

Orbit

We walk our bicycles off the sidewalk and approach the Sun. It is on the ground, a 24-foot ring of mulch and dandelions in the center of the city. We look directly at it and take three flowers from the outermost edge.

We ride on to Mercury, .9 miles away and hidden from view until a docent pulls a walnut from her pocket. She smiles at you, as they always do. You give her a dandelion, and you wave as we leave her in the rippling heat.

Venus a peach, the Earth an apple. A painted golf ball for Mars, a beach ball our Jupiter.

A Saturn hula-hoop and two basketballs later, I can't go on. You race ahead laughing as you pump your legs up the countryside inclines and down again. I fall back into your trail of gravel and sweat. The Sun rises up, and it follows me now.

You are going for the Pluto marble in a farm town 23 miles from the city center. I want to fly with you past Neptune, but I won't make it.

I give one last push on the pedals and let myself float. I will coast until I stop, and then I will watch as the space between us grows. With distance, the pale cylinder of your back will soften to an orb.

You will be radiant.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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