

'A View from My Kitchen Window' by Eric Wang

As I approach the massive, glossy pane of glass, so does my reflection, moving directly towards me from the depths of the ethereal realm where all reflections reside. The unpolarised light shining on the surface bounces back, obscuring my view outside. I draw closer. The reflected entities fade, giving way to the unglamorous view of my garden and patio.

I peer outside and raise my eyes towards the five am blue-black sky, hunting for the cursed moon. I look upwards, just to the left of the top right hand corner of the glass, and observe the splendour of the blood wolf lunar eclipse: an event which would not occur again until 2029. In my haste, I glide and nearly slip, across the synthetic-stone floor, flicking off the two mellow, off-white pendant lamps. The kitchen dims to the same brightness as the night sky. However, the distant yet unsettling cold spotlights, mounted on one of the three red cranes beyond the garden fence now disturb my line of sight. Irritated, I lean my face against the window and struggle to block out the blinding white with my hands, which coats the edges of my fingers in an eerie shade of red and peach.

Suddenly, a wisp of charcoal coloured cloud skews my view of the blood-stained moon. I imagine phasing through the window into the air, and with the power of a deity, pulling the clouds apart. Of course, this is not going to happen. Instead, I opt to draw my attention away from the diminished crimson disc. I observe the lonely tree at the back of my garden, supported by a sturdy frame as it grows, slowly but surely. Its lack of foliage prevented me from identifying it in the past, yet now, even with several leaves, I am still unable to do so. The crisp, piercing January wind plays an atonal chime, barely penetrating through the thickly insulated walls and double glazed, argon-filled, sliding glass window. It is truly the piece de resistance, the cherry on top, the crowing jewel of my, (subjectively), tastefully decorated kitchen, eloquently framing the dull view outside to become a true modern art piece. In fact, I would not hesitate to photograph it and submit it to the Tate Modern.

I continue to drag my weary eyes across the narrow landscape. They land on the wooden shed, a conspicuous and imposing structure nestled away in the corner. I quickly snap my eyes back towards the scarlet circle. It remains hidden beneath the blanket of cloud in front of it, cowering and refusing to be observed. Mildly infuriated by this loss of precious total eclipse viewing time, I carry on my visual journey around the garden. I lower my gaze and watch as the potted plants sway in the melody of the wind, rustling, yet standing firmly. The half-withered head of a rose droops, almost succumbing to the harsh onslaught of the twenty knot gusts. Finally, I watch in horror as the rose snaps off its life-sustaining stem and rolls lifelessly away with the wind. Its short adventure across the stone slabs comes to an abrupt end as it is pushed directly into the outdoor ventilation unit. I turn and examine the burgundy-coloured digital numbers above the oven. The time reads 05:46.

Six a.m. would mark the end of the total eclipse.

Swiftly, I snap my head around to point towards the red circle dot. I see the navy-grey slowly lift from the moon, revealing its true colour. Excited, I return to observing the scenery, this time beyond the shed. I come across a multi-tiered row of houses, each of them at a different elevation. Strangely, the buildings appear to be slightly out of focus. My eyes struggle to sharpen the image but despite my best efforts, they liquefy and remain permanently blurry. I return once again to the now brighter moon, a saturated hue of crimson. I transpose myself towards the oven and examine the time again, 05:53: it is about to be over.

Without hesitation, I hover back over the immense glass pane. I observe outside one final time. This time I notice that even the shed is now out of focus. The plants appear afraid of what is about to happen. The patch of grass in the centre of the garden gains the physics of a fluid. Everything moves. I teleport towards the oven again. It is now 05:59.

Things outside the kitchen window look very strange indeed. An iridescent array of colours paint the landscape, yet the kitchen interior remains undisturbed. I take a single step forward, approaching the enormous surface. The digital clock then reads 06:66.

The view outside the window folds in on its own, flattening everything into the second dimension. The mood descends upon the flat, white plain with its red colour dispelled. White is all I can see outside.

With a loud bang, the glass shatters. I step into the white. In an instant, gravity flips. The clock reads 12:00. I travel through space-time.

Emerging, I step backwards. I fold myself through the fourth dimension and arrive back in my garden. I look at the glass of my kitchen window. I notice the reflection of the garden. I look through the window. I can see the kitchen. All seems to be normal. I slowly approach the glass. The reflection fades away. I step through the glass. It liquefies around me.

The eclipse is no longer visible. The buildings are solid and clear. The rose flower is back, alive. The lonely tree remains standing, lonely. The grass is firm and green. It appears that all is in order.

But what if all of it is simply a reflection? I look back at my kitchen window. Through it, I see my plain garden and patio. However, there is just one more thing I have left to check. I examine the small digital clock above the oven.

It reads 06:67.

