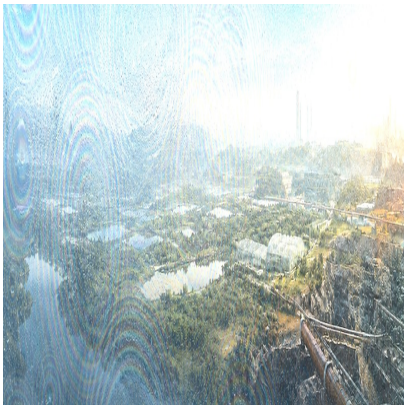


A pod with a view (VI)

Description

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Scase stood in his dwelling pod staring at the window screen. The code to restore his memory pulsed on the screen. The code promised to reverse the procedure he had once tested on himself. It would restore his vocation and the memories that went with it. His bar acquaintance, the droid Telo, had helped him recover the code from the trapped drone. He had to trust that recovery would proceed as Telo said.

The drone was still hovering before him in his living room, though it appeared slightly translucent against the expanse of the world seen through the window.

â??Are you about to vaporize now you have delivered your message?â?• Scase recalled his encounter with the earlier emot. It had disappeared before surrendering its secret.

â??Iâ??m available if you need me to administer courage.â?•

â??Why do I need that?â?•

â??There are risks.â?•

It approached as if to administer a shot. Scase wasnâ??t ready. He reached out to push the drone away. But his hand seemed to cut through the drone which splintered immediately into brief shafts of light.

â??I returned to my charging station as soon as I delivered the code. I am operating remotely.â?•

Scase could recall this technology. It was not a part of the droid rehabilitation programme, but an innovation practically as vital as developments in AI and robotics. Enhanced media optics (EMO) changed peopleâ??s view of the world. It was expensive as it involved intricate manufacture and installation. He could afford it.

Scase knew that the micropixels in his window did not depict the landscape beyond. They displayed a changing Fresnel pattern that reconstructed the light the landscape would have sent into the room, had it existed.

He admired the work of the network of engineers and companies who developed this technology. He envied that they operated without strict regulation. Compared with what? He couldnâ??t remember just now.

The screen could also activate to show virtual objects in front of it, such as a hovering drone. The illusion would fragment if something physical appeared between it and the screen, such as a hand or the limit of the window frame. Directed spatial sonics reinforced the droneâ??s presence.

â??You need only transfer the code to the circuitry in your pod.â?•

â??Itâ??s tied up with this EMO display,â?• Scase said.

â??I will leave to free up bandwidth.â?•

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At this moment Scase did not want to restore what he was or memories of what he did. He was content with Teloâ??s account of events for the moment. He slumped onto a chair as the synthetic sky turned dark.

â??Set mood to melancholyâ?• he murmured under his breath.

The emot could use the podâ??s neural field to administer its protocols remotely.

â??Save the code.â?• It instructed before it melted from his visual field.

The morning light was beaming into his dwelling pod when Scase awoke. He was in no hurry. Oblivious to the responsibilities his job might have entailed he felt free to discover his own story for himself. He showered extravagantly in the open cubicle that shared the living roomâ??s view. Still wet, he crossed to the window and pressed his face against the glass.

He could make out a real sky and real industry through the matrix of addressable micro pixels. As he drew back the concentric patterns of the Fresnel matrix took over, then the synthetic landscape took shape. It was pastoral, bucolic â?? synthetic. He had exhausted its capacity to restore feelings of wellness, and longed for something real. The EMO electronics emitted a plaintive hum as he switched it off. He dried himself in the silence, took sustenance from the kitchen and resolved to rediscover the world.

Without the pastoral reconstruction, the landscape settled into a different picture. There were drainage ponds catching the morning light, quarries, greenhouses, rail tracks and patches of scrub that had established themselves between service roads. None of it was wholly beautiful or wholly ruined.

Movement near the foot of the tower caught his attention.

A person emerged from behind one of the structural piers. Scase leaned closer. The figure was joined by another coming from a different direction. They did not look upwards. They crossed an area the screen had previously rendered as a field and followed an old service track that disappeared behind

excavation spoil.

â??Magnify.â?•

Nothing happened. He had switched the window off.

Scase reached for the control, then stopped. He preferred his own interpretations.

The code remained stored in the pod circuitry. His former vocation could wait.

He dressed and called the lift.

TO BE CONTINUED.

This episode draws on entries from 2014: #233 Windowphilia, #234 Making nature, #235 Re-making the city, and #236 Nature into the city.

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Category

1. Artificial Intelligence
2. Nature
3. Podcast

Tags

1. holography
2. nature
3. window

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