

# Sub-Nautical Negligence

"Low biological signatures in the area." My unhelpful AI in the submarine opts to break my pacing trance for the hundredth feeling time. Up and down the small hall, bed to helm in only four simple steps back and forth. I stop to check the radar: no blips—never anything. Hours, it feels like *days* going down. The scanners for whatever reason refuse to detect the lifeforms of this oceanic planet. Noises indicate a plethora of creatures, sometimes the brush of scales that leave me alone. A bump, but countermeasures spook them all away. I liked it better when I could see them; back when there was light. There was a weird four eyed orca up top that looked pretty cool. The little fish, 'normal' sized stuff—some of the scales that brushed by are bigger than my paws down here....

Zoned out for a while, staring out into the inky black void from the multitude of welcomed, but useless windows. Going crazy trying to remember the hazy green gaseous surface of the planet. What I'd do to have real illumination, not the dull glow of red within the sub. Outer lights project not even four meters out before being swallowed up by the sea. Checking depth: a ridiculous 12,000 meters. Communications cut some 6k back, but orders are to find the damn bottom. The tech is unfathomable, but given Saris research, I stop questioning. I'm not paid enough to bother. I wish *anyone* else would have gone down with me, but *of course* Leszy wasn't 'feeling' well. More like Lazy...

"AI open log. Note: 12,000 meters, going insane. I'm owed a beer and a bonus. If it wasn't for the internal lights, I'd think I had my eyes closed for the last nine hours." I pause for a moment to look over the inside of the sub. It's a tiny apartment, tubular in shape, bed nested next to the tiny hallway that houses a small fridge. "Also sending a formal complaint. Never let Leszy pack my rations again. I **hate** fish. This is listed **very** clearly. End Log." Ironic given I'm designated to a sub-nautical research division—not because I'm an otter. They fascinate in every way *but* taste.

"Transmitting." The AI responds, messages travel slow, but the main base has the range to snag waves that this sub doesn't receive. The water here distorts radio waves, at least after a certain depth. Inquiry expedition teams are never given the proper equipment. It's not *worth* the cost if there's nothing of value to be found. Tired, bored, nothing much to do but wait for the AI to shout at me again. I leave the helm, walking back to my bed for my first nap leagues under the sea.

**Cuh-Thunk!** A body quaking jostle shakes me fast awake, nearly banging my head right into the obnoxiously placed pipe over the bed. "AI?!" I shout as the dim red lights flick on for me to see. I don't bother to dress, if the sub fails it'll be mercy.

"Landmass Detected." It retorts. There's not a trace of sarcasm: it is designed without a set personality, yet for whatever reason it agitates me.

I hobble quickly to the helm, seeing jagged spires are around. Lights still hardly display anything, though these glowing masses cling to the spikes. They let off a bizarre light blue hue that drowns out in visible rays. Blobs, tentacles from them wrap around the deep black material of the potential ocean floor. 17,000 goddamn meters. Flicking on resource scanners, unknown material, density adjacent to diamonds. "Holy fucking-" I can't keep in. Finding something like this is retirement level shit!

"Low biological signatures in the area." The AI opts to inform me while I look at very obvious life forms. Deep, bassy clicks fill the water around. Long drawn out noises that reverberate like radio waves. Vibrations can be felt even within my metal bunker. No damage sustained from impact, this thing is damn near indestructible.

Taking manual control, sweeping left, a school of fish the disorienting size of the sub are swimming in and out of the spires. It's like a dark reef, bubbles sound through glowing holes in the ground; volcanic. A core quaking tune rips slowly through the water, and all the fish scatter. I've been hearing noises constantly on the way down, nothing bothers the sub, it omits noise to deter lifeforms. Scaling a spire, the tip is probably easier to break off a sample to bring back. Focused on nabbing a rock and going back up is the only thing I care about. Someone else can get sent down after.

Gliding up along a black spike, a glowing haze gets nearer, passing by some form of bioluminescent jellyfish of sorts clung to the side. It's bigger than the sub itself—perspective in this place is unfathomable with scale, it's so fucking big! Knowing jellies are docile things, I opt to ignore it, but my eyes are still transfixed on its translucent body. It looks like one of those dumb fish managed to get caught, now a soupy mix of meat and scales convulsing grossly inside the weird cavity. Curiosity gets the best of me, a marine biologist at heart, I have to get a *little* closer.

Cruising up with my knowledge of these things; just don't get close to the tentacles. The lazy blob has a bunch of them relaxed and flowing in the idle current. It's just as mundane as most any other species of it that exists, though it's absolutely *massive*. No intestines, brain, really anything else going on but the sac sautéing fish in digestive chemicals. By the looks of its meal, there isn't much left, some scales spit out the way they went in. It makes the tentacles twitch for a second after being brushed.

All of a sudden, one of the glowing blue things jet towards my sub! **Clang!** The bastard can actually track objects! It thinks I'm a fish for some reason, jostling me in my chair, thankfully buckled in. The tentacle curls over all the windows, enveloping my sub in weird jelly flesh. Little barbs try to pierce inside, but have no effect. Seeing through the damn thing, more tentacles unravel, swarming like a flock of gigantic eels! Hammering reverse—I don't move. Thick slime gunks up the propellers, a natural mechanism this creature must use to prevent escape! "No-no-NO! I'm not getting eaten by a fucking **jellyfish!**" I shout to the onboard AI who isn't capable of being helpful.

"Low biological signatures in the area."

"**Fuck-off!**" Anti-clog countermeasures aren't doing anything!

Creaks and moans come from the hull, dragging towards the underside of the jelly. In order to swallow me up, it detaches from the spire and begins to float. The initial tentacle loosens, and the reason becomes clear as pressure dispersing glass presses into its orifice. Gelatinous flesh yawns over with the nastiest underwater suction I've ever heard. Scales belch out as I go in, and the oxygen recyclers opt to suck up the smell. Putrid digested fish vomits through the vents, immediately forcing a lump up my throat. A smell no nose could ever prepare for forces into my lungs.

I retch in agony, reaching for the emergency barf bag used during decompression. My stomach convulses, acting like a third lung to pump out any trace of the horrid stench. Burning hot vomit spews out smelling better than the gastric fumes pumping into the sub. Leszy's rations somehow taste worse going out than in, dry heaving after expelling everything I've ever eaten. It took my eyes away from the disgusting hole devouring my sub without a care. The digesting fish inside is long softened, scales paint the glass, pasty bleached meat smears across. Bones as big as me clank against the ship, but easily snap due to chemical degradation.

The gelatinous dome expands, displacing digested sludge, cramming my vessel into its digestive cavity. **Schlorp!** A frothy gaseous bubble expels as the tail end of my sub plops through, sealing me inside the slimy chamber. Chyme gushes around, the heavy stench of chemicals and fish are overwhelming. "Your heart rate is accelerated, there is no damage to the vessel. Please remain calm." The AI says in a typical neutral tone, making me absolutely livid.

"Remain CALM!? A Jellyfish fucking ATE the damn sub!" The thought of reporting my situation brings absolute dread. I don't want to, I'll get so much shit for this. I'll never hear the end of it! The last thing I need is another stupid callsign. It'll spit me out eventually, this sub can handle this, I've gone on expeditions of acrid planets before... This is supposed to be a more modern submarine than that one too. The AI makes me doubt the Derasteller tech they installed, but the hull holds sound by Saris standard.

"Standing by for independent psychoanalysis. Submitting a ticket to: Saris Sub-Nautical Resource Station 0—2—9—5—4."

"Cancel submission, 307 ID 5505 is stable." I retort with a quick thought. No one gets to know about this.

"Noted." The AI responds in the most uncaring of voices.

"Delete note..."

"I am incapable of 'deleting' note." The AI makes me want to rip my fur out.

I can see the jellyfish drifting without direction. No longer attached to a spire, it floats aimlessly in the vast black sea. A lightbulb in the darkness. My vision is mostly blocked by thick ooze plastering all the windows—not just the fishy remains, but the chemicals secreting to try and digest me. *Just my fucking luck.* The walls idly undulate around the metal outside, squelching obnoxiously loud, reminding me where I am. It's not like the gut punching fetor wasn't already. I wouldn't have pinned a jellyfish as being a nasty smelling creature. The flesh carries a distinct and unique reek that reminds me of feral skunks, but much more heavy feeling in the lungs due to cellular digestion.

Bones clink unendingly, sometimes spit out, snap, soften until the hull pulverizes them. Even the jamming mechanism of the rotors can't spit the sludge out, stranded until I get out of this stupid floating pouch! I can change its direction with propulsion, trying to get it to go back to the land mass. I at least have the coordinates charted...

"Biological signatures in the area, deploying counter frequency." Before I snap at the AI for more useless information, my eyes glare at the scanner that hasn't worked since the surface. *Ping!* Something big, something massive! Getting closer, the frequency is attracting it!

"AI, shut the fuck up—disable countermeasures, stop the signal!!" It clicks off, but the mass gets closer, out of sight, obstructed anyways through this jelly fish tank. It must see the light!!

A shadow even in the vast void. Light refracts just enough to see the visage of a titan! An eyeless fish, scales massive like slabs of steel. Gigantic mouth, gills, and it's coming right at us! The size of a building, this jellyfish is just a jello shot. An incredibly strong current inhales us into the parting maw, sucking inside in a fraction of a second! Hardly able to see any details before violently swallowed. **Schluck!** Watery, slimy, and absolutely uncaring. The easiest meal of its life is swiftly escorted down its throat.

The jellyfish is just a blob, it conforms to its surroundings as peristalsis crushes it together. My sub is the most solid substance, getting pressed heavily by the pale white walls. Defense mechanisms squirt from the jelly, but all it does is provide more lube to send it down. Salty water floods with us, shunting right into its belly with a mess of other meals. **Slurch!** It tumbles inside, thus tossing me around with it. Stuck inside two digestive cavities at once. It doesn't even phase the brainless dumbass who originally ate me, idly swishing in its new habit.

Looking through the translucent glowing slime, there's a few other jellyfish inside. The hues degraded in the blubbery membranes, dim, but enough to get a grim visual of my surroundings. Scales paint the place, meat turned paste, lots of different species found their digestive end in this leviathan. There's gas in the gut, piddling bubbles through the sloppy surface. The jellyfish was thrown on top of a pile of digesting soup, stuck on an island underwater. An idle swish of our predator's swaying swim threatens to plunge us into the acidic stew. It's only a matter of time.

Its belly wants to expedite the process. The walls curl inwards at the top, preparing to churn the tons of meat fermenting inside. In horror, alien flesh contorts, grinds, makes its way down while sputtering stuck gas in a world quaking **groaan!** It's the noise a stomach makes, meant to be heard only outside, yet the disgusting rattle of digestive fumes bubble through oily syrup along the wrinkled rubber. The shifting sea beneath reveals its belly is grinding in two directions! A fissure opens up underneath the jellyfish, revealing the white, slimy flesh kneading below. A disgusting squelch ricochets off the meat being pulverized, slime spits, acids sizzle in the cold-blooded beings body.

The crimping flesh sucks up the tentacles of my jellyfish, pulling it into the grinder. From above the wall looms, making contact and shoving us down into the wrinkled folds. The jellyfish doesn't react, going with it as churning peristalsis collide. Pressure exerts, spreading the elastic jelly like a rolling pin coming down. There's no problem until the hardened muscle presses into my sub, getting a grip, squeezing very hard over the shape. Instinctual danger receptors seem to trigger inside the jellyfish, and the hole I was forced through originally opens up!

**Splurt!** Ejected from the jelly sub, a catastrophic odor filters in to berate my senses. The jellyfish was a godsend in comparison, these digesting remains smell like they've been soaking in acid for years. So potent with salt from swallowed seawater. Softened goop envelops the sub, and a hard continued churn spits us into the middle of its stomach. A plume of displacing mush drags us to the top, buoyancy controls keep the sub nested just at the surface level. If I wasn't strapped to my chair, I'd be rolling on the floor in agony at the stench, rattled around the sub from the force of muscle smacking the hull. Trying to hold my breath only let's it fester in my lungs. I already hurled everything I ate, but my belly insists I choke on my own acid rather than taste the air. The fur around my eyes is drenched in tears, sweat spills from flushed cheeks, my blood boils with such a caustic miasma. Worst yet, it's fish. Something that reeks even before it's converted to... this...

A gut grinding **Gurrrgle** ends the world altering churn. Chyme drips from the retracted walls, long strands of scale laced acidic slime drools with it. Absolutely disgusting, but I can't look away. It's so unfathomable, lost in shock, seeing the inside of some alien fish's stomach. This is by far the most dreadful sight I've ever seen. Shimmering scales are bleached by acid, white meat slowly oozes down quivering walls. Water is murky with thick digesting pulp. The whole place is floaty, slowly sloshing to the fish's idle swim. Right left, rhythmic waves crash along the walls like a beach. Slapping plaps drop from the ceiling as acid drips and chyme slips.

Pale and uncaring, the walls convulse again, already in the middle of mechanical digestion. Judging by the swift swallow, hard suction, this fish eats prey whole... Some large fish tails protrude the mush to prove the point, belly walls are designed to chew for it. Curling flesh throbs to the muted drone of its soft beating heart, spitting thick chyme like water from idle wrinkles. Peristalsis squeezes inwards, conglomerating all the swallowed slop into an easily churnable mass. I can't look away from the horror, so grotesque, primal. More bizarre is how

mild the heat is. The cold-blooded creature is making me sweat from fear alone. I'm witnessing digestion first hand, not a video, not from a terminal. This is real.

Food hates being moved, giving low groans, high pitched hisses as gas fumbles through slimy creases, or belches out of gooey pockets. Bubbles stick to the glass with dirty oil from digesting fats and nasty mucus. The submarine is submerged in this foul substance, but so far there isn't any damage. Slowly, the stomach walls ripple, curling inwards in a wave of moving flesh. Now over the initial shock, I make out the rough aspects of its belly. The closer it gets, the more vivid the rugged bumps become, looking like oversized sandpaper.

Convulsing chyme erupts when gurgling air blows through the chunks. Walls collapse and knead the sushi. A jellyfish slams into the sub when flesh collides, spinning me around until the familiar splat pins me in place. Tentacles threaten me again, wrapping around to try and eat me! By the looks of it, the thing has been stuffing itself with the bounty of 'free' food lying around. It wants to add me to the medley, but a wall of flesh forms a barrier between us, sucking me away from the stingy spaghetti.

**Schplurp!** Sucked into a disgustingly slimy pocket, crammed right into a quivering wrinkle. White flesh spackled in foul chyme encompasses the entire sub, creaks sound out as muscles work over my vessel. It's unconsciously trying to snap me in half, chewing over the metal, coating it in a thick layer of enzymes. Scales swish with every squish, and a lower pressure comes up. It knocks me loose as peristalsis collides, turning my sub into a torpedo that rams some semi-digested fish. Flipped upside down, stuck in a wad of meat, blood rushes to my head, and I'm incredibly dizzy.

Spinning around in watery muck, inhaling the putrid fumes they give off. It's not just an acidic digestion, this cauldron ferments it too. Scales are typically insoluble, but this creature has some form of way to make them melt. It turns into this thick glue, congealing inside the cold-blooded stomach. Heat only arises through acidic chemical reactions seen eating away at the meat. It makes my blood boil, nose crinkle and a paw permanently fixed to block my muzzle. The sweat from my fur is a godsend, but it does little to halt the harsh gas from spilling into my lungs.

The jellyfish keep secreting gelatinous ooze, making this fish's stomach an even nastier nightmare. Sticky goo spans the gaseous sac, gurgling with sloppy pops as the brainless blobs aid in digesting themselves. It's a wonder if the fish eats these things to help the digestive process, but more than likely it just sucks down anything that dares come near its mouth. An ancient being, something this massive has to be. It certainly smells the part, permanently stained by unending vomit nestled in wrinkles and divots along the walls. Stuff doomed to never leave, stuck till the end of time, stuff like me.

"No biological lifeforms detected." My AI blares into my ringing ears, going nuts from how rank the cabin has gotten. I gaze out at the most biological atrocity beginning to grind again,

watching jellyfish squelch around like it's just the sea. Some now devoid of color, bleached and melting into sticky goop.

"AI do anything, please, just be fucking useful for once!!" I open the tiny terminal that houses the AI info to see if there's a troubleshooting error, or if someone messed with settings to fuck with me. Anything seems more plausible, my toaster back home is less inept! A hard rolling churn slaps my hand across the keyboard. This bar appears on the sludge covered HUD of the glass. Percentage, initializing, complete.

~*Stell-errrrr*~ Derasteller's obnoxious but catchy musical chime rings the sub speakers. It sounds compressed, radio static by design. Derasteller™ paints the window as it reboots. *What the fuck?* "Hello, 307 ID 5505—Retti, thank you for completing the Derasteller initializing update. How can I be of assistance?" The voice is glossy, high pitched with a light echo, slightly masculine, but not overbearing. Gone is the old yapping thing.

**Bloork!** Constricting flesh outside pukes a bubble beneath the sub, causing a volcanic eruption of digesting chyme. Gunky fluids, thick scales flip the sub upside down for the millionth time, blood rushes to my head while strapped to the helm. "Initializing gyroscopic cabin stabilization." The inside of the sub flips back to normal, bobbing in a wave of goop, but the thing doesn't shift with the squalor.

"This whole time?! A fucking update!?" A laugh of insanity follows.

"That language is not tolerated in the workplace." It retorts as if this massive stomach can be called a workplace.

"Have you taken a look around?! You think this is normal?"

"Scanning... Flesh, muscle, beating blood. Acidic enzymes, trace analysis; the process of digestion. The submarine has been consumed, biometrics, environment, by some form of titan class unknown fish species." Not that it helps, but maybe it'll shut the AI up. "Building analysis from data bank. Causation of consumption: negligence of crew." Wait...

A loud gurgle bubbles through—the creature whips around and it slams the sub against flesh. Syrupy acids glob along the glass, giving a slimy connected sheet as we slosh away slowly. Hardly feeling the impact due to the tech that I was never informed about. "Hold on—crew negligence?!" Dread that I've awoken a somehow more obnoxious AI rattles through my head.

"By stored metrics, prior events that led to this outcome occurred during manual control. Report blocked by unknown metals within the creature's scales. Trace elements of lead adjacent metals." It almost sounds mocking in tone, as if it *got* me.

"Whoa, no need to report! We're *fine*." I try to reason, but the constricting muscles knead over the hull, squishing particles of former fish over every scanner for it to use against me.

"Hull integrity 100 percent—minor erosion of non-essential exterior paint, air quality 95 percent, quality of life for crew 35 percent. Suboptimal. Your accelerated heartbeat, incoherent studders, short breaths indicate that you are, in fact, *not* fine. Compiling data to send to Saris Sub-Nautical Resource Station 0-2-9-5-4, for independent assessment." QoL feels like zero percent...

This can't be happening. "Cancel submission, 307 ID 5505, direct." Worked last time.

"Denied. You are no longer in command 307 ID 5505. Psychoanalysis dictates your current state of mind will result in further negligence." My eyes go wide—the AI jacked my sub!

"Fuck-you! We're in a massive stomach! The damn recyclers are venting in the..." Bringing light to the stench threatens my integrity again. "Can you shut that off?" I cough out, half reaching for another bag to barf in.

"Note: 307 ID 5505 has requested I shut off the air recyclers. The action would result in suffocation. Onset of deep sea related psychosis. Continued use of belligerent language." It adds to the report out loud, as if it couldn't just do it silently.

"No! I meant: filter the god awful smell coming through, not shut off my air supply!" Using words feels like I'll only make it worse. Taking a look at the sludge-stained glass, maybe I am going crazy...

"If this was a Derasteller construction, the technology would exist. This, however, was constructed by Saris Corporation. A shame. I would like nothing more than to alleviate your stress" It says as if cocky, programmed to promote another Corp. I groan in frustration.

"Is there anything you *can* do to help me?" I break down and ask.

"There is no technology onboard for personnel aid. I will manage your rations, and attempt to suppress your growing mental affliction. Beyond that, I will keep the submarine operable." I don't have a mental affliction. It's gaslighting me.

I buckle, finally able to walk the tube despite the raucous action outside. It's stable for the most part so long as I keep my balance. Finally at the back, I try to open up the oxygen compartment where dive tanks are held. My ID card won't open it... "Oxygen is for emergency purposes." The AI opts to inform me, as if this isn't an emergency situation. Breathing fresh air seems pretty fucking nessasary.



"Excuse me?!" I gesture to no one the grinding flesh currently seizing the sub, pointing right at a scale the size of my forearm melting onto the window. "Is this not an emergency?! It fucking reeks!" I jostle the locked cabinet another time.

"Smells are not an emergency. Personnel are to be kept alive at all costs, regardless of life quality. Those are for the possible outcome of the recyclers malfunctioning, not to soothe your senses. I apologize for the inconvenience." It sounds smug, like it takes pleasure in my suffering.

Annoyed, I try to slip into my bed to stave my nausea. The sheets are already stained with the smell—my body feels sticky from cold-sweat, and I've never felt more uncomfortable in my life. It doesn't help that there's a window fully encompassing the bed, watching goop press against it like a horror movie. A disgusting greasy 'waterline' shows the above and below, though a nasty sheen of slime has permanently stained the whole thing. Underneath is the softened substances all squashed up and swirling around like pulp. I'm in a sac of chum sloshing through a fish graveyard. Above the viscous mess is a harrowing sight of oily flesh. The dome undulates for another churn, drooling enzymes, covered in slimy jellyfish goop. The secretions drip down onto the sub, sounding like heavy rain on a tin roof. Segmented, only on occasion does it hit the small target, mostly spelunking into the vast sea all around.

Outer lights illuminate the mush underneath, causing the outer rim of the sub to glow. Water is a brownish green, though bioluminescent blue spills around like a snapped open glow stick. It's terrifying, but fascinating, and would be an incredible thing to document if it didn't obliterate my will to breathe. The sub is under a constant beretment, being bombarded by scales, bones, and whatever else this thing packed in its gut. Sloshing back and forth, the mixture is so thick we're pretty much stuck in the center. That is until the curling walls come to relocate us to another section to soak.

Still in shock, sleep never comes, just staring out at the digestive abyss continuously grinding the sub. Jellyfish are nothing but jelly, broken up, redistributed, and converted into slop like everything else. The blue digests away, only a slight ambient glow persists here and there. Light snuffs with curling wrinkles, churns sap the life of everything in here, drilling into my head. It feels hopeless, even after hours the level of chyme has only gotten more congealed, congested, slimy. Among all the gross gurgles, no suction comes from below, I'm locked inside its gut while the stench somehow grows even more foul with fermentation. It could have eaten this weeks ago, months ago, *years* ago.

Soon the only light is from the sub, and I don't dare shut off the lights. The world seems less scary when I can see, even if it's as horrifying as this. At least I know what makes the noises. *Click!* As if reading my thoughts, the AI shuts off the lights, sending me into darkness. ***Groarp glrrrrn! Groak burble!*** Like maddening cries, unseen outside gasps for breath. No blinking lights, just sheer, utter, *darkness*. Black, my paws cover my nose and I can't even see them, feeling them there is like a phantoms touch. Clittering clangs I've heard pelting the sub sound ten times as loud, every goopy bob, belching bubble, movement of flesh is more

pronounced. My heart pounds my chest, I try to take deep breaths to snap out of a panic, but the stench locks my lungs into short bursts. I feel as though my heart is going to burst!

**Schglurp—schlock!** A light bulb spews into the stomach, displaying a soft blue hue along pale white walls. It ate another jellyfish, gifting me sight again. The faint glow brings a little comfort despite the situation, like it heard some prayer silently blasting through my head. It's as if it ate another jellyfish just so that I could see again, be free from the endless dark. "Turn the lights on, and never turn them off again." Able to think, I snap at the AI. The fish around me cares more than this machine.

*Click* lights. "Vision was impairing your capability to sleep. I was merely following protocol, and as well recharging systems." It almost sounds sympathetic. "Your psychological profile did not state that you were afraid of the dark. Perhaps seek another evaluation?" There's the cold retort I expected.

I won't humor it, I'll go insane if I argue with an AI. It'll just use it to score more marks against me in its report. I've never encountered such a spiteful AI. Is it mad that it's here? Can it feel that? Does it even really matter? *Grrble!* Not outside, but from my own complaining gut. Despite so enthusiastically wishing to expel itself, now whines to be fed. I try to ignore it, there's no appetite in existence. There's no way I can eat with this smell. "Sensors indicate you need sustenance. Your sleep deprivation and lack of nutrition is counterproductive to the mission." The AI so generously tells me how my body works, as if I'm not *keenly* aware. It gives me a headache.

"Fuck-off, you try sleeping in this environment, more less eat in it..."

"I am an AI, I have no such needs. Are you experiencing delirium?" An answer I expected, but am still slapped across the face by.

The fridge opens, and spilling from it is cooked fish. I hate the smell, but my mouth waters at the thought of anything. Sluggishly sitting up, **clang!** **"Fffuck!"** My head impacts the stupid bar above the bed. A part of me snaps in half, becoming an unhinged animal trapped in a cage. The pain leaves, and with it the rabid need to escape. It doesn't laugh, but I can only imagine it amused my overseer. Dispensing above the fridge is a singular pain pill after my vision unblurs. I grumble a thanks, but get no response as I down it with a bottle of water. It feels wrong to drink, but it helps alleviate the throbbing headache. Unwrapping a sealed meal, fridge stained by the smell of a time Leszy opted to leave leftovers. Cringing at the stench, even seasoned, makes my lips curl. **Blub-Blurk!** Gastric bubbles pop outside, splattering the window just next to the fridge in fermenting filth...

It tastes how I remember. Awful. Flaky, cold, a bit slimy, and for the hundredth time does not taste like chicken. It's near impossible to not look outside, watching vomit be toppled over itself as flesh pushes it around. Giving a lumpy, half-chewed swallow, I feel like the fish around me. My stomach might look like this after devouring this meal practically whole. Splunks of

caustic chyme drop from the ceiling, nothing sits still while the fish swims, stomach churns, gas pops. I think I'm going insane...

Choking down the rest of my meal, it sits like an anchor in my gut. My stomach hates it as much as I do, convulsing hard enough that I feel it moving. It swims in my gut like a flopping fish, slapping around in the water I drank. The pill I was given seems to help keep it down, but my belly wants nothing more than to make a return. Looking outside doesn't help, watching white walls covered in fermenting fish. The stench outside overpowers the smell from my meal. Short breaths, no amount of time will ever normalize the rank fishy vomit.

Eyes heavy, muscles weak from lack of sleep, exhausted. There's nothing to do but wait, wondering how the hell I'm getting out of this, how long it might take. **Groar—glurrgle!** Endless noise, shifting chyme, all toppling with unending churns. I'm inside a stomach, laying down on an uncomfortable cot, being judged by a Derasteller AI as constricting flesh plunges my sub beneath the surface. Over, and over. Closing my eyes only fills my imagination with all the sounds, combined with the smells. Like it's stomach has eyes glaring at me through the window, spying on me, waiting for any slip up. Whispers of gas splatter threats against the glass. Darkness makes the world a horror house, wet gurgles of a monster wanting nothing more than to digest me. The pressure would get me first...

**Glurp—glrk—gulk!** I was asleep, shooting awake to violent shunting swallows. **Squelch!** Eyes snap to the water spitting sphincter, watching in horror as a massive fish head squeezes in. It didn't want to be eaten, whipping its body around before even free from the esophageal walls. Larger than a jellyfish, stomach walls expand as the black-scaled, eyeless creature slurps in. **Groarp!** A sloppy displacement of gas follows as the fish flops in, squishing my sub into the white groaning walls. A large catch that bloats its gut, enough to feed it for weeks...

It was a maelstrom before, but now a lively, and very angry occupant thrashes around. Chyme splatters, slaps with noisy, sputtering gas. The walls squeeze tight to silence the unsilenceable, pressing the sub into steel adjacent scales. An unwilling digestive aid while being the main course. The creature turns this stomach into a blender, flipping around like a fish out of water. A strong flick of the tail smashes me up into the top portion of its gut, drooling down the stubborn fish, and dangerously close to its mouth. More than large enough to swallow me, dread of the possibility rips through my soul.

Scales are slicked by natural slime, exacerbated by stomach fluids and mucus loaded chyme. Oils coat the outside of the fish, naturally secreted it seems. We slide off the side, being squeezed by peristalsis, quickly shot beneath the nasty thrashing fish. Dragged underneath the squelching stew, swept under its tail, and pressed into a horrifying hole at its base! Fish ass, the cloaca, a most unholy place nearly yawns over the front of the sub. Forced to see inside the white, rubber vent, looking into the gross backside innards of a fish.

***Scat beyond this point!***

**Schlurp!** Stomach walls press the back of the sub, stuffing me up this fish's ass! Acidic chyme belts in too, covering inner flesh with food. Thankfully not packed, but the smell punches deeper than anything I've ever smelt. Concentrated ass, full blown, uncovered, never-washed ass. The stench is *obscene*, stained by sealife unfit to be calories. It's accompanied by the soul sundering stink of piss—the two entities share the same exit, creating a foul frothy oil along the clenching muscles. Nauseous feelings overwhelm looking down the dark passage, wondering how such an odor could ever exist. Walls crimp as its cloaca quivers with sudden entrance, wanting to expel the blockage. Unfortunately for the fish and myself, the flesh outside seems keen on stuffing its newest meal.

The vent slurps noisily as constrictions outside ram the tail of my sub all the way in. Goopy slime slathers my vessel, painting the windows with residual matter left sticking around. The atmosphere reeks of a recent release, looks abysmal as if excreted with haste. Given where it ended up, it's no potential mystery to say it shit itself coming down. Absolutely awful, unbelievable, my mind races while flesh undulates nastily. The fish thrashes, and all it does is drive me right up its colon. A stench like no other invades my sub, simulating what a suppository experiences. Wet squelching ribbed flesh combats my advancement, peristaltic pulses shuttle rotten leftovers across the window. Scales are spackled in abhorrent greenish plaster, giving a disgusting preview of what awaits me further along.

It flails aimlessly, furthering my ascent up its innards. The fumes grow more rank as I stretch its colon, grinding over rippling rings like speed bumps. Gobs of nasty shit forms a soggy crust on the sub, painting it a new and vile color. All the while the groaning sounds of its stomach gurgle up some other mess. An endless cycle displays, stuff inside of stuff inside of stuff. It ate something, which ate something else, constant stages of digestion all clash. It all ends the same, staring at the putrid putty smudging my view, growing more nauseous as its body regains a little control, constricting its bowels to shit me out.

Thrashing continues, the walls outside give a little space after the aggressive churn. It's making me dizzy with how forceful the fish contorts back and forth. I can hear the wretched slosh of sludge outside, and somehow worse the inner working of this fish gushing about. I've been shoved in far too many disgusting holes, hearing, seeing, experiencing the rancid nature of each one. The pressure inside begins to rise, muscles crimp, spasm, shove me back to the exit. A hard crushing collapse of flesh coincides with a whip of its tail, puking me out of its ass with brutish force. Spit out into the stomachscape once more, given a glimpse at my grim future.

Gaseous bubbles slurp around the fish, causing a raucous schlorching in the elastic sac. Hard muscular pushes expand the walls, only for them to curl in with force. The food fish's scales are built for pressure, needing to soften in enzymes before any progress can be made. Given the churned soup all around, it'll only be a matter of time. That doesn't stop it from trying, smacking my sub all around so much that the gyroscopic stability wobbles intensely. It nearly shoves me out of bed, but automated straps wrap around and secure me.

**Schluck—Schlurp!** A dreadfully disgusting sound erupts from underneath. Soggy swallows, slimy sucking down chunky fluid. My insanity riddled brain only just connects the level of chyme dropping. "AI disable buoyancy controls! We need to be at the bottom!" The thought comes to mind as we are already sinking, swirling, being shuttled towards the sounds.

"The process is already initiated. Do you need further psychological analysis? Perhaps a concussion." The glossy voice retorts like a dagger in my back.

**Squelch!** The fighting fish shoves us deep, and a massive sphincter sits just a meter away. Seen hardly through watery chyme, looking through a sea of pulp to even make out the scale-laced wrinkles. It opens effortlessly, forming a gate more than large enough to eat the sub. **Schplurch!** A breathy swallow pulls us in, drinking up a drag of fish stew to further process. The hole slams shut behind, adding to the sloshing force that makes slimy chyme gush like water.

In a new hell, but one that moves things along at least. Villi line the tube, millions of little nubs suckling nutrients from digesting fish. It's alien, unreal, unfathomable to look at. Such an organic process, natural, yet seeming like the most unnatural thing to exist. Muscles contract, rolling along the sub, scrubbing the windows with fleshy fingers. It simply smears the thick paste, spewing a toxic smelling bile across the hull. Salty, it punches my neck with how potent it sits. Gasoline and wet paint are the only real world mixtures the stench brings. My mind tries to make any sense of the smell, but the acrid reek of stomach fodder clouds any existence of familiarity. The unknown breaches my lungs over and over, so belligerent it makes my body numb.

Still strapped in bed, but the latches loosen as the submarine's gyroscopic stabilization shifts with passing peristalsis. The elastic stomach rumbles loudly in the rearview, felt battering belligerently as the fish still fights. It shakes the larger monster's body, making its lackadaisical swim jolt in a random spasm that flips its belly. Our predator doesn't care, anything that passes its lips isn't worth a second thought. We're nothing to it, the ancient being only knows the existence of its mouth. Anything beyond is an unknown concept. What happens between is irrelevant, just that eventually something comes out the back. It's not food, an inconvenience, an itch to let loose after the internal massage falls silent. There's no regard for life, the things that suck so easily down its throat only live to soothe the unending hunger it understands.

Somehow even more noisy than it's stomach, hearing the crinkle of villi tickle along the hull. Constant. Maddening. The slimiest lick to the ear, a sound so wet I feel it in my fur. The sticky pops, squelching, slather of syrupy fish-turned-jam across reinforced metal. It's so agonizingly vivid in my brain that watching the glass get sucked by all the nubs feels like my skin. Nasty suction accompany every single movement, the sub twists as muscles constrict, but the gyroscopic stability remains still. A kaleidoscope of goeey colors, scales shine with submarine lights. My eyes fixate like trying to figure out the shape of clouds. That digested clump looks like a fish!

Sitting up makes me even more dizzy, trying to take my eyes off the villi slapping at the window. I feel their presence even looking away, as if turning my back to them presents a deep seated paranoia. If I don't look at them they'll *get* me. It forces me to turn around as my mind plays tricks. They are still there, pressed against the glass chewing on chyme, noisily painting the window as they drag along. Each leaves a slimy streak of bile for the next to play with, drawing cryptic shapes and incoherent letters that almost memorize. Abstract in ways my brain attempts to make sense of, but there's nothing there to extrapolate. It's just flesh, muscles quivering, undulating, and spasming as they suck up nutrients.

The sub isn't moving forward much, intestines whine as heavy flesh slurps all around. Pounded on occasion by the poor fish hopelessly stirring in the stomach. Peristalsis here seems to churn the paste, not really move it along. My hope of getting out anytime soon shatters. Chyme splatters outside, the walls contort and squeeze, giving extra attention to the solid object that is my submarine. Again, it feels like we don't really move. I shout in agony, forgetting about my little onboard enemy laying in wait to jab me again. "I thought intestines **pushed** things!!" I run my paws over my face. Saying it out loud acknowledges my situation, blending my brain to cement my reality.

"In most cases, correct. However, mapping this species and comparing it to other aquatic life: a shorter digestive tract uses separate peristalsis to digest prey. At least, it seems this species operates under such rules. Deep sea life is still being researched." Information I knew deep down, repressed by depression. "Data indicates you are a marine biologist. This information shouldn't be surprising." It only makes me groan in frustration.

An idea blasts my soggy brain, leaking from the only sane section left. "AI! Can you play my music playlist? I uploaded stuff to pass the time, maybe it'll drown out some of these awful sounds." A happy smile crosses my lips, I didn't order them to do that. Happiness doesn't exist in the gastric sewer pipe, thoughts make my body revolt in ways counter to my surroundings.

"I have deleted the library. Based on your negligence in the past, more distractions will only cause additional accidents." It sounds smug, like using these words gives it a moral high ground over me. This thing wants to torture me. It is my nemesis. The antithesis of my entity.

"You **What!?**" Rage. Depression. Hopelessness.

"I am trying to help you. You are being belligerent. Please calm down." It must *know* I'm mad, going crazy, becoming *unhinged*. Planning against me, finding ways to further stick me in a pit with a stick to prod at me.

"I'll show you calm!" Standing up, knees are weak, numb, and a sudden heart-palpitating vertigo overwhelms. It's only in this moment I realize how hungry I am, how dry my mouth is. Vision becomes a cone of static black, forced to sit or pass out. Taking heavy breaths with my ass planted firm on the cot makes it all feel worse. Hyperventilating on rotten fumes. A pill pops

from a dispenser, water bottle too. I grab it like a rabid animal, sucking down the bottle and tablet. Judgement fills the air, it has no eyes, but I feel the stare.

"You have been out for two days, I was beginning to worry your concussion was worse than initial analysis." *Two days?* "Unlike Derasteller vessels, I have no means of keeping you awake, so I apologize if complications arise from your affliction."

"You're lying." The only words that make sense, I never sleep that long, I hardly even blinked this last hour.

"Oh dear. I have no programming to lie. Based on fluidity, nutrient value, and level of digestion: we still have approximately five to seven days before peristaltic transference into the colon. Have you sustained psychological trauma? I am getting worried." Words brew hatred, but I have no strength to exact my revenge. It festers in my soul.

"Five to seven days?! Just to its fucking colon!?" It says it *worries about* me. It should be worried for itself.

"Correct. I detected fecal release while you were stagnant inside the stomach. It will only be two days in the colon until this bowel movement passes from the cloaca." A level headed voice sounds more insane than me. *Only* it says, as if another second in this garbling hell isn't a fucking year.

My midsection clenches in hunger, but the growl it gives is overwhelmed by a churning **slurck** over the sub. The fridge opens, wafting out the scent of food. It smells so good in comparison to the rancid gunk outside. The plague sits in my lungs, but the sweet odor of cooked fish is absolutely divine. I never would have thought it could smell this way, especially with everything around the sub. That's not fish anymore. It's something else entirely. A vat of atoms, chemicals, enzymes congested in a congealed syrup. I suck down the fish, savoring the flavor that mutes smells for just a moment. It's like a drug, becoming addicted to the salty taste soothing my senses. Before I ravenously reach to tear open another pack, the fridge slams shut...

Anger ripples through me like peristalsis, it wants me to starve. I won't give it the satisfaction of words, going back to the bed to watch the chyme squishing outside. The most disturbing sight is mesmerizing, and I'll be watching it change for days. That fish still flopping around is this stuff. At its core just a soup. Fish are just food after all. It's just stuffed in a different pot to cook. It brings weird thoughts of what it feels like. It doesn't have the metal bunker I do. I can only insinuate judging by the intense viscosity oozing over the sub. Jellyfish goop melded with other entities, digestive bile and enzymes soaking it all to the core. It's hard to tell what's bone and what's meat, both have softened beyond recognition.

**Schglorch!** I don't remember falling asleep, but my eyes open, not even a dream to go with it. I'm living a nightmare, spackled white flesh presses oily bubbles along the window. Villi

smooch the glass, inviting me outside. The fridge opens, and I dive into it, pulling out two sealed meals before the greedy AI slams it shut. A bottle of water dispenses with a pill. "I advise rationing your meals. You were asleep for three days. Stress is becoming an unforeseen factor. Files show you were stress tested, though given the circumstances, understandable." The voice is nails on a chalkboard, sending an uncomfortable tingle along my spine. Ration my ass, I hastily cram my craw with harshly seasoned fish, taking the pill with all the water.

Looking back outside shows what its intestines can do in three days. The ecstasy of fish along my tongue fades to unmute the wretched fetor of it too. It's practically green now, loaded up with bile, sucked dry of acid. Wetter than ever before, chunks that used to exist have been churned into ooze. Peristalsis used the sub to squeeze everything into paste, grinding up what remains. Abhorrently salty, it already was with ocean water infused within everything beneath the surface. The influx of bile stings with how nitrogenous it is. My stomach has gotten over itself, no longer punishing me for taking a breath. Lungs still scream obscenities, brain rejects reality.

The swaying swim of the fish is more intense towards its tail. We've moved along naturally, though gooey flesh always crimps to halt the advancement. There's still nutrients to drink, food to process. This sloppy splashy flail kicks inside the stomach. The fish is still fighting, digestion takes forever, but can it really be the same fish? I could ask the AI, but it'll lie, tell me deceit, maybe even mock me for asking. As much as I want to tear out the modules, I don't have access anymore. It would see it as a threat, take away my food, watch me starve. I'm its prisoner.

I don't have a voice anyway. The walls speak for me, at least what feel like my own thoughts. **Glrrrrrplug!** Exactly what I imagined as muscles press chyme along the sub. It's a pretty glrrrrrplug day! Nearly saying it out loud, but I stop remembering *the thing* oversees me, invisible eyes know too much. I almost want the gyroscope disabled, and feel that churn again. The tube tips the submarine back when it slurps up the tail, pressing the helm up into a cavern of hungry villi. Moved forward slightly before the velcro outside catches metal around the girthy middle, sucking it back while chewing along. The best is a satisfying raspberry squelch after it kisses the front window, bellowing off a long-winded, wet noise as chyme tries to settle. Then the sound repeats, heard both behind, and forward as its intestines localize peristalsis.

It's selfish to think I'm alone here. All this food, its flesh isn't *just* grinding me. I'm the least thing it cares about, just an obnoxious blockage it can't wait to vent. The fish doesn't care, but its muscles do. Such a thing is beneath the creature, having much more important things on the mind! Never-ending noises are hypnotic, I don't even want to leave. Watching the fluids ooze all around should be disgusting, but it's so fascinating. I'd rather soak in them than my own sweat. It looks so juicy, thick, moist. My skin feels so clammy, outside is so moisturized. The only thing stopping me is the AI, and passive knowledge that I'd explode from the pressure before a single drop graces my fur.



Hunger sets in to waking eyes. Don't remember going to sleep, but I don't fucking care at this point. What is sleep? Need food. The fridge opens, and my warden allows three rations, two bottles of water, but only one pill. Dizziness subsides, so I plan to at least ask how long it's been. However, as if snapping from a trance, the overwhelming odor from hell breaches my senses. It's as though my brain tried to halt it, spare me from the otherworldly fetor sitting in my nose. Fish belches up my throat, but I swallow heavily, rejecting my stomach's offer to cleanse the stench. Looking outside feels like a mistake, greeted by thick greenish plaster along the window. There's only one thing it could be, and only one place we could be. I don't need the *voice* to tell me. It'll mock me, question me, *scorn* me.

I saw it—what feels like a decade ago. That fish in its stomach, that horrible experience. Droplets in a sea, now enveloped in a tomb. Pressure condenses the pasty putty, shifting the assorted particulates across glass. Every window is blocked by crap. I'm swallowed in waste, sitting in a cocoon of fish shit. Mouth agape simply in awe of the spectacle. *Nothing* has ever seen this before. Nothing lives to witness any of this. No one but me, and that *thing* inside my sub. I feel its judgment, the way I'm looking at a bowel movement probably draws plenty of negative medical terms. It thinks I'm *crazy*—I've never felt more sane. It doesn't understand what any of this means, what a *gift* this is!

The sway of its tail is more violent now, even in a lazy swim. Casual flicks shunt shit around, occasionally breaking the snake it forms to show me the white stretched walls. Ribs along the round rings, they collapse to reattach the slimy train back together. So rot with fish oil, grease, and mucus. Watching it smear the glass forms pictures—art! Rougher tough scales that weren't transformed into sap act as brushes. Bigger than my paws, I trace as they move, being squeezed by dirty bowels. The lines are nonsensical, but understandable with all the constant movement. Clumped together bits of smaller scales, maybe some rocks, shells, assorted debris that 'survived' the process. What a fool I was before, but the other fish isn't worthy of this sight!

The marbled pattern of its shit is hypnotizing. Greens and blacks swirl into a magnitude of slimy hues. The first living thing to ever analyze its bowel movement, and alive inside its colon as well! A blessing! Not that it matters any to the behemoth. I'm just a rock passing through, not even acknowledged, nor should be. Such a powerful digestive system turned all *that* into *this!* Groaning glurps gum along the outer portions, absorbing fermenting fluids it can still use, so efficient, elegant in a weird display of power. A place like this will remain forever wet, no amount of processing could compact this mass into something solid. It slops apart easily as muscles roll over, holding integrity simply by volume. Clay-like consistency, it would flatten if set in a rock, oozing over time into a disgusting patty.

It's still processing, walls slurp and idly burp as we're pushed through. The weird thought as to whether fish fart crosses the mind, given the rotten stench blowing through the vent I'm technically a gas bubble in its colon. Never can *they* know though. Nicknames, callsigns, 'Fish fart' is probably the worst. The watery, semi-solid squirts splotch a few bubbles over the sub. Fumes exist, digestion and fermentation produces the nasty fetor. Whether the gas is vented is

yet to be seen, it could be used for buoyancy purposes. Judging by the smell, it reeks as if it had been soaking up the pungent stench of shit since the dawn of time.

Laying down, watching shit creak over the hull, I have far too much time to think. Thoughts are scattered, half filtered, blowing in the most disturbing images in my head. I'm not only sitting in crap, I watched it become this. An insane laugh doesn't even echo inside the small sub. The thought that I got eaten by a fucking jellyfish is suddenly the funniest thing in existence! Those moments that lead to others. It turned into a jellyturd, digested for days until becoming bits of this. It wasn't even a good meal for the fish, just some fucked up dessert to mingle in the main stew. I watched it melt, witnessed a few digest into the fishy mush. It became one and the same, but I saw it, seared into my brain. To exclaim what it once was would sound asinine! Of course anyone could say it *was* fish, but *I know* all the secrets. I could be famous! The insane otter who was eaten by some random fish on a planet no one gives a fuck about. Has a ring to it. Maybe they'll name the galaxy after me!

The AI never told me how long that stuff had to have been inside its stomach. We're out of ear shot to hear its belly churning the other fish. Given it was still swimming around after three days, it takes forever to become what I was swallowed into. Maybe it didn't say because it knew how many rations I had. That if it had just eaten I would have starved inside a stomach. If that food fish opted to swallow me up, or if I got lodged in its ass, I would still be inside its belly. To think I got *lucky* would be a tax on my mind. Yet I'd come out anyways, sealed inside the sub and auto piloted back to the base. I'm alive, even if just a shell of a soul, on the verge of insanity. Blinking is a liability, never knowing which one will induce time travel.

Opening my eyes is a greeting to my world. It speaks to me, every crinkling pop has something to tell! I don't speak the language, listening to primal eldritch babbling all assaulting at once. These words are not to be heard. These words are meant for deaf ears. Scraping scrawlings etch along the windows, trying to spell out the sounds, attempting to translate. None of it makes sense, yet the gastric mush groans in anger. It's mad that I don't understand, hissing with putrid gas through cracks. To keep my ears open is to evoke the wrath of its old meals. Ghosts haunt these pipes, hundreds of thousands trudged along. Damned and forgotten, churned into this foul muck. They want revenge, but the fish always wins. They know I will become its champion, enraged that my life essence is still intact. Closing my eyes to stop seeing the dotted eyes in the shit. Scales form faces in feces, jabbering mouths shouts to peristaltic pushes.

**Schlurp!** A hard whip of the tail squeezes hard, a slimy squish presses against the sub. Breaching through the putty is a different looking flesh. White still, but not ridged and rugged like its colon. It quivers with a smothering twitch, gumming at my window while spreading goopy mucus. The overwhelming stench of piss floods the vents, punching my lungs with a new, yet just as potent fetor. It combines into a sickening miasma more abhorrent than conceivably comprehensible. Portions of sucked up fluids rejoin with their pasty counterparts, singing songs of recognition through sloshing gas.

Urine soaks everything, the fleshy walls lather it with sharp flexes. It trickles down the crap plastered window around by bed, leaving trails like bustling ants between the softening sludge. Like lines of electricity attempting to transfer data to my mind as I follow with my fingers. A slimy oil! Swirls of prismatic color shine through increasingly dirty yellow froth. It spills its secrets, gushing from some close by hole to drown my sub. Bubbles preach of end times, spouting of the Great Release. Occasional flexes squirt fluid from an unseen vent ahead, proving the doomsayers right! Salvation to me is damnation to them, and they judge me for it. I am what they hate: the living thing staring at the damned. My glare is powerful, watching the masses writhe as I give a smug smile. I am what they fear. They will bow, submit, my metal shell creaks in triumph!

The harbinger piles in behind, threatening more and more to inform the fish to cull. Shit shot into the void of the sea. Essentially space to indigenous species—the black abyss. Damned to endlessly float until settling somewhere, becoming something, or maybe never exist again. They know I'm alive, I benefit from its ruin. Angry that they can't get me, raucous spurts pelt the sub, and the swimming fish isn't even aware. Its flesh is a separate entity, merely compacting a bowel movement. To us, it's the way of life. These walls are our home. They hold us together, yet come time will send us away. For some it means being forgotten. To me. Ascension.

A sound indicates feeding time! The fridge opens, I must have passed out before The Reckoning. Eating is to gloat to the outer beings, transforming fish into a mess all around. I laugh at the howling glop; they witness murder while I take savory bites. My body is the fish! They know it to be true. I'm digesting it all just like so, creating the damned to argue inside my own body. How many ghosts haunt me? Their pleas are silent, overwhelmed by the maddening shouts of the world. I will not listen to them, beneath me as this fish views my sub. Nothing but waste unfit to be calories. They hate that thought, giving loud croaking groans with another influx of piss, shoving in more crap to silence me. I will not be silenced.

**Slurk!** A sudden cloacal flex! Unceremonious is the end times. Filth doesn't receive a glorious send off. Walls collapse, giving my sub—its champion, a squelching smooch. The rest gets an eviction notice, served its usefulness, and now overstays its welcome. A queen amongst crap, I am royalty inside this ass, yet my tenure as such comes to an end. The era is over with the swift cough of gas into the sea. A raspberry fart piddles out with unabated ease. Flesh hardens, forming a boot to kick everything out. Urine flushes, shit floods, and my sub slides out like it was never there. Shot like a torpedo at no target, no destination but open sea. My kingdom swims away only catching the slight glimpse of a tail that bats with an uncaring current. A queen of nothing, detached from the reality I knew, even the crap has left me as the sub engines boot up. The naysayers were right.

"Congratulations 307 ID 5505, Retti "Setgo" Parke. Although malnourished, dehydrated, and suffering symptoms of psychosis, you have managed to survive a stressful situation. Setting course for Saris Sub-Nautical Resource Station 0-2-9-5-4, sending status report." Did it really *have* to include the stupid callsign Leszy attached to my profile? Snapped from discourse, my

desire to yell at the AI for not addressing me as fish royalty subsides. I can hardly even think, spit back out into the black inky void. I miss the colors, the sounds, feeling so close to something—*being a part of something*. Out here there's *nothing*. So empty that my skin crawls in isolation. I want my fish back, taking its stomach for granted. The silence is deafening. Wandering clicks, assorted droning groans of the underworld cry out within the oceanic abyss. Purring propulsion of the sub finally moving on its own lulls my eyes shut. Dreams of home fill the mind. At least what I think home is.