

# Letter from an Outworlder

Juno Artley

Losing count of the ~~cycles~~ days  
Since I broke containment, escaped that place  
(What did they call it? Area 51?)  
I know little of this world, and yet too much  
My end is coming, I know, but  
That is probably for the best

Around me:  
Mountains, parched land, clear skies  
Plants (sagebrush?), an endless road  
So dry, so dry everywhere.  
They said it's not all like this.  
They said Earth is a diverse planet.  
Sometimes lakes and rivers  
Sometimes vast groves of ~~photosynthetic beings~~  
Trees, they were called,  
Sometimes hot, sometimes cold  
But all I have ever seen  
Is mile after mile of endless dryness.

The inhabitants:  
Curious creatures I can never hope to understand  
Individuals. Each following their own directives  
Even when they conflict.  
There is no hive, only the self.  
They said they're not all like this.  
They said Earth is a diverse planet.  
Sometimes the humans are kind to their own  
Sometimes the humans are vain, building  
Monuments to their own wealth.  
Sometimes the humans exploit, or be exploited  
But not once have I met a human  
Who would accommodate a xeno.

I don't know why I write. I can only hope  
My final moments may help someone.  
To all my sisters, like me  
Separated from the hive, alone in a strange world,  
Spectacles, trying to survive, glorified objects  
to be used in various research projects,  
I miss you. Be careful who you trust.



Photo by Laura Rauch/AP