The guardian of the blue metropolis.

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If you are like me, you sometimes look up at the night sky and wonder what sorts of aliens you might meet if you could travel the universe. What would they look like?
You might meet aliens who look very much like you.

They might even have some familiar habits, like drinking milk and eating cookies...
They might like some of the same games that you like...
But then they might really surprise you by taking apart their face...

and storing it in a box before they go to sleep.
You might meet some aliens who look sort of like you from the front...
but when you look from the side it is a whole different story.

Or maybe they only look like you from a distance.
Some aliens would give hints of the human... though perhaps only in certain positions.
What might first look to you like a happy family of four...
might turn out to be parts of a single creature.
Likewise, what appears to be a single creature... might turn out to be a colony.
I guess most aliens would not look much like us at all, though you might still be able to pick out their faces and their feet.
Some of them might not have faces or feet.

They might not even be in one piece.
What could we really tell about an alien from the way it looks?
Sometimes when I look at people I think about how small changes in their expressions make such a big difference to us.

It might be the same for aliens, but probably their expressions would mean nothing to us and ours would mean nothing to them.
I wonder if the way we size each other up based on appearances... also happens on other planets.
He had beady, close-set eyes that seemed to bore into your soul. He had a crooked grin that covered chipped teeth.

It had an extra bend in its tripod which seemed to give off a bleak radiance. The secondary stalk was ovoid and interacted unusually slowly with the ammonium sulfate it contained.
VOTE
Icewater for Governor

John Icewater has a square jaw and a steely gaze. He's clearly the right person to run things in our state.

Boon Zixboing has a clean arc to his [untranslatable] and a vigorous index of refraction. Therefore he is the optimal choice for manager of Sector 7.
We probably make a lot of foolish mistakes when we go by appearances, but often we can't help it. Our brains fill in the unknown with the familiar, giving us the illusion that we know what is going on.

When it comes to aliens, there is probably nothing at all we could figure out by their looks, unless...
This image translates my emotions into your facial expressions. Pretty neat, huh?

Of course, thanks to my superior brain, 99.8% of my emotions cannot be translated into your terms.
In such situations, the device instead displays a convenient symbol of good will.

It is hoped that this device will bring about a greater understanding between our peoples.

However, the device might be of limited use to us.
Even when we could size up an alien by its appearance, we still might not be able to understand the things it does.
What looks from afar like golf might be something else entirely.
"Tennis" also might have some surprises.

Translation: Ooh... spectacular! Dad, throw him another one after he puts himself back together.
Many alien activities might have strange and partial connections to human experience...
Other alien activities might seem like science that was a little bit out of our range...

I count the number of times they turn clockwise and compare it to the number of times they turn counterclockwise. Then, at the time of each one's death, I cause it to spin around exactly enough to restore the balance.
or maybe way out of our range.

I weave baskets out of light.

I braid x-rays and freeze them into place. It is sort of like basket weaving with light, but more intense.
Going far beyond us, what they did might take on a super-human majesty...

I sculpt the emerald mountains.
I am the guardian of the blue metropolis.
Recursive brain lamination complete.

Or possibly make no sense at all.
We probably couldn't just plunge right in and understand what an alien DOES before finding out what it THINKS. What kinds of thoughts would we find out there?
Woof, woof!
Oh boy! My master just threw me another ball!

Oh boy...oh boy!
What is happening?
This never happened to me before.

We might find more or less familiar thoughts played out in unfamiliar scenes...

Man, that was a great one! It really popped off a long way. I can't wait to tell my friends about this.

Well, if you've seen it once, you've seen it a million times. I can't believe they charge [30 bucks] for this.
I just want to smash these [guys]!
why am I always last?
why am I always first?
It is over so soon.

[Bob] is probably going to wear his square body today, so I should wear my round body.
I am the divine polisher.

Behold, the giver of red.

Now that we know it can ignite the torch of Flynnwold we shall use it to ignite Flynnwold itself!
We will escape by creating blind spots in their visual fields and hiding in them.

We're safe as long as this guy doesn't figure out that we're hiding in his eye.
These waves spread out along the roads and give laws to the land.

Truly, I rule the world with my fist.

My newest quantum computer clearly proves that consciousness is an emergent property.
EVERYONE ON THE GREEN PLANET MUST BE THE SAME.

We might find some of our thoughts amplified into madness...

They can pry my planetary annihilator from my cold, dead fingers.
and madness turned real
by circumstance.
The world is empty except for me.
I can't look at the flowers. They terrify me.
Finally! I'm on top again. Gonna quit my job at the bank and join the circus.

Ugh! [Green] is on top. I hope he doesn't quit my job at the bank again. I worked so hard to get it back.

I hate the bank and the circus. When it is my turn, I'll get my job back as a math professor.

I wish I was on top, so I could talk to [Bob]. He's really a fun individual.

There's [Bob] again. I hate when he's [green]. He's so frivolous!
Sometimes we could hardly relate to their thoughts at all...

This idiot is never going to find his way into my mouth. I had better turn off the electromagnetic food repeller.

Now that it finally comes to the end there are two of them and I can't decide. I had better turn around and go back.
Technically, a recursive brain lamination happens the instant the brain understands itself completely, but if you are clever you can game the system and bring it on a bit earlier.

Now that I have surfed a memory vortex, I know that the song of the universe has overtones of [untranslatable].
We might be surprised... not just by WHAT aliens think about...
but by HOW they think.
We might find some alien thought determined by chance...

LIKE
HATE

I Love you!
...and some by committee...
I am happy
I am angry
I want white wine
I am into golf
I sing in the chorus.
My mother was an acrobat.
I like potatos
My uncle plays the trombone.
I am bored
the ocean makes me sad.

...and some by a living rain.

Time is money.
I sing in the chorus.
My uncle plays the trombone.
I am into golf
I like potatos
My mother was an acrobat.
I am bored
the ocean makes me sad.

You can't get good pizza outside of Brooklyn.
Let's order some white wine!

Charity begins at home.
I need space.
We might find aliens whose actions are controlled by pure logic...

Turn left at white squares and right at black squares.
Change the color of each square I pass.
Make one move each [unit of time].
That is all.
I've been doing this since birth and I'll do it until death.

We might find aliens whose actions are controlled by pure logic...
Wow, just 385 [units of time] after birth and look what I've created! What's the future going to bring?

Think of something clever to say, you fool.

Well, I guess you never know whom you'll meet as you go down the highway.

...but who still manage to think, who still feel life's thrill and uncertainty.
We might find aliens who think without certain powers of deduction...

I'm glad to be here with you.

Now I know [Adam] is glad to be here with me, but he doesn't know it.

I know that you are glad to be here with me.

Now I know that [Bob] knows that I am glad to be here with him, but he doesn't know it.

I know that you are glad to be here with me.

Now I know that [Adam] knows that I know that he is glad to be here with me, but he doesn't know it.

I know that you know that I am glad to be here with you.

Now I know that [Adam] knows that I know that he is glad to be here with me, but he doesn't know it.

Now I know that [Adam] knows that I know that he knows that I am glad to be here with him, but he doesn't know it.

Aliens whose thought runs too easily into infinite loops...
or aliens who think without any idea of SELF...

Moon destruction done...
Symphony number 22706 begin...
New virus synthesis phase 10 begin...
[Egg sandwich] cooking step 3 done...

aliens who plan and accomplish astounding things but don’t know it...

Symphony number 22706 done...
New virus synthesis phase 10 done...
[Egg sandwich] cooking step 4 begin...
Stellar warp drive phase 3 begin...

aliens who are completely empty inside.
We might find aliens who make no decisions and have no plans, but rather think by trying all possibilities...
or aliens who have no moving parts, like images in a cosmic flipbook...
their thoughts emerging from logical circuits,
advancing one click at a time...

coating the buildings of a blue metropolis.
We are surrounded by the unknown.