

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

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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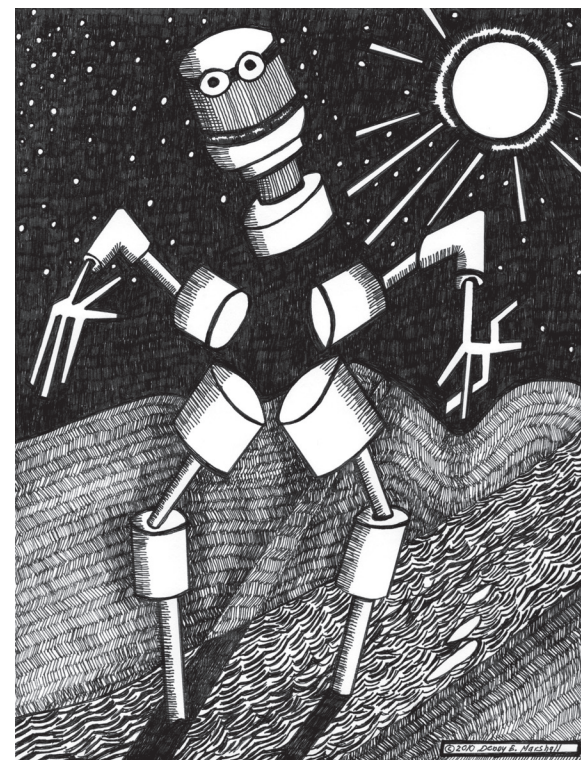
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Wading in the Gravity Stream, © 2010 Denny Marshall

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EXPLORING THE COSMOS

.....
minimalist science poetry



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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.

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 lily pads
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