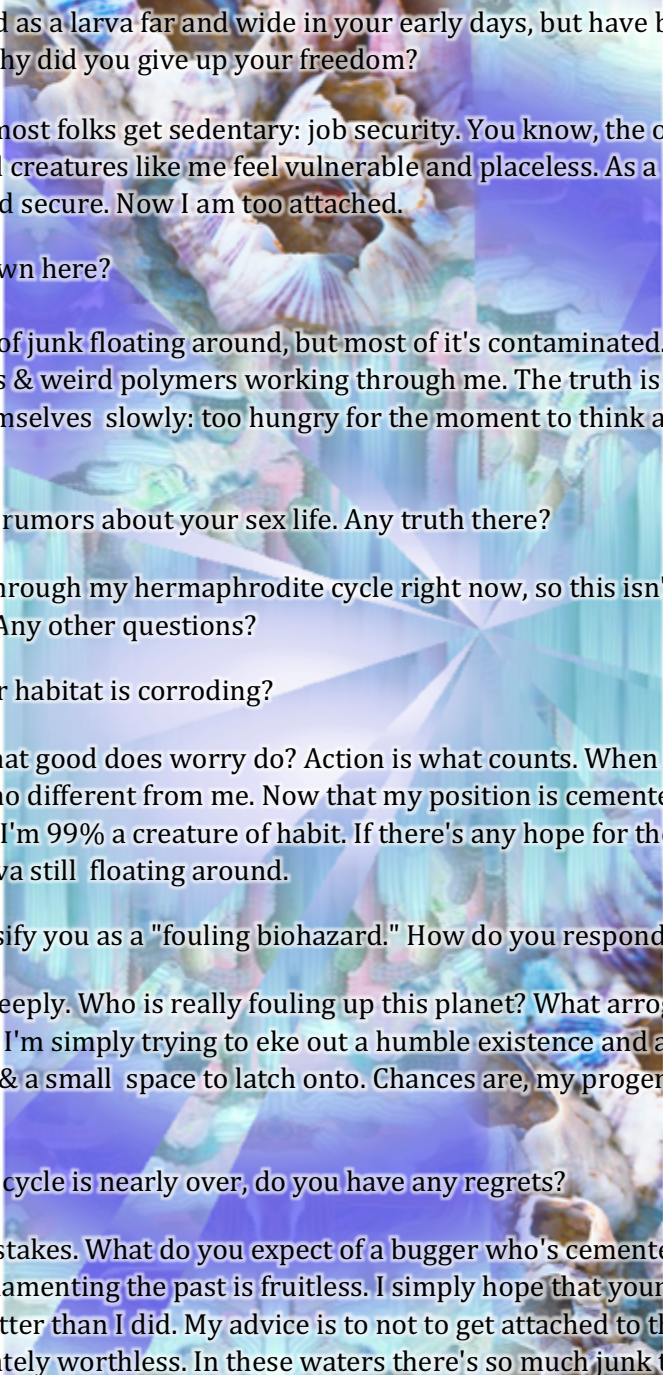


INTERVIEW WITH A BARNACLE

Barney (pseudonym) is a senior member of a crustacean colony in the belly of an aging oil tanker. He was interviewed towards the stern of a freighter which once held 100,000 tons of crude petrol by the author. A mere centimeter in length, Barney nonetheless had a long list of concerns he wished to raise. When asked for details about his private life, however, he clammed up.

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- Q:** You floated around as a larva far and wide in your early days, but have been stuck to this vessel for years. Why did you give up your freedom?
- A:** The same reason most folks get sedentary: job security. You know, the ocean isn't an easy place to live. Small creatures like me feel vulnerable and placeless. As a youth, I was seeking a niche that seemed secure. Now I am too attached.
- Q:** How's the food down here?
- A:** Oh, there's plenty of junk floating around, but most of it's contaminated. I already have so many heavy metals & weird polymers working through me. The truth is most folks around here poisoned themselves slowly: too hungry for the moment to think about the long-term future.
- Q:** I've heard strange rumors about your sex life. Any truth there?
- A:** Gee, I'm halfway through my hermaphrodite cycle right now, so this isn't a good time to broach that topic. Any other questions?
- Q:** Don't you feel your habitat is corroding?
- A:** Absolutely. But what good does worry do? Action is what counts. When it comes to action most humans are no different from me. Now that my position is cemented here, there's little chance I'll change. I'm 99% a creature of habit. If there's any hope for the future, it is with the non-sessile larva still floating around.
- Q:** Most humans classify you as a "fouling biohazard." How do you respond to that?
- A:** Think about this deeply. Who is really fouling up this planet? What arrogant hypocrites most humans are! I'm simply trying to eke out a humble existence and ask for no more than some clean water & a small space to latch onto. Chances are, my progeny will outlast most other species.
- Q:** Now that your life cycle is nearly over, do you have any regrets?
- A:** Sure I've made mistakes. What do you expect of a bugger who's cemented to a petroleum tanker? However, lamenting the past is fruitless. I simply hope that young folks will latch onto something better than I did. My advice is to not to get attached to things that appear solid but are ultimately worthless. In these waters there's so much junk that's deceiving.

- T Newfields

Beg.: 2008 Tokyo / Fin.: 2021 Yokohama