out of my comfort zone.

I usually start my stories with an idea about character with a theme of emotional conflict then build the setting (typically metropolitan suburbia) around that. This time, I have tried to give the setting more weight, forcing the character to interact with it as a plot device in a different genre from my usual writing.