

The Sword-Swallowing Toads

Ten trillion years in the future from now the last star will have burned out. The universe appears dark and empty but not all life has gone. This is the age of the Anura.

Their society harvests rotational energy from the spin of black holes, the only left accessible source of energy. The star field over their skies does not consist of glowing balls of plasma but of Black Hole Farming facilities. A customized heaven, and haven shaped by diligent hands. The Anura are descendants of the human race but their bodies have been modified and adapted through the course of time, so they evolved to something else. For reasons unknown, they are reminiscent of toads. Humans used to believe that the uterus is an animal similar to a toad that eats sperm as food. If not fed enough, the toad wanders hungrily through the body, thus inducing hysteria. Toads are also associated with witchcraft and licking their slimy skin can induce hallucinogenic visions.

The flowing red hair of the Anura is said to be sensitive to gravitational waves, they use it to weave sentient nets to detect the formation of black holes in the fabric of space and time. Gently mingling with the fringes of the black holes' spheres, the toads feel a soft tickle or a tender pull in their hair roots. Faster than light they travel to harvest the energy with their razor-sharp sickles, hanging next to their light swords on handy belts. The light swords ceased to be dreaded weapons when the last enemies of the Anura died eons ago. Now they might be used as proud symbols, metaphors, tools or toys. Everything the sword touches deflagrates into nothingness, silent peace and perfect equilibrium forever.

Sleep tight, old universe, the toads are kissing you good night.