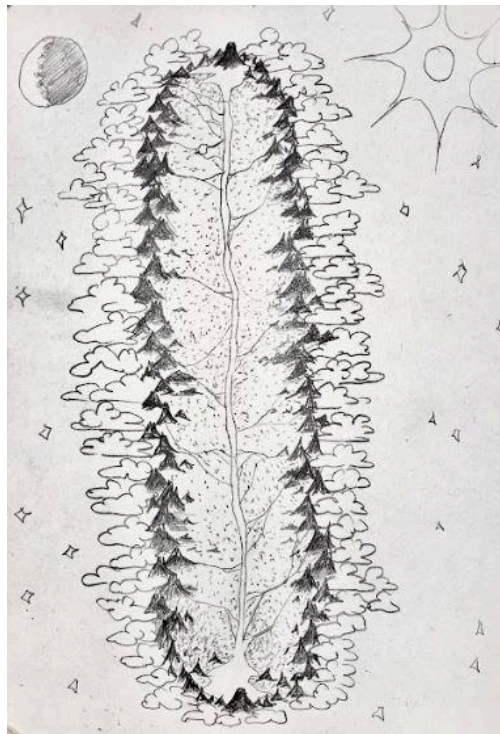


concretus

If I were/will be a writer in the Universe - okay I would write a collection of short stories, & i would shout them out into the stratosphere (I would be/will be/was very very brave).

As a Universal citizen, or an epic Taoist creature, I work play eat. I am building a concrete planet.

The planet is concrete, with rivulets. Rivers flow from one end to the other, each diverting down their own valley channel. Each river runs from North to South. From the reservoir at the South, the water flows through the middle of the planet and come out the other side, bubbling up into the Northern reservoir.



The sun of Concretus Cretus rises in the East, & sets in the West. The main life of each valley (however each valley differs culturally) is held at the hollow of the valley, built around the banks of the river. River transport is the most efficient mode of transport, favoured greatly over trans-alpine journeys. Small steps are notched up the side of the valleys for the more adventurous traveller, however it is much faster to use one of the cheaply available barges or boats. The rivers move slowly but steadily, & there are canals built to move faster upriver.

Due to the steep angles of the mountain sides, there is usually around an hour of direct sunlight in each town. Therefore, this is an important aspect of each day for the concrete people. There was (will be) is time off from any activity such as work or school, & an emphasis on appreciating the hour. If there is heavy cloud cover, unfortunately the people won't get any sun on that day. The rise and set of the sun over the valley is celebrated especially - this can be done with song, dance etc - depending on longitude, valley channel, & time of year.

concrete -synthesizing bacteria create & maintain these ridged structures of mountain & valley, and fill in the cracks that have weathered over time.

The light grey glow of the concrete can be seen only in the fresh cut slabs at the concrete quarry. Cut carefully into useable blocks & lifted fresh and new, leaving white open wounds in the ground. Whiter as it goes down, the lowest newest levels as white parthenon.

Living conditions in the valley are damp. Concrete houses are made of concrete blocks. Here it's cold, so warmth has to come from within. The ceiling has a hole perfectly made to capture and direct as much sunlight as can be caught.

Moss grows here abundantly. A new baby is set in her first bed - a soft cushion of moss, sinking slightly under her small weight. Here it's damp, so warmth has to come from inside.

Her first memories were of flickering candles - the damp and stained walls hosting moss, algae, mould. Gently formed sprawling shapes, always growing & changing, responding to the weather, temperature, pressure, sunlight, humidity.

She learned a lot by watching these. The colours at a first ignorant glance were green, but upon careful observation were silver grey blue etc etc

Each life form with its own speed, patterns, spread, colony shapes & strategies. She learned from these lives about connecting adapting, solving problems. Interacting with each other - mould using spores to cross larger distances, the algae using physical strength to overpower, & the moss patiently maintaining their pace.

The candles don't agitate the life forms that exist symbiotically in the houses. They are piled into crevices and nooks, and are left to drip and run about the walls, eating pale canals through the soft greens. Due to the perpetual dampness, there is no fear of fire, so candles can be left unattended and can burn through the night.

New candles are pushed into the wax of the burnt out ones, and huge structures of wax can dominate older homes.

As the interior of the house flickers and grows, so do the gardens. Vast ranges of fungi wax and wane across all of the concrete planet. Gardens change daily as mushrooms sprout overnight and then recede just as quickly.

The girl's moss bed has grown proportionally with her. Her mother is singing:

Song:

I sing a song of cacophony,
With jagged stones and steel the sound will echo lonesomely
Old Joe Clark, went 'round the world,
knocking on wood and making it twirl.
He met a man in Pennsylvania
who said he'd pay him a penny.
Oh the concrete it moves so strange,
Filled with secrets all around,
Cursed with secrets so profound,
Won't you take me from this concrete planet now.
Trolling down concrete rivers,
Monsters roar in eerie quiver,
Spiders crawl, the night owl hoots,
The concrete planet is strange and aloof.
From the concrete planet I heard a song,
Goblins, gargoyles and spiders oh so strong.
They march and holler in the broken street,
For a weird folk tune that nobody can beat.
The bleached deer trots 'round the city,
Sheets of rain come from the sky.
Her hooves clatter on the pavement,
Singing out a maddening cry.
Oh the concrete's hard, oh the concrete's cold,
Making your feet so very, very old
When you go out one day, find a park of green
That's the only way to make your life serene.

Her mother moves around her bed, the girl sucks her thumb. She is the child, & her mother is the moss - stable, reflexive, supportive - moving with her, and adapting as she grows - her mother moss. Her father a fungus, coming and going with the tides and moons. Does that make her algae - obtuse, slimy, streaky? She's only young, you can only guess at who you'll be when you grow older. It seems like she's always waiting to grow, to finalise.

This is a peaceful, prosperous state (i can't write about political strife and conflict, because I just don't know about it). Daily life is autonomously governed by each town land.

This is not particularly interesting, except to say that the girl isn't familiar with conflict in the political landscape.

This is not a story where things happen; this is just a story where things are.

And she, is. Existing in the gardens, climbing, sometimes daringly attempting to scale parts of the ridges. The valley edges seemingly go up forever. It's hard for her to imagine ever crossing these boundaries, or that anyone could live up there on the ridgetside, like the hermits and nomads do.

CONCRETUS

THE DAY

The day on Concretus is divided into three sections; *the Light, the Shadow, & the Dark*. The amount of time given to each section is not equally divided nor does it remain constant everyday, or the same for each person. This is because the world moves and because people move on the world. As the world moves through seasons, the duration of each day section shifts; *Light* lasts longer in Aaes [summer], *Dark* lasts longer in Tenetene [winter]. When the people on Concretus read the time they are reading their time. By simply looking at the world they can determine where they are in the day and when they are in the year. ([hour], [day], [month], etc.). For example a typical *time* might be written/ known as;

Eridoz. – 4. Tenetene. 754. ☉.

Eridoz (the section of the day and the name of (in this case) the visible constellation) – 4 (how many sky sections it is removed from last light) , *Tenetene* (the season - indicated by how removed from last light the constellations are), 754 (the year), ☉ (the era symbol... also acts as a reminder/ understanding that this is not *the time*, it is *a time*, an idea of time which they are using now.)

The world is the clock.

Because the world & time reading are so intertwined, as a person/ creature on Concretus grows up they become more attuned to the time. By being in the world they know the time, and usually don't have to calculate or measure surroundings to determine when they are. This developed instinct is especially useful in cloudy times when direct sunlight isn't casting hard shadows, or particular constellations are not visible in the night sky.

THE CLOCK

Light

Light

Shadow

Low

Fall

High

(above words are usually used in conjunction with landmarks
of specific areas when the shadow touches them)

Dark

Eridoz

Custictia

Ineshesi

Benessi

Atenali

Quup

Ki

Gi

THE SEASONS

Aaes (waxing)

Aaes

Aaes (waning)

Tenetene (waxing)

Tenetene

Tenetene (waning)

LIGHT

During the light, the sun passes directly over the valley. The sun rises in the [east] and sets in the [west]. The waxing light shines brightly on the western mountain face and harsh shadows are cast over the east. During full light the sun is directly overhead covering what is visible in light. The waning light then shines in the east and shadows the west.

During light all the living creatures on Concretus experience *Oarderathe*, a biological phase which causes a slowing down of time due to reduced rate of metabolism, brought on by photosensitive receptors in the skin. (*Oarderathe is similar to a sleep state*). People and creatures usually stop work in the Light.

SHADOW

During the shadow, the sky is still bright but it is not yet dark. The land is in shadow as the sun has past over. This is the hardest time to interpret visually as there are specific indicators of exactly when it is. Therefore time is largely interpreted intuitively during the shadow.

During shadow, people and creatures on Concretus work.

DARK

During the dark, the sun's light is gone and the stars are visible in the black sky. The people of the Concretus use the constellations that move across the sky to read time accurately. There are eight constellations (or dark sky sections). All of these are visible in winter and some in summer. The time of year is known by calculating how far removed from the last light a constellation is. (or in some areas, what order they appear in).

During dark, people on Concretus play, reflect and sleep.

THE WORLD IS CONCRETE; A DAY ON CONCRETUS

Eridoz. – 1. Tenetene (waxing). 884. ☺.

LIGHT

The sun is here now.

I stop. I go out. Out of the lab. The valley below me is bathed in golden light, and the western mountain face is harshly shadowed. There are no clouds today. It has been almost eleven lights since we last had a clear light. I stand outside my concrete home, viewing the time and timing the view. The air is crisp and cool, carrying with it the sweet fragrance of something I can't surely identify.

As the sun reaches its zenith, everything slows. It slows to near stillness. When the sun passes directly overhead and covers everything in its path. I savor and hold this time. It would be a waste to not hold on to it on a light like this. My body and mind are overwhelmed by nothing. Now the sun is here.

Now.

It's a time of rest for most of us on Concretus, as our bodies slow down in response to the biological phase of Oarderathe. The photosensitive receptors in the skin trigger this phase, causing a slowing down of metabolism. It's like being in a dreamlike state, where time seems to stand still. As if at this time each day, we get to have all time & no time. All breaths and no breath. Everything is here, concrete and forever.

Here.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath, inhaling the fresh dusted air around me. As the sun begins to set in the west, the Oarderathe phase ends, and I slowly come back to reality.

The sun has passed now. It will be back next light.

SHADOW

As Av works in her laboratory, she notices the play of shadows across the room. The dim light from light refractor lamp casts long, distorted shapes across the floor, stretching out like fingers reaching for her. She finds the shadows comforting, almost like they're keeping her company in the otherwise silent space.

Shadow is a neutral time, a between phase. People are always more solitary and reserved at shadow. This is when things that need to be done get done. Finding food, cleaning, building, etc. for Av shadow is often uncomfortably exciting.

Her attention is cemented to her work; to the creature she's studying the giant water ekcle—a remarkable species that carries its young on its trunk. They are large concrete skinned creatures. they build up layers of concrete on their hide over their lifetime. Once it gives birth it has to carry young over it's head until they are 10 months old, because the juvenile skin is not waterproof and the infant would drown if left in the water for too long. She's fascinated by the way the mother's body has adapted to the needs of her offspring, and the challenges they face as they navigate life in the water.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v_Vw7iOrN2wm9UdSbRtokzZRVxd541Sx/view?usp=share_link

Last Tenetene she came upon a puddle of water ekcle larvae and took a sample home. Of the many only one survived past the larval stage. She calls him Aerog and he has become a sort of companion to her during the shadow.

Av carefully observes the creature's movements, jotting down notes and making sketches in her notebook. The sound of her pen scratching against the paper is the only noise in the room, aside from the occasional gurgle of water from Aerog's tank that lines the wall. The smell of the water is strong, but Av hardly notices it anymore. She's been working with these creatures for so long that she's become immune to the scent. Instead, she's completely focused on her research, eager to uncover new insights into the unique behaviours.

As she studies the concrete-skinned creature, she can't help but marvel at its sheer size and strength. Imagining how such a massive creature could be so gentle with its young, carefully carrying them on its trunk as it navigates through the water. The research is exciting to her.

She smiles to herself as she continues to work.

DARK

As I stood outside, I gazed up at the sky and spotted the constellation Eridoz. It was magnificent, like a spider web made of stars, stretching across the night sky. The stars were bright, twinkling like diamonds against the blackness of space. Eridoz was the first constellation I ever learned, and it has remained my favourite.

Eridoz is visible for several hours during the night, and its appearance and position in the sky change over time. It's a seasonal constellation, waxing and waning with the cycle of the year. Right now, it was at the fourth section of the sky from its last light, indicating that it was still early in the winter season.

Eridoz has many stories and mythologies attached to it, passed down through generations. Some say that it represents a great spider that weaves the fabric of time, while others believe it to be a symbol of patience and cunning. I like the spider one.

I could feel the cold of the night seeping into my bones, but I didn't want to leave. I wanted to stay there and bask in the glow of the stars for as long as I could.

The world is the clock.
When I look at the world it tells me the time.
It is where it is and I am there too.
The world is concrete.
How should i think of my concrete world?
here , now
nowhere, never
concrete,
forever?

As the night wears on, I pass by other constellations like Custictia and Ineshesi, each marking a specific time of the year. People on Concretus play and sleep during this time, and I feel a sense of calm as I breathe in the cool night air. Finally, the time of Atenali arrives, and the stars begin to fade as the pre light shadow dawns marking the start of a new day.

HERMIT ON CONCRETUS

The prayer cycle of the hermit is aligned with the movement of the day, light, shadow, and dark.

Light - the hermit experiences *Oarderathe* purposefully and mindfully as an intense meditative state through years of practice. This is the most important part of the daily prayer cycle for the hermit.

Shadow Low, Fall, and High - usually living in a small cave or outcrop on the edge of a ridge, the shadow time for the hermit is different for the valley inhabitants. Usually this period is spent in mindful chores to maintain life in such a difficult climate, such as collecting water, harvesting edible lichens, sweeping and dusting, preparing food, etc. This is the most active time in the hermit's day.

Dark - during the period of Dark, the hermit will usually take rests between the prayer cycle of each constellation. There is a short unique ritual and prayer for each constellation movement, these being:

Eridoz

Custictia

Ineshesi

Benessi

Atenali

Quup

Ki

Gi

As the hermit utilises *Oarderathe* so efficiently, there is usually less need for sleep during Dark for the hermit. The hermit may still sleep between constellation movements, however might also read, meditate, or reflect.

After Atenali, the coming of Light begins, and the hermit will often begin preparations at this stage for *Oarderathe*.

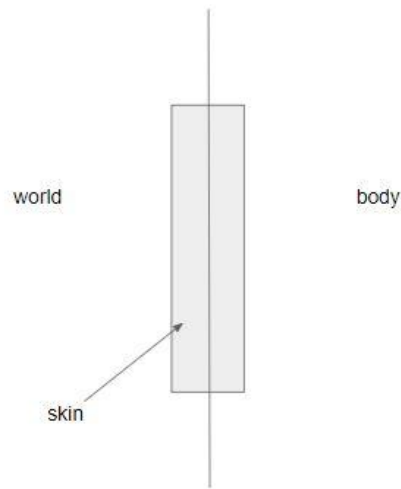
prayer/ thought/ word/ movement , before *Oarderathe*

prayer/ thought/ word/ movement , after *Oarderathe*

THE CONCRETE BODY

Skin

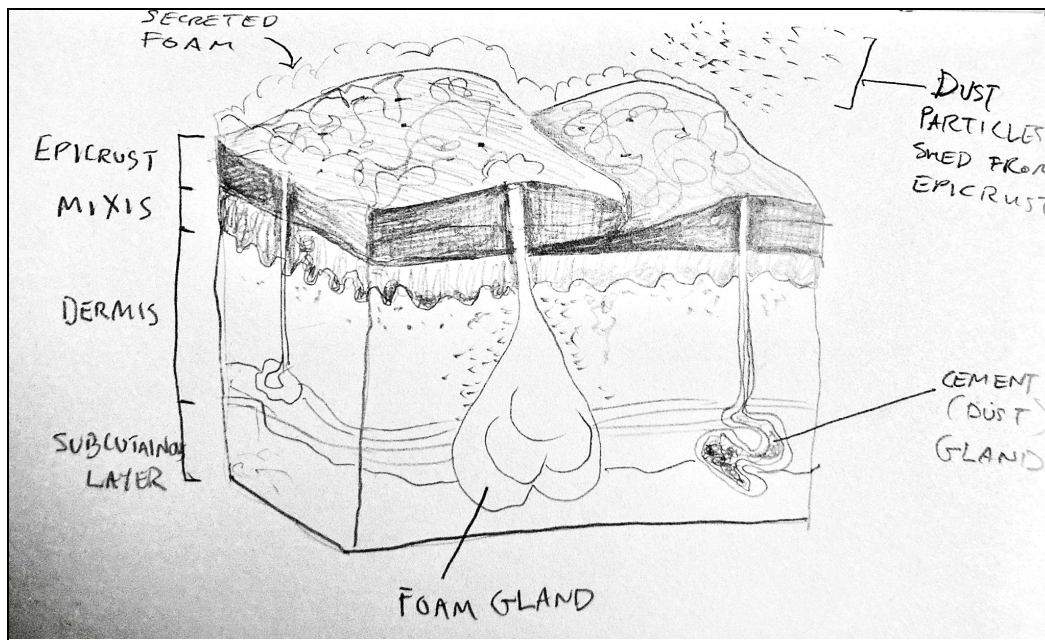
For almost all terrestrial creatures on Concreatius (including the concrete people), the skin is a complex finely balanced meeting between world [concrete] and body [flesh]. The outer layers of the skin are made of concrete which carefully interact with the inner dermis layer, fusing inner and outer worlds.



For creatures to survive the harsh concrete world, they have to wear the world on their bodies. Evolution has developed an ingenious method of allowing them to maintain a living concrete epidermis. This concrete skin is also necessary for the organisms to obtain beneficial nutrients and immunity from the concrete in the atmosphere and earth, while also filtering out harmful toxins. The skin is constantly performing a complex chemical interchange between body and world.

Concrete skin

The skin is composed of three distinct layers; a hard crusty outer layer called the epicrust (ranging 5-10 mm thick), a middle layer of wet activated concrete mix called the mixis (5 mm), and the inner vulnerable fleshy dermis (12 mm). The dermis houses other important structures for maintaining healthy concrete skin; the foam glands and the cement (dust) glands.



The Epicrust

The outermost layer of the skin, the epicrust, is a hard and crusty layer that provides protection to the underlying layers. This layer is composed of various types of concrete, each with a unique chemical composition that allows it to interact with the concrete environment of Concretus. The surface of the epicrust is covered with a layer of symbiotic lichen, moss, and fungi that help to break down concrete particles and convert them into usable nutrients for the organism.

The Mixis

Beneath the epicrust lies the mixis, a wet activated concrete mix that is constantly replenished by the organism's internal chemistry. This layer acts as a buffer between the outer epicrust and the inner dermis, providing a moist environment for the exchange of chemicals between the body and the environment. The mixis is also rich in beneficial bacteria and microorganisms that help to maintain the health of the skin.

The Dermis

The innermost layer of the skin, the dermis, is a vulnerable fleshy layer that houses important structures for maintaining healthy concrete skin. These structures include the foam glands and the cement (dust) glands, which produce substances that protect the skin from harsh environmental conditions. The dermis also contains a network of blood vessels and nerve endings that help to regulate the exchange of chemicals between the body and the environment.

Foam Gland

Secretes a fluid which reacts with the dust from cement glands to replenish mixis fluid.

The foam glands are small structures located in the dermis layer that produce a thick foam-like substance that protects the skin from the harsh concrete environment. This foam is composed of various chemicals that interact with the concrete environment to create a barrier between the skin and harmful substances. The foam also helps to maintain the moisture content of the skin, preventing it from drying out.

Cement (dust) Gland

The cement (dust) glands are another important structure found in the dermis layer. These glands produce a fine dust-like substance that helps to protect the skin from abrasion and physical damage. The dust is composed of various types of concrete particles that are carefully selected and combined to create a protective barrier on the skin's surface.

Morphology

The skin of these creatures is characterised by scaly plates that allow for movement and flexibility, similar to the armour of an armadillo. The plates are composed of overlapping layers of concrete that provide protection while still allowing for movement and flexibility.

The Concrete Skin Cycle

The Concrete Skin Cycle is a fascinating process that involves the constant shedding and regeneration of skin layers. The outermost layer of the skin, the Epicrust, is constantly shedding small particles of dust as it dries out from exposure to the harsh concrete environment. This dust, in turn, is picked up by the Cement Glands and mixed with fluids from the Foam Glands to create a new layer of Mixis.

The Mixis layer is a wet, activated concrete mix that is continually generated by the skin's underlying structures. As the Mixis is produced, it gradually deposits onto the surface of the Epicrust, forming a new layer of skin. Over time, this process results in the thick, durable skin that is essential for survival on Concretus.

Common Maladies and Remedies

Two common maladies that can affect the concrete skin on Concretus are Chamenthropha and Exprecis. Chamenthropha is a condition where the outer Epicrust becomes excessively thick and crusted, making it difficult for the creature to move. This is usually a result of a problem with the Foam Glands, which produce the protective foam layer. The excess buildup can be hacked away to alleviate the issue and allow for improved movement.

Exprecis, on the other hand, is a condition where the vulnerable dermis layer becomes exposed, which can be painful and allow harmful substances to penetrate the body. This condition typically indicates a problem with the Cement Glands, which are responsible for producing the dust that interacts with the foam layer to create the Mixis. To remedy this issue, extra dust can be applied externally to the affected area until the skin is fully healed.

Regular bathing and skin care can help prevent these and other maladies from occurring. Cleansing the skin with specialised fluids in the saliva can help remove excess dust and harmful substances, while replenishing moisture levels can help maintain the skin's health and resilience. Proper skin care is crucial for creatures on Concretus to maintain their primary defence against the harsh environment.

Bathing And skin care

Bathing and skin care are essential for maintaining healthy concrete skin on Concretus. Regular washing with a mild soap and moisturising the skin with a protective foam or cream helps to prevent cracking, drying, and infections. Specialised baths and skin treatments may also be used to address specific skin conditions or to promote overall skin health. Cleansing the skin with specialised fluids in the saliva can help remove excess dust and harmful substances, while replenishing moisture levels can help maintain the skin's health and resilience. Proper skin care is crucial for creatures on Concretus to maintain their primary defence against the harsh environment.

The Tweakers

(just notes & it's so badly written sorry)

Slave to biological functions! What if there was a way to override these periods of metabolic stupor, hateful *Oarderathe*. What is the thing that makes us concretus? What is our biological identity without the ebb and flow of our bodies to the light & dark?

Periods of mania or disease causing non-responsiveness to Light - this is not seen positively amongst the community.

Some such 'tweakers' mess with this pattern intentionally - biohackers.

The girl [who? A different girl idk] is no longer a human being. Unfolding the concrete body - when is a body not a body?

She hates the control that the light has over her.

She gets into

biohacking/tweaking/gleaning/jackhammering/solutions/abrasion/erosion/worming/bioculture/homopermaculture/bioarchitecture/biodesign.

Across cultures, people have always been interested in self-refinement and intentional intelligent redesign. The girl

Finds a group of these people & begins her erosion.

Oarderathe is caused by photoreceptors in the skin - therefore here are some ways you can interrupt this:

1. A chemical cream akin to sun cream which numbs the photoreceptors in the dermal layer from responding to the light. The side effects of use can be severe dermatological problems in medium to long-term use, but can provoke allergic reaction in a single use in some with sensitive skin/a pre-existing skin condition.
2. Pharmacological stimulants - similar to caffeine/speed/adderall/etc. This works by ingesting before Light, to speed up metabolism during *Oarderathe*. Overdose can occur, as well as bad interactions with the biochemistry. This can lead to health problems (psychosis is common) as *Oarderathe* is important for mental health regulation.
3. Bioluminescence harnessing - using the natural phenomenon of bioluminescence, these individuals experiment with genetic modifications or symbiotic relationships with bioluminescent organisms. By integrating bioluminescent properties into their concrete bodies, they envision a way to regulate their metabolic responses to light or even emit their own light, thereby reducing the impact of *Oarderathe*.

4. Plant symbiosis / clothing - they could explore a symbiotic relationship with photosynthetic plants/ lichen etc. it would be a mutually beneficial exchange where the plants use light energy to thrive while simultaneously shielding them from the effects of excessive light and providing nourishment to alleviate/ counteract the metabolic stupor...
5. Tones/sounds/frequencies/music - this is more experimental but is based off the work that the hermits & monks do in their periods of meditation during *Oarderathe*. Kind of similar to rave culture on Earth - stimulating tones/frequencies/resonances etc. Side effects of this can be giddiness, euphoria, and Ontentness.
6. Fungal symbiosis - they study the world of mycelium networks and establish a symbiotic connection with certain fungal species which have a *reverse Oarderathe* cycle. These fungi can be intricately linked to their bodies and assist in regulating metabolic processes by absorbing excess light energy or secreting compounds that modulate the photoreceptors sensitivity. The symbiosis neutralises metabolic responses in both organisms.
7. Reflective camouflage - by imitating mirror-skinned organisms.* They develop techniques to incorporate reflective materials or nanoscale structures into their concrete bodies. These adaptations allow them to mimic the camouflage abilities of mirror-skinned creatures, reflecting their surroundings and blending seamlessly into different light conditions. This form of reflective camouflage lets them lessen the effects of *Oarderathe* and avoid unwanted metabolic responses.

**(mirror skinned organisms are usually predatory as they don't experience Oarderathe so severely/ regularly and can take advantage of opportunities to prey on organisms undergoing Oarderathe who are in a weak vulnerable state)*

8.

Homoconcretus - Concretian Beings

What makes us concretus?

What makes us concretian?