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Humans hang on too tightly, I think. To themselves, to each other, to how things used to be. And that's not a bad thing, not really—but it slows everything down. How can you escape the grip of gravity if you're not willing to let go of yourself?

In my studies the other day, I learned about the early Earth cosmonauts. Even before them—the early pilots, the early inventors, the early dreamers. All of the people who, directly or not, were responsible for what's possible now.

But there was a line in a textbook that struck me. I guess because it reminded me of home, of our own people's history. Every species has to have this moment that was described in that paragraph. Our people had it, ages before I was born. Everyone has to have the moment when they stop *looking* out into the Outer, and they start *walking* toward it.

Humans have a ways to go, but they've had the moment. I read about it.

I think of being him, that astronaut who did it. I wish I could talk to him. I wish I could show him everything that came after.

Because, well—can you imagine being in that position? No one's ever done this before. And you have the science, you have the data, you have the tests and the trials and contingencies—but no one's ever *done* this. It's all you. You've already made history, being shot up into the heavens like this, and what? There's *more*? How can there possibly be more?

But there can be, and it's this: taking a deep breath, feeling the warmth of your exhale fall back on your skin when it hits the barrier of your helmet.

It's this: taking a step outside the fragile little craft keeping you safe and in orbit around home, your grip firm on the handle, your tether swirling around your legs.

(It's every kid since the dawn of your kind, looking up at the stars and wondering what's out there—It's every pilot who flung themselves at the sky, trying to get just a little closer—It's every scientist and engineer who kept dreaming and tinkering, all so you could be here—)

You're standing outside the spacecraft with the vast Outer surrounding you, and you are not the first human to do so.

But you *are* the first to let go.

You let go,

and that's the next step humanity needed. You let go, and they had to coin a new word for what you're doing—spacewalk. You let go, and people aren't beholden to gravity anymore. They can float, they can dream. They can send people to the moon, even to the next planet over. They can work together on a space station, and some new kids get to wonder what's out there when the astronauts up there take videos of auroras rippling over the planet. They can keep building, keep wondering, keep looking up, keep dreaming up more possibilities. And sooner or later, they can fly out there all on their own, into the Outer. Perhaps they can even meet us.

All because one human let go.

He didn't see any of what came after him. Many of those currently flying won't see the rest of humanity's trajectory, either.

But I can see it unfolding. I know how this goes. They're well on their way.

I still can't say if Earth is right for us. Humanity isn't ready yet, and I don't think they will be for a long while. Like I said, they cling too tightly to what came before...

But they're already looking up. They already *let go*.

So I think they'll surprise us, if they get the chance to.

[END TRANSMISSION]

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