



SHORTS

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The Fog

The fog crept in, oozing about everything in its path like an amoeba. It moved quietly, at first only tiny fingers prying at the darkness above the river. Then it came, large arms of fog alternating, pulling the mass forward like the cytoplasm. The arms moved farther and farther forward, pulling the great mass, yet always contained, as if a huge cell membrane held it together.

Slowly the fog approached the bridge. The streetlights resisted, tried to hold the fog back, tried to break the grip that it was getting on the bridge. Like human antibodies, they struggled to destroy the great amoeba. It began to consume the bridge. Bit by bit, the fog oozed around every corner, into every crack, enveloping the bridge. It was phagocytosis: the bridge was the food, the prey of the angry, hungry fog. Now the amoeba devoured it; its long arms, extensions of cytoplasm, opened up, surrounded the bridge, and melted back together again. The bridge was held as if in a vacuole. There were other vacuoles, small hollow spaces; some held cars, others were empty. There were also millions of wisps of stray fingers, blobs of cytoplasm, each one a different organelle. And so the fog stretched for many miles, filling every hollow, consuming the city.

Then came the morning and with it the sun, like some gigantic shot of penicillin aimed at killing the amoeba, at stopping the giant cloud, at preventing the disease. Its rays penetrated the mass, like so many needles injecting the antibiotic, and not even the mighty amoeba was able to resist. The fog was burnt off. The city was freed, liberated from this rule, but somewhere the cyst hid waiting, waiting until conditions were right for it to become an amoeba once more, waiting for the night.

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