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Excerpt from: {being about to ASCEND}

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Excerpt from: {being about to ASCEND}

Cover Page Footnote

The author would like to thank the reviewers for their very insightful comments, which helped me reinvent the submission, and _S&T_ Editors Julia Brown, Scott Koski, and Suzanne Black for their patience in waiting for my revision, and from the beginning allowing me to recuse myself out of fairness from considering any of the other poetry in this issue.

Excerpt from:

{being, about to ASCEND}

Dramatis Personae

Alien Secret Agent

Alien *Being*

Posthuman Community (being)

Alien Poet

Scene I: Earth, the end of the Anthropocene

1. The Fired Man

“He never did a thing so very bad.

He don’t know why he isn’t quite as good”

--Robert Frost {“earth poet”},
“Death of the Hired Man”

“Forgive the left hand: I’m in agony.

I tore the right one off when I fell from
the ladder of the ship. The doctors said
they couldn’t do anything hydraulic with it.
They’ve grounded me like I’m nothing, earth,
won’t give me a mission schedule, flight-dates.
I was the best pilot in the place.

I loved that agency! Was I surprised
when they said they’d refuse to pay my bills!
Two burst disks in my neck, and I can’t use
this arm or hand—may never fly again.
The nurse who had been treating me told them
my polyhol problem has nothing to do
with the accident. ‘You sure you want
that alien in the room?’ my lawyer asked.
So I’m a polyholic! I’m not ashamed
to admit it. I drink to ease the constant strain.
They know I was a good impersonator,
even when I had too much that day.
They took my cosmic pension, benefits.
Planetary is investigating.
My mate told them it’s gotten where you have
to lie on an application form
to get a job. Like all those accidents
I had before. I had to miss some days.
Last time I almost tore my left leg off;

**Alien Secret Agent fails its covert
mission among Posthuman Community,
and is fired...**

the doctors reattached it with a ball—
the kind they use with cyborg hips and knees.
And now I'm *fired* into outer space.
I was the best 'human' in that place!"

2. Alien Manifesto

'We want to take you with us.'

"We want to help you grow."

""New couplings, chips, plug-ins, circuits.""

""Male and female jacks, motherboards.""

""Our voices will fly from our bodies, soar.""

""Over the house where your corpse still sits.""

""In the dark terminus of your little room.""

""Our message will find its way into every home.""

""On every planet in every network.""

""Wired galaxies, electric stars.""

**Alien *Being* reveals itself to
Posthuman Community, and
invites it to join them...**

3. Ornamental

We will take our ornaments with us:
the same holiday decorations
brought out of storage—hung in outer spaces
of deep blue spruce; or holiday candles
flaming, rising up beneath the ground—
from the highest hidden holy shelves,

taken down;

our cloned children in their cozy pods,
our drones surveillancing nighttime skies—
from gravity our satellites dangling

**Posthuman Community prepares
to leave a ravaged Earth, tries to console
itself ...**

amid dark branches, stars and galaxies
and other ornamentals, flowers popping,
growing down through pots with no false bottoms—
signs for memories, emotions, thoughts—
human sentiments we'll celebrate,

forgot

Scene II: Interstellar Space

4. Dirge of the Space Travelers

We will sing without air a stranger tune,
watching the stars explode the universe;
then travel to another wasted dune.

We will inscribe there a different rune.
We know our mission and shall not rehearse.
We will sing without air a stranger tune.

I do not think we'll see Earth again soon:
the rocket we ride can never reverse,
traveling to another distant dune.

We will explore the furthest paltry moon,
and with aliens begin to converse.
We will sing without air a stranger tune.

We'll sleep in our ship like a tin cocoon;
one mistake could make it a cosmic hearse,
traveling to some other dusty dune.

We may serenade the ultimate loon,
but we will never be free of the curse.
So we'll sing without air a stranger tune,
then travel to another wasted dune

Posthuman Community departs
Earth for good, contemplates the long
voyage ahead in interstellar
space, the alternate reality it represents,
and how it might affect them physically...

5. Alien Love

(A Sonnet)

Emotions, like the mind, are hardwired,
limited. We can't conceive of beings sired
differently from the senses we call I—
oh yes, differently combined, Sir: eye

where mouth should be, to see but not to kiss,
watching us, two heads, something amiss,
an arm extending from posterior,
knowing one grip only, inferior—

but in the end, my dear, too much like us.
Technology, you say? A mere extension
of our senses: a palette for perception,
painting the invisible, sculpting touch.

We only reach another love through art,
feeling the tiny buttocks of the heart.

Posthuman Community begins to experience—and tries to explain—the humorous but radical material metamorphosis of their bodies

Scene III: An unknown planet somewhere deep in the Antares binary star system

6.

NOTE:

**An Alien Poet Imitates, then Writes
to William Carlos Williams**

(d. March 4, 1963)

○

This is just to say

I have eaten
the uranium
that was decaying
in the chamber
and which
you were probably
saving
for doomsday

forgive me
it was delicious
so dangerous
and so slow

Alien Poet imitates its favorite Earth bard, William Carlos Williams, suggests him for another covert mission, and invites WCW to its home for dinner

⊙

An ancient Earth physician and poet,
Dr. Williams is a humanoid
but a good friend of mine.

∇ / ≠ / ⊙

A revenant from Terre Prime,
he can now be found on

}}~^>v<~{{

He can be useful
for missions
other than the above.

Use my name.

∇ / ≠ / ⊙

•

Use my name.

∇ / ≠ / ⊙

So much depends
upon

a red
rocket ship

glazed
with star water

beside enhanced
white chickens.

Use my name.

∇ / ≠ / ⊙

Give him this address
or he'll go dock grey

∇ / ▲ / ⌘↑❖★⊙¥+Δt',ttr,

Tell him to keep
his blade up to prevent
overturning the
wheelbarrows, cutting
ideas into particulates, crushing

