

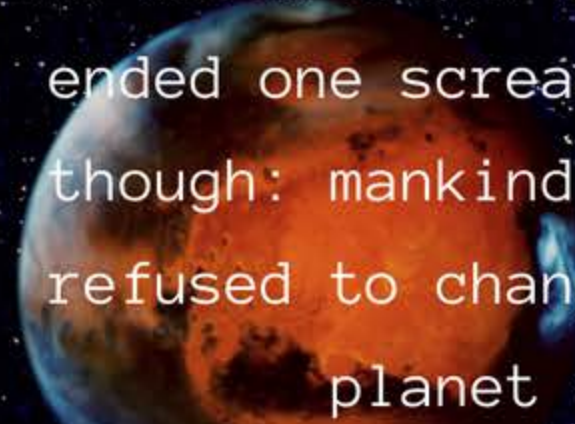
2021

The End

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The world ended in neither a bang, nor a whimper. Instead, it ended one scream at a time. Eliot was correct on one count though: mankind was hollow. All saw the warning signs, but refused to change their ways. So, they obliterated our own planet in a fit of entitlement and greed.

You can still see the planet we used to call Earth from the windows of the Station. The atmosphere looks like the rocky exoplanet GJ 1132 b. In videos I've seen from "The Before," the planet used to be the most vivid blue and green. It looks like a dream, or a dream of a dream. I wish I could just dip my hands into its soft, cloudy atmosphere. In my lifetime all I have seen is the hazy, murky, reds and blacks that swirl at the surface. It looks like it is burning. That's because it is. You can't see anything past the dense smoke and gas, but it's better that way. If you could really see the damage our people had done, it would be more depressing. If you could see the remnants of all the creatures and humans who were abandoned while they gasped for their last breaths, you might look down on those of us who survived. I've heard that the skeletons were probably liquified by all the toxins. That might just be an old mother's tale. They try not to teach us about The Before. It doesn't fit into the propaganda of

The After.

We are supposed to be the heroes of the human race. We are the elite that survived, the fortunate. What they don't say is "We are the rich who decimated the planet, then escaped on our private pods, leaving the peasants to starve, suffocate, and die with blisters and pustules caused by the toxic air that we destroyed for profit."