

Connections

“Even the bravest are frightened by sudden terrors.”

—Tacitus

You awake to the hissing static of rural radio, and find yourself nursing a slight headache from the previous day’s ordeal. As you ease yourself into an upright position, your slow movements gain the attention of Van Rjien, who is driving.

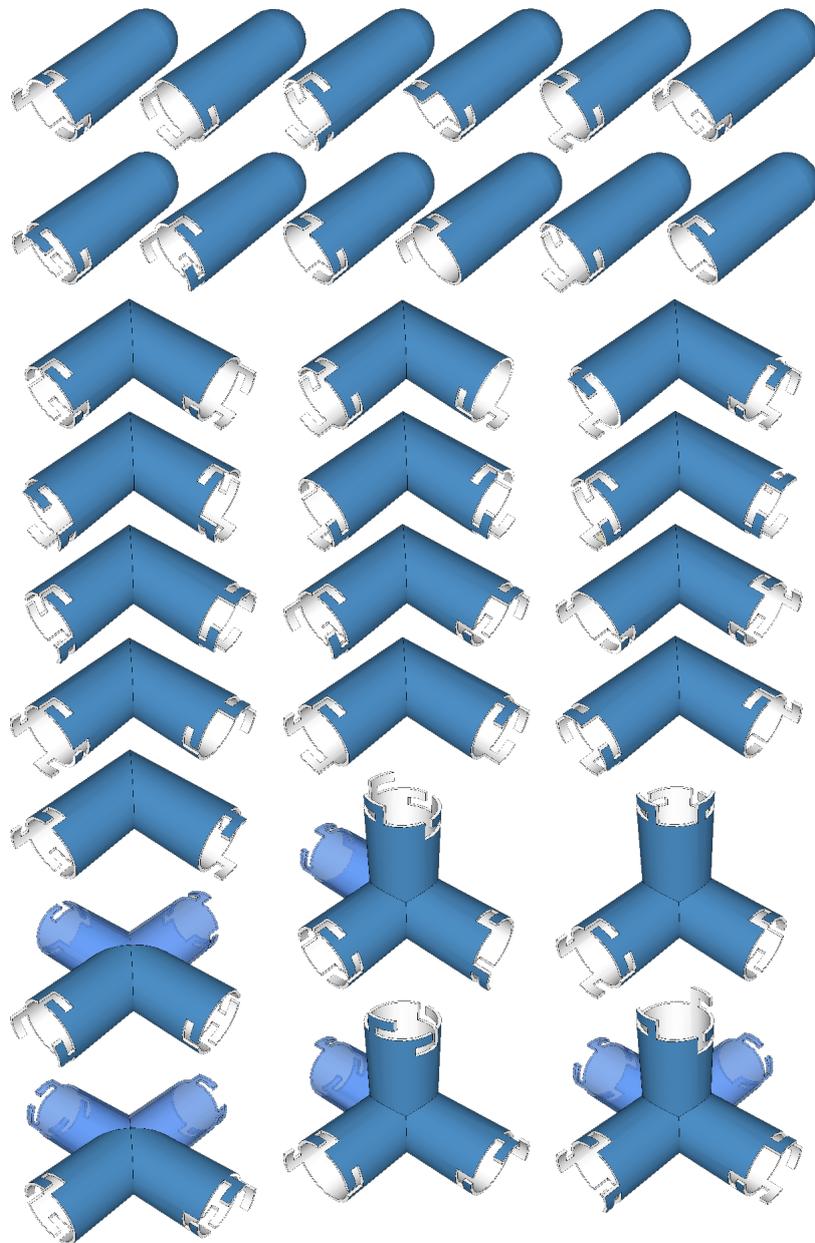
“I hope you slept well. You certainly did not look in good health yesterday. I found the entrance to this underground tunnel at the far end of the reservoir. I checked the maps down at HQ and couldn’t find any records of it. Just how on Earth something of this magnitude could have been built without us noticing is beyond comprehension.” He pauses, then adds “Well, we’ll get to the bottom of this. And hopefully, soon. I have been driving all night!”

You direct your attention to the surrounding tunnel. The walls are smooth, and show little if any sign of wear and tear. With your mind preoccupied by thoughts on the possible origins of this tunnel, you barely notice yourself gently drift back into slumber.

Waking up a second time, you immediately notice the deathly silence and darkness of your surroundings. It appears that you have parked inside the passage and standing outside is Van Rjien, spotlighting a ladder leading up towards a tightly closed hatch. You step out and offer your limited muscle power. Moments later, both of you are warming in the blazing mid-day sun.

In the name of efficiency, the two of you agree to split up, and a short walk soon lands you in front of a small shed. Noticing something under your feet, you peer down and see a welcome mat that has *Come on! In* written in lieu of the usual welcome messages. You obediently comply and step inside the unlocked doors.

A small skylight is the only source of light in the dim room and as your eyes adjust, you find yourself in a plumber’s workshop. After carefully wading through the clutter towards a well lit work bench, you find a rather intricate set of pipe pieces and a scaled model of an eerily familiar looking lake, complete with an enormous underground pipe leading away from it. Putting two and two together, you start to make the connections.



—Corey Plover