

## SELECTIONS

*Bryan Shawn Wang*

When Maia's husband George suggested they do something different for their son's birthday that year, she took that to mean something normal. (His definition of normal.) Naturally she felt encroached upon, but like any good little housewife, she made the reservations at the Chuck E. Cheese's, wrote the invitations for Linus's preschool classmates, ordered the sheet cake from ACME. And then George said maybe they could demonstrate some originality. Originality, as if he were commissioning artwork, or considering funding for a research project.

Maia was clicking furiously through the internet for potential gift ideas when she discovered the monster frogs. *Learn to think like a real scientist!* exclaimed the website. *Observe the amazing monster frogs as they grow in your home or classroom!* Despite the amateurish appearance of the site, a long scrolling page that hadn't been updated in years, and Maia's general

aversion to pets, the product's description intrigued her. Anyway, these animals weren't, strictly speaking, pets. The eggs were cultured and harvested in a university laboratory, probably by some student supplementing her graduate stipend. The frogs came packaged in a kit. They were billed as monsters, for goodness' sake, could you get more original than that?

Maia felt only a twinge of guilt over the price. She would spend at least twice as much on the party. And this was for her little research project, wasn't it? She just needed to think of George's income as though it were grant money.

The frog kit arrived on the day of the party, the day before Linus's actual birthday. The carton was slightly ruffled and felt cold from the weather, and Maia considered whether or not to open it, to make sure everything had arrived intact. No, she would save the present. It could serve as a special surprise for when Linus had tired of his other gifts.

She carried the box up to the guest suite and slid the package into the closet, behind the boxes of files from her thesis work.

"Is that mine?"

Maia turned. Linus was peeking around her. She backed out of the closet and said, "It's still quiet time." She steered him out to the hall.

Linus ducked away. "I want to see that present."

“There is no present.”

“Please, Mommy? It’s for me, right?”

Warmed up now, he hopped from one foot to the other, celebrating himself: *Happy birthday to me, cha cha cha! Happy birthday to me!*

Over the past five years, Maia had come to appreciate how childhood was, by nature, an exercise in self-centeredness. Grabbiness: a hard-wired response to both feast and famine.

“All right,” she said. “The package is for you.”

She led Linus back into the guest suite and retrieved the carton. Brushing his fingers aside, she opened the box. Inside was a glass aquarium encased in a lattice of Styrofoam. Linus seized one of the foam wedges and slashed at the air. The child could turn anything into a weapon.

Maia sorted through the kit’s contents: an instruction booklet, Tupperware containers filled with powdered media and food pellets, a large screw-capped vial labeled *EGGS*.

“What is it, Mommy?” Linus pointed his Styrofoam sword at the aquarium.

She held up the instruction manual. Its cover bore a cartoon depiction of a grinning frog with a mouth packed full of jagged teeth. Linus shrugged and raised the sword again.

Maia opened the booklet and skimmed the introduction, which

summarized the evolutionary history of *Thelmatobatrachus*, the animal commonly known as the monster frog and believed to be the only surviving member of an amphibian lineage dating to the Carboniferous Period. *Thelmatobatrachus* had adapted to the increasingly arid conditions of the later Permian with eggs that could enter a dormant state and lie quiescent for months, even years, until sufficient water was available.

Linus asked where the frogs were.

Maia looked up. The boy had removed the lids to the media and the food and was now prying open the vial of eggs.

“Stop!” She snatched the tube away. “You’ll ruin them!”

As she resealed the containers, he stared at her, pouting, and she forced back other chiding words. Disciplining him could be like hammering glass. He didn’t mean any harm, she told herself. Curiosity was a positive character trait. And the frogs were really a present for him.

“It’s fine,” she said. “The froggies are fine.” She opened the booklet again and flipped to the section that described hatching the eggs. “But please, Linus, let me take care of this.”

She set the aquarium on the vanity in the bathroom and filled it with eight quarts of water measured with a pitcher from the kitchen. She longed for a graduated cylinder: in the lab, she’d always been meticulous with her buffers. She stirred in the hatching media, a fine yellow powder that

dissolved readily, and then removed the stopper from the vial of eggs. The eggs resembled tiny black pearls with a faint odor reminiscent of fungal cultures. Maia decanted the eggs from their container, and they swelled and drifted to the bottom of the tank.

“Now,” she said, replacing the lid of the aquarium, “they incubate.” She looked up and smiled, only to find that Linus had already wandered downstairs to play.

It wasn't that Maia wanted to hide the frogs from her husband, necessarily, but after the birthday party she'd felt an urge to keep something for herself. That night George had been detained at the office, chatting up some executives, and he'd come late to the Chuck E. Cheese's, leaving Maia alone to greet all those children and their mommies and daddies. The adults quickly took up positions along the perimeter of the play areas, exchanging barrages of parentspeak. While they debated the quality of the preschool teachers and curriculum and discussed the available options for swimming, piano, and gymnastics lessons, Maia surrendered any hope of contributing to the conversation and tried instead to identify what, exactly, she was missing. What prevented her from caring about her child's welfare to that extent? She overheard Charlotte's mommy telling Gunner's grandmother about serving fruit medley for snack. The children could get their nutrition,

shapes, colors, and numbers, all at the same time.

When George finally arrived and asked her what they would be giving Linus, Maia said, “More presents?” She gestured toward the preschoolers mobbing the man-sized mouse in the purple T-shirt. “I thought all of this was present enough.”

George shook his head, but he didn’t challenge her. He couldn’t challenge her. He was late to his own son’s birthday celebration, and she was the mother, after all.

After the party, Linus—distracted by the shiny plastic baubles his classmates had given him—forgot all about the monster frogs, and in the subsequent days, he hadn’t mentioned them once.

And so Maia co-opted the *Thelmadatrachus* kit. Each morning, while Linus was consuming his hour’s worth of PBS before preschool, she entered the guest room, knelt before the aquarium, and examined the eggs for signs of development. She approached the task with the enthusiasm with which she’d once approached her real experiments—at a different order of magnitude, of course, but it was the same cheerful optimism she felt before inspecting the tank, the same slight prick of defeat when she found the eggs inert, and afterward, the same humble hope that the following day might yield something new. To think that, six years ago, she’d left all this.

After defending her Ph.D., Maia had been laboring—struggling, by any

objective measure—in a postdoc mill, under a principal investigator who couldn't be bothered with an unproductive associate. Her husband, on the other hand, had flourished after graduation, parlaying his work into full articles in *Science* and *Nature*, a suite of patents, and his own biotech startup.

When a pharmaceutical firm acquired George's company and offered him a directorship in the corporation, he suggested Maia consider "domestic engineering" as an alternative career. She'd thought it a joke, but after reflecting on the years of fruitless research, with her P.I. threatening to discontinue her funding, with the voice of her insecurities growing ever louder, leaving science suddenly seemed a way to preserve her self-respect. She decided it was just a break, a *sabbatical*—although increasingly it felt like retirement as George accepted the directorship and they relocated to the suburbs, and Maia conceived and carried and delivered Linus. She told herself that her family needed her at home more than she needed to work, and that this new life was what she'd desired all along.

Then again, perhaps she'd erred. One year Maia had created the slogan for the department's graduate retreat. *Mol Bio: Research is in our genes!* The desire to tinker, to explore, to discover—for Maia, that desire was an instinct no less basic than survival or sex.

To wit: when the *Thelmatrachus* eggs refused to hatch within the ten days purported by the manual, and the company failed to respond to her

phone calls and emails, Maia adopted the frogs as her own scientific endeavor. She considered the variables that could affect the hatching process—the composition of the media, temperature fluctuations, photoperiodicity. Grateful that her account with at least one scientific supplier remained active, she designed a trial matrix, varying the ionic strength and pH along two axes and titrating in glycerin to modulate viscosity. She recovered the eggs from the tank and arrayed them in multiwell plates. The eggs swelled, some to nearly two centimeters in diameter. Imagining the requirement for a particular cofactor, Maia used a shotgun approach to introduce cocktails of various over-the-counter dietary supplements. She exposed the trays to different lighting regimes, noting that the use of incandescent light entailed a concomitant variation in temperature.

On the first day of spring, exactly four weeks after she initiated her experiments, Maia witnessed them, the small miracle of tadpoles coaxed to life, defiantly beautiful as they wriggled in their clear plastic cells.

*Eureka!* Maia exclaimed, and she recorded her observations and transferred the samples back to the aquarium for further study.

Linus appeared unimpressed by the result.

“Pee-yew,” he said. They stared at the tank. Some of the sample



additives were apparently incompatible—the media had congealed, and an amber precipitate clouded the solution. The flocculent matter bubbled and parted when the larval frogs penetrated the surface, their mouths rhythmically opening and closing as they cruised through the muck.

Maia reclaimed the instruction booklet from the kit and turned to the diagram on *Thelmatobatrachus* development. Upon hatching, she learned, the tadpoles would measure approximately one-quarter of an inch in length. She examined the aquarium. The largest of the newly-emerged tadpoles was more than four times that size.

After three weeks, the manual went on, when the larval frogs had grown to almost one inch, they would begin an eight-day metamorphosis. Adults, which took on a more lizard-like than froggish appearance, would continue to grow throughout their six-week lifespan and could stretch to five inches or more.

Maia turned to the next section. “Like true frogs,” she read out loud, “*Thelmatobatrachus* is a carnivore.”

Linus giggled. “They’re kissing.” Maia looked up and watched as a squirming tail disappeared into the mouth of another tadpole. A second tadpole vanished, and then a third.

“What’s happening, Mommy? Why are they doing that?”

“They’re hungry.” Maia tore the lid from the food container. “I need to

feed them.” She scattered a handful of pellets into the tank. The water exploded as the animals seized the food.

Over the next few days, despite liberal feedings, the tadpole population dwindled to two survivors, the largest of the cohort. Maia considered separating the pair, but that struck her as unnatural. Anyway, the two displayed no further aggression toward one another, although they consumed everything Maia put into their tank. She exhausted her supply of frog chow and, unable to order more (the supplier had apparently ceased operation), she purchased a bag of fish food, and then supplemented their diet with ground beef, chunks of hot dog, chicken livers, canned tuna. The tadpoles ate it all.

The frogs’ growth exceeded her expectations. Within two weeks, they reached nearly ten centimeters in length, dark bulbous forms with pinpoint eyes, a solemn expression. When they grew to twenty centimeters, Maia moved them to the bathroom’s soaking tub. They circled their new world languidly, investing all of their energy, it seemed, in their growth. They shot to thirty centimeters, forty. Maia documented their length and weight gains in graphs and photos, marveling at the young frogs’ very existence as well as their gargantuan size. She had wrought this, through persistence and ingenuity and care, and they lived, at least for the moment, for her alone. Linus remained apathetic toward the tadpoles, and George, who never

ventured into the guest suite, who would probably think it all trivial anyway, remained unaware. Like a child with a new hideout, Maia claimed this discovery as her own selfish secret.

It felt like pure research, research that required no justification beyond its novelty. These mutant frogs (or were they a species entirely separate from *Thelmatobatrachus*?) represented an entrée to a new world, a fold in the garments of Mother Nature never before grasped by human hands. “Science,” her graduate advisor often said, “is all about finding a seam and tearing it open.”

Linus’s tepid initial reaction to the frogs chilled further. One afternoon, he watched as Maia prepared to clean their tub. She netted the tadpoles and lifted them out like a pair of prize fish.

He shrank back, whimpering. “Away. Get them away.”

Maia plucked the smaller tadpole from the net and balanced it in her palm, running her fingers over its skin. “Smooth as a baby’s bottom.”

She cradled the tadpole in her hands as Linus tentatively reached for it. “Careful,” she said. “Gently.”

“Like this?”

Linus stabbed awkwardly with his forefinger, and the tadpole thrashed in response, its maw widening. Linus shrieked and jerked his fist away.

“You scared him,” Maia said as Linus raced from the room. “He wasn’t

going to hurt you.”

She named the frogs after two geneticists—the smaller, darker one, which she knew instinctively was male, she called Mendel; the female, McClintock. In a laboratory notebook, she recorded their behavior and morphology, the disappearance of the gills and dorsal fin, the emerging limbs. She captured their movements on video. While Linus was at preschool, she pored through books on amphibians at the township library.

She asked Linus whether he’d like to enroll in Stay N’ Play. He’d begged to participate in the afternoon program at the beginning of the year, but Maia hadn’t seen the need then. She emailed George (his preferred mode of communication these days) with the new schedule and tuition rate, explaining that Linus could use the social stimulation in advance of kindergarten.

For the next six weeks, after dropping Linus off and tending to Mendel and McClintock, Maia drove into the city to the university and crossed the campus to the library. She had spent so many hours in this place, perusing enzymology journals and ferreting out classic papers on kinetics and reaction mechanisms, each manuscript like the intricate handiwork of an artistic genius. Now, as Maia paged through articles describing the fossil record, phylogenetic relationships, and geographical distribution of *Eryops*, *Ichthyostega*, and other prehistoric amphibians, finding only scant mention of

*Thelmatrachus* in the herpetological literature, and no reference at all to her outsized creatures, she spun out her unanswered questions and twisted them together into threads of inquiry that she hoped one day to weave into her own glorious tapestry.

Mendel and McClintock completed their metamorphosis at the beginning of June. Maia moved them outside to the backyard, which was enclosed with a privacy fence. She rehabilitated the koi pond at the rear corner of the property and surrounded it with shrubs and ornamental grasses. For the most part, the amphibians sat placid beside the pond—one could almost mistake them for statuary. When Maia approached with food, however, they would lift their heads in greeting and sidle to her. Toward the birds and small animals that occasionally drew near, the frogs hissed and struck a defensive stance. No doubt they made an intimidating pair, with their lidless eyes, clawed toes, and pointed teeth jutting from their mouths.

Maia had resolved neither the question of their provenance nor their proper taxonomic classification. The animals resembled *Thelmatrachus*—an elongated, almost reptilian shape; a large flat skull with an extended snout; stubby tail and torso plunked onto four squat legs; skin that had lightened to a variegated olive-and-cream hue that blended with the landscaping—but at a colossal scale. Mendel, the smaller of the two,

exceeded one meter in length and stood level with Maia's thigh.

George discovered them within a week. He burst into the house and yelled for Maia to call animal control.

Maia tried to calm him and began to explain.

"You're *raising* those things?" he said.

"It's a science project for Linus."

"Linus? They look like they could have him for breakfast!"

They were perfectly safe, Maia said, showing George the manual from the kit. He glanced at it and put it aside. She told him they were shy creatures, and she fed them well. They swallowed their food whole—they wouldn't attack something they couldn't swallow. Anyway, Linus avoided them. She pointed out that people kept animals around children all the time; McClintock was significantly smaller than, for example, a German Shepherd.

"Dogs are domesticated," George said. "They've been bred. And conditioned."

Maia ignored him, describing how she'd hatched and cared for the frogs and began to research them more intensely once their unusual size became evident. She cited publications and paged through her notebook. "I've studied these guys," she said. "I understand them. And I'm convinced they're about as dangerous as a teddy bear."

George stared at her. Slowly, he said, "Maybe you should think about

reentering the workforce.” He offered to find a place for her in quality assurance or assay development, or maybe one of the service labs.

Maia shook her head. *This is my work*, she wanted to say. *You’re going to take it from me? Again?*

Instead, she expanded on her project’s legitimacy by outlining her next steps. She was planning to contact a molecular taxonomist in Florida who’d written the authoritative text on tetrapod evolution. She hoped to establish a collaboration to perform some genomics studies. Ultimately, she wanted to publish an article or two, maybe even a monograph.

George said, “The onsite early education center is supposed to be excellent. The staff is first rate.”

“We’re not going to put our son in daycare,” Maia snapped.

Patently, she explained that a child needed his mother.

George relented. All right, he said, of course it was her choice whether to go back to work or not. And as long as she didn’t leave Linus in the backyard alone, he supposed the so-called frogs weren’t doing any harm, and then he even smiled and said it sounded like the animals were keeping her entertained, anyway.

After the conversation with George, Maia tried to view Linus with renewed appreciation, thinking on how this summer would mark the end of

a phase in her life as a parent. She couldn't sustain her focus, however. As her son assembled his little paste-and-construction-paper collages at the craft table, she caught herself sketching the stages of *Thelma* development on scrap paper. At the playground, while he struck up friendships with any child who happened along, she traced cladograms in the sand. She sat with him each evening until he fell asleep, but the sight of him finally shutting his eyes provided her with nothing so much as relief. She descended directly to the study.

On the night of the Fourth of July, after Linus had been put down and George had left to meet some managers, Maia settled onto the couch with her notebook and began to transcribe some recent observations. Under the pretense of gardening, she had spent a good deal of time in the backyard that week and on three separate occasions had witnessed Mendel and McClintock tussling with one another. Neither animal had been visibly harmed, but she worried that their behavior indicated a requirement for additional stimulation. She jotted a reminder to herself to investigate how modern zoos combated boredom.

While she mulled over whether the frogs' captivity compromised her study's conclusions (it would certainly affect their behavior, possibly their longevity, perhaps even their physiological development), Maia became aware of a faint noise, a low moan that she felt as much as heard. She set her



notebook down. The noise sounded again, like the wail of a distant foghorn, insistent and cautioning. It was coming from the backyard. She walked to the patio door and opened it. Set to the cadence of a funeral dirge, the deep notes erupted in unhurried clusters of three. She stood for a moment, quiet and trembling.

In the office, she rifled through a drawer in search of a microphone. Linus appeared. “Mommy?” His voice was strained. “Mommy, what’s that sound?”

She untangled a cord and plugged the microphone into her laptop. “It’s the frogs, Linus.” He followed her out to the patio. As she set the computer on the patio table, the serenade started up again. It was a mating signal, Maia murmured to Linus. Mendel was courting McClintock. He wanted to start a family.

“Mommy, make it stop.”

Mendel’s call grew louder. Maia launched the sound recording application and whispered for Linus to be quiet.

“Mommy—”

She put a finger to her lips. Another generation, she thought. This was a gift, precious and unexpected.

“But it’s scary!” Linus cried.

In concert with the child’s whine, Mendel produced a sustained note—

one final, desperate wail that sang, Maia imagined, of yearning and hope and ardent love—and then the frog fell silent.

Maia glowered at her child, with his neediness and irrational fears. Sometimes she wished he would just grow up. He was crying now, hiccupping and declaring that he just wanted them to go away. She snatched his hand and led him back to bed.

The following day, she neither heard nor saw the frogs. Maia scribbled a note in her log about a disinterested human bystander interrupting the courtship calls and forcing the subjects into seclusion. The next morning, she braved a heavy rain to conduct a thorough search of the garden. She finally found McClintock tucked among the cascading fountain grasses that surrounded the pond. There was no sign of Mendel.

Crouching under her umbrella, Maia approached the female frog. There was a different appearance to McClintock; she looked even more bloated than usual, and her head sank into the folds of her upper trunk. Maia parted a soggy clump of grass, exposing the animal's entire frame.

McClintock had nearly doubled in girth.

So Mendel had made the ultimate parental investment. It was a common strategy, sacrificing the individual for the good of the species. Natural selection operated at many levels. The tactic of sexual cannibalism

had been most fully documented in arthropods, but the potential advantages could extend to other phyla as well.

Regardless of the evolutionary logic, McClintock withdrew, as though ashamed. In the following weeks, she shunned food and spurned Maia's advances. On those rare occasions when she emerged from the cover of the vegetation, McClintock simply sat, biding time, conserving energy, approaching equilibrium. The frog was dying—Maia abruptly realized it—and the questions that remained seemed more numerous, urgent, and intractable than ever. What was McClintock and whence had she come? Through some genetic mechanism? Epigenetic? Maia regretted every unhatched egg, every young tadpole she'd lost. She regretted not having purchased additional kits. She regretted not having spent more time with the frogs. With the object of her study disintegrating in the waning summer sun, Maia rushed to review her notes and outline a manuscript, a purely descriptive paper on the creatures' development that nonetheless would never be complete without some explanation of their origins.

Her family began to demand more of Maia as well. George wondered what she was doing to prepare their son for the transition to kindergarten. Linus asked her why she stayed in the office so much. He begged her to play make-believe with him, to read to him, to take him somewhere.

Maia arranged a playdate with Gunner, one of Linus's friends from

preschool. A rough boy garbed in camouflage and smelling faintly of dog, Gunner tore through the house, weaving around the furniture on a makeshift obstacle course. He hurled pillows like oversized grenades, overturned a chaise and put it into service as a military vehicle, unraveled the fringe on a chenille throw. Finally, Maia handed them Linus's play swords and let them out into the backyard. She set her gardening tools out near the patio—just a half hour of work, she told herself, and then she'd join the boys outside. It was Saturday, and George might even come home early to relieve her.

With Linus and Gunner assuming martial arts poses, grunting and yawping at one another, Maia retired to the office. She reread a literature review authored by the taxonomist in Florida. She could certainly use the man's experience and reputation, but he hadn't answered her emails. She decided to compose a handwritten letter. Something to establish a rapport and pique his interest in her work.

Maia reached for a pen, and then stopped. Outside, the boys were laughing in a manner that bespoke mischief. She hurried to the kitchen and looked out onto the yard.

They stood beside the koi pond, Linus pointing his plastic sword toward a plume of fountain grass, Gunner whooping and twirling his own weapon. "Kill it!" Gunner shouted. "Kill it!"

Maia slid the window up. “Boys! Leave her alone!”

Linus looked up and retreated a few steps. Gunner, however, continued to slash at the plants that shrouded one side of the pond.

“Get in here!” Maia whipped open the door. “Both of you!”

Instead of answering, the boys turned back to the pond. From the far section of the garden, there was a rustle, and then McClintock thrust her head forward. She hissed, showing her teeth.

Linus and Gunner backed away as McClintock lifted her head. She nearly reached to Linus’s shoulder. Linus retreated another step, and the animal hissed again and emerged from the cover.

The frog had grown lean. Flaps of skin, which had lightened again to a dusky yellow that matched the ripening blades of grass, hung loose and wrinkled over the animal’s frame. McClintock moved with a weak but deliberate crawl.

The boys shrieked and darted away, but Linus tripped, falling a few yards from the pond. Gunner rushed on to the patio and scurried inside.

As McClintock advanced on Linus, Maia recognized the naked monstrosity of the creature: the adaptive coloration ideal for camouflage and ambush, the clawed toes for injuring and restraining prey, the fangs and jaws perfectly suited for rending hunks of flesh from a carcass, the single-mindedness of purpose. The animal was nearly upon Linus. He screamed for

his mommy.

Maia raced out to the yard, and she didn't see George until he was halfway to the patio. He grabbed the shovel and stormed ahead, reaching the frog just before McClintock's jaws closed on Linus. With a quick jab, George thrust the blade into the creature's snout. McClintock slumped back, and Linus scrambled to his feet and darted away.

McClintock rose and hissed again. George swung with the shovel, and then stabbed hard, driving the blade deep into the animal's skull. McClintock crumpled to the ground and lay still.

Linus was crying. Maia rushed to him, reached for him. She was his mother, and he was her baby—why had she ever desired more than that? He tottered past her. She watched as George let the shovel fall beside the frog. He took Linus's hand, put his arms around the boy's small body, his entire vulnerable and trusting self. They clung to each other, and Maia stood awkward and alone.

Linus was in his room watching television as if nothing of significance had occurred that afternoon. Perhaps it all was insignificant. Gunner had been picked up without mention of the frog. George had told Maia to get rid of it, nodding in the direction of the yard. As if it were just the weekly trash.

Maia walked out to the yard where the frog lay, her head now just the

mangled remains of fluid, tissue, and bone. Maia retrieved her shovel, selected a spot, and began to dig.

As she worked, she thought about all that she had left undone. She considered the connections she would never make, the narratives she would never write, the papers she would never publish now. Her gaze returned to McClintock. She had only acted according to the dictates of her evolutionary program. Threat—defense. Stimulus—response. She was, in the final analysis, a creature harnessed to the selfish gene, a product of and a slave to Biology.

After a time, Maia put the shovel aside. She stared at the hole she'd created, perhaps three feet square and eighteen inches deep. She breathed heavily, her muscles ached. She wondered where she would find the strength to finish the grave.

She turned back to McClintock. The frog lay on her side with her midsection exposed, as if in invitation.

Maia took up the shovel and placed its point against the belly of the corpse. She pushed, softly at first, and then with increasing pressure until the skin yielded to the blade. Carefully, she widened the cut, and McClintock's organs slid out. Maia knelt, and lifted away the stomach, the liver, the heart, the coils of the small intestine.

Beneath the bladder, near the cloaca, was a heavy white sac. She ran a

finger over its contours, which bulged like a pocket stuffed with a boy's treasures, miniature jellybeans or marbles. With the tip of a fingernail, she made an incision. The sac burst open and dozens of firm, black globules spilled out. Maia knelt for just an instant longer, and then she rose and hurried inside for her notebook and a vessel to contain the eggs. She wouldn't do anything with them, not for now, but they would keep for a long time.

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