

Abduction

The snake lay still and considered what had happened. During the intermissions in the wind, the strategic advantage of his elevated resting position in the thick wood was apparent. He clearly heard the man with the box sneaking to the space-vehicle's landing spot, followed by a strong, fast noise and the creatures' clinking in their attempts to escape.

It was the man's first box. The guy from the hardware store helped him calculate and cut the boards in the right sizes. When the guy asked what the box was for, he mumbled something about a television utility, what else could he say.

He thought to himself: there isn't a more masculine action than building a box. The accurately sawed wood was flexible, and he was forced to be intimate with the boards in the gluing stage, leaning with all his weight and clipping them to each other, arranging himself in strange positions to fend off stubborn rounding-of-edges. And then the screws, their confident penetration, the material's irresistible submission, or sometimes, its sneering revenge when one, too close to the edge, breaks through the side, injuring the wood and irrecoverably damaging the board's purchased perfection.

The inside of the box, which turned out to be heavier than expected, he cushioned with an old sack. He then dragged it to the wood, not far from where he had seen the creatures for the first time, performing what looked like an early morning emergency landing onto the dew-covered grass. Like everyone, he had grown used to imagining aliens in human size or bigger. It took some time and involved a not-too-short series of logical analogies and negative option-narrowing, until he understood what he was watching.

He couldn't think of anyone who would believe him, even enough to be persuaded to come and see for themselves. He wondered who you should inform of such an event, which authority, and whether there was an official procedure for reporting Unidentified Flying Objects driven by creatures the size of grasshoppers, that move like a fragile construction of mucous-covered, honey-colored needles, spreading tiny flare-ups around themselves.

He needed more time to decide what to do. They were as light as foam and emitted shiny warmth through the wood, but he hadn't expected their forced delivery into the box to be so violent. He hadn't foreseen the feeling of self-loathing that swept through him, alongside the

cold sweat of excitement and the enhanced pulse, when he carried the box on his shoulder towards the edge of the wood.

Worse still, since he has never stood next to creatures like these, he couldn't have predicted the telepathic humming or interpret it in a calming way; the rising waves of inner-skull stimulus, like a cognitive nausea, that had a distorting effect on the hearing, and made his accelerated breathing sound like beast grunts.

He fidgeted a few meters further before he realized that he must remove the box from near his head, dropped it to the ground and collapsed into the bedding of dirt and pine needles. It helped. The pressure started evaporating. But then another darting layer appeared below it, less violent but just as domineering. An unfamiliar internal voice, like uncontrollable dubbing, appeared exactly where the one he always talked to himself with usually resided; a different, alien voice.

More than talking, screaming or humming, the alien voice flickered, generating multi-dimensional chaos in his head; burning itself fanatically into his being; launching dense verbal sequences to the center of his consciousness, with words blinking and disappearing, recharging again and again and leaping repeatedly onto the inflamed spectacle stage that took over his brain:

Desolate

Tenth that had passed

Deployment in the space of the barefoot

Ancient information – information highlights

Nutritious labor in the desert

Noisy body

Clings to the side of the trench

He fell asleep exhausted, wide-mouthed, fetus-positioned, his curls on the snake's tail, the box at his feet.

When he woke up, he knew all there was to know about caring for the creatures, and that this is his calling.

translated from Hebrew by Assaf Gavron

