

Funeral for My Body at the Edge of Space

We are getting closer to the part of space where new life is born. The starbeasts blinked at us slowly from afar, their gills opening and closing in puffs of stardust.

When I say us, I mean me and my two bodies—the one I’m currently in and the one I salvaged from a shipwreck. Ashen skin, bleached hair, and lightless eyes was how I found the body, abandoned as its last consciousness capsuled itself away to escape a sinking wreck. The body was intact, but it took months of caring and pampering for its cells to relive again, for the body to gain back its warm brown skin and ink black curls. Most importantly, it has pectoral lines and a flat chest.

Spare bodies are hard to come by and this is the body of my dreams.

I steer my craft towards the deepest part of space known to mankind, the parts of space guarded by hungry stars, and turned off the engine so we can drift the rest of the way while I prepare my transition.

The transition should be quick, but it is a delicate procedure. I caress my hand over the life-sustaining equipment and down to my new body’s shoulders. This is months and months of saving, hiding from a family who doesn’t understand why it matters, and how uncomfortable and life-sucking it is for me to reside in the body assigned to me at birth. They would never help pay for a medical reconstruction or a

brand new body. But this is better. I'm giving new life to something someone had left for dead. I'm making a body of my own.

I want to hold a proper funeral for a body that served me as best as it could. Take something from the stars, return something to it.

I lay my bodies beside each other. I attach the breath link to my new body's mouth and its sucking end to my mouth. We breath into each other. I am keeping my new body alive now, while my old one is slowly shutting down.

I look up at the prowling constellations and close my eyes. I go to sleep at the edge of space.

I hold my breath, and when I exhale, I am bodiless and in limbo. I am formless and everything, part of the exhalation of the starbeasts and the wind that never was in space.

Then I exhale truly and wake up in my new body.

I stare up at the swirling stars and fins and laugh. Everything looks brighter, more worthy of being seen. More worthy of being alive to see.

I stay like this for a little while, my hands trailing across my torso and down. I flex my muscles and my legs. I open my arms in a giant hug. Slowly I get up and detach

the breathing tube. I put on my suit, a little tight now in accommodation of my new height.

I run my hands through my old body's hair, close her eyes. And then I push her off. She floats through space, serene and at rest.

I watched from a distance as the starbeasts dive towards my corpse, tearing into it with their nebulae-filled jaws. I watch my old body become my stars.