

The faun woke up. Rather irritated, he noticed that he could now move. His body was no longer made of stone, but of luminous pixels. At first, he was not sure whether he missed being a statue, which is, after all, a decorous and honourable state of being, if a bit boring at times. But it had offered the enormous pleasure of being looked by a multitude of people across the decades, who had marvelled at his sight. But then he remembered that he had spent the last decades in a dark and dank basement. He had been discarded when fashion changed, and over time, due to a long forgotten incident, he was broken into pieces. The lowest point of these sad days came when a creature began to live in his belly. During these long years, the glamour faded, and he could enjoy none of the delights that being a statue entails and began to warm to his new mode of existence, even if he still missed the heaviness of his stone body.

He rose and began to move about, which had a invigorating effect on him. He was obviously in a garden with large ferns and all sorts of strange and exotic plants. The air was warm and humid, perfectly controlled, with only a slight change of seasons as he would observe in the course of time. After a while, he noticed that the garden was protected by a large glass dome. The garden was as artificial as himself, and yet, again like himself, it was a representation of nature, so it soon felt like home.

After a couple of days, he became accustomed to his new life. He quite enjoyed the garden with its colorful flowers, gigantic leaves, and delicious fruits, and the evenly well-tempered climate made him feel quite sensual. Now and then, he danced like fauns are supposed to and began to feel increasingly ecstatic.

One afternoon, he suddenly exclaimed in a frenzy as in a rapture: *O joy! O bliss! I have beheld the birth of life! I have seen the beginning of motion! My pulses throb even to the point of bursting! I long to fly, to swim, to bark, to bellow, to howl! Would that I had wings, a carapace, a shell,—that I could breathe out smoke, wield a trunk,—make my body writhe,—divide myself everywhere,—be in everything,—emanate with odours,—develop myself like the plants,—flow like water,—vibrate like sound—shine like light, squatting upon all forms—penetrate each atom—descend to the very bottom of matter,—be matter itself!"*

His rapture was suddenly interrupted by a rather disrespectful "Meow". He turned around and noticed a goat staring at him from behind a tree. They stared at each other for quite some time with the goat intermittently bleating with some insistence. Finally, the goat came over to the faun and nudged him, which relaxed the faun. Both being horned creatures, they started to feel a nascent sympathy for each other. They would encounter each other time and again on their wanderings

through the large dome and began to spend their time together until they were almost inseparable. The faun even started to make sense of the goat's bleating, which at first had seemed merely rude and crude to him.

Having been a statue and now being a pixilated phantom, the faun sometimes envied the goat for existing in flesh, a state he had never experienced, although fauns, long before they were statues, were famous for being the very essence of flesh, a fact that he vaguely remembered from somewhere. Probably Leuzinger –that strange man, who had created him as veiled protest against his Catholic childhood in Netstal –had mumbled about it, while he sculpted him. The faun never knew whether he liked Leuzinger, since he was so much freer than his creator, whom he considered unnecessarily stuffy and repressed. He remembered how glad he was when he could finally leave the studio and be a statue on his own. Too bad that artists never get to enjoy the pleasure of being a statue, he thought.

The goat, being much, much older than the faun, sometimes looked at him and was somewhat amused as he was a bit fake. He had known real fauns, back in the old days, not just statues. They were his divine relatives, which he had admired and revered so much, but he had not encountered any of them for centuries. He was not even sure whether there were any of them around anymore, since at some point, fauns and goats, for reasons he could never quite fathom, were no longer popular and well-liked. So he was quite happy to be around the virtual faun, which reminded him of a happier past.

Whilst they were exploring the gigantic domed garden, they would sometimes ponder how it was built, by whom, and, even more crucially, why they were here. Apart from a variety of birds and insects, they seemed to be the only inhabitants of the glass dome. Someone must maintain this intricate structure, they wondered, yet they never saw anyone.

One day, they had a curious experience. They had ventured into a part of the garden near the perimeter they had barely explored. Suddenly, they noticed the shadow of three large horns jutting out from behind a large rock. They stopped and stared at the three horns and wondered who or what that might be. They concluded with both fear and excitement that it could be some giant mutant goat, but after some apprehensive waiting it became clear to them that it must be something immobile. They went around the rock and beheld a concrete cross on a meadow, on which light fell from a curious angle, thus effecting the strange shadow. They glared at the strange structure, which made them feel curiously uncomfortable, particularly the goat, in whom it stirred up some vague and very unpleasant long forgotten memories, which did not quite crystallize into images.

Somewhat frightened for no particular reason, they briskly went away. Later that day, lounging near a bright blue pond and feeding themselves upon the garden's strange geometric flowers, they mused about the cross, and what it might tell them about the unknown builders of the dome, but to no avail, since the unpleasant memories of the goat remained hazy. They decided to avoid this part of the garden in the future, and only rarely ever thought about the cross. But sometimes, on certain evenings, the cross made them wonder whether something was amiss about the domed garden.

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