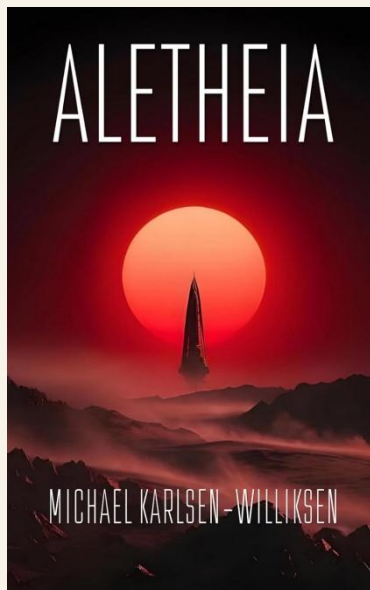




*Aletheia* means truth in Ancient Greek but, as with many words from then, it is not quite truth in our modern sense of the word, it can mean much more. Just like this story isn't just SciFi. It's most definitely about more.

The opening prologue is a beautifully restrained slice of northern memory, told with the kind of clarity and atmosphere that lingers long after the final line. What stands out immediately is the sense of place: Vadsø isn't just a backdrop, it's a living presence - grey, remote, and quietly magnetic. The descriptions of Havnegata, the Varangerfjord, and the muted palette of the far north create a world that feels both stark and intimate, as if the reader is stepping into a childhood filtered through fog and midnight sun.

The writing shines most in its emotional subtlety. The narrator's boyhood detachment, "mostly, I lived in my own skull", is rendered with a gentle honesty that avoids sentimentality. Instead, the story leans into the quiet loneliness of childhood summers spent among adults speaking languages he can't fully grasp. That distance becomes the perfect frame for Uncle Arne, a figure drawn with remarkable depth.

Arne himself is a triumph of character work. He arrives smelling of tobacco, sweat, and something unnamed, a man both familiar and unknowable. The story captures him with a tenderness that never excuses or explains him; he simply *is*, and that authenticity makes him compelling. His UFO tale, delivered with the slow, deliberate cadence of an old northerner spinning a half-hour story from two sentences, becomes the emotional heart of the piece. It's told not for shock or spectacle, but with a quiet conviction that makes it strangely believable.

What elevates the piece is the way the boy receives the story. His belief isn't naïve; it's hopeful. The UFO becomes less an alien craft and more a symbol of the extraordinary breaking through the grey monotony of Vadsø. The writing captures this beautifully, letting the story grow in the silence between what was said and what was never proven.

And then there's the final image, an eagle watching from above, remembering. It's a gentle, poetic lift that gives the piece a mythic shimmer without breaking its grounded tone. It suggests that stories, even improbable ones, have witnesses beyond the people who tell them.

That's a lot to say about a prologue.

The opening chapter is a quietly absorbing portrait of a man moving through a life defined by routine, restraint, and a world that has automated itself around him. The writing excels in its observational detail - the cheap instant coffee, the neighbour's droid hauling bins, the matte-silver hatchback warming itself - each element building a future that feels lived-in rather than flashy. What stands out most is the emotional undercurrent: a man who isn't

unhappy, but isn't quite present either, drifting through Exloo's grey mornings and LOFAR's silent nights with a muted heaviness he never names. The chapter's strength lies in this subtle tension between the ordinary and the uncanny, the human and the automated, the quiet ache beneath a life that runs on rails. It's atmospheric, grounded, and quietly foreboding, setting the stage for something just out of sight, waiting.

The chapters come as a series of sharp observations. The novel shifts into a higher orbit, blending tension, secrecy, and personal reckoning with impressive control.

At one point the writing captures the claustrophobia of sudden notoriety, reporters at the door, security tightening around LOFAR, and then pivots into a sleek, cinematic encounter with the three government suits. What makes it compelling is the emotional undercurrent: the protagonist's long-buried ache for space, resurfacing the moment the offer is made. The dialogue is crisp, the pacing taut, and the atmosphere charged with the quiet inevitability of a life about to be uprooted. His decision, signing with a single letter, V, lands with understated power, marking the moment he steps out of anonymity and into something vast, dangerous, and unknown.

The closing chapter to the first act (of five) is a stunning, unexpected shift in perspective, transforming a simple stowaway fly into something vivid and poetic. The writing is hypnotic: scientific precision blends with lyrical wonder as the fly's tiny, instinct-driven world unfolds against the vast machinery of spaceflight. The contrast is exquisite - astronauts, protocols, and orbital mechanics rendered as mere tremors in the fly's mosaic vision. What emerges is a meditation on scale, meaning, and the quiet persistence of life, told with remarkable elegance. The prose is rich without being heavy, intimate without sentimentality, and the final moments of the fly drifting toward a visor, and the world holding its breath, land with a cinematic, almost mythic resonance. It's a standout chapter, bold in concept and beautifully executed.

It's quite breathless really. And coincidentally the next act is called *The Held Breath*.

I can't keep going through the acts – there just isn't room! But this really is the sort of text you can just keep talking about. Coming out of all this atmosphere is a battle of man versus computer, a characterised backdrop to the mission. The ship computer NOUS is a bit of a know-it-all really, and an often irritating one at that. The closest I can immediately recall would be KIT from Knight Rider, as it delivers lines like "You're alive. That is sufficient." And it makes the perfect foil for pilot Vidar. NOUS becomes his guide, conscience, foil and so much more. And they operate as a quirky team, working together and then disagreeing in equal measure.

*Aletheia* is, at its heart, a simple tale. A journey full of introspection and discovery, not of place but of person. It's a very reflective novel and leaves the reader with lots of questions. Not of what it is about, but of what could be.

Available at Amazon [HERE](#) (Paperback) and [HERE](#) (ebook).