

The Literary Corner



He was twenty three years old when he left us. He had lived his life to it's fullest, both in his successes and failures. He had many goals and ambitions, a few he even achieved. He was a good man.....

She opened her eyes and saw the tear stained face reflecting from her mirror. She saw remorse in the features of the image and felt somewhat a part of it. Ah, yes, she remembered now....the words she'd heard so often without meaning....had come to greet her..." She's still young...she has her whole life ahead of her..." So did he...once. So did they.....together.

The air was thick with the sympathy of false friendships; both past and present. They were few to behold.....but you felt their presence like a cold wind.

Her eyes expressed her sorrow, and her body trembled as she saw him for the last time. His face was calm now...not like before. Her love for him reflected his love for her, they were one, now to be torn apart.

Self pity was heavy upon her as she prayed for peace. She had seen him sown into the Lord's own garden and she envied, and prayed for his forgiveness.....she was a good woman.....

Lament

Old family house left standing,
collapsing, abandoned.
The shades of life faded now,
showing grey against the green.
Ten times passing of frosts and bleaching summers
created this sadness
better not seen.

Farmers return each Spring,
ploughing; encircling
house and wild garden
with whorls of sweet red earth,
Wallowing now, ridiculous, dying without dignity,
only window frames, wood shingles, considered any worth.

The Gillies used to stay there
thriving, contented.
Working through their seasons
the years full occupied.
Real home then for people, living, laughing.
Silent echoes now and blackness.
Time satisfied.

Regrets

I thought I was abnormal.
I was grieved and fretful,
everyone had told me I feel it right away.
I was impatient to love them
realised I'd tried too hard
so had to start again.
But love grows with the child
all the while getting wider
until it fills you, hurting.

They became little girls
I spent my life explaining.
And sometimes that seems all I did
there was so much else to do.
But all the time I loved them.
Now they are people
and time is overtaking.
There's no chance to recapture
those learning times again.

Judy Whitehead.

Gateway

The First Imperium had called it "New Greenland" in the old Terraspeech and like the ancient Eric the Red's infamous misnomer, it had been a supreme con job on the hapless settlers. Of course, it had been monstrously worse, yet totally unintentional, in this case. An error had been made. The bio-pod of oxygen-producing bacteria designed to turn the planet's lethal reducing atmosphere into a suitable cradle for terran life had never reached its mark. A wayward asteroid perhaps, or a comet, or merely the relentless radiation of deep space had destroyed the pod and its precious cargo light-years from its goal.

The settlers had come, a thousand years later, only to find a planet whose atmosphere was no more breathable than the exhaust of ancient land vehicles. They had attempted makeshift ways of survival. They had invented ingenious methods of oxygen reclamation from the ice-water of the polar caps. But their numbers were too great. Wave after wave of colony ships came, only to awaken their willing captives to planet-wide civil war, starvation, overpopulation; a hell worse than that they had fled. Self-extermination was the sole justice, the only peace they found from their pitiful struggles. It ended in chaos in the year 3112.

The sterile mass-grave laid undisturbed for thousands of years. The Imperium waned and collapsed. Scattered colonies fought for trade routes to the richer planets. The result was a bilateral division of Mankind into two great races; the politically authoritarian Mentors, and the enterprising Techs...

VST 1173 grew bored of the monotonous images. He knew every word of this histape, every scent, by heart. "by heart!" he mused, "What a strangely inappropriate phrase." He willed the images away, and called upon his filtering system to flush the fatigue poisons from the cerebral fluid coursing through every neural fiber of his disembodied brain. Switching to another circuit pattern he began to check his co-ordinates and position. A 3-D star field swept in to fill his view. All ship sensors scanned the surrounding vastness. Locating his reference stars, he rotated the field one way, then another, until the pattern matched the super-imposed map perfectly. Increases in magnification shot him in a blinding plunge toward the target point, fresh detail arising with every jump. "Ahh," he thought coolly, "perfectly on course."

Everything about a Tech was perfect. He was Man and Starship at once; the perfect vision brought to life. The cumbersome, inefficient animal body, doomed to return to the dust, had been victoriously discarded. Only that most perfect of tissues, the brain and spinal nervous system, remained, fed, cared for, and intimately wedded to its cubic miles of machine. Someday this last link to the savage past would be severed as well. Someday...

VST 1173 finished the orientation procedure and gazed inwardly at the results. There, amid that small cluster was the source of all this bother: Epsilon Indi II, second planet from the G2-type star of the same name. Still too distant for any direct observations, he traced into the core library for a series of very old holograms of the planet; the only known records. "Stolen from under the Mentats' repugnant, fleshy noses," he recalled in satisfaction. Quickly, emotion depressors washed away his gloating exhilaration and returned him to the task at hand.

It was neary time to end the tedious braking procedure. The headlong dive into the solar winds of many stars was almost complete, the stream of particles against his fully extended hydrogen sails having slowed him more and more every year until now, the year of his arrival at a dust-enveloped epitaph to stupidity. The year was 21585. The planet was Epsilon Indi II, long-forgotten New Greenland of death.