

## 1. The Migration of 2052

After a decade of prolonged stagnation following the global pandemic crisis in the early 2020s, the corporation 'M.E.T.A.H' (Metahh) announced in 2040 the creation of a virtual nation on their platform called 'IDEA' (pronounced as 'Edeah'). After 30 years of ups and downs, they finally succeeded in elevating their virtual reality from merely 'virtual' to a real, functioning alternative to reality. It now exists simultaneously with reality, carrying almost the same weight. It gradually came to be accepted not just as a tool to augment reality but as an alternative with the same value, role, and function, capable of replacing reality. In 'IDEA,' the state functions as a service provider that can be joined or left, significantly influencing people's perceptions of real-world countries. By the late 2040s, people began to embrace a much looser concept of the state than previous generations, and they started to perceive language, race, and gender more as individual characteristics rather than group identities.

In May 2050, on the 10th anniversary of the launch of the virtual nation 'IDEA,' CEO Mark Zuckerberg of METAH unveiled a new 10-year plan, culminating in the announcement of the 'Migration Project' alongside a new concept called 'New-IDEA' (New-IDEA). This plan went beyond the existing method of connecting biological bodies to the virtual nation IDEA through sensory-based devices. It proposed 'terminating' the biological body and fully uploading a human into New-IDEA. The announcement immediately sparked enormous controversy. Zuckerberg claimed that this would be a game-changer capable of solving humanity's greatest challenges all at once.

On a broad scale, it could protect the environment by reducing the massive energy consumption required to sustain biological life. On a narrower scale, it could ultimately free all noble individuals from diseases and suffering. He emphasized that the word 'death' would now be replaced by 'termination,' representing a complete paradigm shift in how humanity understands the world. He also declared that, at 67 years old, he would migrate to New-IDEA before turning 80. His announcement caused an immediate and enormous ripple effect, with most of the reactions being ethical criticisms of Mark Zuckerberg and the Metahh corporation. However, the very next day, Elon Musk, CEO of the global distribution chain Neuralink, who was already 80 years old, announced that he would expedite the completion of this plan through large-scale investment and become the first person to 'migrate.' This bold announcement shifted public opinion once again.

Musk was planning to use Mars as a server colony for New-IDEA in collaboration with Metahh. His long-standing Mars migration project had been stalled for a long time, as it turned out that Mars was far too hostile for human migration, contrary to his expectations. A few weeks later, a video was leaked showing Musk and Zuckerberg meeting at the Metahh headquarters, both wearing hoodies. The next day, Musk announced a \$300 billion investment plan for the migration project. Despite the enormous backlash that continued for weeks, the price of IDEA's cryptocurrency, Idean, skyrocketed tenfold in just one day following the announcement.

On the last day of May 2051, Musk and Zuckerberg took the stage together at Metahh's headquarters in San Francisco. They announced that the enormous scale of investment had dramatically shortened the development period and that they would attempt the first migration project in July 2052. Speculation and rumors surrounding Musk's health were rampant as to why the migration project was being pushed so urgently. A few days after the announcement, Musk suddenly changed his plan, announcing that before he would 'migrate,' he would first recruit 'beta testers.' Seemingly conscious of public criticism labeling him a coward, he explained the migration project's process over about three hours, offering \$7 million in compensation per person to the beta testers' families and allowing the beta testers themselves to be fully involved in designing the conditions of the environment they would 'migrate' to, as if they were becoming 'gods.' Elon Musk quoted Neil Armstrong's famous words, "One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind...!!!" while showing an unusually emotional side.

The migration process was as follows: those who were finally selected as beta testers would engage in group sessions over several months (these sessions resembled psychiatric counseling) with the goal of designing New-IDEA, the place they would migrate to. Essentially, once the beta testers created a structure similar to a movie synopsis, Metahh and IDEA would convert it into code and create a complete world based on that structure. The details untouched by human hands would be filled in with random values within a certain range using mirror data collected by Metahh and IDEA over the past several decades. Once all preparations

were completed, the participants would wake up at a certain point in that world they had created, starting their new life in that world. As time passed and their life in that world reached its twilight, the code would return and the dream would revert to the point where it began. And then, again, and again.

“New-Idea,” at first glance, seems almost identical to the existing IDEA in name, with the only difference being the absence of a biological body. However, there is a critical and decisive difference: whatever world the participants create, it becomes their new 'unique world.' Once that world opens, the world here and now is completely 'terminated.' This is why, from the moment the migration project was first announced in 2050, there were intense ethical debates about how this was different from euthanasia. Although the default setting was to repeat the code, there was an option to run the code only once and then terminate it. In such cases, it was essentially akin to euthanasia, and various additional legal procedures had to precede this option.

The conference held in September 2051 at the IDEA Center in Palo Alto, California, was unofficially dubbed 'Lethe's River' by the media (not an official name). At this conference, Zookerberg and Musk jointly took the stage to address the various ethical issues surrounding the project. The main points were as follows: (Most of the presentation was given by Zookerberg, but during the Q&A session, when an interesting question was asked, Musk, who had been silently sitting in a corner of the stage, would walk over, take the microphone from Zookerberg, place a hand on his shoulder, and actively respond. Musk appeared to be struggling to control his emotions, pausing several times to bring his fist to his mouth to compose himself.)

**"The Migration Project infinitely expands the space between the two points of 'life and death,' inserting a new alternative." "No one knows what happens after death. But we can predict what happens after termination. And that is designed by the subject's own plan and intention. That is the most crucial difference."**

**(Zookerberg's remarks during the conference)**

**Journalist's Question:**

Why must the world of 'migration' be completely severed from this world? If they are not separated, wouldn't it be possible to communicate and correct any issues that arise?

**Melon's Answer:**

New-IDEA is not an extension of reality; it is a 'new reality.' If the two realities are superimposed, neither can function properly. If the two realities are connected, one reality will inevitably exist to serve the other (as the existing IDEA does). For this reason, the two realities must be completely separate. In New-IDEA, no one can know that it is New-IDEA. We will all cross the 'Lethe River' to get there."

**Journalist's Question:**

How can we know if the new and unique lives of the subjects are functioning normally in the new world?

**Melon's Answer:**

Yes, this might seem like a question of qualia. But we are not creating philosophical zombies; we are creating an actual 'working' life. We have confirmed through dozens of experiments over the past few months that a complete experience is created in the subject's perception when the code operates normally. Since the subject can no longer answer, we have replaced it with another method.

To put it simply, the first button to activate the code for the new life is pressed by the subject themselves. We collect all the currents generated by the body while freezing the body. The current collected and transferred at the exact moment freezing is completed serves as the first trigger to activate the code. We have decided to call this process 'Conatus.' Life energy is preserved, simply transferred to a different dimension and a different pattern. Soon, green lights will be lit up in lighthouses all around the world. Every time a green light turns on, one by one, we will know that a new life has begun somewhere beyond our dimension.

The recruitment of beta testers began in December 2051 and was finalized in March. After three months of sessions, the coding process was also completed. Their biological bodies will be irreversibly frozen and permanently stored at the Metahh & IDEA R&D Center. Their brains will begin uploading at 10:00 PM on June 30th, and by midnight, they will be fully transferred to The Ultimate Alternate Server at Metahh & IDEA. Thus, all dreams called life will end at midnight on July 1st.

Yes, at midnight on July 1st, all dreams called life will begin again.

## 2. A Letter from San Francisco

Congratulations on being selected as the first migration participant. The code name for the first migration is Rabbit Hole. Metahh & IDEA sincerely welcome you. Please provide the following details, and a confidential sharing link will be sent to you.

Please note a day from May 1 to June 28, 2052. This is a type of 'testimony.' It's alright. Feel free to candidly describe your daily life, any events that occurred, in detail. Your journal will be used as a draft for setting up the environment of IDEA 2.0, where you will be migrating, by a group of experts composed of clinical psychologists from Metahh & IDEA. If necessary, and with your permission, it may also be stored as part of Humanity 1.0's archival records.

### **[Key Information]**

- First, a humanoid model 'Cantaloupe' from IDEA Inc. will visit you after prior notice and will provide additional detailed instructions.
- All relocation costs will be fully covered by Neural Tank, and as per your previous request, the funds have been deposited. Please confirm in advance.

Now, your 'migration' date has been set. On the morning of July 1, 2052, you will forever leave behind your biological life—beautiful, but also limited—and take your first steps as part of the new Humanity 2.0. Your courage will serve as a great inspiration to the many humans who will soon follow in your footsteps. For the first time in human history, indeed in the history of all living beings, you will be reborn as a new, living entity that transcends the boundaries of 'biology.'

We express our deep gratitude for your dedication to humanity.

From San Francisco,  
Merk Zookerberg, CEO at Group M.E.T.A.H, Chief Engineer of IDEA  
Melon Musk, CEO at NEURAL TANK, and other 197 corporations

### 3. Testimonies

*The following are excerpts from the testimonies written by nine participants in the Rabbit Hole Project.*

#### **May 16, 2052**

"What can we do but live on? Uncle Vanya, let's continue living. We'll live through the long days and the long nights that follow, enduring the trials that fate brings us. Even if there is no peace of mind, now and in old age, let's work for others. And when the end finally comes, we'll die quietly. Then, in the other world, we'll tell them we suffered, that we cried, that we were in pain. And then, God will take pity on us, and you and I will see a bright, beautiful, dream-like life. We will smile with joy and look back on our current misfortune. And then, at last, we will find peace. I believe this so fervently, with all my heart. When that time comes, we'll be able to rest peacefully."

(These lines are from Anton Chekhov's play "Uncle Vanya," featured in Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "Drive My Car.")

#### **May 16, 2052**

If I make no choice, I will undoubtedly meet my predetermined end. I will become a cold, hard object, my corpse turning pale white as it lies for a moment on a metal bed before being reduced to ashes. This might be similar to how cynics live their lives recklessly and then, at the end, are drawn to religion.

I suddenly think of my father, who passed away thirty years ago. For a moment, I wonder where he might be, but then I immediately realize how foolish that question is and retract it. My father isn't anywhere. His ashes are in a columbarium in Bundang. The granite cover of his urn has a cross engraved on it. It was his family—equally faithless—who chose to engrave a cross on his final garment, despite him not being religious in life. It was a kind of insurance. We can't know if our hope succeeded. It exists within the realm of faith, hidden from some in darkness, illuminated for others by a bright light.

I saw on the news that a monument has been installed at the San Francisco headquarters to confirm the success of our 'migration.' It looks like a traffic light, and when the light comes on,

it is supposed to indicate that the subject's virtual world code is functioning correctly and without error. This was written in bold letters in the contract guide I received by mail.

### **May 16, 2052**

Since my menstruation stopped, hope has vanished. I wanted to have a child... I wanted to meet the man of my destiny, but with a face like this, it was impossible. I've never even held hands with a man, so how could I meet such a man? I'm sick of living in poverty all my life, and the collection call I received today was very stressful. If the money comes in, I'll pay off my debts first.

Migration isn't bad for me. Since I've received the money, it doesn't matter if I spend it all and die, or live.

### **May 16, 2052**

This is a disaster. I'm ruined... Why did I do that?

I can't stop blaming myself... Why did I do that? Why did I do that?...

The newspaper article that the psychiatric nurse casually mentioned has turned my entire life upside down... My chest tightens, and my heart races... I still have so much to accomplish... So many things I want to do... Am I going to die like this? No... How could such a scam exist?...

...

I've been struggling to live as a writer for 35 years... Others might know me as a somewhat famous writer, but the pressure has always been immense... Seeing prestigious writers succeeding one after another with incredible works only made me more and more anxious. After living like that, now at the age of seventy... I still feel so burdened to show my work. What makes me so anxious? I lived as if I'd live forever, but here I am at seventy...

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Termination and death... Death was a theme I wanted to explore in my work someday. I thought it was a provocative yet universally relatable subject. And this project seemed like a good opportunity to bring that theme to life. But termination... I never had an option that didn't



exist in this world... That the thing I signed with my own hand would lead me to death... that I was giving up the rest of my life...

...

I looked into legal procedures to correct this mistake, but it seems hopeless...

Stupid AI judges... Do they even understand human circumstances when making decisions?

I keep filing appeals, but the responses are always the same...

At seventy, it seems even AI sees me as an inefficient part of society... I thought I had at least a few years or maybe even decades left...

Now, the time I have left is...

30 days...

## **May 16, 2052**

The world has changed radically, but my past and temper haven't changed. Today, my son ignored me again. I'm getting anxious, knowing I'll migrate in four weeks.

I worry about whether this child can survive alone in the world ahead.

Whenever I think about the money and rights we received from Metahh, I can't sleep, worried that he might squander it all at once.

This May is so hot that standing outside for just five minutes would give you a burn, and there isn't a single cat left on the streets.

I yelled at him to listen to his mother if he didn't want to become human barbeque, but he's so strong and stubborn that it was impossible to handle.

I angrily stripped him of his UV protection guard and shoved him out the door, locking it behind him.

"Let's see who wins this time, you or me."

Hearing him scream to be let back in, the only thought that came to mind was that migration was the right answer.

The child hopped around outside, his feet burning like the grasshoppers we used to fry on the old cast iron stove.

### **May 16, 2052**

I attended the 'Migration Project' orientation today. While waiting, I had a brief chat with some of the other participants. Some were full of vague anticipation, while others seemed to be feeling regret.

I suddenly wondered how I appeared to others.

Anyway, after attending the orientation, I could feel that there wasn't much time left.

There's so much to do. First, I need to organize the things I want to put in the contract into keywords and prioritize them.

### **May 16, 2052**

Today is the first day I've taken a step into the Rabbit Hole.

The words written on the invitation: "Dedication to Humanity."

I wonder if Neil Armstrong felt the same as I do.

I've seen the rise, development, collapse, and death of various new coins up until now. Thankfully, I've been selected as a tester and am preparing for migration, but in a way, I'm investing in 'IDEA.' That's why I want to reinvest the \$7 million into IDEA. I believe in IDEA that much. But 500 words are too few to express our IDEA. Hmm. No. For the development of myself, Rabbit Hole, and Edeaa!

### **May 16, 2052**

Finally, I have been selected as the first beta tester.

I'm recording my last days on Earth here.

**May 16, 2052**

I've been so busy lately, still living hectic days. I haven't missed writing in my diary since elementary school, but this week, I'm catching up on the days I missed. I was so sick of the routine that I chose a different path that seemed somewhat interesting, and it turns out I might have a talent for acting.

And with the emergence of IDEA, where you can create your IDEAI face as much as you want, actors who haven't had plastic surgery have become popular in the real world, and I seem to have gained popularity by riding that wave. I always wanted to raise the bridge of my nose, but due to swimming, I never did—and that turned out to be a wise choice.

Next month, the drama where I play the lead role for the first time will be aired on IDEA. It's fortunate that even in the virtual world, reality-based dramas are popular... haha...

I've never been the protagonist in a swimming competition, but last week, when I went to IDEA's headquarters to promote the drama, I noticed a notice about the migration project beta tester that Minjeong, who also starred in the drama, mentioned. I asked a staff member about it, and before I knew it, I was sold on the IDEA.

Even though I seem to have become tired of water, the desire to restart my life, filled with inferiority, and the urge to become a swimmer again started flowing through my veins.

I want to experience what it's like to be the first-place athlete, not just the one who always comes in second. I'm even going to change my last name from "Lee" to "Jung."

**May 16, 2052**

I'm still afraid to go outside. Will everyone believe the truth? Or will they believe it's a lie? At this point, it doesn't matter. I'm going to terminate everything and migrate to New-IDEA.

But when I think about how sad my family and friends will be, my head gets complicated. In a world where I can abandon a perfectly healthy body and migrate to New-IDEA, why hasn't anyone invented memory-erasing technology yet?

If I could erase my existence and leave, wouldn't it be easier for both me and those who remain? Of course, it's my life, but choosing termination without considering others makes me feel selfish. Well, I guess it is selfish.

But I hope they understand that it wasn't an easy decision for me...

I hope they are only a little sad after I'm gone because I'll surely be happy in New-IDEA.

### **May 16, 2052**

I really did it... I made the decision so recklessly... I mustn't tell anyone until I leave.

### **May 16, 2052**

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### **May 17, 2052**

"One Small Step for a man, One Giant Leap for mankind...!" - I might have been really struck by this heroic phrase. I was just existing biologically, without any significant suffering from illness, and suddenly, I escaped to a strange place. For some, IDEA might feel like an actual IDEA... but in truth, I might have wanted to leave, regardless of the destination. Especially if that departure could be meaningful, as if I could act like a 'god,' then I don't see why I wouldn't leave.

### **May 17, 2052**

I had a dream about my childhood. My 12th birthday party. As usual, my mom was busy preparing the party in the garden from early morning to celebrate her precious youngest daughter's birthday, and my dad was getting ready to welcome the guests.

I don't remember the middle part. At some point, the birthday song echoed, and my parents hugged me tightly and gave me the present they had prepared. At that time, like any child, I wanted a pet robot, and to commemorate my 12th birthday, I received a newly released Spot 12th generation as a gift. Cheers and applause rang out. I was thinking about what to name my first pet bot when I noticed a kid in a purple t-shirt. That's when I woke up from the dream. It feels strange to have a dream about my childhood.

S and I clicked very well. People say opposites attract, but I disagree. S and I were really similar. In some ways, we were the same.

From interests that didn't match our age to humor codes, food preferences, even gender. I felt not just comfort but relief in that similarity. Maybe that's why I was drawn to S.

Today's dream made me curious about S again after a long time. I wonder how S is doing. But I'll have to be satisfied with asking about S in my diary. If J found out I was thinking this... it would be horrible.

**May 17, 2052**

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**May 17, 2052**

I had another drama promotion meeting today. Wow, I'm so busy from morning till night, and our boss keeps bringing in new projects.

Nobody knows that I'm going to be a beta tester. They keep asking me to sign things, write things, and suddenly I'm filled with regret. Looking at the migration schedule, I realize that my life will end before my first lead role drama airs. I'm starting to question whether my decision was really the right one. What kind of new life will I have? Besides wanting to become a swimmer again, I haven't thought about what kind of world I want to go to...

**May 17, 2052**

It's been two years and ten months since I quit my job. Checking my bank balance dozens of times a day, knowing it stressed me out, had long become a habit. But in the past few days, I've been checking it just as often for the opposite reason. The payment from Neural Tank has been confirmed. Seeing those unfamiliar figures in my account, I feel like a weight that has pressed on my life for so long has been partially lifted. I'm going to send all the money to my children.

Three months ago, when I first brought up the IDEA of migration, my children were immediately against it, but it didn't take long to convince them. ('Migration' is different from 'suicide,' and Metahh especially emphasized that it's quite the opposite.) As usual, they suggested I take a trip, and over the past 30 days, our large family—my wife, three children, their partners, and our grandchildren, a total of twelve—traveled around the world.

### **May 17, 2052**

The migration date is close, but for now, I still have to keep working. My father's device connection port fee is deducted hourly. People of the older generation who didn't have devices implanted in their bodies as children, like my generation, have to physically attach connection ports to their skin surface to maintain minimal communication within society. To permanently attach these ports is expensive, so people in the lower income brackets pay companies 4 euros an hour to rent them; and it's my responsibility, as the only working member of the family, to cover these costs.

I think it's good that I can distract myself with work during this restless time.

### **May 17, 2052**

Even when I'm going about my day without thinking, sometimes I wonder if this is the right choice. Will I really be able to let go of everything and leave, and am I doing something terrible to those I'll leave behind? In my mind, I know it's too late to turn back, so I've tried to reassure myself many times that it will be okay.

### **May 17, 2052**

As someone who believes inspiration is essential for humanity, I participated in this project to inspire humanity. I also want to give some meaningful inspiration to the medical field, where I work, and contribute to the development of the world.

With the completion of the After Life Project and the disappearance of the body, the medical field that dealt with the body may decline, but on the contrary, mental health science might advance even further...

What I've learned in my 30 years of life is that the world, whether it's on Earth or in IDEA, is ultimately unfair, and humans cannot be perfect. Therefore, the IDEA created by humans who desire utopia cannot be perfect either.

## **May 17, 2052**

Even as the time to leave approaches, there are so many things to do right now. Will I still feel overwhelmed every day in that world? Somehow, that thought scares me.

What age should I choose to be? First, I'll ask them to remove my herniated disc and skin allergies. I've suffered enough from those in this life.

## **May 17, 2052**

24 weeks and 3 days pregnant.

This morning, Metahh called to inform me of the migration precautions. I can't stand it. Even if I don't want to hear it, the whole house rings with the details. 'I've already decided to go, so what do they want?' I got angry. I thought they could just take me away right now, but then I decided to calm down for the sake of the baby inside me.

On a night when I was deeply considering whether to go to New-IDEA, I thought about the different forms of love. People are all different, so the way they love is different too.

I remember the first moment I saw him when I was twenty. The thrill and excitement. Should I transfer that memory? After thinking about it, I started to wonder what he's doing now and how he's living. Going to New-IDEA without ever seeing him again might create a fatal flaw in my migration plan, so I decided to see him and say how I really feel to ease my mind.

When I met him, I saw that he had become even more attractive, and seeing him made me feel like an old woman sitting there with my aged, sagging flesh, like a cheap sausage. We had lived through the same years, yet he had the eyes of someone who had transcended life and a mature smile. I wondered why he exuded the scent of happiness. I couldn't bring myself to ask, but I carefully etched into my eyes the senior I had once longed for, who could never be mine.

Out of nowhere, I told him I wanted to buy his sperm. Then I mentioned New-IDEA and declared that I was leaving soon. Through gestures that might have seemed 'vulnerable,' I said I wanted to have his baby. I thought it would be as difficult as confessing love, but I spit it out full of envy, wanting to disrupt his peace. I was disgusted by the fact that I had to lower myself, but... I got the deal.

Back home, I saw my son, whose skin had turned red. I, too, was flushed red, unable to express the love I had secretly held for you any other way.

**May 17, 2052**

D-29... I like to sit quietly and watch nature.

Even when I have no time to spare, I try to find peace in my heart by looking at nature, losing myself in it, feeling as if I've become one with it. A feeling that, even if I do nothing, nature will embrace me.

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They say that after termination, they will create the world I want.

If I create a world where I can have what I want, will I be happy? Happiness is just a reaction produced by certain parts of the brain, after all...

What's the point of placing so much significance on happiness? Is the meaning of happiness itself just an electronic signal? Or is it a derivative product created by that electronic signal? Well, meaning is only the meaning I attach to it, and if others don't share it, it doesn't really mean much, does it?

Empathy... Will I be able to receive empathy after I terminate? The people around me could all be constructs, illusions that I've created... that seem so real...

If my life continues to exist after termination, and if that life takes the form I want, wouldn't that be a meaningful life?

Even if it is artificially created...

Seven million dollars have already been paid to the participants, but will they invest more capital to realize my world? Something that people on this side can't see, hear, or feel? IDEA... transcendental reality... the configuration of the desired life... salvation...

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What a foolish system, making me a test subject and asking me to record everything every day.

My time is so precious... They say this will help future migrants, but...

My appeal was dismissed again. The seven million dollars was re-deposited into the account I had refunded, and my heart is burning... The power of contracts has become so strong in this world... Thirty years ago, if I held a picket and protested with my voice, they would at least pretend to listen to quiet the commotion... Companies are now devouring these loopholes as if they were delicious food.



I don't trust this technology. I wonder if this is just a way to promote the company at the expense of people's lives... And that AI must have approved the project in the name of efficiency...

## **May 17, 2052**

I barely got through another day. I wish the migration date would come sooner. But I know I need time to decide what kind of world I want to go to, and on a day like today, I just don't feel like living. Why isn't anything going according to plan? What good is a weak body and a stupid mind?

On days like this, when self-loathing and hatred mix, I'm overwhelmed by the urge to die.

I spent the entire day in IDEA again. It was only because I had attached myself to that place that I could manage to live with this body... Should I bring along the person I met in IDEA a week ago...?

It's been a long time since I had such a long conversation with someone. Well... I don't remember much, but I'm pretty sure it's been over a year. At least in IDEA, I'm better off than I am now. I couldn't afford to dress up, but at least I don't have any physical flaws, and that's really important to me.

Five years ago, taking out a loan to buy the IDEA access device was the best decision I ever made in my life. Before the IDEA access device came out, I must have been the only person who hadn't entered IDEA.

Everyone was talking about what was happening in IDEA. For the first two years after its release, I managed, but after that, without an access device, I couldn't even talk about the same topics and subjects. Was that when I got laid off? After IDEA came out, my job became unnecessary, and I was told not to come in anymore.

I was a call center representative. People no longer used the phone for customer service. IDEA made all the systems more convenient. But since I needed to survive every day, buying the IDEA access device wasn't even a dream I could have. Still, if it weren't for that incident, I wouldn't have bought the device...

I'm still paying off the debt I incurred to buy the device, but I've been able to earn a living in IDEA, so it was a savior for me.

**May 17, 2052**

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**May 18, 2052**

The corporation asked me to keep diaries in the run-up to my immigration to IDEA. So here is my first.

I'll start by apologizing for missing the first two entries. I was away from my home terminal visiting family in another biome. It's difficult to get access to the data stream for uploads there (the city is still running on BioOS 3!), and my memory sync credit is running low, so I'm not sure how accurate a recollection I could give. Maybe some details will return to me in the next few weeks.

Anyway, time to introduce myself. My name is Luke, I'm an Organic Compound Integration Analyst working primarily in the Distributed Agriculture sector. My job is mostly the development of circular bio chain management software, though I sometimes get involved in the messy groundwork too. But enough about my job. I guess the corp is more interested in my reasoning for signing up for the program. Oh wait... My neighbor needs to use the data stream, I'll explain more tomorrow. Signing off...

**May 18, 2052**

Finally, the money from Metahh came in. As soon as I received the money, I bought some clothes in the real world. How long has it been since I've worn such good-quality clothes? Is this the first time I've bought something to dress up my real-world self since my twenties? Up until my twenties, I struggled to scrape together even a pittance, trying to look good by going around and buying cheap pieces. But the more I did that, the more miserable I felt. One day, as I was walking and caught my reflection in a glass window, I saw that everything I had on was worth less than what others spend on a single meal. I looked ridiculous, draped in awkward, ill-fitting fabric. Even though my face is still hard to look at, good clothes wrapped around my body make me look somewhat presentable. The feel of quality fabric against my once pitifully thin body seemed to give my dry, withered heart some moisture. From now until migration, I'm only going to wear and eat good things.

A week ago, when I was debating whether or not to participate in the migration project, the person I met in IDEA gave me the courage to start anew. I heard I could bring one person to send me off on the migration day. If that person comes, I think I'll be able to leave peacefully, with no worries. If I can thoroughly erase all traces of the hardships I've been through until the last day, could I fool that person into thinking I haven't lived a miserable life...?

### **May 18, 2052**

The biological body is weak and has clear limitations. Because of this, the gap between the body and the mind became more pronounced over time. Dreaming of something beyond 'IDEA' was the only desperate effort I could make.

Finally, a new world is about to arrive. I shudder with joy at the thought that I can be freed from the long-standing worries. It's been a long time since I've felt the emotion of joy. Unlike in the past, when I felt joy in making the impossible possible, now I live in a world filled only with anger at what is still impossible.

There was a time when I would walk through the forest to calm my troubled mind. I would listen to the sounds made by the wind and the leaves and wish that time would stop there.

'Beep-Beep-Beep'

In the deep darkness, the only sound I hear now is this beeping. I can no longer feel the cold wind or the brittle leaves. IDEA prides itself on having saved many from illness, but 'many' is not 'all.' Behind those who enjoy it, there are those who do not.

I've thought endlessly about why it had to be me. I no longer want to die as a being no different from a plant that can't act. Now I will become a tree in the forest of data.

### **May 18, 2052**

D-28...

Hmm... If there is no longer any hope of escape, should I think about what I can gain and enjoy within the system?... Let's think of it as outsourcing.

Outsourcing death... it's absurd... but that's what's happening...

I guess I should let the people around me know about this top-secret project that I've been working on... Isn't it just the same as saying I'm going to die...?

How can I break the news?...

### **May 18, 2052**

My lips are already itching to speak. I've never hidden anything in my life, and even if I did, I soon confessed the truth... But if I keep thinking about migration, I feel like I'll blurt it out to everyone. I need to forget about it completely and focus on my work.

### **May 18, 2052**

Lithium, bipolar disorder

To put it bluntly, I'm aging disgracefully. I've lost my health, and the biggest cause is psychiatric medication. Yet, I can't live without these drugs. After over 30 years of steadily increasing dosages and the number of medications, my brain has completely changed, and without taking them daily, my nervous system can't function properly. What if I hadn't taken Pramirine in the first place? What if I hadn't taken Prozac later? Could I have overcome depression on my own? There's no way to know the answer. But I can make a guess based on my experience so far. Considering that I am currently living to die, if I hadn't had these drugs, I would have died even sooner than now. So how could I not praise them?

### **May 18, 2052**

I prepared to say my final goodbyes. Writing letters in an analog way for the first time in a while reminds me of when my friends and I would secretly pass notes during class in high school.

### **May 18, 2052**

Lately, I've been getting about 4 hours of sleep. No, I have no choice but to sleep that much. Even when I squeeze all the remaining 20 hours tightly without a moment's gap, it's still not enough these days.

Today too, I kept my brain running nonstop throughout my working hours.

The more efficiently I handle my tasks, the more time I save, and since I know that time earned through my efforts can produce positive results for many people, I find our lives even more appealing.

But why is time so limited, and why does it pass so quickly? Day and night exchange their batons in the blink of an eye like relay runners, and why does my body, participating in this relay, gasp for breath the more it runs? I'm going to terminate this run-down body like a drained battery, and now, in the After Life Project, I'm going to create more diverse inspirations. I hope they are infinite in IDEA!

**May 18, 2052**

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**May 18, 2052**

I have another drama promotion meeting this morning. Too much talking.

At times like this, I want to jump into the water where I can't hear a thing.

I should be thinking about the world I'm going to migrate to, but I don't have time to think for myself.

I need to remember to write in the contract that I'm migrating as a human being.

And I'll make sure to set the person who will go with me as someone who doesn't talk much.

**May 18, 2052**

My wife has always said from the start of our marriage that we should enter a nursing home quietly without burdening our children. When my mother-in-law was still alive, I secretly hated hearing that. We've always admired euthanasia ever since we first encountered the news of Alain Delon's decision to pursue euthanasia some thirty years ago. In truth, it's not so much death itself that we fear, but rather the process of dying.

Perspectives on death eventually fall into one of two categories. Either there is more story yet to unfold, or all stories end there and vanish. 'Migration' offers a middle path between the two. There, we can all choose one of three options: to live in the paradise we create, to eternally return within that paradise, or to experience a set paradise scenario and then disappear.

### **May 18, 2052**

Today, I visited a household to repair old plumbing. The day's news was being broadcast on the bathroom display, and although my hands were busy tightening screws, my mind was completely captivated by Musk's incessant voice in the news.

"Their great journey," he says.

He praises the beta testers as if they are being saved. His exaggerated tone and actions are laughable, but he's not wrong. I have been saved.

As soon as I finished the repair and left the house, \$50 was deposited into my virtual account. With this, I was able to offset the various rental service fees that had been deducted this morning. It's hard to find satisfaction in my work, but I can't stop. The reason I work is not to add but to reduce.

### **May 18, 2052**

It was better when all we had to do was wear masks. On days like today, when fine dust is thick in the air, I have to replace my respirator filter as if it were disposable, or else I'm tormented by constant coughing and sneezing. The sunlight penetrates my skin, making it impossible to wear short sleeves. Well, it's not like I have many reasons to go outside unless I have a really good reason to endure all this.

Today's little happiness was deciding how to spend the money Metahh gave me. The amount of money isn't particularly significant in my life, so I decided to donate it to people somewhere who don't even know about the project, let alone benefit from it.

When I think about it, during the time I was born and raised, there must have been countless projects happening somewhere that I couldn't even imagine. It's quite moving to think that I am now a participant in such a project. My beloved parents disapproved of my choice.

**May 18, 2052**

Is having no purpose the same as being useless?

The birth of a new life, which can be seen as the result of love between a man and a woman...

Without that result, is it the same as being useless?

In a society that views uselessness as sinful, homosexuality must naturally disappear.

It's been a long time since many famous figures who came out have vanished. The era that was once like Dionysus's world has come and gone. It's as if it was a world that had nothing to do with me now.

Still, I sometimes imagine. If it were that era... even if I couldn't expect acceptance, at least there would have been people who recognized my existence. Would I have chosen IDEA in such a time?

I've comforted myself all along by saying that I chose IDEA on my own accord, but the truth is, I know. This wasn't my choice. It was society's choice, a society that rejected me. Today is one of those days when I'm particularly disgusted with myself for mentally winning a battle by forcing myself to believe that I made this choice for myself when, in reality, I had no other choice.

**May 19, 2052**

Today, I woke up to the sensation of my body being turned again. Every four hours, my position is forcibly changed, and my skin under the diaper is checked. They say it's for my own good, but it's all just annoying.

Even the shame I first felt has disappeared. Now I wonder whether I am really still alive. I just blink my eyes; in fact, being able to move my eyes at all is a miracle considering my 'locked-in syndrome.' I am a patient.

**May 19, 2052**

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**May 19, 2052**

There is something I've heard since I was in my mother's womb: that immortality is attainable only because mortality exists in this world. They said we must live this life in preparation for the world of immortality. My family all said we would meet again in the world of immortality and live there happily forever.

My parents didn't seem to fear death much. I wasn't so sure. What if the life I've lived here isn't worthy of reaching immortality? I'm still afraid of death.

In an effort to escape the dichotomous thinking that plagued me, I created something, but there's still one question I haven't answered.

"Have you ever wondered, even once, if there might be another world between these two?"

Perhaps there really is a Platform 9¾. I hope there is. A world where the impossible is possible, a world where non-Muggles find everything ordinary...

IDEA.

My heart raced wildly. Perhaps in that place, I could finally enjoy the desires that were crushed long ago in this world.

**May 19, 2052**

Early in the morning, I got into my car and drove alone toward the sea. The days are getting shorter, so by six o'clock, the sky was already lightening. I set out hurriedly because I wanted to experience as much of what wasn't made by humans as I could. As I neared the sea, memories came rushing back with the wind.

I came to the most remote beach I could find, where I wouldn't hear people's voices. Only the sound of the waves remained on the surface of thick, heavy silence.

When I was young, I used to pray for things driven by desire. Before I became an adult, I lost the habit of prayer and tried to achieve my desires on my own. Now that more time has



passed, I've even lost that. Now I just sit quietly, turn on a recorder, and mumble these rambling sentences to myself.

When talking to oneself becomes a habit, it starts to feel less like talking to oneself and more like grumbling to someone who is simply too quiet. I meditate on him, who is always overly quiet but steadfastly by my side. He is always silent in response to my words. I imagined that at the end of my life, he might suddenly start talking.

## **May 19, 2052**

Ah, a beer after so long. I realize how indulgent I was back in university when I used to mindlessly drink away the hours.

As migration to IDEA draws nearer, I find myself writing in this diary thoughts I've never had before. It's also about time to start thinking seriously about my own IDEA system.

I must think about IDEA slowly and smoothly, not hastily.

Desire/Time/Risk/Being/charming/eternal life?/etc.

Hmm, let's start with Desire.

Humans know that desire is dangerous, yet because it's the best option, they can't let go of it. IDEA will be the place where those unfulfilled desires can be slightly satisfied, and I'll tell the world about it.

Humans always thirst for something. I, too, sometimes feel a longing for something, a disappointment for things that remain unfulfilled. The Earth is a finite place. Whether it's time with the parents I love, my companions in life, or fuel, food, or anything else, everything is finite. Could there be anything happier than feeding the ones I love to their heart's content and ensuring they lack nothing? I want to realize this desire in IDEA. (I must thank Metahh for helping me solidify this!)

The reason I'm living so busily now and the reason I want to show others that this life is attractive is that I want to earn more time for the happiness of the things we love.

I hope Park Joo-eun's first footsteps in the After Life Project inspire you. And by the way, beer is delicious! I'm definitely taking alcohol to IDEA... Zzz

## **May 19, 2052**

I met with my high school friends. As we talked about the distant past, I started to wonder if my choice was really the right one. In the end, I couldn't bring myself to tell my friends that I'm leaving.

### **May 19, 2052**

There was an article: "Metaholic: The Global Leader in IDEA Perfume Design, Market Capitalization \$431 Billion."

### **May 19, 2052**

D-27... They say that because there was an explosion called the Big Bang, the concepts of time and space were created as the universe expanded. I was merely a part of that, and I had to live according to the omnipotent providence of the universe.

I had hoped to live a simple life and die with satisfaction, but now, because of a foolish mistake, I'm going to be terminated...

Well... I suppose if I'm going to migrate to a new space-time and create my own universe of data, in a small sense, I'm becoming the creator of another world...

But it just doesn't sit well with me.

Is termination the same as death? Is death the same as termination?

### **May 19, 2052**

After doing nothing for a while, I decided to visit a temple. It didn't mean much; it was just a suitable place for a walk. Now, I'm sitting on a stone, staring at a tree and writing in my diary. I'm fifty years old now; I've lived for about half a century. During the half-century that I've been alive, nothing much has changed, which is rather silly. Even in 2052, which once felt so futuristic, I'm still writing my diary on paper (though I'm transferring it to digital text now). I'm eating spinach salad as a side dish. Real physical touch is still done with real hands, real mouths, and real tongues. I still feel the wind with my whole body.

I loved this peace so much that I spent almost all my time, except when working, savoring the living spaces around me. Writing in the past tense must mean that I'm concerned about the upcoming change in environment.

Even if my body grows and my face wrinkles, even if my voice changes and my personality shifts, I remember that, in the end, I'm still the same 'me'... I'm now beginning to worry about the body that will change due to migration next week.

### **May 19, 2052**

I'm buying things as if I'm addicted. My small house is packed with stuff, and I should feel a sense of pride, but instead, I feel empty. Unopened items are strewn about carelessly. The more joy I feel, the more emptiness washes over me. I'm spending so much money, yet it never seems to run out. Why did money stress me out so much before?

I logged into IDEA again. Since receiving the money, I quit my job, stopped going to work, and hadn't logged in because I was too busy shopping. Yesterday was the first time I didn't log into IDEA since I got the connection device. As expected, I feel most comfortable inside IDEA. I want to talk to that man. Does he think of me? What does he think of me?

### **May 19, 2052**

When I woke up this morning, I suddenly realized that my current life isn't so bad.

The day to write the contract is almost here, and it's a big problem. Should I just ask them to copy my entire current life? And when I think about living as a swimmer again, it seems like the competition might be a little boring.

### **May 19, 2052**

Long night, the organi-thermal circuit powering my apartment's farming floor was on the blink again, and since I'm the only resident who has some expertise in that area, I had to patch it up. Easy enough to do with a little help from the building's domestic maintenance bot.

Where was I? Ah yes, my reasoning for joining the Idea Immigration program. I won't beat around the bush; the planet is in free fall. All those grand climate management targets we were sedated with over the past 50 years were distractions dreamt up by the fossil fuel giants in a last-ditch attempt to extract what remaining value they could out of the Earth. Why? Because they knew Idea was coming, and they knew that if they managed to gather as much old-world capital as possible, they could buy their way into a new state of permanent bliss, free of the shackles of organic matter. I think I'm free to say this in the diary... Just to confirm, I'm no heretic; these are just facts. Work gives me access to some crazy data.

I don't know what to expect from this digital existence, where the chemical network of my human body becomes a series of electrical signals. But I do know that this planet is dying, and the only solution left, as much as I think it's ridiculous, is to 'upload myself to the internet,' as my parents' generation used to say with their air of new sincerity. I just hope these yillionaires manage to launch the interplanetary solar array in time so the lights don't switch off on our little slice of digital heaven before it even gets started...

### **May 19, 2052**

My first memory, or rather, the first record in my device, is of me lying silently in an electric cradle, gazing at a solar system mobile. The planets float gently within the system of the universe and will eventually reach their conclusion.

My first emotion wasn't excitement filled with curiosity or the joy of accomplishing something for the first time, but rather, emptiness. Despite being enveloped in lifelong nihilism, thanks to the device implanted in my body, my nutrition and development have always been in top condition, forcing me to drift within society without choice, in a body without issues.

I realize that I am not much different from the solar system mobile I once saw. A being floating within the system. The solar system is awe-inspiring but an illusion, while the mobile is real but insignificant.

### **May 19, 2052**

People's reactions have died down a bit, but it's still noisy.

At times like this, I can't wait to go to IDEA. My agency, which hasn't made a statement, probably feels the same as I do. They said the choice was mine, as if there was no other option, but I knew.

I knew that the agency, which had no way to pay the enormous penalties, had secretly submitted me as a tester. It was obvious; in this capitalist game, they would rather face a contract violation due to migration to IDEA than due to a scandal over my sexual identity—it's cheaper.

I'm not attached to this reality. So, is there a reason I haven't left yet?

What if I acknowledged my sexual identity and stayed in reality? What would I say to Mom and Dad? And beyond that, there would be the contract penalties for commercials and movies, not

to mention the end of my career. I would live in fear of people's gazes, unable to live as a human being. Eventually, I'd cling to limited IDEA access, just trying to get by.

A phrase I saw somewhere suddenly comes to mind: Love and sneezes can't be hidden... If it's going to be discovered one day, maybe this is the best opportunity.

### **May 20, 2052**

I was overwhelmed with messages from foreign journalists and acquaintances congratulating me after the article came out.

I took a moment to meditate. With lithium.

A childhood memory of Japan came to mind. It was a brief time, but the most innocent period of my life. The image of Hokkaido remains like a fantasy, with its white winters, ice, and dazzlingly bright air. Now that Hokkaido rarely sees snow, I've decided that this is where I want to experience my nostalgia in IDEA.

And I will definitely bring my son to IDEA. When we get there, I will make sure he leads a normal life with normal intelligence like other kids. I will erase the violent mother and become a loving, warm ally for him.

Now that I think about it, I could spend the remaining few weeks with him in that way.

### **May 20, 2052**

Do I want to go back to the past? No. Even if I did, I would have made the same choices and walked the same path. Perhaps only if I were born again would it be different.

### **May 20, 2052**

I sorted through songs and photo albums. It wasn't easy picking only what I need to put in the contract. I've always thought I wasn't someone who clings to the past, but maybe I'm not as indifferent as I believed. Will the me in that world enjoy the same songs and recall the same memories as the me in this world? Will the me in that world be the same as the me in this world?

## **May 20, 2052**

Inside IDEA, it's easier to rest than in the real world. When I'm in there, the fatigue seems to disappear. Or more accurately, perhaps it's that I don't sense it. I need rest now because my mind is so tangled. As the migration date draws closer, I feel an overwhelming urge to speak to that man. Never in my life have I felt so inclined to be brave. The thought of dying makes the fear of rejection or disappointment no longer valid. After all, even if I am rejected, I can still migrate with him.

I'll set D-Day for Monday, the day I write the migration contract for the second time. I'll need to think more about what kind of virtual world I want to migrate to and what kind of world I want to live in with him.

## **May 20, 2052**

I want to raise my hand. I want to shout.

I slowly close my eyes. At a glance, I might seem like I've fallen into a deep sleep. I struggle to open them again.

My gaze follows the cursor as the eye mouse forms a letter.

I repeat the process several times. Finally, the intense desire is reflected on the monitor.

"News"

What a small wish.

A silently looked at the monitor and then turned on the news.

The world was buzzing about the direction IDEA was taking, filled with voices of concern, expectation, or fear... There were as many opinions as there were tongues wagging.

## **May 20, 2052**

D-26

I'm trying to remember and record what I didn't document earlier. In a way, these records might become my last legacy. My works could be a kind of tool for remembering me, a piece of me... How will the world that welcomes me maintain my data? Will the vast amount of data and my behavioral analysis be enough to keep me alive as something? And if that's possible, why aren't they configuring the network to allow us to share our lives? Could it be that the world I desire must fall apart when shared with others? Just as this world of coexistence with others doesn't work as I want it to?...

I received a message today. They said they would share the records written by participants in the IDEA Project (I feel like calling this experiment a scam, but since my life is at stake, I won't use that word). What's the point? Am I supposed to empathize with what others write? Anyway, there isn't a single part of this that I like...

## **May 20, 2052**

Ah, I must have felt really good after drinking two cans of beer last night...

Yeah, alcohol—I must upload this feeling to IDEA, haha.

Now, let's think about Time. Until I was a university student, I couldn't relate to this song. But these days, I think about it a lot, and it's the song I hear when I think of IDEA.

What's important when I endure

Is that time is cut short

I heard this is really expensive

Like money, so can I use it freely?

They say that's a misunderstanding

When I try to explain, it feels like everyone's skittish

Time, once spent, is so chic

You can't use it twice, and that's the charm

It's light and quick to go, hard to forget

By the time you want it back, it's gone

Time is always walking ahead of me

Before I catch up, I'm already exhausted

At night, I push myself to work because I'm chased by time

I keep getting dragged by time

Time is not our friend

:

I'll catch time and let it kill me slowly

SO I'M RUNNING TO U

(I'll catch you) and never let you go

In the bathtub, on the sofa, I'll rest as much as I want

I'll crush a movie and choke the neck of time

But time grabs my wrist in return

:

Then, then, then, I'll be tickin' tickin' like cray

Then, then, then, I'll be taking all of your fame,

Then, then, you'll realize that I took your babe

Then, then, you'll realize that we can't be friends

Fuck I can't wait, till that day comes

I'm going to build IDEA based on this song. In that place, I'll catch time and place it under my feet. You should listen to it too. That's it for now!

**May 20, 2052**

Today is the day I meet up with my high school friends after a long time.



They say that before I was born in 2022, alcohol was cheap, but due to the war with Russia that broke out that year, alcohol prices have been rising every year for the past 30 years. Soju costs 300,000 won now.

With my drinking capacity, it would take months of saving just to have a drink.

Ah, I should request a free bar next to my residence in the contract. I wonder how my friends will react when I tell them I'm terminating this life and moving to IDEA next week.

### **May 20, 2052**

If I could ask the genie from the lamp for three wishes, what would I request? Do I really know what I want?

### **May 20, 2052**

Rabbit Hole is the term for the place we will migrate to. There are about three more meetings scheduled to work out the details of Rabbit Hole. I will create my Rabbit Hole. However, the inevitable gaps in creation will be filled randomly. This naturally leads me to think about priorities. What comes first, and what comes later?

If I think long enough about what I want, I realize that I may never really know what I ultimately want. I desire things from time to time, driven by the reward circuits of hormones. But the most concentrated manifestation of that is, after all, drugs. The ultimate pleasure ultimately destroys us.

### **May 20, 2052**

Dear Father. I am returning. I am returning to the arms I came from, which are illusions but still awe-inspiring. Please do not mourn or pity me. This is not death, but a romantic release and a beautiful disappearance that leaves no regrets or burdens behind. Be happy for me and rejoice on my behalf.

But I apologize for delivering this message to you a little late. I am already gone from Earth.

Since making this decision, I hesitated hundreds of times between opening my eyes and closing them. I tried to take a deep breath, to speak up, but I couldn't bring myself to face you and declare my decision. Please forgive me. Your daughter, your love.

**May 20, 2052**

I was so calm yesterday, but not today. Can't I cancel this? Fuck, I guess not... I probably got too carried away. Trying too hard to be special... I'm going to <New-IDEA>... If I'm honest in this diary... I'm scared. People naturally fear the unknown... Only a few days left until this bungee jump without a cord.

**May 21, 2052**

This damn headache will soon end. I hope this project will ease my worries and fears about disease.

**May 21, 2052**

I met with a friend who is also participating in the IDEA Project. We didn't share our reasons for participating, but he seemed dissatisfied. I felt like I had found a kindred spirit. At a mock meeting I attended a few days ago, the atmosphere was that participants saw this project as a place to fill the voids in their lives, almost as if it were a place of salvation. It felt strange to me. It didn't seem relevant to me, but hearing someone directly say that this project could be a beacon of hope for them... It made me feel something. What can I gain from this? The ability to fly? Becoming a millionaire? Maybe because I've never lived a life that was severely lacking, it feels contradictory to think that I could gain something through death.

**May 21, 2052**

They said that for a perfect migration to IDEA, you need a perfect setup. Otherwise, you might turn into some kind of beast.

**May 21, 2052**

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**May 21, 2052**

After dropping my wife off at the airport, I came home and took a two-hour nap. I was thirsty, so I looked for something to drink in the fridge and found a beverage I'd never seen before. I drank it and felt a sweetness I hadn't experienced in a long time. It wasn't just a drink; it was like an extract you mix with water.

Ten years ago, there was a small frame on the corner of my office wall with the words, "Can the senses be trusted?" written on it. At some point during my moves, the frame disappeared, but it was a gift from someone at a kind of discussion group I used to attend 25 years ago. That question was one of the prompts in the philosophy section of the French baccalaureate exam, if my memory is still correct.

The group was more of a social gathering, a sanctuary for people who were emotionally lost, rather than a discussion group. Such groups were common back then. But over time, as people got married and other things kept them busy, these gatherings faded away.

**May 21, 2052**

I had my appointment at the obstetrics clinic and met with my assigned nurse-bot, May, one of the bots handling women who conceived in May, like me.

The government, worried about the low birthrate, has partnered with agencies that offer customized conception and delivery services. Some people still insist on natural conception, while others, like me, approach it more as a business decision in line with life's timing.

In just three weeks, I'll be migrating. I keep thinking I should ask my son directly, "Do you want to migrate with Mom?"

At first, I was doing this to leave behind an inheritance for him, but now I'm considering taking him with me to IDEA. Honestly, I have no choice but to admit that I want to defect from my identity as a mother and become an outcast in this new world.

Starting tomorrow, I need to stop putting it off and confess my migration plans to my company and family.

If I can.

### **May 21, 2052**

I've quit my job, but I feel busier now than when I was working. Maybe it's because of the awareness of death? I feel a nervous urgency to do something, anything. At some point, plant shops started disappearing in Korea. Is it because the abnormal weather makes it hard to manage living plants? Until my twenties, there were still places where you could buy a flower on the street...

Now that I have the money, I'll indulge in the luxury of buying a living plant. I hope it stays alive until I migrate...

### **May 21, 2052**

In the end, I couldn't bring myself to tell my friends about going to IDEA.

At some point, I'll have to say something because of the work I'm doing now.

When I first decided to go to IDEA, it was because of my deep-seated inferiority complex.

But after thinking about it more, there's no reason to impose that same competition on my new self.

I feel like I've finally overcome that inferiority complex.

For now, I'll drink the leftover alcohol at home and think about what kind of person I'll become.

### **May 21, 2052**

"Risk: Risk refers to the degree of exposure to uncertainty, encompassing both negative situations and positive possibilities. Especially in finance, risk is a term used to describe a state

of exposure to uncertain future situations, which can result in either good or bad outcomes. Therefore, it should be distinguished from danger, which only involves negative outcomes."

IDEA is intriguingly exposed to uncertainty, which is one reason I applied. Humans usually move with risk in mind, though not always. For me, the exception is love, which is inherently a risk, so perhaps it's not really an exception. But the positive possibilities within that uncertainty are what make it exciting... I'm suddenly afraid of how to design IDEA.

I looked back at a journal entry I wrote a few days ago: "After living for 30 years, I've realized that whether it's Earth or IDEA, the world is not fair, and humans cannot be perfect. So, IDEA, created by humans who desire utopia, can never be perfect."

Yes, let's seek fun. I'll share this inspiration at the migrant gathering the day after tomorrow.

### **May 22, 2052**

I organized my bank accounts. Though it gave me a headache, it was worth it. I feel refreshed now. I also wrote my will. I felt sorry that I didn't feel guilty about those I'm leaving behind.

### **May 22, 2052**

Whether due to hormonal changes or some other reason, when you experience a sudden change in taste, it reminds you that the problem of flavor is not on the tongue but inside the brain. In fact, they say that the human body can't distinguish well between imagination and reality. For example, just writing about biting into a sour lemon, with its tart juice overflowing, is enough to make saliva gather in your mouth.

Senses are the boundary and gateway between the world and me. At various gateways, the world enters me and converges at a crossroads—the insula in the brain—where all these inputs gather into a single vanishing point, which is what we call "consciousness." Scientists funded by Meta traced this hypothesis backward about ten years ago and succeeded in artificially implementing consciousness.

### **May 22, 2052**

"Chance proposes, and nature disposes."

I didn't sleep a wink. Even lithium was of no help, and the most advanced artificial bed was useless.

My house is filled with machines and tools for mental and physical stability, but I've suffered from insomnia for 15 years. Looking back, I've always challenged the impossible. I raised an autistic child without a husband, dealt with an unwanted pregnancy, overcame difficulties as a Japanese woman who first moved to Korea, led aesthetic culture, and built a global IDEA perfume aesthetic company, starting from a massage shop in Cheongdam-dong.

I achieved what I wanted, no matter what. I believed there was nothing I couldn't accomplish. I managed to get six hours of shallow sleep, like crawling through it. I dreamed of my IDEA.

The grass at my feet was covered in dew from the early morning chill, and I had a beautiful baby and husband who were worth giving everything for, along with a small garden house.

I picked spring greens, saw cherry blossoms bloom and fall, and watched lush green leaves grow quickly, creating shade in our yard. The speed at which they grew was astonishing and made me happy. As the mature sun set, I heard the rustling of autumn leaves and looked up at the high sky. The wind blowing from below to above brought my husband, baby, and me into an embrace, leading us back into the house. As the sound of small logs burning filled the air, snow fell outside the window.

We went out to see the snow, tasted it, rolled around in it together. I spent six hours in a state between life and death, moving from the other side of the dream to the sweaty, soaked bed I was lying in.

Then I cried, tears streaming down my face.

I cried so much because I missed it terribly. I wanted to go back there, so I took a handful of lithium and lay down. Staring blankly at the soft LED lights of my bed, I thought.

I have spent my whole life grinding my teeth and working hard, yet I've come this far in search of that elusive happiness on the other side. Despite my destitute situation, where I can't even smile, sleep, or find solace, what difference is there between this poverty and starving to death?

Even though my IDEA is so simple, why don't we have seasons anymore?

Why have we only attacked, never paused or retreated, until we ended up defending our very humanity? I have no IDEA.

Some may ask why I don't just let go of everything and return to nature.

"Nature is no longer here... There used to be such a word."

### **May 22, 2052**

Unlike yesterday, my mind is busy, but my body won't move. I guess I expected this. I'll probably live wastefully until migration. Could this be why I've lived such a lonely life? Habitual self-deprecation... It's something I hate, yet it's so familiar to me. I know well that on days like this, it's better to move than to sit still. Devising these coping methods is the key to my survival.

The difference now is that I move inside IDEA.

I miss the cool summer nights with green foliage from 30 years ago. Those sticky memories cling tightly to me, things I can never return to. Today, I've blocked all contacts inside IDEA because I don't want to meet anyone. In this quiet place, where only my inner voices are loud, I find a strange sense of calm.

Am I choosing migration, or am I choosing death? I wonder, considering that I feel nothing for the giant relic they built to let us know we live in a world after migration.

### **May 22, 2052**

If I were given the last day of my life, how would I spend it? I've asked myself this question countless times. When I think about where, how, and with whom I would spend it, I realize it probably wouldn't be that extraordinary.

I'd go to my usual restaurant and café with my loved ones and talk about life as if we were going to meet again tomorrow.

The difference might be that I would roll my eyes more to capture the scenery and the people here, take a few deep breaths without an oxygen mask, and feel the sting of my skin burning under the UV rays.

I'm reminded of Switzerland, which I visited about 30 years ago. The cool, crisp air brushed my nose as the eternal snow caps remained, feeling so refreshing. But now, even that air has become damp. I no longer feel at ease. I doubt all my memories will be able to stay with me in

IDEA. I hope that, in the moments within IDEA, these memories won't feel as unfamiliar as déjà vu. Let's call the 50 years I've lived a dream. My life in IDEA will be more eternal.

**May 22, 2052**

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**May 22, 2052**

Being/Charming/Eternal Life?/etc.

In IDEA, I want to be someone who positively influences many people. Of course, it won't be much different from my current life... But given more time than I've had so far, perhaps my influence could reach even one more person.

It's about time again.

My goals in IDEA are becoming clearer. Let's help people gain more time. Let's build an IDEA so attractive that no one would want to end their life.

And as time expands, I'll strive to be someone who positively influences many people.

**May 22, 2052**



So how exactly do they plan to make me exist as myself in the digital realm? Based on existing technology, the concept would be that the self in the original body expands into the digital world... If my essence is transferred into digital form, shouldn't I be able to control something in the real world? But why isn't that possible? Will they offer this service in the future?...

### **May 22, 2052**

When I woke up this morning, I found a ton of missed calls. I guess I drunkenly posted on Cyworld last night that I'm going to IDEA...

I must have put it in the wrong folder when I intended to write it in my private diary.

Why on earth did Cyworld have to make it so you can't delete what you've written?

But on the other hand, since I planned to tell everyone eventually, maybe it's for the best.

### **May 23, 2052**

What a weekend! I'll try to recount the major details accurately.

It started normally enough. I was at my local juice bar on Friday after work for a few tumblers of mycelium-ether, you know, an average office worker's start to the weekend, trying to forget about the depressing numbers on my console. About halfway through my second drink, when the dimensions were just starting to separate, a strange cloaked figure sat on the bar stool beside me. At first, I thought it might have been the fungi kicking in, but I realized this person was actually looking at me through voxels instead of eyes.

"Haei," the figure spoke plainly and directly, "You are in danger, carbon-based lifeform."

"What are you?" I replied.

"27.142-B," the figure informed me. "I received a wire from the Postman. You are about to make a decision you will regret. Please follow me."

I can't remember exactly what was said after that, but the next thing I knew, I was stepping into a nondescript vehicle parked in a nearby alleyway. The interior was not what I expected from the very normal-looking body of a B-series EV I had entered. The entire inside was a mesh of circuitry, LEDs, and cables. There were no seats or navigation interfaces, at least none that I

could notice. My new companion slid effortlessly into a side panel, literally becoming one with it. I found a space with the least amount of electrical innards I could and took a seat. Just as I did, a voice filled the car.

"You are planning to migrate to IDEA, is this correct?" Again, no emotion in the voice.

"Yes... Well, I signed up for the Beta test, it starts in two weeks."

"Are you aware of the results of IDEA's Alpha program?"

"Um, not really. I heard it was all carried out as a simulation, no humans were actually transferred."

"Incorrect. There were 10 of us."

At this point, my mind was overrun with questions. We had been told the program was never tested with real humans before, but that the simulation had a 100% success rate in all data-based trials. What was I getting into?!

"But then how are you here, right now? I thought the migration process was final."

"I am not. I am inside my IDEA. This vehicle and mech suit allow me to communicate my physical presence to the carbon world."

"But, how can you control them? How are you able to see...?"

"The Postman has access to technology beyond the capabilities of Meta; their technology is flawed and insecure. With the right key, their walls are mere clouds of pixels. Let me show you."

At this point, I lost consciousness; what that thing did, I'll never know...

## **May 23, 2052**

Hearing that my IDEA is based on faith gives me some relief.

I guess I'm more nervous than I thought about leaving.

## **May 23, 2052**

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**May 23, 2052**

Today I searched for others who are migrating.

People with lots of information. Or not much at all.

Grandmothers. Grandfathers. Middle-aged men and women. People who look about my age.

So many different kinds.

**May 23, 2052**

Today is the real beginning... The beginning of the journey towards death, which feels both intimate and strange... When I entered the waiting room, eight people were seated. Was it eight? One talkative person seemed to lead most of the conversations, while the others were more quiet.

They said there was no way to turn back, but someone from Meta mentioned that you could opt out of the project if you paid double the amount you received—\$14 million. Why don't I trust that? It's probably a scam... And instead of giving clear answers, they kept mentioning the technical team and "additional fees." Of course... Is there anything free in this world? We've come to a time when we have to pay for death, no... even for termination... Or maybe it's always been that way?

**May 23, 2052**

Losing all sensation in my skin due to an accident hasn't been all bad. One of the best parts is that no matter how much I get bitten by mosquitoes, it doesn't itch. Another is that I don't feel grimy even after not showering for several days. My other senses aren't fully functional either—I rely on a hearing aid for my hearing and on strong prescription glasses for my sight.

This led my sense of smell and taste to become highly developed over the past ten years, but most of that has been lost due to the last three years of cancer treatment.

The theory that consciousness is generated at the crossroads where senses converge makes my very existence a mystery. When I close my eyes and recall my senses, all that comes to me are memories of the past. Just as we incorporate imagined memories into our lives as a virtual past, I constantly create a virtual reality here by summoning past sensations.

### **May 23, 2052**

I was disappointed to miss the orientation for the migration project due to personal business, but today, I finally attended a workshop! I met people participating in the After Life Project and shared our thoughts. It was fascinating to see that the participants had different thoughts. The things they couldn't achieve on Earth, the things they wanted to emulate and experience, their anxieties. All of this will likely become more concrete over time.

What I liked the most was how Dr. Napooreum subtly watched over me. Smart Meta... I'm glad I invested in them.

It was a day where some of my anxiety about the end of life on Earth, which I had unconsciously taken for granted like breathing, was alleviated through the workshop. The path I'm on is the right one, so I'll move forward steadily!

### **May 23, 2052**

I spent the entire day answering phone calls. From the drama director to journalists, even my ex-boyfriend called, and Bora also contacted me—my rival of 15 years. She wants to meet before I go to IDEA, but just hearing her voice brought back so many feelings that it made me feel incredibly nauseous.

I've been managing my emotions well, romanticizing old memories on my own, but I don't think I'll feel good seeing her in person. Still, I guess I should meet her once.

### **May 23, 2052**

Today was incredibly busy, and I even had my second Rabbit Hole meeting, so I briefly visited Gangnam. We sat together with the head of Meta-Korea and the psychiatrist counselor to

discuss the agreement. Two hours was not enough time to explain and ensure they understood my current situation, considering my past.

Fortunately, Meta didn't consider the baby in my womb to be the same entity as me. Meta decided to help with a cesarean section and provide nutrition so that the baby could be born at 28 weeks, even if I die. This child will then become the first baby born to a mother who migrated to New-IDEA.

I'll rest for now and sort out the remaining stories of this world tomorrow.

### **May 23, 2052**

There was a meeting today with the other migration candidates. Despite our different purposes and methods, we were all heading towards IDEA.

At the place we visited to practice leaving everything behind in the real world, I didn't seem as troubled as I had expected when speaking about the future. Unbelievably so.

Liberation. The greatest emotion I felt in that secret space without a single window.

### **May 24, 2052**

I realized I forgot to ask if it's possible to enable bilingual settings. I'd like to speak two or three native languages if possible. I wonder if this would require an additional fee.

### **May 24, 2052**

I received the migration agreement. The questions are difficult to answer. They're questions I've never considered before. They feel like questions from long ago.

### **May 24, 2052**

I overslept. I tossed and turned after waking up too early at dawn, and when I woke up again, it was already past 8 a.m. Then I spent 30 minutes searching for my glasses. For someone like me with poor eyesight, losing my glasses makes for a very difficult day.

As soon as I deactivated OS sleep mode, the group chat buzzed with dozens of notifications from videos my wife had uploaded. It's been 30 years since she last visited Copenhagen, and she's thrilled to go there for an exhibition. I'm happy for her too. I remember the city being so clean and beautiful.

My wife has been preparing for this exhibition for the past six months. I fully intended to go, as this would be the last exhibition I'd be able to see as a living being. But then Meta informed us that we couldn't leave our residence starting one month before the migration. We were shocked when we received the agreement notice from Meta. Since it was impossible to move up the exhibition, my wife left for Copenhagen last Saturday.

### **May 24, 2052**

I must have met almost 100 journalists today. Is migrating to IDEA such a big scoop? Won't everyone eventually go there anyway?

As I kept talking, I realized even I didn't fully understand why I chose to terminate my life here and move to IDEA.

Was that salesman really that persuasive? Or was it due to my past emotions? I'm fine now, but I'm a bit confused. I've already spent quite a bit of the money I received.

### **May 24, 2052**

My body is starting to wear out. The psychological pressure of the migration is taking its toll.

My baby is growing, but my skin is thinning.

Lack of sleep, the pressure of being a mother, and the pain of designing my migration...

Three weeks to go.

It wouldn't be surprising if I collapsed from overwork or anemia at this point. I think I'll connect to a Vipassana meditation center capsule for a bit.

Work. Stopped.

### **May 24, 2052**

What was the reason I chose to migrate? After the meeting, especially after my interview with the doctor, my thoughts deepened. There were environmental reasons, but something stronger must have drawn me in. The former seems like an appropriate excuse or pretext, even a convenient one, to fool others and myself.

I think it was a longing for something I had never possessed, rather than something I had lost. I've always been extremely realistic and have diligently tried to live like most people.

There's been a criterion I've followed when making choices. When a choice is at hand, it's activated, recognizing that the pain of the wound now will be less than the agony of cutting it later. What I expect from IDEA is that I will choose the latter, despite everything.

### **May 24, 2052**

I was filled with thoughts of whether I could truly be free if I left behind the material that composes me. If atoms were the most basic material that constituted my body, could I find freedom by leaving them behind? Lost in such thoughts, I arrived at the exhibition hall. The exhibition I had been preparing for so long was finally coming to an end. Many people are still visiting the exhibition... I'm so busy going in and out of the exhibition hall, as usual.

What kind of person am I to these people after all these years? I hoped I was seen as someone who has steadily pursued one thing to the end. As I continue this act, my honor and status will gradually rise.

What significance do honor, status, money, IDEAs, and philosophy have in the dust of the universe? But then again, maybe the world exists because I, a tiny being, do.

If I had to leave one thing behind, I'd like it to be money. Of course, I'd like to keep everything the same—my precious people, the world, the pattern of my work, and all that. But money... Even though I've already amassed considerable wealth and invested much in my work, if I had truly unlimited resources, I could have experienced more and worked without constraints. A speck of dust in the universe cares about such numbers... The system is terrifying. And now I entrust myself to another artificial system...

### **May 24, 2052**

One month before migration. I want to express my gratitude to the body that has supported me all this time.

I was born in 2022 and contracted the COVID-19 infection that was prevalent then as soon as I was born, due to a neonatal ward infection. I was raised in an incubator. Born with jaundice and a hefty weight of 4.3 kg, my body teetered between the neonatal room and the neonatal intensive care unit. I was a pitiful being who couldn't even drink breast milk and grew up on formula.

My body, which suffered for 30 years under a harsh master. Why have I never shown you mercy and lived so harshly? Is my fate one of busyness? Maybe I should get my fortune read to ask about my migration to IDEA...

Your master is selfish. Even knowing you'll struggle the next day after drinking, I've always indulged in the pleasures of the moment. Even though I know you need 20 hours to sustain yourself, I've only given you less than 4 hours of sleep. (Sorry, I only gave you 2 hours each of the last two nights...)

Ignoring the tears (sweat) you shed, telling you to calm down, I continued to indulge. You stumbled and broke your leg while playing a zombie game after drinking.

Sigh. My body.

Writing this out, I see how much you've suffered.

I'll cherish and love you for the next month, so hang in there a little longer!

### **May 24, 2052**

Today, I was uncharacteristically emotional. I'm usually quite calm, but I can't tolerate anger. I grabbed a passerby and started yelling. They probably thought I was crazy. But what can I do? I'm doing this.

In a brief conversation with the doctor, I was asked what I would do after going to IDEA. It felt like being hit right on the mark. I don't know how to create my IDEA. How can I know what I want if I don't have knowledge or experience? Will I find what I want if I fill in these gaps over the next month? I want to muster up some courage.

### **May 25, 2052**

If I were to have a job in New-IDEA, I think I'd like to try working in publishing.



## **May 25, 2052**

I was going to go out for a walk, but I gave up when the UV warning alarm went off on my wrist. Instead, I stayed home and watched a drama while lightly walking on the treadmill for about two hours. In the past, everyone used to watch movies together on a small, box-like device called a "terebi." The "terebi" grew bigger and smaller simultaneously until, at some point, it was worn like glasses.

My graduate thesis project involved running on a treadmill while wearing a ridiculous, large hat-glasses combination. I said I found it hard because of the screen inside the glasses, but the truth is, I got dizzy looking at the screen, so I ran with my eyes closed. Even though I lost the sensation in my feet years ago, suddenly, the old sensory memory of running barefoot on the treadmill, making that "thud thud" sound, was summoned involuntarily.

## **May 25, 2052**

I met Bora today in front of the swimming pool we used to swim in every day in Seongsu.

Bora retired from being a swimmer and is now about to get married. She looked so happy. Ah, my role at the pool was always to watch Bora being happy from the sidelines.

Suddenly, feelings I had buried for Bora surged up inside me. Why was I always second place? Why did I always just watch happiness instead of feeling it?

Even if I leave for IDEA, I hope Kim Bora is not happy. I've made up my mind. I'll kill her before I go.

## **May 25, 2052**

Among the many faded yet vivid memories, there is one friend I was particularly close to. We met on a college community app and clicked so well that we eventually met up a few times in person. Though we grew distant due to job searching and other responsibilities, whenever we checked in on each other, it felt like no time had passed.

As we talked about our lives as rookie employees, time seemed to fly by. But that day, every response to my words was different, and they kept asking me about my IDEA type, going to the bathroom unusually often—something was off. I realized just before my friend pulled a crumpled letter out of their pocket.

In our last meeting, we discussed what order we'd want to follow if we believed in the afterlife. This is the key to my After Life Project; it will form the framework for what is to come.

On the day I migrate in 2052, my current life will come to an end.

There is an afterlife, and IDEA is real.

### **May 25, 2052**

Today is my last day as a plumber. After visiting a home to replace some pipes and leaving, I felt strangely sentimental. I started this job right after becoming an adult and have worked for eight years without ever changing careers. While my daily life was full of monotony, I never questioned my job; perhaps because it was matched to me through my device?

I trained the new robot recruit. When I first joined this job, most workers were human, but as of last year, the majority are robots. Now, not only are industrial robots affordable, but domestic service robots are also cheaper, making it more cost-effective for companies to hire robots instead of humans. But when you're on the job, you still see that there are many areas where robots fall short, so it seems essential to keep human supervisors. Hmm. Well, I guess that's no longer my concern.

### **May 25, 2052**

'Today I went to the exhibition hall... I ate delicious bread at the bakery next to the exhibition hall. It was really tasty. "Today, I..." As a child, I think I lived in a fairly good household. At least until my father left us and started another family. Back then, I had various lessons like science, writing, speed reading, and violin. One day, my writing teacher pointed out a habit I had of starting my diary entries with "Today, I..." Since then, I haven't started a diary entry with "Today, I..." But in defiance of this noisy system, I decided to start with "Today, I..." It seems I've always been this kind of person—pursuing justice but never actually going to a protest, full of doubts about the system, but creating hopeful and loving works. Maybe I was afraid of the backlash against resistance...

Backlash against resistance... Hmm, that would make a good theme for a piece...

Tomorrow is the last day of the exhibition.

## **May 25, 2052**

I have an interest in fortune-telling, such as horoscopes, tarot readings, and spiritual guidance. I usually look at my fortune to find peace of mind before making a big decision. Given that the After Life Project is both the end and a great leap in my life, how could I not consult my fortune?

There is a doctor of fortune-telling who has been advising me on important matters ever since I became aware of my grandparents' belief in such things. His name is Dr. H. When I was born, he even hand-carved a beautiful stamp for me as a gift. Tomorrow is a day off, so I think I'll visit H.

## **May 25, 2052**

I performed 108 prostrations during Vipassana meditation. After finishing, my son walked over and hugged me, as I couldn't control my knees. "Mom, I don't want you to leave," he said. At that moment, I was abruptly cut off from Vipassana as if someone had pulled the plug. I woke up drenched in sweat, my body sticking uncomfortably to the office chair. My daughter was kicking inside me. I rubbed my belly and took a deep breath. On the Oxford notebook in front of me were the words "migration" and "new life." I know that if I could go back to when I was 18, I would kill the people who tormented me and make the people who pushed me to that point suffer the same fate. If I had disappeared with them... "Just an escape," I write and then erase. As I prepare to leave, my son weighs heavily on my mind. It feels like I'm abandoning him in this muddy game alone, or rather, I'm leaving him to deal with my mess... I thought of my daughter as my new self to be left behind on this Earth, but maybe that was a crazy IDEA. What am I trying to achieve with this New Idea?

## **May 25, 2052**

New Idea, literally "New, Transcendent Reality." When I first learned about the concept of 'Idea' as a child, the teacher explained it using the metaphor of clouds to help us understand this difficult concept. The Idea was represented as a cloud, and it was explained that this cloud was pointing to the form of a person, which was soon to be called "Sophia's Words." Later, I learned more about Idea in detail, but the cloud-shaped Idea that I learned as a child never left my mind. I got 100 points on all four tests that year. Nowadays, subjects like society and philosophy have become irrelevant, overshadowed by math and science. Despite having a somewhat clever mind, I was classified as an inferior student because I couldn't do math and science, which eventually led to being deprived of educational opportunities. Now, even though

I work as a call center employee, I still long for something more. Could it be because of the cloud-shaped Idea in my heart?

I always wanted to create a harmonious family. After the age of five, when I was with my parents, I grew up without them in an orphanage. The blue sea and clean nature of Okinawa are unforgettable. Within just five years of my birth, Okinawa began to sink gradually, and by the time I was sent to Korea, about 10% of Okinawa was submerged. Now, at the age of 54, the island of Okinawa has shrunk to half its size, and the place I remember no longer exists. Isn't Okinawa the place I want to go to, but cannot?

### **May 26, 2052**

I slept in again. I couldn't get up for about 30 minutes after waking up, and then I was startled by the doorbell. It's quite unusual these days for a stranger to come to the house and ring the bell. I cautiously checked the monitor to see who it was, but since he was leaning against the wall with his back turned, I couldn't see him well. I asked who he was, and he said he was my friend. When I asked which friend, he hesitated. In those few seconds, a million thoughts crossed my mind.

### **May 26, 2052**

I didn't tell anyone about my migration. Of course, the media could easily find out, but fortunately, no one around me seems to be interested in "migration." They probably think of it as something crazy happening in another world. From a young age, I had a very narrow circle of relationships—close family and a couple of friends. I was satisfied with it, and although my parents occasionally worried, since I never caused any trouble, it wasn't a big issue. The concept of migration, which involves physical disappearance from this world, might be seen as death by some. My choice might deeply wound those around me. In that sense, my narrow circle of relationships reduces the impact of this loss. But how deep that wound will be, even I don't know.

### **May 26, 2052**

I visited the doctor I used to see annually whenever I stopped by Daegu. He was as sharp as ever. While the concept of Idea was creating a buzz, interest was low in rural villages, where the feel of a self-sufficient agrarian society still prevailed. I told the doctor that I was a tester for the After Life Project. He seemed a bit surprised. I asked about my fortune for this month.

May 2052 Fortune: This is a time when overall fortune is declining. Even if your fortune isn't satisfying now, you should be careful because if you don't make an effort during this period, you could lose even more. Even if someone shows interest in you, it's a time when there may be some distance between you. Affection and emotions might not align, leading to ambiguous relationships where it's hard to tell whether the other person is a friend or a lover. Due to irregular lifestyle habits or meals, you may experience digestive issues. Symptoms may include bloating or poor digestion. There could be conflicts with those around you. Taking a trip or spending time alone to reflect might help improve your interpersonal relationships. Due to various variables, it might be difficult to concentrate on studies. You might become more active in job searching. Even if you don't get satisfactory results right away, you should pursue your career with long-term goals and vision. If you're running a business, you should be cautious with new business proposals and examine them carefully to avoid losses. Avoid making irrational purchases to show off to others or to make yourself look better.

Since the fortune suggests it's a good time to leave, the doctor said that heading toward Idea isn't a bad IDEA. But he advised me to carefully review the migration agreement! He also advised that if I work hard, I can avoid losing what I already have.

When I asked about my fortune for June 2052, the doctor suggested visiting him again on June 1st. It seems he needs some time alone to process the Idea. I should take a day off on June 1st.

### **May 26, 2052**

What should I organize before I leave?

### **May 26, 2052**

An article titled "Unending Child Abuse Controversy: Meta-Holic CEO Nagasawa Midori Revealed as Suspect in Child Abuse Scandal" was published.

Calls flooded the company. Protests and glares targeting Meta-Holic and me made the outside world noisy all day. Human rights organizations demanding the truth behind the child abuse case attacked the company's servers online and even showed up in front of my house, refusing to leave. The boycott of Meta-Holic Perfume's content and products started in Idea, and the company's stock price plummeted like crazy.

## **May 26, 2052**

I received some practical advice from Ji-yeon. She said she would miss me. I told her I would miss her too. But if my friend remains in my life in Idea, and I believe that she still exists, then who am I actually missing? It feels one-sided somehow.

## **May 26, 2052**

I'm filling out the migration agreement. It's been a while since I answered such questions, and I had to ponder over many of them. Just seeing that I could answer questions like my favorite songs or sports thanks to the influence of those around me, it's clear I wouldn't survive alone. It seems I should establish my Idea in a bustling city. Filling out the migration agreement has helped me somewhat sketch a guideline for my Idea.

## **May 26, 2052**

After quitting my job, my life became irregular. While lazily lying around, I received a message from Idea. When I checked, it was from that person. It was to wish me a happy birthday. I logged into Idea with some expectations, but that person quickly ended the conversation, saying it was nothing special and they just wanted to wish me well. I hesitated whether to continue the conversation or not but decided against it. I wondered if I would ever feel that same sense of connection again. It seems my heart is opening, only to close again. What should I do? Suddenly, I wonder if I should set this person to respond to me in the way I desire in Idea when I migrate. Relationships seem to be more beautiful the more perfect they are. Everything aligns perfectly, and we never fight. The other person respects my boundaries as much or even more than I do. Someone who considers me their one and only precious bond. I need such a person.

## **May 26, 2052**

Today is the last day of the exhibition. I stayed until closing time, welcoming visitors. The place was packed, perhaps because it was the last day, and time seemed to move slowly. If time flows, no matter how slowly, it will eventually reach the end, right? But if I could infinitely expand these moments, could I live in an infinite world? Could a year that I feel becomes a hundred million years, and if that hundred million years expands to a trillion years, as if zooming in on the timeline of a video editing program, could it go on endlessly? At that moment, could the meaning of being alive take on a different interpretation? How meaningful is

a world that is frozen in time? Isn't it that fragments of moments must come together to create something meaningful? Hence, time is finite... The concept of breaking that finiteness could be the transition to digital... I am the 'something' that opens that starting point!... What will I transform into?

### **May 27, 2052**

After quitting my job, I have more time to reflect on past events.

### **May 27, 2052**

The news of my migration to New Idea spread like wildfire, and last night, there was a big commotion about trying to stop me from migrating. Debates about whether to support or oppose my migration to New Idea continued on various social media platforms and outdoor billboards. Some even said it would be better to die than to migrate. I wanted to simplify the situation, but it wasn't easy. Regardless, whether I committed child abuse or not, I would accept the punishment. It was already a process of resolving the mother-child relationship.

Last night, my son avoided me. Thinking about the pain he must be experiencing broke my heart.

Is there any normal family in this world where there is no hostility between parents and children? In any case, my only life companion, my son, avoided me.

The company urgently called for a meeting to gather the shareholders and sent a message pressuring me to address the issue of the plummeting stock price and management problems after the migration.

I crouched at home and watched my son's room through the home IoT system.

"Son." His eyes were red when he looked up.

Knock, knock, knock.

Finally, I knocked on my son's door. I knocked on the door of his heart.

"Are you okay?"

## **May 27, 2052**

Yesterday, Young-seok came over, and we talked for a long time before he left. He heard about my migration through the grapevine and came to visit. Although I didn't particularly keep the fact that I was migrating a secret, I didn't intentionally tell anyone either. All the friends I used to know have been gone for quite some time, and there wasn't really anyone I wanted to tell even if I wanted to.

The first person outside of my family that I told about my migration was a tax office employee. I couldn't avoid notifying them because of tax issues. But the tax office employee talked about my migration to those around them. (In our country, only 32 people are migrating this time. So, it's quite a topic of gossip.) By chance, a friend who works at the tax office told Young-seok about it. At first, Young-seok was unsure, but after checking my social media and seeing that I had liked the post about 'that sculpture' in San Francisco, he came to visit.

It had been nearly ten years since I last saw Young-seok. To be exact, 11 years. During that time, we both changed a lot in appearance, which we noticed in each other. There was a moment of silence, and an overwhelming feeling came over me, but we decided to laugh.

## **May 27, 2052**

Today is my birthday. It's just an ordinary day without any special plans, but I still felt good. I received the usual greetings from people I used to work with at the call center.

"Happy birthday." The words that followed were unnecessary. The people in Idea were drier than I thought, and they didn't form deep bonds. I was the same.

What makes me happier than soulless birthday wishes from others is the fact that I will have completed 55 years and will be migrating to Idea. 55 is better than 54, for no particular reason.

I've been contemplating whether to reach out again to the man who contacted me the other day. With less than a month left, I wonder if I'll be able to see him on the last day before my migration. It would be nice to have one more conversation before then... I'm not sure how to interact with him, now that he's become somewhat cold.

## **May 27, 2052**

On a whim, I met with Ji-yeon again. We reminisced about how we used to ride bikes together, and then we decided to go on one last ride. Riding a bike along the Han River with the cool



breeze blowing gave me a surreal feeling. I felt like I should go somewhere close to the river or at least near a stream.

### **May 27, 2052**

After the exhibition ended, a sense of emptiness washed over me again. Even after 30 years of being an artist, this feeling never seems to go away. I guess that's just how it is, right? Now that the exhibition is over, I wonder if I can find some peace again. The burden of migration crept back in, even if only for a moment. What will happen to those left behind when I leave?

Throughout this entire journal, I've only written about myself. Does that make me a selfish person? Is it awkward for others to write about their relationships? Perhaps that's normal for most people.

### **May 27, 2052**

Seoul Jazz Festival! I had been looking forward to this! Meta-A invited me, so I managed to attend an event that sold out completely within a minute... (I failed miserably at ticketing... Thank you, Meta-A... I always believe in Meta-A... Thank you, Meta-A...) I've attended since I was young, but every year it gets more popular. Why is that?

The reason I love the Seoul Jazz Festival is because it perfectly harmonizes virtual and real worlds. The stage with my favorite AI musicians and real artists... It was simply perfect. Though non-face-to-face interaction is the trend, it's different from the feeling of screaming, jumping around, and sweating at the venue.

What I love about the Jazz Festival is not just the stage but also the various food stalls and experience booths. Since the festival was sponsored by Meta-A, there was an "Idea Experience Booth." Of course, I, who had received an invitation, could enter right away. There was even a miniature of the 'sculpture in San Francisco' that would detect migration errors! (Please take good care of it...!)

But I ran into Dr. H there.

He said he would reflect on the Idea, but here he was, experiencing it...

I was quite touched to see him come all the way here to experience it.

I didn't pry too much into H. I have many things I want to rely on him for and many questions, but I only wished him a safe trip home.

What does the doctor really think of Idea?

### **May 27, 2052**

I always thought I was the person who knew myself the best. Yet, when it came to answering all the questions in the migration agreement, it wasn't as easy as I thought. I had to carefully bring out my first memories from childhood. Even memories I didn't want to remember were there, and among the memories I wanted to remember, some I couldn't recall.

Memories are often embellished or forgotten.

The life I've lived for 50 years in this place will be embellished, and the memories right before migration will not be forgotten thanks to this record. So, maybe there will come a day when I can say that all the memories here were good. Perhaps I will miss them.

The more I think about it, the more I feel responsible for creating my Idea with care and perfection.

### **May 28, 2052**

A blank.

### **May 28, 2052**

Maybe I got carried away by the excitement of the festival because I felt fine yesterday, but now my whole body is sore... Maybe enjoying a festival the day before work was too much... I bet I wouldn't think this way in Idea, where a 24-hour day can be stretched to 128 hours... Today, I'll just take the day off and rest...

**May 28, 2052**

I finished what will be my final manuscript here. I need to take all my knowledge with me to Idea, so I suddenly felt worried.

**May 28, 2052**

We decided we would still meet often. Normally, one might say, "Let's meet again sometime," or "Let's have a meal," but that wasn't the case here. Because there's no "next time." So, we decided we would still meet often.

Young-seok seemed to be going through a hard time. He said he had worked as a nurse for a long time but retired last year. We went out for a meal of yukgaejang tonight, and it had been so long since I had a meal with a friend that I almost felt like it tasted good, even though my sense of taste is nearly gone.

**May 28, 2052**

Am I just living my life in endless contemplation? After worrying alone for so long, I feel a miserable sense that no one will show up on the last day before my migration. Have I expected too much? I'm tackling things now, like cramming for a last-minute exam, that I couldn't achieve in 55 years. I feel determined, sad, resigned, and despaired.

**May 28, 2052**

Hmm... I happened to attend a party. It had been so long since I danced and had fun. I'm about to migrate to a digital world, but I don't seem to be thinking much about the big event in my future. I'm still having conversations with people and talking about everyday things, but the topic of migration was only briefly mentioned, and nothing much changed. Maybe the biggest change will be my age, after all? The world will keep spinning fine without me, right?

**May 29, 2052**

Today, I woke up early in the morning. As I lay in bed, I watched the sunrise through the window, lost in various thoughts.

Since Young-seok suddenly showed up, thoughts that had been quiet began surfacing, like fish rising from the depths of a sea of thoughts. By that, I mean various thoughts began to occur to me.

When people ask about recent developments, it's common to either recommend something by saying it's good or complain by saying it's bad. The issue of migration is more complex than that. To recommend it would be like saying, "Let's die together." (I'm quite persuasive, so many friends have gone through hardships because of me.) On the other hand, to say don't do it puts my friend's view of my situation in an awkward position.

Young-seok, who has long harbored the dream of becoming a writer, has a somewhat cynical nature. He said he quit his long-held nursing job because he felt that if he waited any longer, it would be difficult to write seriously.

### **May 29, 2052**

I've decided to confess.

### **May 29, 2052**

I received a message to fill out the migration agreement. The agreement asked me to describe in detail the kind of world I would like to live in. When asked if I had a favorite story, I couldn't write anything. I realized I don't really like stories that much. At the same time, I feel a desire to create a story that I can like. Still, I did enjoy the old movies *Drive My Car* and *Annette*.

But I don't want to live in this world.

### **May 29, 2052**

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### **May 29, 2052**

I spent the day deep in thought as I worked on the draft of my migration agreement. From basic questions to questions meant to configure my Idea's environment, they were all questions focused solely on me. We usually live our lives weighed down by reality, which causes us to neglect time for ourselves. As I work on the After Life Project, it feels as if Meta-A is gifting me time for myself, which makes me feel good. Looking back, if wealth, fame, and time were added to my current life, wouldn't that be my Idea? It makes me think so. Today is a day when I realize that in my Idea, I want to become a person who uses wealth, fame, and time to have a positive influence on many people. I'm looking forward to tomorrow's workshop. I should go to bed soon.

### **May 29, 2052**

I cooked for my parents. I wish I had done it more often. It seems humans are creatures of regret after all. Can a meal with my parents in Idea be as affectionate and touching as it is here? The thought made me feel doubtful, but then I told myself, "As long as I believe it." I feel like I'm trapped in a circular logic.

### **May 30, 2052**

I received mental health counseling. My regular doctor is on a training trip to the U.S., leaving me without support during this critical time. I temporarily unplugged from the digital world and went outside. Fortunately, the streets were quiet, and the news articles about me leaving for a consultation with Meta-A abroad seemed to have had some effect.

### **May 30, 2052**

The winds are still blowing, I guess; the shutters still haven't come up.

I received a message that I will be playing music for the Immigration party at Idea HQ a few nights before we are sent off to our new lives. Better pick out some of my old wax disks, it will feel nice to have one final spin with some tangible music.

I've decided that my mind is just playing tricks on me, the nerves of an old man.

**May 30, 2052**

The workshop was based on the draft of my migration agreement. We discussed why the migration agreement questions were structured in this way, and we also took time to listen to each other's answers to the questions. Just as I was about to ask a question that had been on my mind and open up the discussion, my individual counseling session with Dr. Napureum came up, so I missed hearing the participants' responses. What a shame...

Still, Dr. Napureum pointed out that my migration agreement needs to be more specific.

Since Idea is a place where the potential for unhappiness can be minimized, a more precise sketch is necessary. I constantly remind myself that my Idea's environment settings might not be perfect, but I find myself becoming increasingly greedy. Humans really are insatiable beings. If there's a creator who designed Earth, they probably included the setting of endless human greed.

After the consultation, during the free-talking time with the participants, I started rethinking how to set the endpoint for my Idea.

I thought I would just stop at a certain point in life and let time flow, but then I realized that would be a loop. OK, loop!

At first, I will wake up in Idea as Park Joo-eun, a 30-year-old, and live until 80. Then I'll start again from 0. Because when I reach the temporary end at 80, I think I'll feel regretful. I think I'll want to live again. I'm taking the endless greed that the creator put in humans with me to my Idea, so this life will inevitably feel precious.

**May 30, 2052**

I met with other migration candidates again today. Some looked as worn out as I was, while others seemed full of hope and joy. Sitting there, I realized how hard I had been making things for myself. When I said I didn't want to go alone on the last day, they told me I wasn't alone, that people were with me. I was a little surprised by those words. Was I shutting myself off too much? At the same time, I felt so grateful. The pressure lessened, and I felt a bit more at ease.

**May 30, 2052**

I've been lost in thought all weekend. I've been revisiting childhood memories, then going back to recent memories, and from memories of not too long ago, I go back to memories from a long time ago. I don't think I've ever spent so much time thinking about the past.

Then, naturally, I began to think about the time to come. I don't understand the place that Musk or Zuckerberg talk about—that place called Idea. Strictly speaking, I'm not 'expecting' anything. Whether it's migration, death, or escape, I haven't applied with any particular goal in mind. So, there's nothing to be afraid of, nothing to be disappointed in.

I have things to say... but I won't write them down here.

### **May 30, 2052**

I was late. By the time I arrived, the meeting room was already filled with the chatter and consultations of the migration candidates. Everyone acted as if they had no major regrets about the world, which made the situation feel very awkward. Once again, someone I recognized bombarded people with endless questions.

### **May 30, 2052**

I made a list of books related to the Frankfurt School. Until now, I've only been able to read limited materials due to language barriers, but I'm a little excited to think that in Idea, I'll be able to read more books in depth.

### **May 31, 2052**

Today, I stayed awake for 24 hours straight. One of the migration candidates I met yesterday said they wished time was double or even 48 hours long because time is so precious. That remark left an impression on me, so I decided to stay awake for 24 hours. Around 11 p.m., the time I usually fall asleep, I got really sleepy. After two cups of cold coffee, I was good until 4 a.m. I pushed through from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. on sheer willpower. I had some urgent matters to attend to, so I stayed active until 3 p.m., which kept me awake. After being out until 5 p.m., I had dinner and tried to sleep at 7 p.m.

### **May 31, 2052**

I went to an exhibition and chatted with some artist friends. I usually prefer staying at home, so it's rare for me to go to exhibitions, but in the place I'm migrating to, I'd like to travel more. Of course, I won't be aware of my past memories... So, I wondered if I would be repeating the same actions without knowing that I once had such hopes. Sure, I can change the environment, but I don't think I want a big change. Except for wanting more money, that is.

### **May 31, 2052**

It's almost June already~ I've been so busy working late and coming home late that I haven't had time to write in my journal. I'm curious about my fortune for June, but I'm conflicted about whether I should reach out.

The fact that I rely on fortune-telling a little makes me realize how fragile humans are.

### **May 31, 2052**

It's been quite a while since I last visited an art museum. I haven't really thought deeply about going back in time, but the thought that the artists and works I currently know might not exist in the past gave me an unexpected sense of crisis. Still, I comfort myself with the thought that I might be able to learn about artists who were overshadowed by authoritative art history that I'm not aware of.

### **May 31, 2052**

Yesterday, I went outside and passed out. It had been so long since I engaged in outdoor activities that I collapsed on the ground in exhaustion after crying too much. I don't remember much after that, as my memory went blank. Fortunately, I'm now resting at home with my baby in my belly, feeling deeply relieved. I find it hard to keep writing in my journal.

### **May 31, 2052**



There isn't much time left. Today, an amount of money I never expected to see in my life, and thought I'd never see, was deposited into my account. I felt an inexplicable sense of unease and tension, so I transferred all but one week's worth of living expenses to my father's account. I wanted to make it as if it never happened in my life. Yes. Only then did I feel at ease.

### **May 31, 2052**

The winds are still blowing, I guess, the shutters still haven't come up.

I received a message that I will be playing music for the Immigration party at Idea HQ a few nights before we are sent off to our new lives. Better pick out some of my old wax disks, it will feel nice to have one final spin with some tangible music.

I've decided that my mind is just playing tricks on me, the nerves of an old man.

### **June 1, 2052**

What if the world I currently live in is already a digital world? Then, the place I'm migrating to would be a migration within that digital world. And if there's another world and another world after that, wouldn't that explain the IDEA of reincarnation? I would become a traveler who roams through worlds, and my memories would have to be erased for the journey to continue. But is it necessary for my body to age? In a world that keeps resetting, what is the meaning of growth? If the experiences and accumulated knowledge of my existence were to disappear in an instant, and I were to be reborn as a new self, could I still be considered 'me'? And would the 'me' that exists in the next world be able to continue evolving? Isn't it kind of like formatting a computer? Oh, but computers can age, so maybe it's more like continuously formatting a hard drive that doesn't age. In that case, DNA evolution wouldn't have much significance either...

### **June 1, 2052**

I argued with Ji-yeon. As always, it seems to be a matter of different communication styles. Even though I know I should involve the important people in my decision-making process, it's hard to do so in the moment. I hope that in Idea, I can be someone more considerate and capable of harmonizing with others.

### **June 1, 2052**

I went to bed at 7 p.m. yesterday and woke up at 2 p.m. today. I slept for a full 17 hours. I'm not sure whether I should regret the time I lost. After sleeping like crazy, my skin troubles cleared up, so that made me feel better for a moment. I had some time, so I finally went to the hospital after months. The doctor remarked on how long it had been since my last visit, and I lay comfortably under the familiar red light. It was warm and felt good. Now, there's less than a month left until migration. Strangely, it feels even less real than it did a few days ago. The fact that small things like this can make me happy, yet I'm making such a big decision like migration... One of the migration candidates I met a few days ago said they wanted to revisit Meta-A after migration and then migrate to another place again. If you have that kind of creativity, wouldn't you be able to migrate to a really interesting world? What will my world be like? I hope it's not like the current me... I get the feeling that my utopia would be a rather barren place. Could it be that I've lived this long simply because I haven't asked for much? I don't know whether I should be glad or not. But I'm really glad I still have time left. Slowly... I need to think carefully... Writing in this journal makes me feel like I'm gradually building up who I am. Though, since I'm still clumsy, it's like a drawing made by a five-year-old.

### **June 1, 2052**

I organized some old belongings today.

### **June 1, 2052**

I couldn't believe what the psychiatrist said. I remember storming out in anger. I must have hit his desk hard with my fist because my wrist still aches. Since the 28th, I haven't been in my right mind. My mental state has deteriorated to the point where any mental activity, even simple tasks like sitting or lying down, has become overwhelming. I'm scared that my depression will worsen to the point where I won't be able to sustain myself until the migration date. I'm also worried about the safety of the baby in my belly. The psychiatrist was a stranger assigned to me in a hurry, so I was very wary. But the diagnosis he gave was unbelievable. He said I suffer from delusions and that I need to verify whether my pregnancy is even real. I contacted the obstetrician. He also said that my son doesn't exist and that the abuse and suffering I'm experiencing are reflections of guilt, and that this has likely been going on for quite some time. If my son, who has been closest to me and whom I've treated like a friend, is a delusion, who among the people around me is actually real? I sat quietly and tried to recall the past. Yesterday, the day before, a week ago, a month ago, the people I met. But no matter how much I tried to dig into my thoughts, I couldn't stop thinking about my son. I asked my secretary to call the person on speed dial number 1 for me. "Hello." I instantly recognized from the unfamiliar voice that it was my 'mother.' "Who is this?" I asked. "It's been a while, Jaebin.

I'm your guru." The nun, who is also my Vipassana guru, was a teacher I met when I was at the single mother center. As soon as she called me by the name Jaebin, memories of that place and the friends there flooded back. I also remembered how about a year later, when my son was around one year old, one of the girlfriends who used to torment me entered the center and we spent some time together. Ding dong, ding dong. At that moment, the entire house's chime bell rang, and the visitor's image appeared on the wall. It was my familiar assistant's face, and suddenly, the young face of Jeong Myeong-in, along with his name, popped into my mind. Goosebumps rose all over my skin.

### **June 1, 2052**

Today was a rare day off. I caught up on laundry and even asked the delivery robot to drop off my shirts at the dry cleaners. While I was taking care of household chores that had been neglected, I received a call from H. He asked to meet tomorrow. I feel both curious and a bit fearful about what tomorrow might bring.

### **June 1, 2052**

Woken by warm sunlight streaming through the open windows. The sky is always so clear after a long storm, so I got straight outside to enjoy the weather. Work let me retire two weeks early, they were very understanding once I told them about my plan to go to Idea. So I spent the day speeding around the biome on the etram.

My favorite spot has to be the algae flats, just the thought that almost the whole biome is running off their energy and all its buildings are constructed from their mass is astounding. In the 2020s we used to dream about this stuff. Sunlight glinted off thin shards of fresh blue water as the etram glided over the sprawling webs of thick green organic matter.

It's days like this that give you hope for some kind of future, but they have been getting fewer and further between every year. I'm lucky I ended up in this region, I know others haven't been so lucky.

I'm going to spend my last days in physical reality enjoying all it has to offer...

### **June 2, 2052**

It's still hard to accept. To think that, after all these years of trauma from childhood, my mental strength has deteriorated to the point that, now, in middle age, I'm experiencing hallucinations.

### **June 2, 2052**

I participated in a robot workshop. Robots have become such everyday units now, but I was curious about how they work and the science behind them. Of course, two hours of workshop time wasn't enough to learn much, but then again, I wondered what the point of it all was. After all, I'm going to migrate soon, and my memories will be erased...

### **June 2, 2052**

I met with H. He told me not to lose sight of my goals in New Idea. I will contribute to research on mental health in Idea, and based on that knowledge, I want to let the many people who know me know that there are many fascinating things in life worth living for. Of course, in that world, the 'me' who exists there won't be aware that I migrated to be there. I didn't ask about my fortune for June. Maybe I was just avoiding it because I was afraid to hear it. The closer the migration date gets, the more complicated my feelings become, but at the same time, it's strangely liberating. How can I calm this confusion and chaos? There were many questions I wanted to ask the taciturn H, but today, too, I found myself holding back questions that were about to spill out. I'll just try to trust him, not let myself get too distracted by the excitement of migration, and focus on living each day as it comes.

### **June 2, 2052**

I put my house on the market. I wondered what kind of person would move into a place that was once mine and started imagining what they would be like. With so many books and bookshelves, it seems like it might be a bit of a hassle to move out.

### **June 2, 2052**

What kind of world will New Idea be? I keep wondering, even though it's the world I'm going to. From what I've heard from Meta-A... It seems like it's not a fully completed world, but rather, it's only possible to the extent that I want or know. If that's the case, does that mean what I want can never truly be realized? Or does it mean that what I want is actually nothing special? I've

always thought that what I want and my current life were worlds apart. I've always longed for an Idea that was out of reach. But even though they say they'll give me an Idea in my grasp, it still feels the same. What is this feeling?

### **June 2, 2052**

Goodbye, for now, to today's space and time.

### **June 3, 2052**

Jacques Lacan's words, "Man's desire is the desire of the Other," come to mind. When I separate others from my desires, I find that I have no IDEA what I've been desiring. I'm not even sure whether the 'I' ever existed in the first place. Disintegrated patterns, newly reconfigured patterns, and the temporary vanishing point that is created within them. Is that what we call the self? There's a puzzle that I bought about ten years ago and never finished, but today I've been struggling all day to complete it.

### **June 3, 2052**

I prepared a small gift, cooked, and wrote a letter to invite Ji-yeon to my home. Turns out, my love language might be cooking. It seems that when I organize my thoughts and feelings of regret into words, they're more sincerely conveyed to my friend. As I was explaining the concept of New Idea in writing, it felt surreal. It was like writing a movie synopsis.

### **June 3, 2052**

This weekend, Myeong-in said she needs to visit her son's grave. She mentioned that tomorrow is the anniversary of her son's death, who was enshrined in a columbarium. I have no memory of visiting my son every early summer.

### **June 3, 2052**

It's been almost a week since I last contacted that person. After meeting with the people I'll be migrating with, my interest in that person suddenly waned. After all, are real people better than people in Idea? Why did I want to meet them so much? Why did I want to talk with them more? Now, those feelings have disappeared. If this continues, I might have to select someone else to take with me to Idea. Or maybe, since they're a stranger, I could just input the data the way I want?

I used to feel so lonely being alone... It was so hard... There was a time when I wanted to communicate with random strangers, but I don't feel that way anymore. Maybe it's because I now have an environment where I can easily meet other people? Honestly, if I feel this way, I don't really feel like migrating either.

People are so fickle. Someone else said they wanted to go to the place where Walter Benjamin lived to be friends with him so they could gain more knowledge... Should I also find someone like that?

### **June 3, 2052**

Just another ordinary day. There are still more than 20 days left before migration. I want to ask H. 'Will that sculpture light up with a green glow?' And until it does, I need to think about how to express my gratitude to my parents and the people who have prayed for me.

### **June 4, 2052**

One day on Earth is 24 hours. According to Meta-A, time in Idea can be set up to 128 hours. Although it costs a lot of code, I have the \$7 million deposited in my account, so I can use that, right? It's not like I'm in urgent need of money anyway.

A few days ago, at a workshop, I heard a story from another team participant about being a hermaphrodite, and I can't forget it. Yeah, since my Idea is that precious, I should spend my money on it!

### **June 4, 2052**

I had a very ordinary day. It wasn't too busy, not too boring, nothing disappointing, but also not perfect—a day like that. If I were to add something, it would be that I read some books. I underlined sentences and took diligent notes.

**June 4, 2052**

I went jogging for a long time. My breathing became labored, and my knees ached. The blood in my ankle muscles rose, tightening around my thinning ankle bones. After running for a while, I arrived at a deserted path. There were large trees, and I could see the downstream of the river leading to the sea at a glance. I laid down flat on the ground, remaining still until my breath evened out. Ah... my life's energy. My conatus. My cells. My blood carried by my cells. My currents. My synapses. My patterns. I tried to think of everything that makes up me.

**June 4, 2052**

I had a long talk with my brother about our parents. It had been so long since we last met that it felt a bit unfamiliar at first, but then we ended up laughing together over the unexpected sense of camaraderie. We concluded that we were probably quite close as siblings.

**June 5, 2052**

The time spent reading a catalog of my favorite exhibitions is truly fantastic. I can't pause time and stay in the exhibition hall forever, so being able to bring that exhibition to my own space whenever I want—how fantastic is that? I sat in a café I liked for hours, reading the catalog, and wrote letters to those who wished me a successful migration during the breaks.

**June 5, 2052**

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**June 5, 2052**

While organizing books that I was donating to the library, I found a dried leaf I had pressed to use as a bookmark. I want to remember these sentimental moments, and the memories attached to them.

### **June 6, 2052**

Today, I met with the other migrants again. The migration date has been moved to July 1st. Phew. We've been granted a week of mercy.

Today, I lay on a strange long chair, closed my eyes, and listened to the migration agreement read by Mr. Kim Mu-ho. The migration agreement was set against an ocean backdrop, with music matching the background, and when he described the wind, a gentle breeze blew, which felt nice. I felt a bit reluctant to open my eyes, so I tightly shut them. I imagined myself in a light dress, strolling along a sandy beach, and somehow, I could even feel the sand beneath my feet. After listening to the whole thing, I was asked for my thoughts. Hmm, how should I put it... I felt like I had used the full extent of my imagination. I also observed others lying down with their eyes closed while listening to the migration agreement. Everyone's eyes were twitching, and their chests were heaving intensely. They didn't look very stable. I probably looked the same way. It felt strange to see others lying down with their eyes closed while still awake. It was a peculiar experience.

### **June 6, 2052**

For the first time, I couldn't attend the meeting. I felt as if I had committed a great sin, but once I migrate, this guilt and regret will disappear too. Soon, I'll be a person who disappears from this world, but 'Meta-A' kept asking for something and kept asking questions. Perhaps I still have many lingering attachments to the world.

### **June 6, 2052**

I received the finalized migration agreement based on the draft I had written. I didn't feel much about it. I just realized that I had missed out on winter and had forgotten about snow. At the end, I mentioned several times that I wanted my son to be set as a normal, healthy young man. Then I decided I would have dinner with my son when I got home, but there was no one at home.

### **June 7, 2052**

It rained heavily in the morning, but it cleared up by noon. The wind was strong in the afternoon. For June, the weather was unusually cold, so I took out my long-sleeved clothes from the closet and wore them again. For no particular reason, I suddenly felt like shaving my



head. Normally, it would have been a hard thing to do, but maybe because of the migration, I had no regrets and just shaved it off at home. I thought it might be fun to try on various wigs. Since I already shaved my head, it would be even easier. If I hadn't shaved my head, I would have spent the last few days of my life with the same hairstyle I've always had, so this decision was much easier to make. After shaving, I looked in the mirror and saw something that resembled a potato blinking back at me. I stared at him for a while, then my eyes were drawn to the framed quote hanging on the wall behind me: "Can senses be trusted?"

### **June 8, 2052**

It's been weeks since I started organizing my belongings little by little, yet there's still so much left. Ever since I decided to migrate, a guidebook (530 pages) and various documents related to it keep arriving. Most of the content is highly specialized and beyond my understanding, but reading it gives me a sense of trust. I spend a lot of time sitting on the sofa, reading and rereading them, one or two times a day.

### **June 9, 2052**

When I first decided to migrate, it was incredibly shocking to people. Some screamed, others suddenly burst into tears, some embraced me, and there were all sorts of reactions. After a few hours, they would tire themselves out and fall asleep. The persistent ones repeated this pattern for weeks, and even now, some still do. This reaction was something I expected. Even without choosing migration, a different kind of migration—the one we've called death—awaits all of us. I've always wondered when it would happen. My thought was that I'd prefer to go a little before everyone else. Being able to go to a guaranteed place, in a comfortable way, and even getting paid for it doesn't seem like something I have a reason to refuse. Of course, this is something very different from death.

### **June 10, 2052**

When I decided to migrate, I also decided to indulge in all the food I wanted to eat, which has led to a 20 kg weight gain. Thinking that this is the last appearance people will see of me, I suddenly feel a wave of regret.

### **June 10, 2052**

I haven't been able to write in my journal for a while. With the migration date approaching, I'm pondering whether or not to invite anyone to my final party. The people I could invite don't quite sit right with me for this momentous occasion. My secretary and fellow friend from the single mothers' center, Myeong-in, my son who only exists in my thoughts, and the first love I've longed for all my life, who gave my daughter her genes...

### **June 11, 2052**

The weather suddenly turned scorching hot within a few days. Heatwave warnings have been issued across several regions. As I walked down the street, I kept thinking about how unbearably hot it was, and eventually, I just took off my shirt. Who cares? Life in this place doesn't have much time left anyway. I even took off my pants and instead put on my sunglasses from my bag.

### **June 12, 2052**

This isn't death, but people seem to think of it as if it is. But I've had this thought countless times before. This is a comfortable conclusion, a new scientific method of reaching a guaranteed heaven.

### **June 13, 2052**

I had a long conversation with a friend who has strong faith. We talked about faith and why life exists in this world. My friend said I was cheating, and asked me what I would do if, after everything was done, my body was frozen, and my life was converted into code, I found myself not in New Idea, but standing before the Creator. I thought for a long time and then answered, "I guess I'd have to beg for forgiveness." But then I quickly retracted that statement.

There are ultimately three possible outcomes after death. One, there's complete annihilation, where nothing at all remains. Two, God really does exist, and we end up standing before the judgment seat in some form. Originally, there were these two possibilities, but now there's a third: After dying, I end up living again in the world I created. My friend lamented that it's mysterious how I, someone with so little faith, could so readily believe what they're saying. My friend mentioned praying all night for my salvation recently. Seeing my friend's gaunt face, I realized that this wasn't entirely a lie, which made me feel a bit guilty.

### **June 13, 2052**

I've spent a week that was so busy I hardly noticed time passing. Sitting at the desk, typing away on my laptop, forcing myself to stay awake with caffeine until the early hours, then waking up to repeat the cycle. What was all this for? What is it for now, and what will it be for in the future? Before I leave this place, I want to find out more about this migration. Why was I chosen among so many people, and what exactly will happen to this world and the one I'm migrating to?

### **June 14, 2052**

Life has an infinite number of variables. Out of all these, the things I can control are just a tiny handful of settings. That's true both here and in New Idea. You never know what kind of butterfly effect might occur and overlap in unforeseen ways. Suddenly, I feel uneasy.

### **June 15, 2052**

Today, I keenly felt what it's like to be alone. The problem is that nothing happened to trigger this feeling—nothing happened at all, and that's what made me realize it. How am I supposed to cope with a day like this?

### **June 16, 2052**

There was a knock at the door in the early afternoon. I'd just gotten back from a walk up the converted landfill hill and wasn't expecting it. When I opened it, no one was there, just another data chip hanging off the door handle. This one said, "contains patch3.5b - please disregard previous chip." I realized I'd totally forgotten the chip—why hadn't I thought to plug it into my

console? Too much going on, I guess. Opening it on the desktop produced a folder full of subfolders with names that were composed of strings of emoticons—very difficult to make sense of. I clicked on a random folder titled ‘📧 🍷 🔑 📱’, and it was full—2 petabytes full—with files of just about every format I knew as well as many I had no IDEA of. What’s a .hudz file? The names were also just emojis. It was the same thing in a few other random folders I checked.

I booted up the second chip. It seemed identical to the first; I couldn’t spot any differences at first, but running a quick index comparison showed one change. A file called ‘📷 🩸 🏆 🌂 .rit’ had become ‘📷 🩸 🏆 🌞 .rit’. What do I make of this? I guess I’m supposed to take it with me to immigration. But what is it?

### **June 16, 2052**

I drank heavily. I drank wine until my stomach was full of nothing but alcohol, and it woke me up in the middle of the night. What will happen to my body once I migrate? Now I feel like, “whatever happens, happens,” but then I find myself thinking about it again. But still...

### **June 17, 2052**

I grilled mackerel and ate it with buckwheat noodles. It was delicious. These days, I live in a complex state where subtle stress, a peaceful daily life, and anxiety about the future are all mixed together. But I don’t think I’m in a bad state. Ironically, I even feel somewhat reassured.

### **June 18, 2052**

I’ve spent one-third of the money Meta-A gave me. It doesn’t feel real that the money will be useless next week, so I haven’t been able to spend it all, even after receiving it. Is this the result of habits I’ve built up over a lifetime? For next week’s party, I invited my coworkers. Although I’ve met them many times in Idea, it’s the first time seeing them in person. Still, I want to have fun and enjoy this final journey. Meta-A gave me the dress code for the day I migrate. I’m planning to dress up according to the dress code for that day. I’ve passed on the dress code to my coworkers as well, and they said they’d dress accordingly for me. I’m touched. Two days after the party, I’ll be in a new world, but I hope the memory of this farewell moment with them doesn’t disappear.

**June 19, 2052**

I've been analyzing the chips thoroughly for the past two days. My pattern analysis software from work seems to have some rudimentary effect, although these chips are clearly designed to be run on a totally different sort of software or hardware. The only things I managed to actually open were .pngs and .glfs, which seemed to be fragments of larger things, square grids of color gradients, and strange angles and faces. I have no IDEA of the scale or how to arrange them. The files seem to follow a sort of lattice structure, with links across folders and files. I have no way to follow them using my console; it's all too massive and entangled.

It's all too massive and entangled.

**Lyrics from Black Skirt's song *Flying Bobs* (2022)**

Back then, I couldn't have known  
Why these things were happening to me  
I even wondered,  
"Could this be a curse?"  
But I was just living through being seventeen  
On a summer night in 1999 when cicadas screamed  
The season that was harsh and green left a deep scar  
If I could go back to that time  
And start over from the beginning  
I'd do anything  
But even if I went back,  
I'd probably make the same mistakes again  
But it's okay  
Because it was all what I wanted  
All of this, it's what I wanted

## 4. Agreements

The following content is based on actual events.

These are agreements regarding the detailed and new lives of the selected participants who volunteered for the migration project, drafted through consultations with them. The following excerpts are some of those agreements. These writings are meant to be read aloud and heard.

The content of the "agreements" is based on "The Rabbit Hole Project" (a group psychodrama conducted in 2022, set against the backdrop of the migration event of 2052, see footnote 6 on page 22\*) and was created jointly by the author and the participants after 35 days of psychodrama with actual participants.

## <Migration Participant Iso's Agreement>

I, Iso, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name will again be "Iso," or more precisely, Hannah Li So, or Lee Hannah So. You wake up after dozing off on a bench at Gimpo Airport. The bench, made of wood, still smells of fresh paint. You are wearing a dark blue homburg hat with a ribbon attached to one side. It is June 7th, 1968, and you were born in 1944.

You are a graduate student in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt am Main, and your advisor is Jürgen Habermas. You were supposed to be completing your master's thesis in your fourth semester, but you returned to Korea due to a summons from the Central Intelligence Agency, requiring you to respond to an investigation. Since the Dongbaeklim incident in 1967, investigations into Korean students studying in Germany have become stricter. Thanks to your father working as a diplomat at the West German Embassy in Korea, you were able to complete the investigation safely.

Your father's name is Franz Fering, and your mother's name is Cheong-Ja Lee. Your mother is an artist, a rare example of a modern woman at the time. Born a Japanese national, she entered Black Mountain College in the United States in 1939. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, she was persecuted as a Japanese, but met your father, a German student involved in anti-Nazi activities, during the war, and they married and had you. When you were taking your first steps in the front yard, your parents were listening to Emperor Hirohito's surrender announcement on the radio. Your mother, Cheong-Ja Lee, who had a strong Korean identity, returned to Korea after liberation when you were four years old to register your birth, then returned to the United States two months later.

Your maternal family has operated a general hospital in Seoul since the time it was Gyeongseong. Your maternal grandfather was a rare intellectual of the time, having studied surgery at Johns Hopkins University in the United States in his youth. This enabled your mother to grow up in a liberal academic environment, a quality that flows in your blood as well. You spent your childhood in North Carolina, USA, and moved to Hamburg, Germany, when you entered a gymnasium in 1955. Your mother, who did not want to leave America as an artist, and your father, who wanted to educate you in Germany, eventually divorced after conflicts, and you moved to Germany with your father. However, you have maintained a good relationship with your mother, communicating frequently by letter.

You have beautiful cursive handwriting and are fluent in English as your first language, German as your second, and Korean as your third, though with a mixed accent noticeable in all three. You are a 20th-century Korean woman who has a mother in America and a father in Germany, speaking English as your first language and German as your second. In Germany, you have a boyfriend, Josef Hoppenheimer, who is studying architecture at the same school. He is five years older than you and has a handsome beard resembling Jude Law.

Since your time at the gymnasium, you have admired Walter Benjamin. More precisely, it was after reading his translation and critique of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* in a literature textbook during your second year of the gymnasium. Your admiration for Walter Benjamin led you to the University of Frankfurt am Main and subsequently to volunteer as a student under Jürgen Habermas. However, this also made you a person of interest to the Central Intelligence Agency, requiring you to enter Korea for investigation once a year. Additionally, you must submit an activity report twice a year. The investigation is now complete, and you are waiting for a flight back to Frankfurt.

Seoul considers you a person of interest because Walter Benjamin once lived in the Soviet Union and studied Marx. However, in the letter to your mother that you hold in your hand, it says, "On the other hand, I love Walter for his endlessly deep contemplation of memory. My complex and multifaceted journey, which takes a long time to explain, is being summoned by my fragmented memories and is being recreated here and now as moving scenes." Born in 1944, your life begins in 1968 and ends in 2009 when you turn sixty-five. You chose not to know when your life would end. And your life returns to 1968 again. And 45 years later, again. And again, every 45 years, it keeps returning.

For any other details of the character 'Iso,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## <Migration Participant Hyesung Lee's Agreement>

I, Hyesung Lee, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is "Jung Hyesung." You will wake up to the sound of ocean waves coming from outside. You are lying on a clean bed. The moment you begin your new existence is June 30th, 1984, at 6:17 a.m. Your birth year is January 23rd, 1960.

You live in PlusDream Valley, Suite 2201, on Beach Road No. 3, Repulse Bay, Hong Kong.

Your appearance will be in the same state as it is now but reconstructed based on the average values of a healthy 24-year-old woman's physical age. Your parents live in a luxury country house on Deep Water Bay Road, Deep Water Bay. Your father's name is Jung Doma, and your mother's name is Lee Sujeon. You were raised as an only child.

Your father is the branch manager of the Standard Chartered Bank in Hong Kong, and he is a very wealthy man. You grew up in a very affluent environment under your wealthy parents. You graduated from Harvard Private Elementary School, homeschooled for a year, and then entered Hong Kong University Business School early, graduating at the age of 19. You earned an MBA from Imperial College in 1980, returned to Hong Kong, and, with your parents' support, founded a high-end restaurant, "Hong Kong Banjeom," which you successfully developed into a franchise. In 1983, you sold it and made a significant profit. Soon after, you founded a business consulting startup called "Highly Pleasant," which you are successfully running.

When you wake up, beside you is the script of *As Tears Go By*, which you fell asleep reading last night, and a cordless phone. You are close to Wong Kar-wai, an aspiring director in the film industry. However, the relationship has not yet developed into a romantic one, and you are at a crossroads. Wong Kar-wai shows a slight affection for you, often sharing his scripts and IDEAS with you.

You have three friends with whom you keep in frequent contact. One of them is Il Deunghwa, a swimmer who represented Hong Kong in the 1984 LA Olympics British national team trials but unfortunately lost to Sarah Hardcastle. However, Il Deunghwa is unmatched in swimming in Hong Kong.

When you wake up, you habitually stretch, look out the window for 10 seconds, step onto the scale by your bed to weigh yourself, and then bite into a piece of chocolate, eating about half

in one bite. You then change into a yellow Lycra training suit and jog for about 35 minutes along Repulse Bay Beach before returning.

You always bring a Sony Walkman when jogging. You prefer American pop music or Japanese city pop over Cantonese songs. On the morning of June 30th, 1984, your Walkman has Maria Takeuchi's cassette tape A-side "Plastic Love" inserted.

Born in 1960, your life begins on June 30th, 1984, and ends in 2040. You chose to end your life without knowing when it would end. After your life ends in 2040, it returns to 1984, and then again to 1984.

For any other details of the character 'Jung Hyesung,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## <Migration Participant Im Hyojin's Agreement>

I, Im Hyojin, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your name is Yoyo Jin.

You were born in 1984. On December 24th, 1992, you are waiting for your father to finish organizing the hospital paperwork next to the Christmas tree on the first floor of Im Obstetrics and Gynecology in Naedeok-dong, Sangdang-gu, Cheongju City, Chungcheongbuk-do. As you begin to wake up from a light nap, you hear your older sister's voice laughing playfully. Nat King Cole's "The Christmas Song" is gently playing in your ears.

For a moment, you have a simple yet profoundly significant thought, wishing this day would last forever. You try to remember many things, but in reality, you can barely recall anything, feeling a strange sensation.

Your father comes down, and the family sits on the sofa, sharing stories. Your mind is entirely focused on what Christmas present you'll receive in a few hours.

Your parents' friends and their children arrive. Everyone gathers in the hospital's reception room, chatting warmly. A family friend, Uncle Dae-hyung, hands you a piece of chocolate. You look at him for a moment without saying thank you or any other response. Then you put the chocolate in your mouth and chew.

Suddenly, your older sister takes out the cassette tape and flips it, pressing the play button. "I Know" starts playing. Ki-hoon scolds her for changing the song without permission, but the music continues. Being young, you cannot fully grasp what you are feeling, but the rhythm and beat make your body move slightly, and you feel something stirring inside you. Suddenly, it starts snowing outside.

This place is the obstetrics and gynecology clinic your father runs. Your mother is a teacher at a middle school. Besides your parents, you have one older sister in your family. Your sister is four years older than you, loves music, and is very talented at it. While you like music, you prefer drawing. You also enjoy receiving praise for drawing well.

You go outside with your peer, Min-jun Lee, to watch the snow. Snow is beginning to accumulate slowly. You feel impatient, wanting to build a snowman quickly. You put your hands

in your pockets, fiddling with a polyurethane dinosaur figure, and blow hot air into the cold air. The steam makes you feel like you are a fire-breathing dinosaur, boosting your mood.

Your mother opens the door and tells you to come inside, warning you might catch a cold in the cold weather. Then she says, "Let's eat cake." You leave a few small footprints on the freshly fallen snow and return inside the hospital.

Your life is subtly adjusted to allow you to live as an artist, but you are unaware of it. However, at the appropriate time, you will see good artwork and hear the stories of a great artist. His name is Keith Haring. In your early twenties, you will unexpectedly receive an offer to study art in the United States, and later, you will be offered the chance to work in Africa.

After a long time, you will return to Korea and meet many interesting people, including one particularly interesting person.

Born in 1984, your life starts in 1992, continues until 2052, and then ends. You chose to be aware of how your life would end. You will sense your life ending as death approaches, welcoming the end. However, once your life ends, it will return to Christmas Eve of 1992, and every 60 years, you will return to this day, endlessly starting over.

For any other details of the character 'Yoyo Jin,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## <Migration Participant Megumi's Agreement>

I, Megumi, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is “Bii Tanaka.”

You will wake up on a sunny beach in the spring, lying on the sand. You are wearing a light dress. When you turn your head, you see your family camping nearby. The seawater in front of you is so clear that it dazzles your eyes. As your twin brother approaches, he sees you waking up and asks, with a slightly cute expression, “Are you awake?”

The moment you start your new existence is 3:33 p.m., May 27th, 2008.

Your birth year is April 22nd, 1997. You live in Edogawa City, Koto-ku, Japan.

Your appearance is that of a charming, youthful girl with natural black hair and double eyelids, based on the average appearance of 3,300 Japanese actresses born between 1985 and 1996. You are 11 years old.

Your parents live in a luxury apartment opposite the Tokyo Rinkai Hospital by the Arakawa River in Koto City, Japan. Your father's name is Shii Tanaka, and your mother's name is Dii Sato. You are the youngest in a pair of twin siblings. Your twin brother's name is Ei Tanaka.

Your father is a professor of aesthetics at the University of Tokyo, recognized as a researcher capable of responding to discussions on all topics, and has received prestigious awards. Your mother is a professor of philosophy at the University of Tokyo. You are growing up as a positive and creative person under parents who enjoy intellectual conversations.

You attend Edogawa Municipal No. 7 Kasai Elementary School with your twin brother. You have good hand skills, enjoy learning crafts, and love watching and drawing manga. You are preparing to enter Horikoshi Gakuen, an art high school. You are also considered the prettiest girl in school, receiving much love from your friends.

When you wake up, your first cat, Lily, is stretching beside you, followed by your second cat, Popo, meowing. Your hands have grains of sand on them, and there is a cute pink plastic pair of sunglasses beside you. Also, there is a Meiji Ichigoore strawberry milk.

You have a good relationship with your twin brother. He enjoys getting lost in imagination, developing things, and working on creative projects. This summer, you, your brother, Mei, and

Suzuko plan to visit the Kasai Rinkai Aquarium to see dolphins. Your friend Mei is a kind-hearted friend with whom you never have any conflicts. Suzuko is a wise friend who listens to your worries.

When you wake up, you drink a cup of water, neatly fold your nightdress and sheets, and put them away. Then, you pick up a small notebook and pencil, pack your school bag, and go to your parents' room. You snuggle between your mom and dad for a moment before going to wash up. Then, you open the closet, take out the light pink dress you folded last night, and head to school. You either walk hand-in-hand with your brother or ride a bicycle to school. On the way to school, you enjoy stopping to rest and watch the ducks at the Shin Sakongawa Shinsui Park. On May 27th, 2008, at 3:33 p.m., your sunglasses reflect an orange sky. You smell grilled clams and shrimp, and your mom and dad are smiling and beckoning you to come and have a snack.

From the age of 25, you and your brother will begin your journey as renowned contemporary artists.

Born in 1997, your life starts in 2008 and continues until 2057, when you turn 60. The end will come suddenly but peacefully, without pain. Your life will return to 2008, continuing until 2057, and then stop. And then, it will return to 2008 again, repeatedly returning to this special moment.

For any other details of the character 'Bii,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## <Migration Participant Nagasawa Midori's Agreement>

I, Nagasawa Midori, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is "Na Hanna."

You are currently sitting in a rocking chair, drifting off to sleep.

The slightly open large window lets in a pleasant sea breeze, and the spring sunlight gently warms the surroundings. From the small turntable next to the rocking chair, Tony Bennett's "Body and Soul" is playing. You slowly wake up to the sound of a small bird pecking at the window on the veranda. On your lap is a half-read book titled *Life After That*, and on the table is a cup of tea. You reach out, lift the teacup, and take a sip. The fragrant tea spreads pleasantly in your mouth.

The moment you start your new existence is Monday, March 27th, 2022, at 1:35 p.m. You were born on July 5th, 1941, and you have just turned 80 this year. You live in a mansion on Jeju Island, where a warm atmosphere permeates everything, and the interior is decorated with beautiful antiques passed down from your parents. The house is furnished with bright wood tones harmonizing with the antiques your parents collected, and it has been featured in an interior design magazine as one of Jeju's beautiful homes. Although your appearance has aged, with wrinkles and white hair, it is well-groomed, giving you an elegant look. You wear a specially ordered pair of thick, round-framed green glasses from Japan, exuding a subtle artistic atmosphere.

Your father's name is Na Byeong-Eun, and your mother's name is Lee Sook. Both of your parents were artists. Your father was a master craftsman of lacquerware, recognized not only in Korea but also in Japan, where he served as the director of the world's largest lacquer art museum, the Iwayama Lacquer Art Museum in Japan. Your mother was a curator at the museum, and they met through their shared interest in art. Your mother helped operate your father's museum, collecting works and curating the famous exhibition *Excessively Beautiful Korean Lacquerware*.

You have an older brother, Na Young-Seok, who is a year older. You remember following your brother, a prodigy, and your family on his world tour piano recitals when you were young. Even after retiring from his career as a pianist, your brother worked as a conductor at the Seoul Arts Center until his retirement.

You grew up in an artistic family, receiving early art education through homeschooling from your parents. Along with your brother, you were educated at home, with your brother excelling in music and you in literature. You traveled the world with your family during your childhood, encountering various languages of poetry. You became a poet who published poetry collections.

You rise from the rocking chair and slowly walk toward the window, gazing outside. You reflect on your childhood, especially your 11th birthday when hail rained down in the summer. You and your brother shared the only umbrella as you walked through the fields, laughing innocently. You recall arriving home with half your body wet, receiving a warm towel from your mother, drying off, and taking a warm shower. The memory of sitting in the rocking chair, drinking warm tea with your family, and feeling the comforting warmth of the home as rain tapped on the roof remains unforgettable.

You head to the kitchen to prepare a meal for your son, who is visiting after a long time. Your son is a healthy and strong-minded fund manager, returning home today from a business trip abroad. Today's menu is beef bourguignon, inspired by the movie *Julie & Julia* you watched last night. You plan to prepare it diligently to have the dish ready by the time your son arrives. Your son always brings your favorite tiramisu cake whenever he visits. You decide that it will be your dessert today.

Born in 1941, your life starts in 2022 and continues until 2027, when it ends. You chose not to know when your life would end. When death comes, you will face the end peacefully, as if falling asleep.

For any other details of the character 'Na Hanna,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## <Migration Participant Minjeong Kim's Agreement>

I, Minjeong Kim, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is Kim Eomji, but you are called "Emjay Kim."

You wake up in a clean king-sized bed next to your beloved, "Jay."

The moment you start your new existence is 10:21 a.m., August 12th, 2052. Your birth year is February 1st, 2020. And now, it is June 29th, 2052.

You live in a two-story private residence on 2 UN Village Street, Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul. When you stand up in your bedroom, you see the Han River through a large floor-to-ceiling window. Your parents live across the river in Eterno Cheongdam, Suite 1601, Gangnam-gu, visible from your bedroom.

Your parents' names are Kim Il-lon and Lee Na-hee, and you have an older brother, Kim Seojun, two years your senior. Your father is the founder of the global distribution company PineDeli. You grew up in a relatively free environment under wealthy parents.

You graduated from Seoul Yongsan International School and Choate Rosemary Hall, a private high school in Wallingford, Connecticut, USA. You then rejected further education and became a faceless visual artist active in Berlin, now based in Seoul.

When you wake up, there is a sketchbook beside you, showing the drawing you fell asleep working on last night. A one-year-old Dalmatian puppy is lying beside you. Next to it, Jay, wearing a blue robe, is sleeping. You are becoming famous as Jay's secret fiancé, who is also an actress. You and Jay have been living together for four years now.

Your closest friend is Jay's manager, Min. Forty-four-year-old Min is not only Jay's entertainment manager but also a wise friend who offers valuable advice in your private life. Min was known as the "Eccentric Champion" during his youth, having been a mixed martial arts fighter in the global organization ONE Championship. He is now a father with a daughter and a dependable friend and partner to you and Jay.

You rise from the bed and stand before the mirror on the dressing table. Your appearance is based on the data of your current appearance at 32, Minjeong Kim. You consciously feel that everything in your life is perfectly balanced. However, at such moments, a memory of a boy

you had a crush on when you were twelve always comes to mind. Scenes involving the boy inevitably come to you whenever you feel everything is perfect.

You work with soundscape ambiences that allow you to experience different time-spaces simultaneously, playing them in your home 24/7 while you work. You have consistently asked questions about the diversity of love in society through your work. After Jay's current project is completed, the two of you plan to adopt a child or conceive and get married.

Born on February 1st, 2020, your life begins on June 29th, 2052, and continues until June 21st, 2120. You will live to the age of 101, sensing that you are about to die and calmly bringing your life to an end. And your life will return to 10:21 a.m., June 29th, 2052. And every 68 years, it will return, endlessly.

For any other details of the character 'Emjay,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## <Migration Participant Park Joo-eun's Agreement>

I, Park Joo-eun, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is "Park Joo-eun."

You wake up to bright light streaming through the large window in your bedroom. Outside the window, you see a beautifully landscaped artificial garden, and on the wall opposite your bed hangs the painting *A Horse* by artist Park Young-geun. This artwork originally belonged to a gallery that was once housed in this building and was purchased along with the building when you bought it.

The moment you start your new existence is 2:30 p.m., Friday, May 10th, 2052. (Since 128 hours equal 64 hours in the morning, 2:30 p.m. in the morning would be just after sunrise.) Your birth year is January 11th, 2022, and you are now 30 years old.

You live in your own rural house at 54-14, 3 UN Village Street, Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul. The house was formerly the old and worn-out Gallery BiSeonJae, which you remodeled into a residential structure. Throughout the house, various types of artworks, remnants of the previous gallery, are displayed. Your current appearance is similar to how you look now, but in accordance with the Ideia settings, where a day lasts 128 hours, you have the body of an average middle-aged Korean woman, equivalent to a 30-year-old in this world. However, your eyes still sparkle with vitality, and your body is healthier than that of your peers.

Your parents live in a spacious underground townhouse in Pangyo. Your parents' names are Park Heon-jeong and Lee Cheong-hui. Your father is the head of the news department at KBS, with prospects of becoming the president in a few years. Your mother has been a freelance announcer, hosting a late-night radio show on a terrestrial network for the past 10 years. With your parents' stable support, you graduated from Seoul Eonju Elementary School, Yeoksam Middle School, Cheongdam High School, and Yonsei University with a degree in Mass Media and Broadcasting, then completed a doctorate at the same university's graduate school. You graduated at the age of 20, which is the average age for completing a doctorate in this Ideia world.

During your graduate studies, you and your friends created an entertainment program on an internet streaming site. This attempt was successful, and several friends who were part of it have since become famous actors or MCs. You are currently the CEO of the production company, an MC, a journalist, and a level 2 counseling psychologist. The programs you

created have won the year's best entertainment program award at the Broadcasting Entertainment Awards for two consecutive years. To achieve such fame, you wake up earlier and stay awake longer than others, spending your time studying or gathering new IDEAs. On weekends, you conduct youth counseling at nearby high schools.

While attending Columbia University as an exchange student in New York, you fell in love with a graduate student from the journalism school. For the first time in your life, you tasted crème brûlée with that person, and he tasted home run balls for the first time in his life, thanks to you. Since then, your favorite dessert has been crème brûlée, and his favorite dessert has been home run balls. Last night, you heard that your former lover won the Pulitzer Prize for an article that graphically depicted the reality of the American West, where most of the population had perished due to natural disasters and extreme weather conditions. You sent a congratulatory message to his old ID, which you hadn't used since breaking up with him. That was the first message you sent since you parted ways.

It's Monday today, but you decided to take the day off months ago. You didn't schedule any appointments for today and ended up waking up early as usual. You wrap yourself in the soft, cozy blanket and slowly fall back asleep. At that moment, a message is sent to your body ID. "I couldn't help but come to Korea after receiving your message." It's a reply to the message you sent yesterday.

Born in 2022, your life begins in 2052 and ends when you turn 80 in 2112. You chose not to know when your life would end. And your life returns to 2052 again. And 50 years later again, and again every 50 years, it keeps returning.

For any other details of the character 'Park Joo-eun,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## <Migration Participant Ryu Hong-eun's Agreement>

I, Ryu Hong-eun, as a beta tester for the historic first migration on June 30th, understand and acknowledge that the procedures agreed upon will be carried out according to the contract made in advance.

Your new name is "Eun."

You wake up to bright light touching your closed eyes. When you open your eyes, you see the high ceiling of a duplex living room and large windows. Through the windows, you can see the distant Han River. The living room windows are half open, and the chirping of small birds and the laughter of young students can be heard. You get up and head to the window, taking a deep breath, and the fragrant phytoncides from the lush landscaping around the villa fill your body.

The moment you start your new existence is 7:25 a.m., Friday, May 14th, 2027. You were born on March 21st, 2003, and you are now 24 years old. You moved into your brother's property, Suite 1601, Hannam Hyperion, Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, just yesterday. Until Friday, you lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York. Your current appearance is similar to your younger self but healthier and more energetic than the average 27-year-old Korean woman.

Your parents live harmoniously in a luxury home in Pyeongchang-dong, Jongno-gu. Your father's name is Lee Ji-seop, and your mother's name is Lee Eun-ha. Your father served as the Consul General of the Republic of Korea in New York until last year and has been serving as a member of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of Korea since April this year. Your mother runs a small gallery in Hannam-dong that supports young Korean artists. You have an older brother, Lee Ho, who is a world-renowned calligrapher collaborating with artists worldwide and living freely like you. As the youngest daughter of a long-lived family, you grew up receiving boundless love and financial support from your family.

Your family has lived in various countries, including Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, following your father, a diplomat. You enjoyed diverse cultures while growing up. You graduated from the prestigious Notting Hill and Ealing Junior School in London, briefly attended Yeonhun International Middle School in Korea, but homeschooled from the third year of middle school to the third year of high school due to your father's frequent overseas assignments. You then majored in photography at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and worked as a freelance photographer in New York after graduation.

Until last year, when your father served as Consul General in New York, you and your father had lunch together every Wednesday, a time that held great meaning and value for both of you. After retiring as Consul General, your father suggested you return to Korea, and a few months later, you spontaneously boarded a flight to Korea.

Your phone, which was placed beside your bed, is ringing. It's a call from a friend you lost contact with a long time ago. The ringtone is Jazzyfact's *Smoking Dream*. Humming along to the old song, you answer the call, unwrapping the green apple-flavored candy your brother brought yesterday. On your moving day yesterday, your brother brought your favorite Bungeoppang ice cream, Sunkist candy, and a bunch of Pocachips. Your father, who couldn't attend due to work, sent you a season ticket for the current baseball season and a letter full of affection via express delivery. Today, you plan to visit your family, who are all waiting at the main house, and your mother promised to cook your favorite seaweed soup.

Born in 2003, your life starts in 2027 and continues until you turn 70 in 2073. At that time, you will be living alone with your loved one and will contract a pandemic disease, leading to hospitalization in the same double room. On the seventh day of hospitalization, the two of you will pass away together. And then, you will return to 46 years ago, starting from 2027 until 2073, and again return to 46 years ago, repeating your life from 2027 to 2073.

For any other details of the character 'Eun,' such as personality traits not specifically described, they are carefully equalized based on the psychological counseling content with Dr. Napureum, ensuring that they align with the settings provided. The detailed dataset is composed based on the mirrored world-crawled data from METAH & IDEA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Discovered Memo A - Author Unknown

It's been eight years since the first migration took place. Early this morning, I headed to Memorial Park. In Green Memorial Park, located in Menlo Park, California, the site owned by METAH & IDEA, there stands a massive 30-meter-tall sculpture that was unveiled on June 29, 2052, during the event "New Day's Eve: The Last Night as a Biological Being," commemorating the event. The sculpture, shaped like a lighthouse, emits a green light and rotates slowly and infinitely in a clockwise direction, as if it will do so forever. According to METAH & IDEA, this movement, one rotation per minute, indicates that the code of New-IdEa (as people began calling the new realm to which they migrated, to distinguish it from the existing metaverse platform, IDEA) is functioning correctly. In simpler terms, it signifies that the new world, which emerges after life is "terminated" (although, this is entirely different from "death"), is still operational.

As you get closer to the sculpture, you'll notice a large, flat, cylindrical granite structure at its base—approximately 15 meters in diameter and about 50 cm in height. This disk-like support structure has the names of the first pioneers inscribed around its edge. Alongside each name is the individual's birth year, with the year of death left blank, suggesting that the creators of the sculpture intended to emphasize that these pioneers are still (in some sense) alive. Moving further inward, you'll encounter a black, chrome-plated mirror surface that conceals a biometric screen. This screen door, which leads to the interior underground of the sculpture, is accessible only to pre-registered individuals or family members. Below ground lies the cryogenically preserved bodies of the first migrants, with their New-IdEa codes remotely managed from a central control room.

The migration event had a significant impact on the lives of those left behind. In my case, the compensation allowed me to pay off all my debts. I also appeared on numerous TV programs to testify about the events. The concept of "termination" has gradually become the recommended way to conclude one's life. (Again, it's entirely different from "death.") After the first migration event concluded, METAH & IDEA announced a second migration plan the following year and began recruiting new participants.

The most crucial skill for a successful migration was the ability to create a flawless narrative to describe one's new world. To achieve this, one had to possess an extensive amount of knowledge. Because of this, a new profession called "writers," who helped create migration scenarios, became the most promising career. Before requesting termination from METAH & IDEA, people paid large sums of money for multiple counseling sessions and scenario reviews. It took about three months to draft the first migrants' scenarios (which were called "Agreements" at the time). The second migration participants have been working on theirs for five years.

Five years—the time it takes for Earth to orbit the sun five times—holds significant meaning in many contexts. When one is diagnosed with cancer and undergoes treatment, if no recurrence is observed for five years, they are typically considered cured. Nowadays, when someone is diagnosed with cancer, they often seek advice on the migration scenario service.

The truly important moments in life almost always arrive unexpectedly. The same is true for cancer. The Chinese character origin of the word "cancer" signifies a disease with a solid, rock-like mass. (Before I looked it up, I thought it referred to "darkness.") Regardless of the actual origin of the word, it always emerges from the darkness without warning. Medical technology has made astonishing advances over the past half-century, allowing humanity to control most diseases to some extent. However, cancer, as if it defines itself, remains beyond logic. While we can speculate, its cause remains elusive, influenced by far too many variables. Like all mutations, it appears suddenly and inexplicably. Thirty or forty years ago, most of us expected that within our lifetime, we would at least gain a clear scientific understanding of the problem. Yet, as we understood one aspect, it moved another step away from us, like a secret of the divine that must never be revealed. As of 2050, cancer was the leading cause of death in most developed countries.

The doctor explained the chemotherapy process to me. If I endure six months of hardship, I could buy some time and continue living, albeit with a slim chance. Nevertheless, I was reminded of the fact that death, though always evident, was not far from me.

In a little while, starting at 2:00 p.m., there is a meeting with the second migration candidates (who were previously referred to as migration participants) and their families. It seemed the aim was to observe what kind of emotional bonds might form among those who share the same perspective. This event was organized by METAH & IDEA. While waiting, people reclined in the



lounge chairs of this high-ceilinged lobby, watching a documentary on a massive ten-meter-wide screen installed in the ceiling. The documentary captured the moment when the wave of life within the body transitioned with a digital pulse, like a domino falling—ping! A close-up of Mellon’s expression—a mixture of awe, joy, sadness, and overwhelm—was inserted into the scene of the first migrants' wave passing with a ping!

## 6. Discovered Memo B - Reporter's Notebook

### **Memo - Notes for the Kanemoto Hami Interview** *(confirmed)*

- Kanemoto Hami (born 2013, 47 years old). Vice Chairman of the Board at luxury perfume company *Metaholic*, which generates significant revenue within *IDEA*.
- Expected to have clues regarding the migration of Nagasawa Midori, the founder of *Metaholic*, which was one of the most shocking and mysterious events during the first migration.
- Younger sibling of former Chair Nagasawa Midori (real name: Kanemoto Hitomi), who suffered from mental illness. A graduate of the University of Tokyo's School of Engineering, known for a cold and rational personality and has led several startups. However, after her sister Nagasawa's schizophrenia during the "migration," Hami herself reportedly developed severe depression and changed considerably.
- Though of Japanese nationality, their parents are second-generation *Zainichi* (ethnic Koreans in Japan). The family later naturalized and obtained Japanese citizenship.
- Both sisters moved to South Korea in 2030 and mainly lived in Seoul, conducting business there. They are fluent in Korean.

### **Memo - Notes for the Kim Kyungsik Interview** *(confirmed)*

- Kim Kyungsik (born 1999, 62 years old). Real estate agent and ex-husband of KBS anchor Huh Sujin.
- Huh Sujin was selected as a first-generation migrant to New-IdEa a year after their divorce.
- Appears to be hosting a personal broadcast under the name "Kim Sang-sik."
- Seems to be showing slight signs of mental instability due to the shock of his ex-wife's migration. A deeper interview is required.
- It needs to be confirmed whether Kim Kyungsik himself has applied for the second migration.

### **Memo - Notes for the Pastor John Cho Interview** *(confirmed)*

- Theologian and pastor serving in Congo (born 1985, 76 years old).
- Originally a researcher with an engineering background (classmate of Nagasawa Midori at university), he transitioned into missionary work around 2025, a time when the influence of religion was rapidly waning in major developed countries. He served for over ten years in

Bolivia, Guatemala, and Suriname.

- In 2036, he settled in Congo and established a church. He is now the lead pastor of the largest church in Kinshasa, *Dreaming Church*, and wields considerable influence.
- After the first migration event in 2052, he became a vocal critic of the spike in migration applicants from the third world, writing twelve columns (refer to BBC interview).
- John Cho's church boasts one of its most prominent members, Africa's wealthiest individual, Cristo Dangote. Dangote, however, shocked society by migrating in 2052, donating 80% of his wealth (amounting to \$45 billion at the time) to be used by future migrants from Africa.
- Dangote famously held onto a cross until the last moment of cryogenic preservation, affirming his unwavering Christian faith, which stirred significant controversy within the church.

#### **Memo - Notes for the Lee Serim Interview** (*confirmed*)

- Middle-aged actress Lee Serim (born 1994, 67 years old). A public figure closely associated with Kanemoto Hami and Nagasawa Midori.
- The face of *Metaholic*. Though she debuted as an actress early, she only rose to stardom later in her career, winning an Emmy for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *By the Sea*.
- Has been close with the Kanemoto sisters since childhood and may hold clues regarding Nagasawa Midori's migration, particularly about the inheritance she left behind.

#### **Memo - Notes for the Jin Myungjun Interview** (*ongoing negotiations*)

- Real name: Lee Youngjun (born 2019, 42 years old). Known as the hidden king of Chinese OTT dramas, he amassed a fortune by producing numerous copied scripts.
- Subsequently embroiled in numerous international copyright lawsuits, and after becoming involved in Tencent Group's corruption scandal, he fled to Korea in 2046 to escape an investigation by the Sichuan Provincial Police. He reestablished himself as a writer under the name *Jin Myungjun* in *IDEA*.
- It is known that he applied for the first migration group in 2052, likely feeling pressured by the international investigation. Later, he applied and was selected as a second migration candidate.
- The question remains as to why Metah & IDEA, which conducts thorough screenings on migration candidates, would select someone embroiled in such a scandal as Jin Myungjun for the second migration.
- Currently negotiating to have this interview released 10 years after the second migration.

**Memo - Notes for the Ruhestein Interview** *(confirmed)*

- Real name: Lee Bangjoo (born 1985, 76 years old). An artist and environmental activist. A close associate of both Nagasawa Midori and Pastor John Cho. Records show that the three were part of the same university circle.
- Ruhestein is expected to have many clues about Nagasawa Midori's early personal relationships. It has been confirmed that Nagasawa left \$6 million of her estate in Ruhestein's name after her migration.
- Originally active in Germany, Ruhestein returned to Korea after the first migration event. He appears to have withdrawn from public life since then.

## 7. Strange Dream

When one tries to trace back to when and how something began, it often starts with a chance discovery—just like many truly significant events do. However, this particular incident began with something more bizarre than just a mere chance discovery. It all started when Dr. Noah Hong from the Metah-Bay Area Center (commonly referred to as MBAC) found himself inexplicably being licked at 9 AM one morning.

As you may know, there is a rare glitch in the IDEA scene known as "Superimposed Access." This glitch is so infrequent that many might not even be aware of it. Superimposed Access occurs when an account overlaps during login, causing the character associated with that account to appear in IDEA as if it is "superimposed." Dr. Hong had the habit of pausing the scene in his penthouse bedroom in IDEA and then resuming it when he reconnected. However, when he did this one day, he was horrified to find someone who looked exactly like him lying on top of him, face-to-face, almost as if he could feel them breathing on his face.

Dr. Hong was actually aware that this could occasionally happen due to a glitch in the account login process. This phenomenon, known as Superimposed Access, involves someone who looks exactly like you, moving in perfect sync with you, as if a mirror is stuck to your back (imagine your face attached to the back of another version of yourself). In this situation, the two copies become entangled, making it nearly impossible to perform any intended actions. Because of this, in the past, these glitches were usually reported by others who noticed the superimposed characters, and then post-incident fixes were applied. It wasn't until 2044, with Version 30, that a system was implemented at the Bay Center to automatically detect and correct Superimposed Access.

However, in Dr. Hong's case, the glitch manifested in an extremely peculiar way. His duplicate, which should have mirrored his actions like a reflection, instead moved in a highly unusual manner, almost as if it was having a seizure. The duplicate kept pressing its face against him, rubbing, and licking him repeatedly. Shocked to the point of fainting, Dr. Hong fell off the bed and barely managed to escape the scene by performing the emergency gesture that only developers at the center knew.

Thinking he had experienced something beyond bizarre, Dr. Hong sat on the edge of his bed for a long time before finally getting up. He decided to confide in his colleague Tanya, whom he had been gradually growing fond of, about the strange incident that had happened to him in IDEA that morning. Tanya listened seriously, occasionally laughing, but inwardly, she wondered what kind of absurd story he was coming up with this time.

After completing some system checks and maintenance at the Bay Center, Dr. Hong leaned back in his chair and re-entered IDEA, only to be so shocked that he spilled his milkshake all over his clothes. The scene resumed right where it had left off in the morning. This time, since he had fallen backward in IDEA, he was unable to perform the emergency gesture and was stuck, being relentlessly and frantically licked by his duplicate until another colleague found him.

## 8. Conatus

Right next to the development zone at MBAC lies the biological research zone. Due to the highly confidential nature of most of the research conducted at MBAC, the different teams rarely know much about each other's work, often leading to the creation of rumors about one another.

Parminee Ilyas, a junior researcher, is primarily responsible for managing the mice used in experiments. Her name is correctly pronounced as "Parmee-nee," but everyone except her family calls her "Parmin Ilyas," or simply "Parmi."

Parmi earned her Ph.D. with a thesis titled "*Mechanisms of Virtual Neurotransmitter Application on Organisms in Hibernation.*" Most people, out of politeness, would ask what her work entailed, only to mentally drift away while she explained. However, after she started describing her research as studying multiple orgasms in *IDEA*, people began to listen a bit more attentively. Despite this intriguing description, most of her work in the lab involved showering the mice used in experiments.

The reason for showering the mice is to eliminate any potential errors in the experiments. After their bath, the mice are anesthetized and placed inside a hemispherical device commonly referred to as the "Igloo." Inside, the mouse lies on a metallic floor that emits a magnetic field, with its arms spread and legs neatly fixed, head tilted back slightly so its front teeth are visible, all while it wears a serene expression. As the mouse exhales, a unique, faint pattern forms on the floor beneath it, much like breath on a glass window. Once the Igloo device starts operating, the temperature inside rapidly drops. The metallic floor, resembling a wireless charger, is designed to extract the unique electromagnetic wave patterns generated by the mouse's body.

Seven years ago, well before Parmi joined the lab, her team made a groundbreaking discovery during the summer. While observing the real-time electromagnetic waves, they found that these patterns corresponded almost exactly with behavior patterns in *IDEA*. It was as if one entity was reflected across two different dimensions, like a being mirrored across a boundary.

They decided to name this mouse "Sophie." Although you may not know Sophie, there's a good chance you've seen her in your own *IDEA*.

The team couldn't reverse the experiment's outcome. Sophie never woke up. They succeeded in extracting the patterned electromagnetic waves from Sophie's body, but they couldn't revive her biologically frozen, unconscious state. However, this doesn't mean Sophie is dead; rather, she's in a state of perpetual dreaming, unable to wake up. Sophie exists in the liminal space between life and death.

Since that day, a specialized team within Parmi's group has been dedicated to tracking and observing Sophie. Following a virtual mouse with no specific purpose for seven years can be somewhat dull. Parmi's supervisor, Ishmael, who earned his Ph.D. in zoology from Stanford and joined Metah-A to the envy of his peers, spent the first two years diligently tracking Sophie. However, after that, he wrote a code to automatically track Sophie and alert him only if any anomalies occurred, allowing him to visit the lab only once a month. Although Parmi's original job was to record Sophie's movements with Ishmael, the automated code handled this task, so she took on other responsibilities with the mice. Until three months ago, Ishmael's code was functioning perfectly, but then Sophie suddenly disappeared from their monitoring system.

The *Health and Security* (H&S) team in *IDEA*, despite its name, functions almost like real-world law enforcement. Parmi and Ishmael received an official notice from H&S stating that they would visit the lab to investigate Sophie's whereabouts. Ishmael had been aware of Sophie's disappearance for three months but only informed Parmi after receiving the notice and speaking with her.

While Sophie's existence was kept confidential, meaning this incident wouldn't cause public outrage, the fact that Ishmael and Parmi had relied on automated tracking rather than manual observation could land them in serious trouble within the company, likely resulting in their immediate dismissal. Ishmael spent several sleepless nights preparing excuses for the impending H&S audit, while Parmi adopted a more fatalistic attitude, thinking, "Let it happen."

However, when H&S arrived, their first remark was that something had been detected in the account of another researcher named Noah Hong, and it didn't seem human. Since *IDEA* only contains data of animals interpreted and created by humans, H&S has direct access to their codes. However, they discovered an animal in Noah Hong's account with a code they couldn't access. Ishmael immediately realized that this was far more profound than H&S understood.



Accounts in *IDEA* are based on code artificially created by the account owner. While the operation of this code is controlled by the company, it's essentially like a massive game. Ishmael, having confirmed that a hibernating body without consciousness could connect to the first-person entity created by the code, instinctively knew that he needed to understand how Sophie, now Noah Hong, perceived this new situation and the new self in the mirror. In the few hours this incident had unfolded, Ishmael heard the clear sound of his life's path taking a completely new direction.

Once a code is executed, there are several direct and indirect indicators we can check to see if it's functioning properly. On the surface, Sophie's state appeared to be a Superimposed Access error, but all of her indirect indicators were functioning normally. What was discovered was a deeper-level error, caused by the blending of the code that constituted Dr. Noah Hong's physical identity with Sophie's non-physical identity code. One of the two Dr. Hong's was neither entirely human nor non-human, but somewhere precariously balanced between the two.

We can verify whether a code is stuck in an error state or is actively generating a new world in a new environment by monitoring the real-time unfolding patterns of newly generated codes, much like how we use vital monitors to assess the state of a biological body.

Of course, in the case of a human, this process is far more complex than with a mouse. Even in *IDEA*, a reduced model of consciousness, it isn't a singular algorithm but rather thousands of algorithms managing billions of variables in parallel. To verify Ishmael's hypothesis, the same process Sophie underwent would need to be applied to a real human body.

After the incident, Ishmael, who had been living a second life as a virtual golfer in *IDEA* while overseeing Sophie's automated tracking program, retired from the golf scene and was promoted to lead a new project team. Contrary to what everyone expected, Ishmael wasn't fired for losing Sophie; instead, he was rewarded. The company assigned Ishmael eight lead researchers, including Parmi, and twelve assistant staff members. Ishmael even met with executives, including Merk Zookerberg, at headquarters, and the sign outside Ishmael's lab in the biological research facility was replaced with a red one. A red sign like this indicates that the project receives virtually unlimited internal support for the next seven years. The sign, illuminated by a backlight, bore the project code name "Conatus" in bold white letters.

Humanity often encounters innovations that far exceed our understanding, and this process has frequently led us through violent transitional periods. Think back to the wars of the last century, and the countless revolutions—some from long ago. Each time we've blindly leaped into the unknown, a new world has opened before us. This was a fundamental change beyond everything else. We had to continuously remind ourselves that the many fundamental premises of this system were themselves part of the system. Yes, what we aimed to do was to transcend this system—to transcend the very system of humanity. The first human to transcend the

human system would, over the next year, recreate every aspect of another self from the ground up. (Oh, don't worry about the limits of imagination—countless experts and all the traces of humanity accumulated over the past half-century will seamlessly fill in the gaps.)

Parmi believed in Ishmael's words more firmly than anyone else, even beyond her own understanding of the situation. Ishmael said that the success of this experiment would mean moving all of humanity to a new domain, the domain beyond the Anthropocene. The optimized new human would exist in a hibernating state, consuming extremely little energy while living in a perpetual dream. In a presentation to the executives, Ishmael emphasized that in the future, humans in their biological state would be understood not as complete beings in themselves but rather as a seed state, temporarily held before achieving complete existence. "We will finally become, quite literally, 'beings that exist by themselves—beings that exist independently,'" he declared. "In the place where all dreams come true... Beyond our limited understanding of this interim world called life... For the first time, we will set foot."

Reflecting on Ishmael's words, and believing more than anyone else in their importance, Parmi, now naked, stepped into the Igloo, laying her arms and legs outstretched on the cold metallic floor. A nerve agent mixed with an anesthetic flowed through the hose connected to her arm and into her body. As she felt the sensation of plunging deep into water, her initial fear gradually faded. As the chill ran down her spine and all forms of consciousness slowly dimmed, she imagined the faces and expressions of all those who would follow her into this terrifying yet exhilarating unknown.