

Zeta Reticuli

by Christian Bell

Now we live in a never-ending dream. She'll wake in the night, letting out what sounds like a distressed chirping, her body drenched in sweat. Sometimes, I'll hold her until she's calm. Sometimes, I'm scared and can't.

We've talked often about that night, where six hours of our life disappeared, about our shared experience, and the big question of why. Sometimes, that's all we have. The images we replay are quick stillshots, fleeting dream residue we can never seem to touch. Blinding lights, elongated shadows, thousands of wiggling reptilian wires. We've talked to the authorities and therapists and college researchers. They think we're making it up. I tell them, I'm a reasonable man, I know what we experienced.

We've found a place to live deep in the woods where we're cut off from the world. In the pitch black of night, unable to sleep, I'll look out the windows, thinking I'll see lights or shadows or faces. Nothing. She'll be asleep, her mind replaying our missing time, spinning and whirring, over and over.

