

## Escape Velocity

even the moon blinks!  
silver flash—10,000 miles  
and climbing ... climbing....

—James S. Dorr

Free radical seeks  
same. Let's form  
a bonded pair!

## Snowball's Chance

—Stephen M Wilson

Alas  
Poor Pluto, you  
ID crisis iceball:  
Disqualified outsider or  
Tombaugh's  
Distant darling? Demonized by  
Kuiper Beltway schemers,  
Politics spells  
Meltdown.

—Ann K. Schwader

## Snapshot: The Voyagers

still out there my friends?  
braiding moons, banded spheres in  
pixilated light

—James S. Dorr

Comet Kohoutek  
spent a hard night in the Oort cloud,  
lacked tail: bad hair day.

—Mary Turzillo

## Spacemail Correspondence

Letters take years  
To fax at lightspeed,  
Originals centuries to deliver.

Write soon.

—Ruth Berman

## Note to Accompany the Plaque on Pioneer 10

Boxholder:  
Please do not discard  
this unsolicited solicitation.  
It is not a bulk mailing  
and postage was high.  
If our overture is unwelcome,  
please mark it "Return to Sender."  
At least we will know  
there is a Postman.

—David Lunde

## Wish List

Dumb as a rock—  
Martian meteorite  
won't talk to NASA

—Mary Turzillo

the very first thing  
I'm going to get for myself,  
when custom DNA retailoring  
becomes affordable,  
is a bright blue tongue.  
if an okapi can have one,  
I don't see why I can't.

—FJ Bergmann



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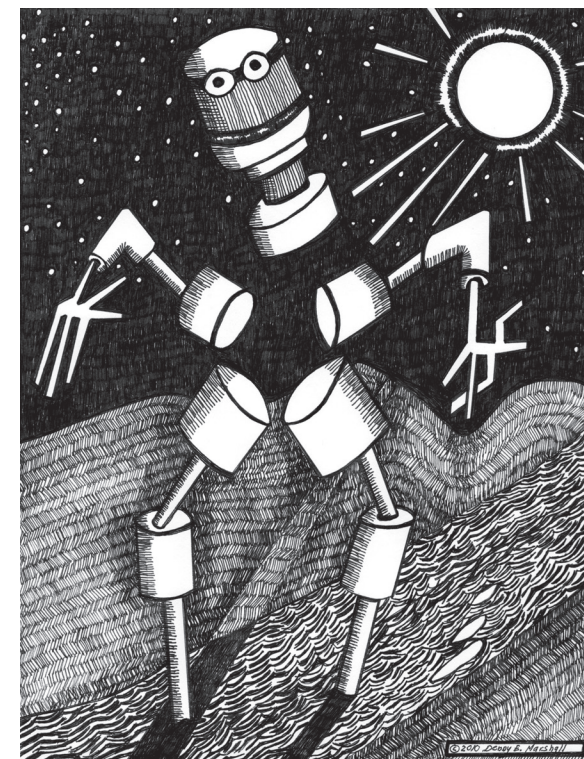
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# EXPLORING THE COSMOS

.....  
minimalist science poetry



.....  
selected by  
David C. Kopaska-Merkel  
for the  
Science Fiction & Fantasy  
Poetry Association

## ABOUT MINIMALIST SCIENCE POETRY

This pamphlet showcases minimalist poetry, which includes well-known forms such as haiku as well as other very short poems. A previous pamphlet of short poems was published by the Science Fiction & Fantasy Poetry Association: *The Universe in Three Lines*. This pamphlet and others are available free at [sfpoetry.com/promos.html](http://sfpoetry.com/promos.html).

That pamphlet included scifaiku, defined as a form of science-fiction poetry first announced by Tom Brinck with his 1995 *Scifaiku Manifesto*. Inspired by Japanese haiku, sci-faiku explore science, science fiction, and other speculative themes, such as fantasy and horror. Scifaiku are based on the principles and form of haiku but can deviate from haiku structure.

The Scifaiku Manifesto stresses the following points:

- Immediacy
- Minimalism
- Human Insight

Some of the science poems in *Exploring the Cosmos* are scifaiku; others are not. Collectively, they explore scientists, scientific discovery, the nature of humanity, and (of course) the future.

### A Trivial Matter

To a neutrino  
the rest of the universe  
is immaterial.

—Peter Payack

### Skylab 1973–79

Fragments of space debris  
and me, floating in vacuum  
observing the Earth.

Humans gazing up  
see only the infinite  
skin of glassine sky.

I start to tumble  
from orbit, slowly slitting  
open the envelope of night.

—Carolyn Clink

### Wide-Open Spaces

*dedicated to John Wayne*

There are  
13 billion  
light years  
between me  
and the edge  
of the universe.

And that's  
the way I like it,  
pardner.

—Peter Payack

Great sky river floods,  
Entices our flimsy craft,  
Cataract of stars ...

—David Lunde

### Hanny's Voorwerp

Falsegreen and gaseous  
It leaps, anuran  
Twixt spiral lilypads  
Depositing newborn stars  
Lonely tadpoles in a cosmic pond

—Marsheila Rockwell

### A Hollander's Secret Weapon: 1609

Invention of a spyglass  
sent Galileo off to ponder  
a re-invention unintended  
for a combat situation.

A twenty-power increase  
in the lens, he turned it on the sky,  
opening up our galaxy  
for harmless speculation.

Three centuries have passed,  
radar's replaced the glass,  
yet still we war, and still,  
we haven't touched the stars.

—Marge Simon

### Partial Solar Eclipse

Her black  
lunar eyelid  
gives a half-hearted wink,  
her golden gaze still uncovered.  
Blinding.

—Elissa Malcohn

a fiery end  
earth crossing asteroid path  
ash sinks into soil  
nourishing ground for new life  
genesis in silence waits

—Shelly Bryant

### Grand Raiment

Far-off supernova  
Weaves its massive death shroud,  
A centuries-old cloak.  
Great blast of brightness fades,  
Hidden in darkest dust.  
Hidden in darkest dust,  
Rarer supernova  
Glowes with shocked oxygen,  
Its gamma rays bursting  
'Round buttoned-up black hole.

—Elissa Malcohn

### Epitaph for *Homo floresiensis*

While ice-age men hunted mastodons on the ice,  
dwarf humans on Flores Isle lived peaceful lives.  
We served in bondage to the law of kill-or-die;  
without prey or competition, they lived in paradise.

Twenty thousand years later, we  
recall them but in myth and children's stories.  
We're now the killers we had to fight to be;  
they, the wee, fey folk of dreams and memories.

—Geoffrey A. Landis