

## NaNoWriMo project – Nebulon Lineage

# Transition

The ache and redness dwindled as the imprint of those figures around faded. Sense of light or dark were unified into utter vagueness. No more pain; it was the first elementary sense to disappear with that endorphin release that staunched the searing thirst. The ambience dropped to mutter, then a toneless hum, then a vague sensation. Coherence is moot – the last dialogue is wiped, along with all other memories in an escalating rush. The emotions were gone, even the love and the fear; even the calm gave way to less and less, until it could not be described.

There was one final lingering. Proprioception – that invisible belonging to somewhere, stayed. That feeling of existing. No reason, no purpose, just being. The elementary, united feeling of inanimacy. It never left after all.

The end.

Something changed. A new sort of feeling, a little stronger than belonging. There would come a clearer understanding of it as it advanced – time. Whatever it was, it stood in opposition to the sense of being. It was...uncomfortable. Yes, uncomfortable. This was the first decision. It created an instinct – stark fear, in its purest form. It couldn't feel inanimacy anymore.

Time changed that fear – the instinct began to split up into different forms. Some felt less uncomfortable – desirable, even. Warmth. The worst instincts were laid aside, floating about where they would be less of a nuisance. This warmth felt right, better than that feeling of inanimacy now neglected. Time worked on and the instincts became more unique, more distinguishable. Space felt like it was changing – was this moving? The warmth was ebbing and shrinking – sometimes some new variation of discomfort crept in before fading away. Discomforts changed into new perceptions – an awareness of other things. That became smell, then taste – the vibrations made became hearing. One vibration felt special. It had to separate into a group of its own – light.

Time made these perceptions easier to understand, and they too grew bolder with the rest of things, overriding belonging. They were now immensely addictive – inanimacy became unacceptable. This dull, still space was insufficient. To stay here for any longer! It was so cramped now. The discomfort flared vehemently, bringing with it a new kind of decision – make more space. Force those infringing things aside. A push – a momentary relief. But then the things just drew back. Frustrating, but it felt possible now to do so much more. Another try, with more force. Again. Again! With the struggle, relief came harder and harder, but the effort was more and more. Effort...that was a kind of understandable discomfort, less than the rest. Everything was becoming very lucid.

Then, in desperation and frustration, the body exerted itself very hard and there was pain. Then senses surged and the restraints fell apart – this wasn't how it was supposed to happen! Everything changed – and a new fear more powerful than ever before was discovered. Confusion.

The redness and ague returned. It had to be relearned.

## Prologue - Confusion

Time seems to pass much faster than in that origin space; there is too much to take in. The bright red, the vibrational chaos, the chemical mess and the cold. there are so many things around. They are moving involuntarily, without your conscious control, no matter how much you exert! You should never have left the numb space! You want to go back! Go back! You're already forgetting sensations – already reverting back to the undesirable state of not living. You're losing so much energy – you can hardly exert yourself at all, hardly control what you're doing. This is the first time you've felt this horrible.

In your despair, something comes to ease the fear. A motion raises you up, fills you with a sort of warmth. Energy begins to flow back through you. Time slows down a little. You begin to understand things a bit more, but not fully. Was that motion another individual too – one much bigger, more powerful and more understanding than yourself? It hasn't made you truly uncomfortable...you trust it, although you cannot easily control it.

It's not long before, to your own surprise – a bold new emotion - you find yourself numb again. But it is a different kind of numb to the space, initial impressions aside. Over the next period of time, you frequently find yourself returning to this state again and again as your little reserve of willpower is frequently exhausted. This is your ultimate comfort – sleep.

The space around you, which the special individual supports you through, becomes increasingly clear and much less frightening. You realise you can make memories – you use this to stop those remnants of understanding from disappearing. The first thing you understand is that you need the special individual's warmth to keep your energy up. Then you understand that you too produce smells and noise, and that you can use it to coerce that warmth towards you. Reasons are found for discomfort – you are hungry, you are cold – you've learnt to distinguish between the two – you are not getting enough attention, you are tired and thus want the individual to stop giving you attention so you can sleep.

It quickly becomes very frustrating as you realise your new limitations. Despite your efforts, you're not getting exactly what you want, no matter how much you fuss. They try to feed you when you are full, try to clean you when your skin was already optimal and now feels sore as a result. You've actually begun to notice what you are made of now, even if the purpose of most protrusion or compartment is unclear as of yet. The special individual seems to have a lot of the same things - albeit much more morphologically complicated - and there are many more individuals like them, come to think of it. Some of them are similarly as helpful. Others ignore you. You hate the individuals that ignore you and love them when they pander to your needs – you are very fickle.

Then you fall sick. Very sick. You feel too much warmth – your own making – for the first time. You lose what little energy you had saved up, yet can hardly sleep enough to recover it. Worst of all, none of the individuals can put an end to the problem – the relief they attempt to bring is insufficient. In fact, most of them aren't putting any effort in themselves. Some of them are disappearing altogether – traitors! Even a change comes over your most obedient carer – they become despondent, upsetting. Are they suffering too? Are the others sick as well?

You come close to ceasing function altogether, the exhaustion almost becoming almost too much to bear. At one point, you almost want to abandon living to escape the pain, despite your newfound fear of inanimacy. The illness gradually abates – the temperature is finally optimal again and your improved hunger befits your amping energy. It's a happy occasion, but the other individuals don't quite share this sentiment. They are scarcer, more reclusive than before. It's unsettling to see the change about them – your ecstasy is short lived.

It is around this point you begin to notice trends with the sounds and sights and smells – what belongs to which object, what objects are similar in function to one another. Sound becomes especially important – you have a lot of control over what sound you can make. The more you strain, the louder and more urgent your demand – then you can change the texture of vibration using other elements of the body. Linguistic development is well underway, and before you can even produce the same complex, meaningful sounds of the other individuals, you learn a special vocal label. Your own name. After this, you reach your first fundamental epiphany. You will mostly forget all that has happened until now – even the sickness that left you scarred. But you will remember this as your earliest memory until close to your end.

This is where things branch off – your natal years were quite similar to a good number of other species in existence, though key differences in sensory focus are a prime variance. From now on, you will exercise better control over this life and we'll let you get on with the story. You're not to know anything about this, of course – that would spoil the immersion entirely! There's still some establishing of setting and cast to be done, but we've given all the instructions you, the viewpoint, needs. From now on, the narrative will take third person. Your personality will be established; your significant happenings will be catalogued; you will die at the end. You will not get a happy ending, but we'll see if you can leave an entertaining legacy. Look sharp, will you? Try not to blunder into anymore cliches, as thick as they come, or we'll never see the end of this narrative.

Your name is Brri – You are not a human being.

# Chapter 1 – Seeing.

The special carer, she realised before long, was her mother. She hadn't worked out what motherhood precisely entailed, nor if her mother was the only one of her kind, but she knew the name – Ami~I. She'd even practised saying it, calling it. Brri was pretty chuffed about that at this age. By now, she had grown to see the nights grow shorter and warmer, when to start with they were long and frosty. This meant she could be taken outside to first glimpse the cliff-falls beyond. But mother would not be taking her.

In all the time leading up until Brri's recovery, Ami~I had not left her family den. When the others went out into the veiny shade beyond, mother stayed by her daughter's side. Brri wasn't to know that this wasn't ordinary – that many parents were confident to nurse their children on the go, giving them witness to the actualities of the wider world; both the endearing and the disturbing. When Brri learned to walk, she was kept on a leash – never allowed to leave the home's frame. This became all too easy when Brri was sick and unable to walk without bringing up. Still, she could see what was beyond the roof. There was another permanent resident by her side – Rriu, who was like mother in appearance and attendance, but yet so much more on hand.

For all the attention she craved, Rriu made Brri feel unsure. Rriu had nothing but love for Brri – she was constantly playing with the baby, making learning opportunities out of whatever flew in and stung her and licking that same pain away. Rriu had been hardly a phantom from before the sickness. Brri remembered that she'd been preoccupied with someone else of a similar size and pitch – another whelp, one who used to be around very often. Now, she was there every night, now more of a presence than Mother. Ami~I began leaving the shelter one day, meeting some strangers in the moist green garden beyond and then disappearing beyond the bouldering. She'd take various things with her – learnt to be sharp, painful and inaccessible to infants – but she wouldn't take her daughter. She'd be gone with the stars, coming back by the trickle of dawn. Ami~I would usually be sopping wet, rarely empty handed, sometimes limping. She'd exchange sharp, unfamiliar words with Rriu and force her outside, then cradle Brri alone for a while. Rriu always returned, gloomy and estranged, and Ami~I always let her stay; the rain on the tarp crackled with jealous ambience. The shelter, like the womb, became oppressive.

The first moment Brri truly felt world aware came when Rriu snuck her under the open sky. It was past midsummer, the nights relapsing despite mounting warmth...