

IS THIS EARTH?
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I walked as if in a daze. I didn't know where I was going. My surroundings were unfamiliar. I didn't even know where I was.

My steps carried me through the city. As I passed, people stared at me strangely, as if they didn't know who I was. Or as if I were an outcast. Or unknown. No one spoke to me while I was in the city. Why, I still don't know.

I stumbled out of the more populated areas and found myself surrounded by a wall of men. Almost unaware, I ignored them and continued on. They, too, stared at me as if my behaviour were unheard of.

A police officer stopped me along my path, asking if I was all right. I looked him in the face and found none of the compassion that I felt the words should contain. I shook my head "no," mumbled that I was looking for something, and pulled myself out of his grasp. He didn't put up a fight; he was almost glad to be rid of me.

The lights around me were dimming, I noticed, at the same time realizing that I was indeed looking for something. Maybe someone. I didn't know. I could only keep searching.

I came across a long expanse of grassy fields. A park almost. Scarcely noticing, I continued on.

It was some time before my bent head struck an unyielding surface. I looked up and hit my head again. The next time I took a step back before doing so.

My eyes focused on the transparent surface in front of my nose. I stared at it in trepidation. Earth had none of these walls! I stared about in panic. Earth had no parks like this! I screamed my terror in incoherent strings of words, the syllables merging to form incomprehensible oaths. Men came and dragged me to my knees, fighting all the way. Only when I had ceased my struggles, did my eyes focus on what was beyond the transparent dome: rolling red sand dunes. And in the distance the setting sun cast a blue shadow across the alien desert.

As they dragged me away, one thought crossed my mind over and over again: Mars, the Red Planet, has blue sunsets. . . .