

“Stand in The Door”

by

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The warning repeats in a robotic, monotone amongst us, “Ten. . .Minutes!”

Opening my eyes and tilting my head upright, it takes me a second to acclimate myself to the surroundings. I fell into such a deep and enveloping sleep that my comprehension of time warps. Initially, this place appears hollow and voluminous, but our occupancy transforms its consuming expanse into a cramped and constrained enclosure.

I fear being overcome by the stifling and arid heat that threatens to deplete every presence of moisture from my body. Evidence of extreme perspiration presents as white, salty splotches on my t-shirt. The near liter of water I hastily consumed a mere hour ago alleviates my immediate thirst but now presents as an uncomfortable, and growing pressure on my bladder.

The man next to me winces as he shifts in his seat, exposing folds of tightly compressed skin and muscle, like that of a sumo wrestler whose loincloth is too small. It is pointless attempting to obtain any position of physical satisfaction as there is no room to maneuver much less get comfortable. So many bodies.

Damn, I really need to pee! How much longer must we endure? The perception of time is irrelevant. The speed of its passage is

irrelevant. There is only now, in this moment.



I am compelled to rise despite all bodily encumberments, and a moment of instability overcomes me as I stand. The floor drops and the sensation of weightlessness exists for an alarming yet exhilarating second. Reacting on ingrained teachings, I stagger my feet to steady myself.

Ahead of me, pale faced, a novice clenches a misshapen, white bag knotted hastily at the top; presumably the remains of a large meal, drenched in condiments and reeking of heavy, congealed, gelatinous, grease. I look on wearily, hoping that the pungent aroma is undetected and averts a collective reaction from the adjacent masses.

The doors release from their latches, the air rushes in with great force, and the taste of exhaust mixed with cool air fills my mouth.

We are in a heightened, hyper state of anticipation, pulse rapid, adrenalin surging. It is almost overwhelming.

With nervous anxiety and eagerness all eyes are fixated on the glowing red globe. I swallow hard and when its ruby hue is extinguished, we can no longer resist the urge to leave our imprisonment. I handoff my lifeline, step to the platform, propel from the portal and prepare for what comes next.

Feet and knees in the breeze. It is pure joy.