

Winner of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize

feed



M. T. Anderson

your face is not an organ

We went to the moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck.

We went on a Friday, because there was shit-all to do at home. It was the beginning of spring break. Everything at home was boring. Link Arwaker was like, "I'm so null," and Marty was all, "I'm null too, unit," but I mean we were all pretty null, because for the last like hour we'd been playing with three uninsulated wires that were coming out of the wall. We were trying to ride shocks off them. So Marty told us that there was this fun place for lo-grav on the moon. Lo-grav can be kind of stupid, but this was supposed to be good. It was called the Ricochet Lounge. We thought we'd go for a few days with some of the girls and stay at a hotel there and go dancing.

We flew up and our feeds were burbling all sorts of things about where to stay and what to

eat. It sounded pretty fun, and at first there were lots of pictures of dancing and people with romper-gills and metal wings, and I was like, *This will be big, really big*, but then I guess I wasn't so skip when we were flying over the surface of the moon itself, because the moon was just like it always is, after your first few times there, when you get over being like, *Whoa, unit! The moon! The goddamn moon!* and instead there's just the rockiness, and the suckiness, and the craters all being full of old broken shit, like domes nobody's using anymore and wrappers and claws.

The thing I hate about space is that you can feel how old and empty it is. I don't know if the others felt like I felt, about space? But I think they did, because they all got louder. They all pointed more, and squeezed close to Link's window.

You need the noise of your friends, in space.

I feel real sorry for people who have to travel by themselves. In space, that must suck. When you're going places with other people, with this big group, everyone is leaning toward each other, and people are laughing and they're chatting, and things are great, and it's just like in a commercial for jeans, or something with nougat.

To make some noise, Link started to move his seat up and back to whack Marty's knees. I was like trying to sleep for the last few minutes of the

flight because there was nothing to see except broken things in space, and when we're going hard I get real sleepy real easy, and I didn't want to be null for the unettes on the moon, at the hotel, if any of them were youch.

I guess if I'm honest? Then I was hoping to meet someone on the moon. Maybe part of it was the loneliness of the craters, but I was feeling like it was maybe time to hook up with someone again, because it had been a couple months. At parties, I was starting to get real lonely, even when there were other people around me, and it's worse when you leave. Then there's that silence when you're driving home alone in the upcar and there's nothing but the feed telling you, *This is the music you heard. This is the music you missed. This is what is new. Listen.* And it would be good to have someone to download with. It would be good to have someone in the upcar with you, flying home with the lights underneath you, and the green faces of mothers that you can see halfway through the windows of dropping vans.

As we flew across the surface of the moon, I couldn't sleep. Link was playing with the seat like an asshole. He was moving it forward and backward. Marty had dropped his bird, these fake birds that were the big spit and lots of people had them, and Marty's bird was floating off, because

**"We went to the moon to have fun, but
the moon turned out to completely suck."**

So says Titus, a teenager whose ability to read, write, and even think for himself has been almost completely obliterated by his "feed," a transmitter implanted directly into his brain. Feeds are a crucial part of life for Titus and his friends. After all, how else would they know where to party on the moon, how to get bargains at Weatherbee & Crotch, or how to accessorize the mysterious lesions everyone's been getting? But then Titus meets Violet, a girl who cares about what's happening to the world and challenges everything Titus and his friends hold dear. A girl who decides to fight the feed.

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