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Celestials

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Wilkes’ stomach felt as though it were a balloon filling at an exponential rate, just waiting to burst all over the forest.

Because. God impregnated me with his child, and then told me I was not pretty enough, and did not love him enough. So he left me for another.

Miss, whoever is the father of this baby, he isn’t God.

Who are you to tell me? God is the absent father of all. Invisible and omnipresent. Wilkes’ lungs burned. He had to rest again against the trunk of a tree, but only allowed himself thirty seconds.

Please don’t give up. Please don’t give up.

Her breaths grew more and more shallow and rapid, until they quieted altogether. She grew limp. He felt the blood that had soaked through his jacket.

They arrived at the truck and Wilkes laid her in the cab, felt her pulse, and felt her pulse again. His vision cracked. He lay his head upon the tight skin of her belly.

You’re okay, he said. You’re okay, you’re okay, you’re okay.

Before he crashed he was thinking of the day he found his daughter at his doorstep. They had dressed her up in all new clothes. Even did her hair. He was thinking of the bows they had put in, bright pink bows with white stars.

I don’t know much, but I do know one thing:

That nobody who says you ought to reach for the stars considers that it takes eight minutes for the sun itself to reach out its hand to earth and smack with its aurorae awake the sleeping, insipid ingrates that it once inspired and some men on the television assure me that this is in itself very impressive, even though it’s just the same stupid sun and I see it every day.

Or that it would take a wingspan of something like twenty-five point eight trillion imperial miles, and god knows how many units that the imperials themselves use, to rub elbows with the celestials (or twice that considering that basic physiology dictates that your elbow’s only ever going to be halfway to where ever the hell it is the rest of you’s going) in Alpha Centauri.

This is all to say that this whole thing seems like a lot of work to tell a kid who spends his days wondering which teeth are falling in and out of place and pulling in a star of his own about the things he could accomplish if he told himself enough times that the star he’s named all to himself hasn’t even yet sent the sunbeams over to planet Earth to tell him to Fuck off, kid, we’ve got a name.