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#43

by stanley lieber

Geo wasn't certain when the interrogation had begun. Searching his memory it seemed that the interrogator had always been there. He strained upwards, craning his neck toward the aperture centered far above his head. Save for this solitary shaft of light, the tall narrow cell was completely devoid of illumination.

Geo felt around on the floor, his hands trailing through damp puddles. He realized now that he had wet himself, maybe several times.

How long had he been down here?

Always?

The interrogator was apparently taking a break. Geo used this opportunity to get his story straight. Whatever this was about, Geo had had nothing to do with it. It would be easy for him to sell this explanation because Geo honestly had no idea what he had done.

Had he in fact done anything?

The cell door creaked.

Day after day he kept track. He gave up trying to count after he noticed he'd filled every available surface with marks. It seemed to him now that the only life he could remember was his life in the cell. His only friend was the interrogator. Was this how they'd planned it? With him able to recall only his captivity? The interrogator asked questions that pertained only to his previous life. At this point Geo just didn't know.

What if the interrogator was himself? Geo had approached this most prickly proposition several times, but the environment always colluded to distract him. What could it be they wanted him to tell himself that he didn't already know?

The cell door creaked.

Geo was led outside, into an implausibly bright, sunlit half-pipe, seemingly constructed to competition standards. The guard issued him a blue plastic skateboard with chunky yellow wheels. Geo just didn't get it. What was he supposed to do? He rubbed his eyes.

The guard withdrew, locking the exterior door behind him.

Geo was alone.

"Skate," his little voice said.