



Strings

Author: Ivan Guo



A hint of clarity comes back to you. Your dream - the Earth you returned to - there were so many people living there. Thousands of thousands of thousands of humans - of living minds in danger from something... *Why worry about it? You can't bring back dreams. They don't change anything here.*

But it was such a long dream! It felt like hundreds of sleeps' worth, but shadow patches in the pit barely hold together long enough for you to steal a moment's rest. *And you're wasting time thinking about it out here in the open. Begging for some fiery messenger to come along and deliver your inevitable demise.*

Yes...those few remaining glimmers of darkness have disappeared, you sense, leaving you vulnerable and - as ever - alone. *You're going to be alone forever. Even if you survive the Long Count and climb out, you'll never age, never grow old, not after existing here.*

Your heart sinks at the realisation. Maybe it would better if a demon came along and consumed you, right now. *But it might just as easily imprison you in a tomb of your own mind. Better to seek out a Great Old One, and face true oblivion.*

As easily and unexpectedly as the last, another memory fills your mind.



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01100100  01101111  01110111  01101110  00100000
01100011  01101000  01100001  01110100  00100000
01101001  01100100  00100000  01101110  01101001
01110100  00100000  01110011  01101000  01101111
01110100  00100000  01100100  01110010  01111001
00100000  01100011  01110010  01100001  01110100
01100101  01110010  00100000  01100110  01100101
01110010  01101110  00100000  01101100  01100001
01100111  00100000  01100010  01110010  01101111
00100000  01101000  01100101  01111001  00100000
01100010  01101111  01101110  01100100  00100000
01101110  01101111  01110100  00100000  01110111
01101001  01110011  01101000  00100000  01101000
01101001  01101101  00100000  01100001  01101110
01110100  01100101  00100000  01110110  01100101
01110011  01110100  01101101  01100101  01101110
01110100
  
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Seven six eight. Three two five. Two seven three. Eight four zero. Eight two. One zero five six. Three six. Four.