

## My Friend from Beta Pictoris

Josh Alletto

My friend from Beta Pictoris came over the other day. He had never been to Earth before, so I took him to an art museum. I showed him realism and expressionism and ancient art and modern art and then he asked me, “Who made all this stuff?” and so I told him, “Artists.” He seemed intrigued by the term, and for a long while he stared at the ceiling, his long slimy, wiry tentacle casually scratching what I had come to assume was his head. He then asked me, “Who decides what goes in this place anyway?” His one enormous eye bulged from his belly and frantically flashed through the color spectrum. He vomited an orange, syrupy liquid onto the ground that immediately turned to vapor and smelled like fresh tangy apples. “Oh, I’m not sure,” I said, “I think maybe people who wish they were artists.” I was eating peanuts and digging a clumped-up glob of them off the roof of my mouth. “Oh,” he said. “I guess that makes sense.” Then a Japanese man took our picture and I heard a tiny blond-haired woman gasp as she pointed in our direction. “Oh, this is by far my favorite piece I’ve seen all day,” and smiling, she too snapped a photograph of us just as I was folding my tongue back to scrape the goopy glob of peanuts from the roof of my mouth.