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## The Smell of Blue Grass

Sydney Rose Quintana  
*Concordia University - Portland*

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## The Smell of Blue Grass

*Sydney Rose Quintana*

When the aliens finally come, I'm first in line. But not for the probing, or the brainwashing, or the... crop circling?

When the aliens touch down on this planet, I'm going to be thumbs out, hitchhiking—ready to join them. I'm going to spend my nights floating and becoming acquainted with the stars like they were my old friends that I finally get to visit on their side of town. I'm going to spend my days building massive pyramids on some unknown planet so the natives can marvel at them centuries later and wonder.

When my signal to alien life goes unheard day after day, I'm left to my own imagination.

What is their home planet like? I wonder if they're born like us, or laid in eggs, or synthesized in a lab somewhere. Do they have marriage, or even love? I wonder if they know the feeling of wanting another more than they want air to fill their lungs (or the anatomically equivalent organ). I bet they do.

Do they have a sky alit with stars and a thriving world around them with animals, plants and kindness to remind them that life in the universe is bigger than themselves? I imagine a place with dogs who can speak French, grass the color of ripe blueberries, and stars so close it feels like they're going to collide with the planet... except they never do. The stars sit close and share their light as if called to this alien world instinctively; they'd

never dare venture so close to the Earth, or else they'd probably get colonized.

Do they have our same problems? More than anything, I hope they don't. I hope every alien gets a seat at the intergalactic table, even if some old, conservative alien would condemn them to the kitchen to make some space-age sandwiches because of their sexual organs. I hope they welcome aliens from the struggling, nearby planets with open arms (if they have arms) and open hearts (or the anatomically equivalent organ). I hope they accept the differences from one alien to the next, whether their skin be green, purple or blue. I hope they love who they want to love, however they want to love them. And I hope that they love their planet more than Earthlings loved ours; I hope they value it even though their UFOs could fly them away to the next galaxy over to find a new planet in a nanosecond. Even when they leave their world, they will always go back because it's better than everything else they're found out there, even Earth. Especially Earth.

The universe is over 13.8 billion years old. The estimated distance to the edge of known observable space is 46 light years and counting. In the grand scheme of you and me, the Earth is like a person in a crowd of millions, billions, gazillions—whatever *illions* comes after that. However high you can go.

When the sun has long since retired for the night and I'm alone in my bed, clutching at my blankets for their unwavering

security, I'd like to think that I can feel this endless expanse of space and possibility growing, expanding constantly. I hold on to my blanket tighter so I don't fall off the edge of the Earth in all the madness and chaos. Dark energy pulls the planets, stars and galaxies away from each other as the universe itself grows infinitely. Stars are born and stars die, and Earth is too far away for us to mourn them. Even after their death, so much of their light is inbound for Earth that we continue to see it for centuries and we take their fragility for granted. Most of the stars lighting our shaky paths are long gone, a supernova of the dead and forgotten, as we are pulled farther and farther away from what could be.

I hope that somewhere in this undefinable universe, even if it's on some faraway planet that I will never set foot on, there is a place with French-speaking canines, grass you could mistake for an ocean untouched by humanity, and stars you can greet as old friends. I hope beyond reason that this place is out there, but even if it isn't, it is. Or at least it can be. I'll be waiting, bags packed.

When the aliens finally come, I'm first in line. I want to see some world, some species of people, get it right. I want to jump down from their alien spacecraft and walk through a field, reveling in the aroma of the freshly cut blue grass, at peace.