

Illustration from page 16 from *All Tomorrows*, here cropped, featuring a Qu individual firing a weapon over the Vitruvian Man, symbolizing the fall of humanity, flanked by a nanotechnological drone to the left and a genetically modified “tracing creature” to the right.

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows* and the Possibility of an Expanded Universe

by Kīraz Fiskahrofa

SPOILER WARNING: The following text contains major spoilers for All Tomorrows. It is highly recommended that it is [read](#) before continuing to read this article.

Introduction

All Tomorrows is an unpublished, “future history” book written and illustrated by the Turkish artist and independent researcher C.M. Kosemen (“Memo” for short, also having gone by the *nom de plume* “Nemo Ramjet” in the past, under which he first authored the book) in 2005, which chronicles the future evolution of humankind and its varying fortunes over a billion years. In the exposition, the narrative sees humans, after a devastating interplanetary civil war involving Earth and Mars, colonize a section of the Milky Way galaxy, ushering in an age of unprecedented civilizational growth and prosperity, only, and after discovering evidence of an alien presence on Earth in the form of an extraterrestrial dinosaur fossil, named *Panderavis* for its ominous nature, to be invaded and extinguished by an ancient, advanced alien species known as Qu, who would then genetically engineer humans into a wide variety of bizarre, nightmarish, baroque wildlife, pets, or tools as part of a self-imposed, religiously-driven mission to “remake the universe as they saw fit.” After ruling for 40 million years, they left as they came, leaving behind pyramid-studded worlds shaped in their image populated with whimsical post-human ecosystems that largely fall apart following the departure of their god-like stewards. The Qu do not appear again in the story until towards the end, where it is described – only very passingly – that they were reencountered and then subdued by the humans of a resurgent, intergalactic polity, much larger and more advanced than ever before.

A physical description of them based on an analysis (with some interpretation) of the single illustration portraying them in the book is as follows: a creature of insectile appearance, possessing the following features: an inverted trapezoidal head bearing a single apparent pair of thick eye stalks oriented horizontally from the side of the superior region of their head,

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

tipped with what may be compound eyes, with a pair of processes slightly inferior to the eye stalks which might be tipped with a second pair of eyes (if the tracing creature is related to the Qu, it appears to have two pairs of glowing eyes on stalks, and it would follow then that the Qu have two pairs of eyes), in addition to what appears to be at least a pair of curving, dobsonfly-like mandibles at the bottom of the face with what appears to be a membrane stretching between the proximal regions thereof, in addition to what might be a second, much shorter pair of mandibles located above the long pair; in the forehead region, a single orifice of unknown function; an inverted triangular body with a very long, prehensile tail, which tapers distally, inferior to it; four narrow, leaf-like wings with strong musculature in the proximal regions thereof.

Who, exactly, are the Qu?

Throughout *All Tomorrows*, only scant information about the Qu is revealed to the reader, especially with regards to their biology, their culture, their society, their history, the specifics of their technology, and the deeper nature of their intervention. Nevertheless, the instrumental role they played as the story's primary antagonists and the sheer mystery surrounding them make the Qu the subject of intense fascination and curiosity among the book's readership, which includes, virtually religiously, the speculative biology community. Beyond what is available therein, fans ever hungry for more depth concerning the Qu could only turn to Memo himself for what few precious scraps of information he is willing to dispense.

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

C.M. Kosemen, in [an open question time answers podcast](#) uploaded on YouTube on March 27th, 2017, did precisely that in answering some questions asked about the Qu (pronounced "koo"). He revealed that the Qu were merely plot devices that served as a way for the many posthuman species he envisioned to come into existence throughout the book, though he grants that, as he wrote the book, they started having a life of their own. Nevertheless, he further expanded on their role in the story, characterizing them as a force of nature, a "preventative measure" as he put it, that, as it migrates across the galaxy like the hand of a clock, wipes it clean of other intelligent life and induces species diversification in all the worlds they encounter – through their artificial means as it would follow – because the “forces behind time and galaxy," for some "distant and mystical reasons," had decided that intelligence was a plague that would destroy planets and galaxies. This information was from a question (timestamp 26:57) he answered about the defeat of the Qu at the end of *All Tomorrows* and why it was mentioned only briefly (the answer to that, in his words, is because "it's such a big event that the human-sized viewer couldn't comprehend it, and readers would have all these fantastical ideas about it, which would always be more fun in their own minds than in my book”).

Not very forthcoming, but he also said in answering another set of questions (timestamp 40:56) about the Qu and their life cycle that the idea he had about the Qu’s social structure is that of a “hive mind,” describing them, after mentioning that they “may” not age, as more like a swarm of ants that has no intelligent minds or even individuals, but operate on a set of very simplified reflexes that amounts to intelligence, following – without training – a basic set of instinctive procedures like “if see animal, test if intelligent; if intelligent, sample; after sampling,

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

kill; after killing, mutate/adapt.” Essentially, they are, to paraphrase Memo’s short description, like “godly ants.” He also said that he envisioned the pyramids the Qu leave behind as “instinctive nest eggs” that, for a few million years after their departure from the worlds they pass through, survey those worlds and crush intelligence if it rises again, nipping it in the bud. Finally, when asked about their religion of being gods (timestamp 44:01), he simply handwaves this as part of the reflexes discussed earlier, but then states that they may have “fascinating, horrendously terrifying ceremonies.” “Possibly,” he adds.

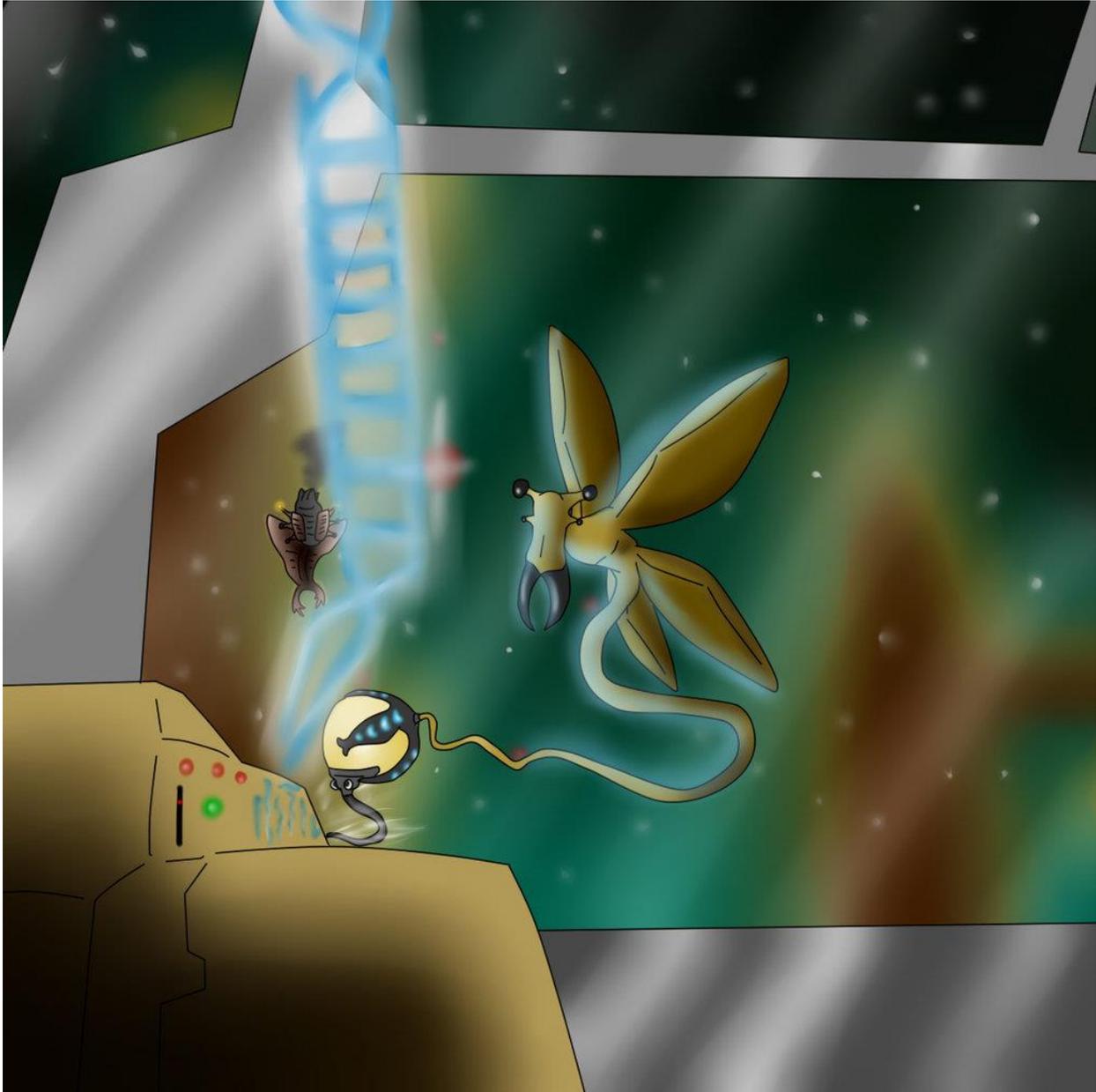
All in all, and since it is evident when he was answering the questions that he has not given much thought to the more in-depth aspects of the Qu, it seems that C.M. Kosemen primarily intended the Qu to be a plot device to set the story of *All Tomorrows* in motion, without much additional depth, and it doesn’t appear that he will expand on them beyond what he is willing to share. However, he was very pleased at the spate of Qu questions he received, calling it “the Qu Fanclub” (timestamp 41:12), and encouraged people to make fan art, fan theories, and even a Qu Fanclub t-shirt, adding that he would buy one.

Parenthetically, fan art – and accompanying stories – had been created yet on the Internet, namely in the form of submissions on the website DeviantArt.

Existing Qu recognition and fandom

On top of fan art and stories, recall the speculative biology community mentioned earlier; primarily concentrated on DeviantArt as well as on a dedicated online forum, entitled Speculative Evolution, therein the Qu have become a recurring theme throughout certain discussions in that community. In the case of the Speculative Evolution forum, which had, after

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*



“[Lives of Others 3](#)” by TopsyRa1d3n on DeviantArt, portraying a Qu individual using a nanotechnological drone to interact with his computer, accompanied by a tracing creature holding a DNA sample, which he is analyzing. Fan art like this – and the stories that accompany it, like this individual being a “white-collar” worker in his “cubicle” – is testament to the tangible popularity the Qu hold in certain corners of the Internet.

a ten-year run, moved to a new host, Jcink, on August 20th, 2018 due to the original host, ZetaBoards, merging with Tapatalk (a move members of the forum despised); on the old forum, if one searches for “Qu,” [105 matches are returned](#). The conversations in which the Qu are

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

mentioned range from discussion of the *All Tomorrows* book itself, to the subject of posthumans in general, to a few evolutionary scenarios that are unlikely to occur naturally such that they (or “Qu-like aliens”) are invoked as *dei ex machinis* to get them to work. This alone shows that the Qu already enjoy a modicum of popularity, even if primarily among what may be considered a niche community. But what if fans like these decided that the Qu should be more than just a plot device, more than just a convenient solution for ideas for which a natural solution is insufficient in their speculative evolutionary brainstormings? What if fans, everywhere, came together to conspire of a greater role for the Qu?

Establishing an expanded Qu universe (Qu-niverse?)

If fans are eager to enliven the Qu beyond their official status as a narrative catalyst, it would then follow that this aforementioned “Qu Fanclub” so clamored by Kosemen, or at least some sort of movement, would need to be established. Facilitating this would be an easily accessible, centralized document of foundational lore produced in the form of not only a summary of their presence in the source material – *All Tomorrows* – but also a set of lists of what is known about the Qu, culled from *All Tomorrows* itself or from what Memo reveals about them outside of the book, that could be referenced to by fans seeking to become the dark energy needed to expand the promising prospect of a Qu subuniverse (with relation to what may be the greater *All Tomorrows* universe already established by Memo).

Thus, the following are two lists: one documenting what is known about the Qu – and therefore what is assumed to be canon – and another on what is unknown, what could be further explored about them.

What Is known about the Qu (canon)

Here, we are going to treat all that is currently found in *All Tomorrows* and anything Memo has said about them per the open question time answers podcast, even if waveringly, as canon. I will note that some of these items involve a level of interpretation of or inference from the text in *All Tomorrows*, since its wording is not always clear. Below is an exhaustive list of what is canon, with sources cited in parenthetical format with their specific page number or timestamp.

- They've been in existence for about a billion years (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15).
- They are "galactic nomads," who sweep across the entire galaxy from one galactic arm to the other in epoch-spanning migrations (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15).
- During their migrations, they have constantly improved and changed themselves up to the point of where they were when they first encountered the humans – perhaps similar to how the Asteromorphs, or the Spacers, who are among humanity's descendants in the book, did to not only adapt to microgravity, but to develop larger brains as well, all via genetic engineering (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15; re Asteromorphs/Spacers, pp. 56, 85, 98).
- They are masters of nanotechnology and genetic engineering (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15).
- Stemming from their technological superiority, being able to control the material world, they have embarked on a self-imposed, religiously-driven mission to remake the universe as they saw fit and saw themselves as the divine harbingers of the future. This was rooted in a desire to protect themselves (or intelligent life like humans? the writing is unclear) from their own power (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15).

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

- This involves changing the surfaces of and erecting kilometer-high monuments, seemingly on a whim, on at least habitable planets, and modifying their biological inhabitants, which they see as mere transmutable subjects, through genetic engineering to be anything of their liking, be it a wild animal, pet, or living tool (*All Tomorrows*, pp. 15, 17).
- They aren't intelligent at an individual level, nor do they seem to operate as individuals, but like eusocial insects with extremely advanced technology which, as individuals, behave in an instinctively procedural manner without being trained, thus possibly explaining the "blind, unquestioning obedience" that had made monsters of them in the book (Open Question Time Answers, timestamps 41:43, 42:05; *All Tomorrows*, p. 15).
- They have an aquatic larval stage (*All Tomorrows*, p. 28).
- They don't age (Open Question Time Answers, timestamp 42:03).
- They have "fascinating, horrendously terrifying ceremonies" (Open Question Time Answers, timestamp 44:06).
- In less than a thousand years after encountering the humans, every one of their worlds were destroyed, depopulated, or, "even worse," changed – as is part of their divine mission to recreate the universe (*All Tomorrows*, p. 15).
- Their reasons for their particular treatment of the humans were twofold: first was the fact that there were few raw materials in the form of organisms for their vision other than humans, because the humans wiped out the original alien ecologies in favor of imported, genetically modified Earth organisms to make way for human colonization; this furthermore offended them because they saw that another civilization was

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

remaking the universe, so they sought to punish the “infidel” humans by using *them* as the primary stock for their genetic engineering enterprises (*All Tomorrows*, p. 17).

- When they encounter such strong resistance from an intelligent species from a world that they are successfully repelled, when their subsequent invasions prove victorious, they punish the losers in ways they feel would be demeaning or torturous to them, like transmuting them into immobile blocks of conscious flesh feeding on waste or being gruesomely parasitized for eternity (*All Tomorrows*, pp. 36, 48).
- They ruled over the worlds of the galaxy for 40 million years before departing, leaving behind many modified worlds filled with many modified inhabitants, including humans (*All Tomorrows*, p. 17).
- They leave behind mile-high pyramids on each world they pass through, which serve to suppress intelligence through an unknown means for at least a few million years after they depart (*All Tomorrows*, p. 18; Open Question Time Answers, timestamp 42:40).
- It appears that they also destroy any trace of human civilization in the colony worlds they encounter in an attempt to prevent them from being salvaged by their posthuman subjects after they leave, though they do not always do a good job at it, as was the case with the posthuman species, the Ruin Hunters (*All Tomorrows*, p. 58).
- They were later reencountered by the humans and then subdued (*All Tomorrows*, p. 106).

What is unknown about the Qu

The following is a list of unanswered questions I generated concerning the Qu. This will obviously contain more items than the previous list, and even then, it is by no means exhaustive. It is possible that many of these questions will never be officially answered by C.M. Kosemen, leaving it to the fanbase to do so with their own imaginations.

- Whether “Qu” is an autonym of the civilization or is it an exonym given to it by humans.
- How they communicate with one another (vocalizations, gestures, pheromones, technology, etc.).
- If they had encountered other civilizations before.
- If they have any connection to the entity responsible for *Panderavis*, the extraterrestrial dinosaur fossil (or if they *were* them).
- The weapons, tactics, and strategies they use to attack and conquer the humans (and other civilizations if they had encountered any before).
- The mechanism by which the pyramids suppress intelligence.
- If the “tracing creature” in the illustration found in *All Tomorrows*, which appears to bear morphological similarities to the Qu, is in any way related to them.
- The origin of the Qu in space.
- The original form of the Qu before they became space-faring.
- Whether the form shown in the illustration is the only one or if there could be many different forms (and if the “tracing creature” is one of them).

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

- If they continued to change during or since their 40 million-year stint with humans, or if that was their “ultimate form.”
- If the former in the previous is true, the form of the Qu when they were defeated by humans at the end of *All Tomorrows*.
- The ontogeny and rearing of Qu offspring.
- The functions of some aspects of their gross anatomy (i.e., whether those structures are truly mandibles, the function of the forehead orifice, etc.).
- Their internal anatomy and physiology.
- Their mode of reproduction (i.e., if it is ‘natural’ or technologically assisted, etc.).
- Their habitats, if they live in microgravity arks like the Asteromorphs.
- If they built any megastructures (besides giant arks, like solar sails, Dyson swarms, Shkadov thrusters, etc.).
- If they ever visited their worlds personally.
- If they ever lived on their worlds.
- If they ever left their mark on non-habitable worlds.
- Whether their modification of organisms, including humans, is performed rapidly or over a protracted timescale (i.e., modifying a human genome to produce a worm person in one sitting before generating one or even changing an individual’s genome *in vivo* and their morphology through nanotechnology, or through directed incremental genetic changes over thousands if not millions of years.)
- The exact origin and circumstances of their religious zeal that drives them to facelift the universe.

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

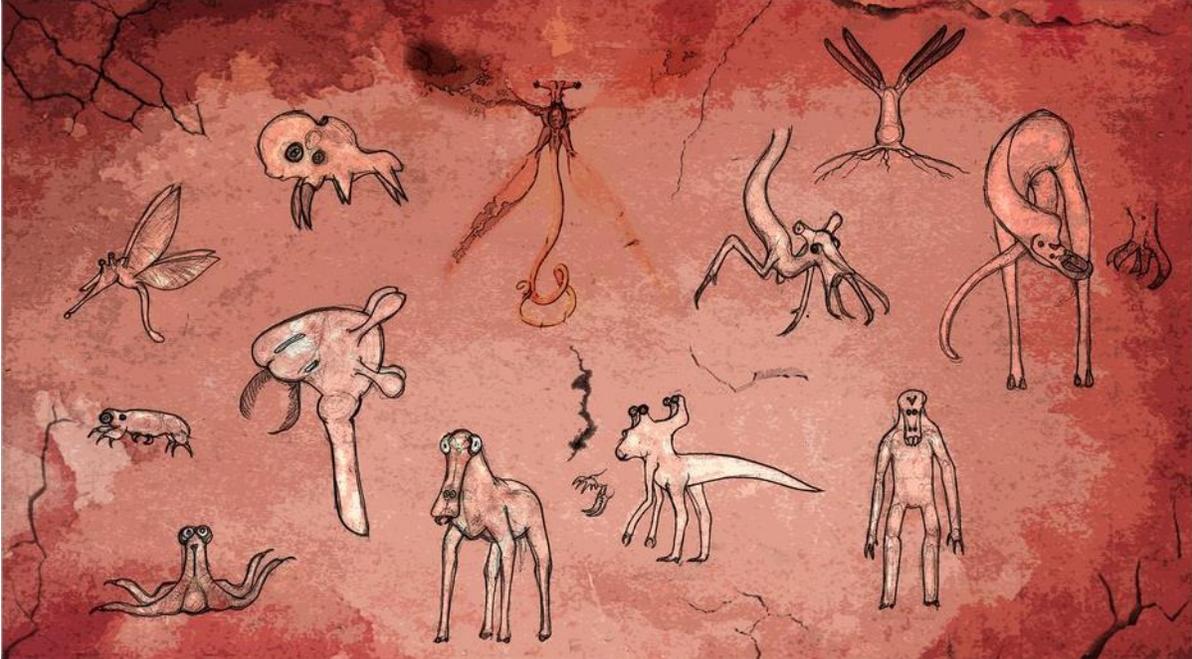
- The nature of the “fascinating, horrendously terrifying ceremonies.”
- Whether they were always a hive mind.
- If there could ever be deviance from this hive mind.
- If they ever had any contact with the Amphicephali (serpentine aliens with heads on both ends of their bodies peacefully encountered by the humans towards the end of *All Tomorrows*).
- Their exact fate after being defeated by the humans (extermination, genetic modification into animalistic forms, etc.).

And so on.

On the potential impact of this document

C.M. Kosemen has expressed desire to rewrite *All Tomorrows*, first in [a reply to a comment](#) on his DeviantArt page, then later elaborating on it in both of the open question time answers podcasts he has made so far. In [the first one](#), uploaded on May 20th, 2013, responding to a question regarding what this rewrite will entail (timestamp 25:09), he answers that, on top of setting it in a new style that is less “young adult,” one “less prophetic” and one that dwells more deeply in some of the issues explored in the book, he hopes to add more chapters about future descendants of humanity that are not illustrated, in addition to making it more text heavy and more “solidly written.” It is unknown and perhaps unlikely that he will add any new depth to the Qu, let alone make new illustrations of them in this rewrite. Moreover, as he stated in the open question time answers podcast uploaded in 2017 (timestamp 44:53), it is not

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*



[“All tomorrows: After Qu”](#) by Dragonthunders on DeviantArt, cropped here, portraying one possible fate of the Qu after their defeat by the posthumans of the united galaxies, assuming that they retained the form first encountered in the book up to this point: transmutation into an array of mostly animalistic forms – the same treatment they subjected their eventual conquerors to when they were just in their galactic infancy. Could this be but one of the many untold stories about the Qu in *All Tomorrows*?

priority for him at this time as he has other projects in the pipeline, including the much-beloved alien speculative biology project [Snaiad](#).

Nevertheless, none of that has tamped down the enthusiasm of his fanbase towards the idea of an expanded Qu universe, if the “Qu Fanclub” is anything to attest. If this document does herald the emergence of this vaunted “Qu Fanclub,” then it has the potential to at least set the stage for the cultivation of a rich fanon, expressed in the form of fan art, stories, theories, etc., some of which again already exist in some form online, at least keeping the fanbase busy until Memo, out of his sheer good will, throws the next salivating piece of red information meat. It would serve as the foundation for any creative who may be interested in portraying the Qu in some way in their works featuring them. In fact, seeing his reception of fan concepts for Snaiad in that he incorporated the ones he liked best directly into the project

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

(more details [here](#), timestamp 15:05, and on the Snaiad website [here](#)), there is a very remote possibility that he could be inspired to make a tangential work solely dedicated to the Qu themselves. Perhaps along the way there, at least some of the questions in the “unknown” list might just be “officially” answered (or he may accept the best takes on them by fans as answers to them)! At the very least, he could be prompted to at least answer just a few more questions.

What started out as a mere plot device for a story involving future human evolution has indeed taken on a life of its own, more so in the minds of fans than apparently that of Memo himself – a fact none the more pleasing to him. Will the Qu, as they make their epic migration from the galaxy of Memo’s imagination to that of his fanbase, evolve from the single-purpose entity they were in their book to something that becomes such a galaxy unto itself? And, what if that galaxy ends up making an epic collision back again with Memo’s mind, with stelliferous result? The answers to those questions will depend on the dedication towards furnishing humanity’s future insectile overlords with the welcome they deserve by a willing coven of acolytes. Let the horrendously terrifying ceremonies begin!

Conspectus of the Qu from *All Tomorrows*

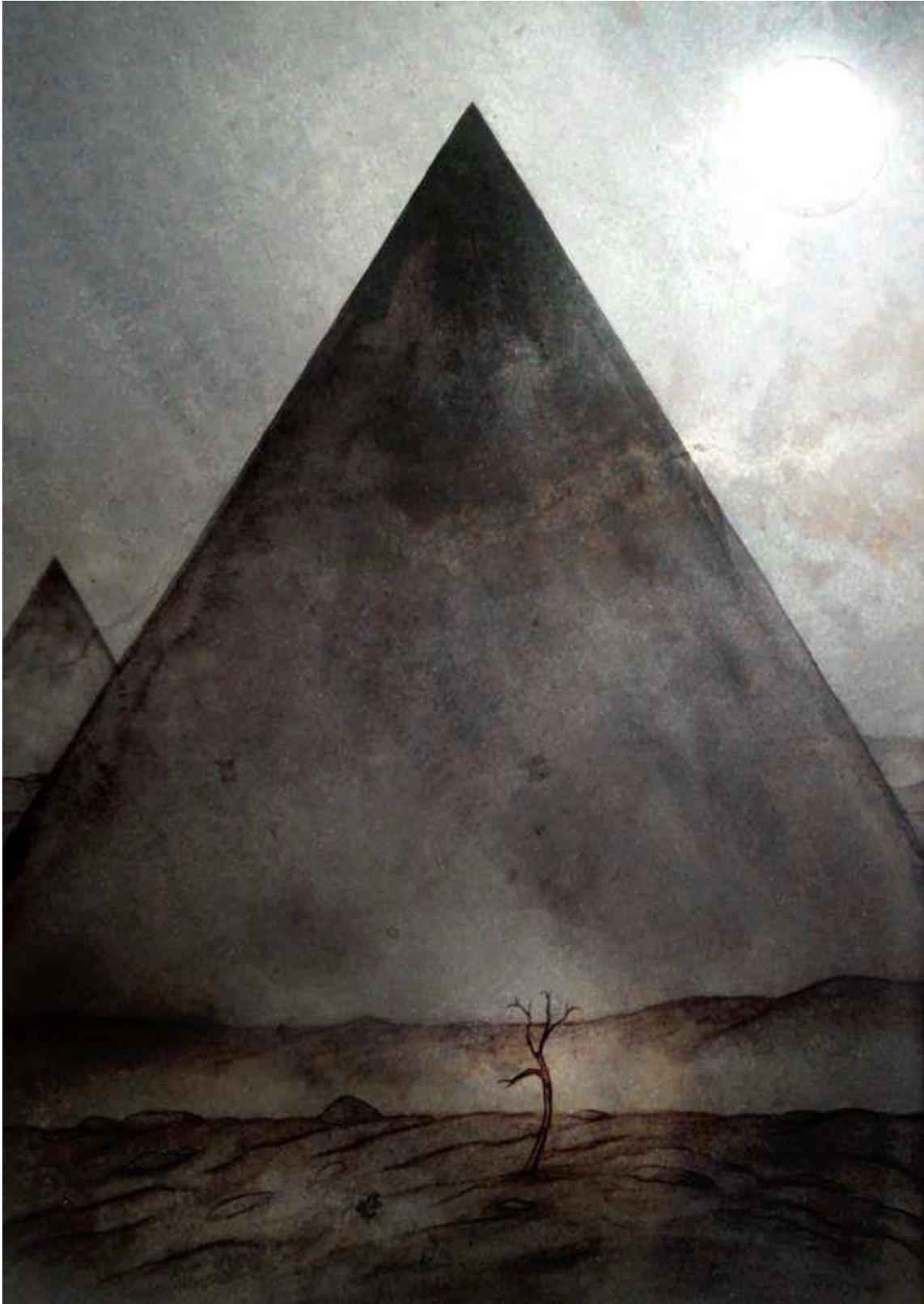


Illustration from page 18 from *All Tomorrows* featuring one of the pyramids the Qu leave behind on any habitable planet they pass through, towering over a tree in the foreground, with another such pyramid in the background behind it. These pyramids here stand over a world once inhabited by four billion humans.