

This short piece was inspired by the [Typetrigger prompt](#) of the same name, but came to me a few months after I'd seen the prompt.

Yet it moves

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The stolen carapace was a piece of thruster casing from a nimble, yet doomed, scout ship. The legs and claws had once worked delicately at the end of a graceful salvage arm, but the yard bosses had thought them too fiddly to be salvaged when its joints failed during a fluffed manoeuvre. The two cameras glinting behind their lenses were from the same boom, as was the torch hanging beneath the carapace between them. That shiny, polished carapace hid a multitude of sins, namely a bird's nest of free-soldered wires connecting the sensors and actuators to the pilfered control chip. Still, everyone needs a hobby; this was Mika's.

When the other kids finished their shifts in the salvage bay, most stayed out late. They would get up to mischief in some part of the station or other, while their caregivers worried about them back at home. Of the rest, nearly all went straight back to quarters to study and make their caregivers proud.

Mika wasn't sure whether her parents were proud. Her mother had thought it a phase when she found the stash of smuggled parts in her tiny cabin; her father, as usual, didn't give an opinion.

Mika herself certainly wasn't proud. Given the chance, she could spend hours watching the station's swarm of spacecraft through the porthole in the family's quarters. By the time they came to the salvage bay, though, they were no longer graceful; they limped inside or, worse, were disgorged from the hold of some cannibal freighter. They deserved respect in their final days. Yet what did she do? Take bits of them, sneak away, and hoard them like Frankenstein from the old myths. Mika was ashamed, but couldn't contain her fascination.

The night before, she had soldered the last links and impatiently sent bursts of electricity to each leg in turn, moving a twitch slowly around her monster's body. Then, at the last moment, her mother had come in to hurry her into bed. Tonight, though, she had all the time in the galaxy. She connected the tail-like umbilical to her wall socket and turned. The torch burst into life. Otherwise, nothing interesting happened. Mika crouched down cautiously next to the monster on her floor, and smiled. The two front claws were twitching nervously; the chip was just a little shocked. She sat in a corner to watch.

The universe, she felt, was made by giants. Long ago, giants had lit the stars and set the planets with them; now, giants hung stations around the planets and sent spacecraft flitting between them. Different giants, yes, but giants nonetheless. The electricity flowed from her wall socket because somewhere a giant, of one sort or another, flicked a switch.

A few weeks ago there had been a pile of parts on Mika's floor, and she had felt rather small. She hadn't understood any of them — and still didn't, really — yet somehow, the creature she had made was not completely nonsensical. The legs were twitching now, straining against the floor. She came forward and lifted it to its feet. Slowly, cautiously, it twitched, then scuttled. It had been dead, yet it moved. She smiled. Mika tinkered because it made her feel a little taller — a little more like a giant.