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Southwinds - Spring 1991

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Southwinds



Southwinds

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1991

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Art From the Canvas Freed

Sitting alone in a room full of pictures,
Other peoples' dreams come to life
Before me a large screen unfolds,
And the ideas dance to a Baroque jig
There is one that is limping however,
Very sad and full of strife
Stuck in a world of one dimension
The idea is kind of sick
Too big to escape the small painting,
But big enough to mean something
Who is to say, who is to play,
The wonderful role of God
The artist man, the artist of course,
Is the one with the power, the mind,
The crazy ambition to make it all mine.

James A. Barnes

Spheres

Look around in the Biosphere
A blue Bubble in the vacuum of Space
Ever closer to the End we face
Feel the Tension in your Hemisphere
the East struggles Ever on to be Free
And in the West, We See but don't Believe

Spheres Encircle our life and times
Bottoms to face and Heights to climb
Point to point by Diameter
to Arc about the Equator
An equal point by a different path
to move to Freedom, to love, to laugh

Sphere of Influence, Sphere of Might
Honest ambition Takes us to reach True glory
From spheres of Dreams come a wondrous Story
From sphere of Hope to speed of Light
Hope provides the Motion to gyrate through the Day
Let a Light of reason Lead on the way

Some Spheres enclose our Heart and Mind
Break from those Bubbles so unkind
Use a compass from Pole to Pole
Navigate the Globe of your soul
Integrate it through Your Mind's Eye
Remember each part Is a Slice of Pi!

Sean Dingman

Many too Many

by Kevin V. Weidemann

"I don't care what you think, Hayce. It's obvious we can't be together, and I want out of it now."

"I want out of it too, Kate; but we should talk about it and settle it out before I leave. Otherwise..."

"No!" It was direct and inconsiderate.

"What?!" Hayce was thoroughly surprised at the unexpected answer. When it concerned their relationship, they had always, no matter what the problem, worked it out and eventually put the pieces back together again. Hayce's bewildered face turned to hidden sorrow after her half squinted, dark green, pine colored eyes burned him with anger. He finally whispered, "Fine."

Kate returned loudly, and still upset, "Fine!"

Hayce left the house, knowing he wouldn't see or talk to her in over one full year.

And somewhere, in the ageless darkness of space, a year and one half later, his damaged probe fell through the emptiness without direction and without computer calculated accuracy. Captain Hayce Merthens, more alone than imaginable to anyone back on earth, traveled in his limping ship, hopefully toward home. His partner had died on the mission directly after missing their returning elliptical around the giant planet Jupiter. The asteroids had pounded the deep space probe during outer orbit entry. Hayce's partner had been on the outboard, trying to readjust the failing directional responders on the main boosters. Hayce knew before his partner did that his hand, hit by an asteroid, was sliced cleanly off.

Panicking, his partner had fallen away from the probe. Before he could activate the thrusters on his suit the whole swarm of asteroids came. Hayce's partner was

gone, with the only pressure suit.

That was almost one year ago, thought Hayce as he lay in the bunk, thinking. Alone in space. Theory said a man would be driven insane by the loneliness that crept in a single individual. Hayce, trained in a conditional environment for being alone, thought carefully about his training.

Immediately, he sat up, unfastening the strap that held his body in place.

"Journal," he said hastily, as if an emergency.

"Yes, Captain Merhtens," the computer voice said, "Shall I comment on your entry?"

"Yes! Yes!" He sat back, calmer now that he was talking.

"I know I've made many entries about my separated wife, but I cannot stop thinking about her. We left as complete enemies. How can two best friends die off like that?"

"I'm not familiar with or capable of human emotion, Captain." The computer sounded sincere, but Hayce knew that it was programmed to react in that fashion. "However, I do comprehend the fact that

you are unhappy about leaving your wife, Mrs. Kate Merhtens, and I will psychologically help you to the best of my ability."

"Thank you."

"You are welcome, Captain. Would you like to continue?"

"Yes. We agree to not talk when I returned home. She said she'd be moved out by that time and I wouldn't know where she would be. I wouldn't have even attempted to look for her. I bet she doesn't even know or care that they suspect I'm dead."

"Evidence shows, Captain, that the Earth deep Space Directory had concluded that this probe has been lost since our transmissions were eliminated six months after we departed from Earth. Mrs. Kate Merhtens would have been informed of your disappearance by the EDSD, presuming you dead."

"Thanks," he mumbled with a smile. Hayce laughed inside at the computer's attempt to cheer him up or to say what he wanted to hear.

Hayce realized how lonely he really was. He might as well be talking to the

cabin wall because the “personal” computer only made if-then decisions followed by statements of fact. Computers couldn’t understand sarcasm, or love.

“Thank you very much,” he worded with intentional sarcasm. Hayce didn’t get mad because he knew he couldn’t do a thing about the computer’s rudeness.

“You are most certainly welcome, Captain.” The sentence was intentionally extra responsive to Hayce’s faked gratitude, not knowing the difference.

He laughed out loud this time. Nothing is like a human being, he thought, and no human being is more precious than the one you love. “or loved,” he said aloud, his stare focusing on nothing, his eyes glazed, his forehead damp.

“Pardon me, Captain?”

“Never mind.”

His thoughts flew with the probe, soaring at incredible speeds through his mind. Like his ship through the blackness, they seemed to go nowhere.

“We shared everything. Nothing was withheld, no matter how personal or secret. We loved each other, and now—now

it’s all been thrown away over nothing. Nothing! I can’t even remember what the fight was even about”.

“How can something that close be torn apart so easily? I have both of us for being so ignorant. We had something before, something that could never be replaced.” Hayce lay back, his thoughts tormenting his lonely mind, picking at him like vultures on dead animals in the lonely desert that was this deep dark space.

Commonly understood in everyday life, the term ‘infinite’, to Hayce captured his mind’s wondering, briefly pulling his thoughts from his wife. “How can something never end?” Explained in theory, that sideways figure eight could never become rational to him, he reflected.

“Here I am, lost in infinite space. How can I escape this? How can a number escape an infinite loop? It’s like I’m a number traveling through the number line, never stopping and always forgotten by someone who doesn’t care anymore. She doesn’t care anymore. She can’t!”

“There are many too many different directions to go. An infinite amount of

choices to take. What are the chances of her caring? what is the probability of her wanting to know?"

He answered his own question in a different town, as if someone had asked him. "My chances: infinity to one, of course," he sighed, "What else?"

"I miss you..."

Floating in any direction, in any way, Hayce's probe plunged further into the open pit of the unmeasurable, four-dimensional space, ever losing reality as he traveled. "What are the chances?" He mumbled to himself as he dozed, finally falling asleep after his internal pain bounced through his head.

He awoke to a beep. Unstrapping the bedding on his bunk, he floated toward the cockpit to view the screen.

"Ha!" His face broke into excitement. "Ha-ha..." He pushed backward, hitting his head lightly on the low ceiling. "Deep space radar. They know I'm here. They know we're here!"

"Yes, Captain, EDSD is tracking our

course now, and will intercept in 149 hours. I did not want to wake you Captain, you haven't slept in 72 hours."

Once again, Hayce laughed at the inhuman courtesy of the computer. Sleeping or not, he knew anyone would want to know immediate news of that kind. He didn't care anymore though; he finally was going home.

As he arrived with escort at the Freedom IV space station orbiting Earth, he heard himself being credited as the only human to survive a deep space accident. Captain Hayce Merhtens would go down in the memory banks and psychological reference computers as the only human to survive the loneliness of deep space.

"I lived through it," he said at a press conference, "but I don't think I survived the loneliness." The quote of the year, that was. Many people believed it to be a modest statement, but Hayce understood they could never comprehend the pain.

He hadn't said a word about his wife, not even mentioning her name to anyone, or vice-versa. He was too popular now to worry about his separated wife, they

thought.

Back on Earth, he landed to thousands of onlookers: thousands of people wanting to see the “man that survived the worst.”

Hayce wondered, as he gazed over the thousands, if Kate might be there, somewhere. A glance to the right; a glance to the left. Everywhere he searched. His eyes plunged through the people as his ship had plunged through space a week before. Then, for an instant as his focus crossed a group, he thought he saw his wife. Quickly looking directly back in the area, he searched the faces again.

“Many, too many,” he said aloud, not finding her.

Deep within the lonely crowd of people, one single woman stood there applauding respectfully. One lonely tear ran from one of her dark green, pine colored eyes.

Cathode Ray Tube

So, these are the golden years
Between child and man
Between can't and can
Dueling the world with passion and
fears
Looking for a place
a personal race
A dominating pixel
In The Big Picture

We set our goals and dreams
A house or car or wife
A job, or child, a life
Falling into place, so it seems
Unaware that we sacrifice
that which has no price
To be seen on the screen
In The Big Picture

Now we feel pressure to conform
into nonconformity
drink to insobriety
We tread foolish paths so well worn
Thoughtlessly we do as they please

Looking at the forest, they can't see the
trees
We become another dot on the face
In The Big Picture

Turning off, Turning on, Cathode Rays
Move Along
In Insulated Wire, No way to Start a Fire
Electrons on The Screen, A Momentary
Gleam
The Picture stays the Same, As Electrons
Change

Sean Dingman

To Mr. W.

All things do seem to be so consitent Mr. W.,
As the ice melts off of the cold tree's limb,
The uncontrollable freezing of a small pond checks it,
You am I, and I am you.
The continuance of the written word floods my brain
As it once did yours; a blank sheet before me
Quickly unfolds to reveal an unknown meter
Dancing with an untold rhyme,
It's all written in the seer's mind.
Dictation of the highest degree does come forth,
Spraying the paper—setting up an invisible world—
I, along with it, create an alternate universe
That is filled with good, as well as bad,
Every character is a reflection of both,
But the feeling remains the same.
Page after page does this come forth,
I put it all down in a half-conscious fit,
A frown comes to my face when I think
About how you have gone to sleep,
How your body lies still.

But the soul of a poet is the divine influence,
It can move, it can fly, it can inspire the sharpest mind,
Giving each person a gift of offering;
A gift of solace, a gift of love,
A gift of rejection, a gift of hate.
Explosions in my head let me know of the presence,
The lights in the room are set on low, and I still write.

James A. Barnes

Choice

Standing in the Shadowboarder
Voices from the sides of me.
Looking back in darkness,
Forward into light.

Darkness: comforting and lightless
It will hide me well.
He calls, low and sensual,
Coaxing me to come and dance,
Dance with him in the darkness.

Out of the light comes a voice
As I sway into the darkness,
Luring me with peace and love.
I say into the light.

Burned by the glare
I fly to my shadows.
My lovers show themselves.

Out of the light, a piece of the light.
His hair new gold, his skin ivory.
His hands reach out,
I step toward him.
The light is harsh and merciless

Exposed, I look back to the comforting
darkness.

Gliding out of darkness, embodying
dark.

The hair black against unlit skin.
He reaches out,
I turn to him.
The dark is alive with evil.
Overcome, I waver.

Time, time, time.
Each tempts and repels in turn.
At last, my choice made,
I bid my dark love farewell
And enter the blinding, searing light.

Angelia Sparrow

A Matter of Principle

by Jeff Schroeder

A jet thundered across the cloudless sky. A white missile fell quietly from beneath the stubby wing and ignited an instant later with a shrieking roar. It shot downward, curving in a smoky arc, and slammed into the dusty ground in the center of a small village.

As the plane flew onward, the missile exploded in a ball of flame, throwing a fine red powder in a wide circle. The powder burst into hot, pinkish flames that shot outward. Fire slithered across the ground, licking greedily at the thatched huts. They caught quickly, erupting into blazing towers of orange as their terrified occupants dove away, screaming.

Within minutes, the entire village was ablaze, illuminating the dawn with its ghastly light. People cried and cursed, looking skyward in a vain search for the mysterious aircraft. Instead, they saw several distant specks, approaching with ominous purpose. After a moment, the specks resolved themselves into enormous black helicopters, moving steadily toward the fiery town.

Dust churned and flew as the vast helicopter blades sliced the air. The behemoth

gunships, four in all, set down outside the town with a roar of turbines. The rotors spun down as hatches slid aside. Ramps extended from the interior of the helicopters, locked into position, and the four colossal machines sat patiently in the quiet dawn.

A siren sounded. From each of the dark gunships emerged twenty men, all dressed in black jumpsuits with the white shoulder insignia of the Global Equalization Authority. They quickly array themselves in neat rows, their obsidian-black helmet visors hiding any expression.

Another man climbed down from the front seat of a helicopter, walking briskly to the front of the group and facing them with a stern expression. Three red slashes on his rank insignia marked him as a colonel. His visor was up, and his steel-grey eyes glanced over the men with a practiced look. There was no emotion in those eyes, only authority. He turned around, examining the smoldering ruins of the small village with a disinterested glance.

"Move in," he snapped. His helmet microphone transmitted the message to the other men, who instantly began a quick trot

toward the town. They spread out, approaching the smoking remains in a fanlike formation. Their deadly weapons were leveled menacingly as their hidden eyes darted about, looking for any threatening signs from the villagers.

There were none, only the quiet sobs and moans of unseen people. A thick haze hung over the town, mercifully concealing the dead and dying. The eight black-garbed men surrounded the site in a loose circle, their weapons trained inward, waiting silently.

The colonel checked his watch. The operation was proceeding exactly as planned. He looked back to the smoky village, and the encircling ring of patient men, then spoke into his microphone.

"Raze it."

No one moved.

The men looked at their comrades, not quite sure how to proceed. They had been expecting to guard a military site, not a burned-out rural village. Now their commander was evidently expecting them to destroy the town completely, despite the fact that people were still in it.

"I said raze it."

A few men stirred, but no one moved forward.

The colonel marched angrily toward the circle. "I want this town destroyed," he snarled.

"Sir—"

"Perhaps you didn't hear me, soldier!" He glared at the man, almost daring him to respond. "There should be no one left alive, no buildings left standing, nothing. When we leave, I want no traces. For all practical purposes, this town never existed."

"We should ...kill the inhabitants, sir?" asked someone feebly

"Do you have a problem with that?" the colonel demanded.

"Well, with all due respect, sir, that would not only be unethical, but highly illegal. The United Nations Humanitarian Act specifically prohibits—"

"The colonel marched toward him. "Are we from the United Nations, lieutenant?"

"Um, no sir."

"Then let me refresh your memory. We are a detachment of the Global Equalization Authority. It is our duty to eliminate unacceptable nations from the world environment. This country is below the Threshold and cannot contribute significantly to the global market. It is to be liquidated. Do you understand that?"

"Yessir, but—"

"Since you are a member of the Authority, you will carry out your task of razing this village!"

The lieutenant swung his visor up and returned the colonel's harsh stare. "Colonel, these are innocent civilians. We have no reason to murder them."

"These people have a negative impact on the world market. There are limited reserves of food and resources on this planet, and the rest of humanity cannot sacrifice itself in order to sustain a few dozen poverty-stricken countries. What we are doing is for the welfare of all mankind."

"Sir, you don't understand. It's a matter of principle."

"No, it's you that doesn't understand." The colonel swung his rifle from his shoulder. "It's a matter of life and death." He leveled the deadly gun at the lieutenant, his icy eyes flashing. "If you wish to die, you will continue arguing with me. But if you wish to live, you will shut your mouth and carry out your orders to liquidate this village."

The lieutenant was unfazed. "You can't shoot your own soldiers."

"On the contrary, lieutenant. As the commanding officer of this detachment, I have full power from the Global Equalization Authority to do whatever I deem necessary to carry out the mission objective, up to and including the termination of human beings."

"Colonel, I—"

"Enough! I have a mission to fulfill. I don't have time to listen to your blathering." He indicated his machine gun. "You have two choices, lieutenant. Live or die. Which do you choose?"

The lieutenant looked down at his own

rifle, his teeth clenched. He looked back to the colonel. A long moment passed. Every eye was fixed on this lone rebel. "I won't be a killing machine," he answered at last. He threw his gun to the ground with disgust.

"You choose death?"

"No," he said quietly. "I choose humanity."

There was a tense pause. "Pick up your rifle, lieutenant," replied the colonel acidly.

The lieutenant turned on his heel and walked away, headed for the waiting helicopters.

"I'm warning you..."

The lieutenant continued walking.

With a loud click, the colonel flipped the safety off. His gloved hands gripped the black machine gun as his finger tightened on the trigger. There was complete silence in the still air. "For the last time, lieutenant, pick up your rifle!"

The man had nearly reached the helicopter, not even breaking stride at the colonel's warning.

The colonel fired.

His gun rattled, spewing metal death. The lieutenant staggered as his body shook from the bullet impacts. He fell to his knees, his face contorted in pain and shock, then collapsed forward. His head thumped to the dusty ground as blood oozed over his black uniform, giving a macabre crimson color to the

white insignia of the Global Equalization Authority.

The colonel turned to face the horrified circle of soldiers. There was no compassion in his grey eyes. "Does anyone else want to discuss principles?"

No one else did.

Good Ole Days

by Janey Blue

"The highway went through the town. I sold my house for \$750.00. I went and bought a new one for \$250.00. We used a bulldozer to pull it two miles to a new location."

K-mart's going up. Ken Lanning sold his houses for who knows what. (Probably a little more than \$750.00.)

"Missouri highways and roads have allowed the people great mobility (137)"

"I stood and watched Bill Smith as he used his hammer. The blacksmith shop with all of its smoke and noise was a real fun time for me as a ten-year-old. I really liked watching him make those wagons--he made those too, you know."

"Women spent most of their time cooking and cleaning and sewing the childrens' clothes. They also did garden work along with some other farm work."

Doctors, lawyers, anything we wanna be... we are, along with mom cook cleaner, gardener. "We've come a long way, baby."

"Ole Ma...what to get her for Mother's Day? Flowers?...not likely to do the trick, since she grows them by the ton. Ever since I can remember, she has herded a couple hundred head of chickens.(109)"

"It took forever to get anywhere. The horse and buggy ride was a rough and bumpy one, but we were never in too big a hurry anyway. We finally got a Model-T. We had to turn and go backwards up steep hills because of where the gas tank was located."

Get in your Miata and feel the highway move beneath you. Get where you wanna go. Only \$13,000!!!

"In 1903, only 640 motor vehicles were registered in Missouri. The legal speed limit was 9 miles per hour. by 1990, 3,211,785 motor vehicles were registered, and the speed limit was 65 miles per hour (137)."

"I remember when Mr. Rumstead used to be the source of coffins. He built them to fit most anyone--young or old. I guess he knew when his time was nearing. He built one of his own, and it wasn't long before he was making use of it. Not much hoop-de-doo at funerals then. A few tears, but life and work went on."

Death has become commercialized. Pay up to \$15,000, and your loved one is placed in a silver-lined casket. Usually last 2 or 3 days--then the funeral director rushes you out--another one coming in...very sad.

"Farm workers used to make 50 cents to \$1 a day. Seemed like a lot of money then."

Graduate from UMR and make 60,000 a year. How much is that a day?

"The mail was carried by hourse and buggy. Edgar Elliot was the man who drove the long hours it took to go a short distance. He always stopped to talk and visit...this took a little time also."

The mailman opens the mailbox with a key...stuffs the bills in, and he's outta there...the little white truck travels on.

"The thrashing machine used to come to town to thrash wheat. The neighbors would at the house where it happened to be at the time and the ladies would fix the meal for the hardworking men to eat. When a neighbor's house would burn down, everyone would get together and get to know each other and rebuild...then there would be a square dance in the new dwelling."

People help each other, but neighbors are limited. We help only certain people...only ones we know, or only those who help us. Help a stranger...no, we don't much...can't trust them.

"Chicken and dumplings, biscuits and gravy were the main meals. Sunday mornings we'd go out and choose our chicken. It wouldn't be long before the feathers

would be flying, and he was in a pot boiling, waiting to be eaten."

Golden arches he we come. No hard work goes into this kind of eating. (Guess it shouldn't for something that tastes like cardboard.)

"Money was short, but someone has said that the finer things in life are free. If you don't think ham and milk gravy ain't fine eating, we're looking at things from different angles. there was a closeness about the heat and smell from the old wood stove that penetrated to the bone (9)."

"We'd all go to church on Sunday. The small church held everyone. The church was donated on the condition that it would always remain a union church. That meant anyone could go. If it changed, it would automatically revert back to the heirs. but it worked out because everyone felt the need to worship God together."

Baptist, Methodist, Assembly of God, Catholic--Everyone feels the ned to worship God--seperately.

"As early as I can remember, my folks went to church on Sunday. Rain, snow, sleet, or sunshine. It was a sturdy chapel of hewed logs with six small windows. There was no bell tower, since money wasn't available for a bell. After sitting a couple of hours on those hard benches, the sweetest words the preacher could say were, "may the Lord bless and keep us until we meet again. Amen." (5)"

"The school bell rings. doors open and the children rán in. Their ages went from 4 to 13. They all stayed in one small room together. Mrs. Hume was the teacher. she never had much trouble controlling them--she had this big stick--and she used it."

Many schools for different ages. Lots of children to a room. The teacher may have a stick, but she has to follow ninety-nine rules to use it. Children know this--trouble erupts.

"'School days, school days, Good old Golden Rule days.' Bull! For the most part, it was a boring confinement. there were still a lot of one room schools...with classy names like Lizard Lick, Hogcreek, Ham String(17)."

"Doc Dillon was the doc in Salem. He made house calls. Doc McFarland was the operating physician in Rolla. He cut one man open, but didn't sew him up real well. He told him he wasn't going to live long anyway. You know, that man still lives on the other side of town."

Heart transplants, artificial legs, miracle drugs. Still more to learn, but we've come a long way. But...you go to them ...with your insurance card in hand...or they won't help you.

"For fun, everyone would get together on Sunday afternoons. All the kids would come home and there would be a big ballgame or an ice cream social. The kids would play annie over after the meal...the grownups would talk."

Sunday afternoon. Shannon has a soccer game. Rick has piano lessons. Dad has a business call to make that he didn't get done last week. Mom is busy getting stuff ready for next week. Older kids can't come home often. They live too far away.

"We rolled our own cigarettes then. Usually Prince Albert. We smoked big cigars too."

People roll their own today also. But it's not usually Prince Albert!

"I was ten years old... I built me a pipe just like my grandma had...just a piece of corn cob with a small cane jammed in the side for a stem. I smoked anything that would crumble and ignite (35)."

"Boy, that outhouse used to be cold in the winter. We passed the cold minutes reading the wish book, which had many different uses. It was used as wall paper, too. It kept a lot of the cold air out."

Three bathrooms to a home. "Soft and Pretty". You can't read it, but sometimes there is a Wall Street Journal sitting around that you can glance at.

"Sometimes a tent would be set up in the middle of town, where a silent picture would be shown. You paid five cents to watch cowboys like Tom Mix."

Mel Gibson, Kathleen Turner--larger than life as you sit in your cushioned seat and put your feet up. Five dollars won't get it--unless you sit there and suck on your fingers instead of popcorn.

"There weren't many cattle then. There were lots of hogs. People would butcher their own and have ham and bacon for the winter."

Cattle spot the hillsides...red, black, white... steaks for everyone.

"Corn fattened hogs were rounded up in a small pen and butchered for winter. The hogs were boiled--the portker hung, and beheaded and cut down the backbone--

sometimes six or eight hogs were done at a time, with their freshly scraped white skin shining in the sunlight (45)."

"Missouri ranked third nationally in the total cattle inventory in 1975 (133)."

Good ole days....

Some say now...

some say then...

some say...its never been....

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