

# The Greenless World

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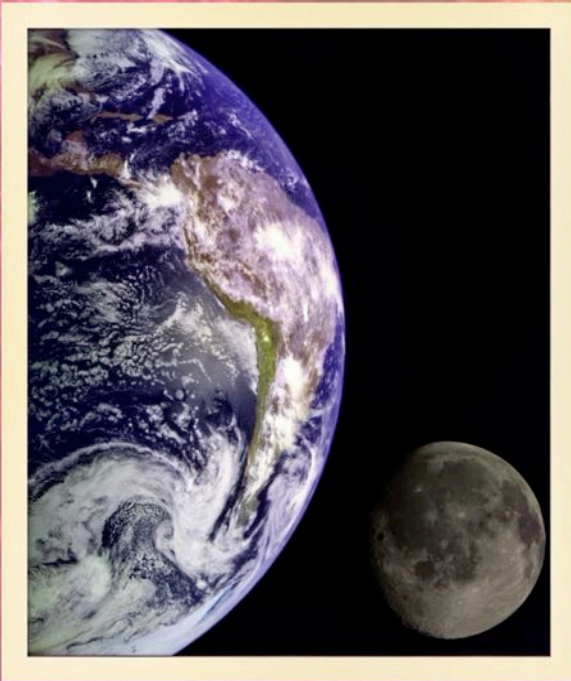
THE GREENLESS WORLD

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# On a Planetoid





## The Greenless World

(In the nether world, I learned the lore and  
Legends of the colors, of their uses  
In nature and emotions, the whatfor  
Of their light's glowing activity:)

(All color variants, quite numberless,  
Are made from the three primaries, no less;  
Namely: red, yellow, and blue—often backed  
By colorless white tinges or shades of black.)

I'd come to this strange and foreign world  
Over three years ago, as a scout  
For a phosphorus mining expedition,  
And here I had remained, marooned,  
For the nearest asteroid supply bases  
Had all been closed for lack of  
Their necessary Earth supplied material.  
Well, at least I had life. I'll take that anytime.

I was thankful too, that my alien friend,  
A native of this planet, was female,  
And that we were compatible  
Both genetically and physically,  
Although we were probably unable  
To produce offspring, at least so far.

Science long ago had indicated that Earth  
Was probably not the birthplace of mankind,  
That Earth was seeded by ancestors  
Who were common to all the galaxy.

My friend's name was Serena,  
That being the closest English translation.

Over the years here,  
I had learned her language  
And she had learned mine.

We lived together 24-7,  
And so I had been spared  
An eternity of loneliness,  
Although it had been a very close thing,  
I being the only human here  
And she being one of the few remaining natives  
Of this large but doomed planetoid.

This planetoid had been dying since its birth,  
For it had three suns,  
One of which was always shining,  
And so it was only a matter of time, I suppose,  
Before all the underground springs evaporated.





But these types of planetary events  
Were still measured in centuries, if not more,  
And there was perhaps  
No immediate danger in our lifetime,  
Although life here was certainly  
Becoming more difficult;  
Hence the already great exodus long ago  
Of those who could afford to leave.

There was never any darkness in this land  
Where the sun always shone,  
Not even inside the caves,  
For the phosphorous in the walls  
Gave off a constant luminosity.

This phosphorescent light  
Had been hard to get used to, at first,  
Although Serena had no problem,  
Having been born here;  
She even had the natural ability  
To sleep with her eyes open.

It was the hottest part of the month now,  
The time when the two largest  
Of the three suns shone at once,  
There often being such an overlap  
As this for days at a time,  
And so we often had to retreat

To the "cool dampness" of our cave—  
Our home in this primitive world.

Even when there was but one sun in the sky,  
It was still quite unpleasant to be outside,  
For it was always hot, and bright, too,  
For the suns, all of them, were large,  
And one could not easily look up  
Into the sky near any one of them.

As I said, the cave was lit  
By the radiant glow of the walls—  
No real blackness anywhere.

Our lunch was boiled brown vegetation,  
The only cuisine available;  
However, when one is hungry,  
One is thankful for anything at all.  
No gourmet food here.

Serena had never known darkness, and indeed  
There wasn't even a word in her language  
Which meant anything close to "dark", "night",  
Or even "black"; however,  
I'd been able to convey the concept  
By using the absence of light as an analogy.  
Of course, she still had trouble grasping the idea  
Of "that which could never be".





I suppose it was like asking someone  
To visualize a color that one had never seen.

(From just the three essential hues derives  
All of heaven's prismatic radiance,  
Myriad colors of floral brilliance,  
And technicolors that come so alive.)

Naturally, I tried covering her eyes  
To simulate darkness,  
Since she couldn't close them,  
But she still reported a yellowish color,  
And later, upon inspecting her eyes,  
I noted that they gave off a cat's eye type of glow—  
Just like every damn phosphorous rock on this planet.

Even the sand shone, like gleaming yellow snowflakes.  
Ironically, this was what had brought me  
Scouting here in the first place—  
The prospect of mining that rare yellow light  
That made fireflies glow  
And caused those struck matches of old to light up,  
For the Earth's supplies had long since run out.

(The offspring of married red and yellow  
Is the secondary, orange, a bright fellow;  
Its sibling, of blue and yellow, is green,  
With, of course, some gradation in between.)

(Saintly brother purple, twixt reds and blues,  
Completes the second generation hues.  
Next to arrive, lime-green, is a grandchild,  
As are all the tertiary colors wild—)

(They're crimson, magenta, maroon, scarlet,  
Amber, auburn, salmon, ocher, russet,  
Mauve, taupe, fuchsia, cherry, cerise, umber,  
Teal, emerald, and vermilion others.)

This ever present light was, at first,  
Psychologically disturbing,  
But I'd learned to live with it,  
First by sleeping with a band of cloth  
Wrapped around my eyes, although gradually  
I lost all track of time and just slept  
Whenever I got tired.

I also had to be careful not  
To come into any rough contact  
With the phosphorous rocks in the cave walls,  
Lest they should burst into flame.

Yes, it was a rather precarious existence,  
Though a livable one, but alas,  
I could never go home again...





For the Earth had been destroyed by a giant comet,  
One of the Perseids, the shower  
Whose many precursions  
Had given us the wonderful  
Meteor shows of that name.

I turned to Serena and spoke to her about it,  
Having been unable to deal with it until now,  
And because she had only recently gained  
The scientific knowledge to be able  
To understand solar system concepts.

“I was one of the lucky ones, Serena,  
For I was already out in space,  
Had just recently launched, in fact,  
When the disaster hit my home planet, Earth.

“You cannot know the shudder that went through me  
When I realized that all that I had loved was gone,  
That all that it was or could be, all that had formed me,  
Given rise to me, was gone forever.

“My Earth was one of the most priceless works of art  
That the universe had ever known.  
This rock on which we now live  
Is not even Earth’s pale shadow—  
At least we do have pale shadows on your planet,  
Though they are hardly noticeable.

“At first, when I saw Earth’s fireball,  
I thought that I had seen a shooting star, but then,  
Noting the origin and size  
Of the spectacular explosion,  
I was overcome by a horrid feeling—  
One that was chill and sickly,  
Like none I’d never known—  
That it was indeed the Earth that had left us.

“I could do nothing but continue on,  
For the Earth had no equal in our solar system.  
Oh, we had long ago searched  
The entire galaxy in vain for such a paradise,  
But the Earth had remained unmatched.”

Serena thought for awhile,  
Having only recently grasped the idea  
Of a universe filled with worlds,  
She never even having seen stars  
In this land in which night had never fallen.

But again I was fortunate that  
She had an open and intellectual mind;  
So during our recent studies  
I had been able to take her thoughts and her mind  
Across many centuries of learning and knowledge.





I was sequentially educating her, step by step,  
Using small and primitive learning blocks,  
Until reaching some rather complex theories.

She was now able to understand such concepts  
As solar systems, space travel, physics, biology,  
And many other unseen wonders,  
Like oceans, rivers and lakes,  
Which, though quite impossible on her planetoid,  
Were at least conceivable to her,  
Since she had often seen water bubbling up  
From the hot springs, which, by the way,  
Were apparently the limited  
And unrenewable source  
Of both water and oxygen  
On this planet.

Finally, she spoke,  
After allowing the cloud of sadness  
To pass from my brow,  
For she was emotionally very capable,  
*“Patrick, you lost everything that day—  
You are a man without a world.  
How many people died? How many survived?”*

“Trillions died—  
That is a number you don’t have here,  
But take your “deca” and multiply it by itself  
For “deca” number of times

And you will be close to knowing what a trillion is.  
No one on the ground survived.”

*“A trillion is like the number of grains of sand  
In the desert outside our door,”* she answered.

“Yes, Serena! I might of said that in the first place  
But I suppose I’ve been  
Too much of a scientist lately.  
As for how many survived,  
I’m sure that’s only in the thousands—  
Perhaps eventually only in the hundreds,  
Since many Earth outposts were contained  
Within domes on uninhabitable moons and asteroids  
And were quite dependent on the Earth,  
In the long run, for their survival.”

*“I understand more and more everyday,”*  
She answered,  
For she was now quite proud  
And even happy with all the ongoing revelations.

*“When you first fell from the sky  
I thought you a god,  
But now that you explain everything,  
I see that it all makes sense,  
And what once seemed magical and clever to me  
Is now all laid bare before my eyes  
As something entirely reasonable.”*





She spoke mostly in English now,  
There not being enough words  
In her native tongue to suffice,  
But of course  
When discussing particulars  
Known only to her world,  
We had to use her language,  
Which, for example,  
Had hundreds of different words  
For all the various kinds of light and heat,  
Although none for weather,  
Since it never rained or even got cold,  
And as I have mentioned  
There were certainly no words for night,  
Blackness, stars, or for other worlds.

(Strangely enough, all the color-pairs  
That symbolize seasons and festive fairs  
As they're found naturally in nature's ways,  
Do contrast on the color wheel, crossways:)

(Direct opposites on the color wheel,  
Sky-blue and leafy-orange, represent fall,  
For they are autumn's contrasting colors  
That quite up for its lack of flowers.)

(As with crocus, spring's floral colors yet  
Remain yellow primrose, purple violet—

The sensual sun, as it were, warming  
The virginal earth, with love, into spring.)

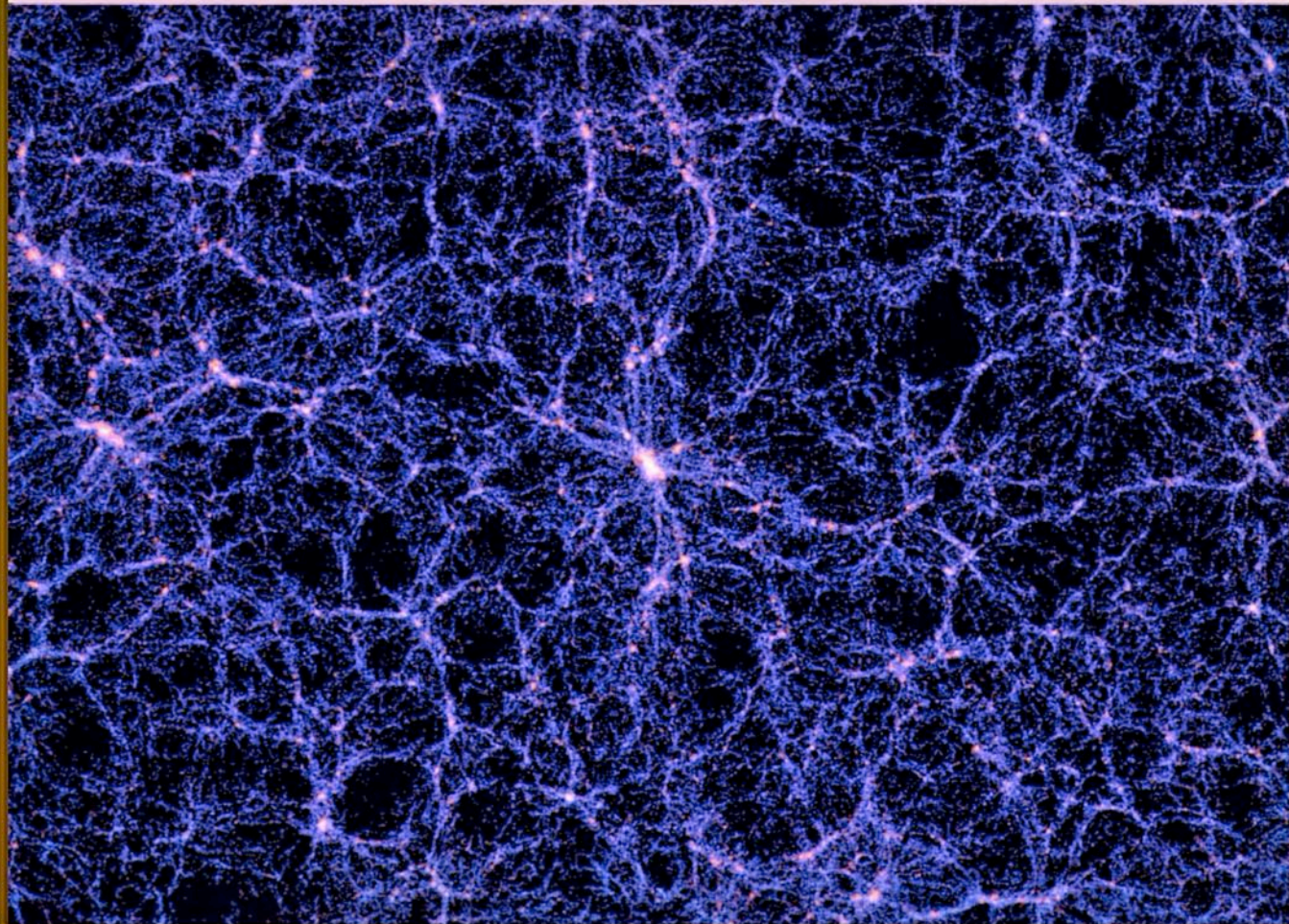
(The Christmas Holiday Season is "seen"  
In its opposing hues of red and green—  
As in Holly, berry-red, ever-green,  
Or in Poinsettias' red flush, leaf of green.)

(We're out of diametric color sets,  
So, which for summer? It must then contain  
The entire spectrum, as these the sunset  
And the rainbow express, in shine and rain.)

(Since winter's snow hides all things out of sight,  
Its colors are hidden inside white—and night,  
The cold season's symbols, for they conceal  
All of spring and summer's bright floral feel.)

(For that as different as day and night,  
We have the twin-opposites: black and white,  
For the day-clock first became dark and light  
When twin-gods split day & night, wrong & right.)

(Heaven's splendor, white, for purity, bless,  
Holds all the colors of prismatic light,  
But the symbol of the Prince of Darkness,  
Black, removes all the colors from our sight.)





(So then, it is proved that, in both nature  
And in the color wheel, opposites attract  
And complement in their contrast—to procure  
Both real and symbolic color contracts.)

She continued,  
*“We have been together several years now,  
And still I awake each morning eager to learn  
Of new mysteries. Is there no end to knowledge?”*

“Oh,” I replied,  
“Where I come from there is truly no end,  
But one cannot possibly know everything,  
So one ends up finding out things  
Only as they are required.  
Oh the wonders I could have showed you on Earth:  
The colors, the mountains, the forest, the meadows,  
The scents, the tastes, the inventions.  
I’m sorry that I don’t have any books with me  
Or even something so amazing  
As a mirror to show you.”

*“A mirror?”*

“Yes, you can see yourself in it.”

*“See myself? See another me? I cannot.”*

“Yes, it’s like a reflection in the water—  
Oh I forgot—there is no standing water here,  
And damn, I don’t even have a shiny belt buckle  
To use to show you the effect,  
And all the glass in my spaceship is non reflective.  
Anyway, yes, you could see yourself  
Just as others see you.”

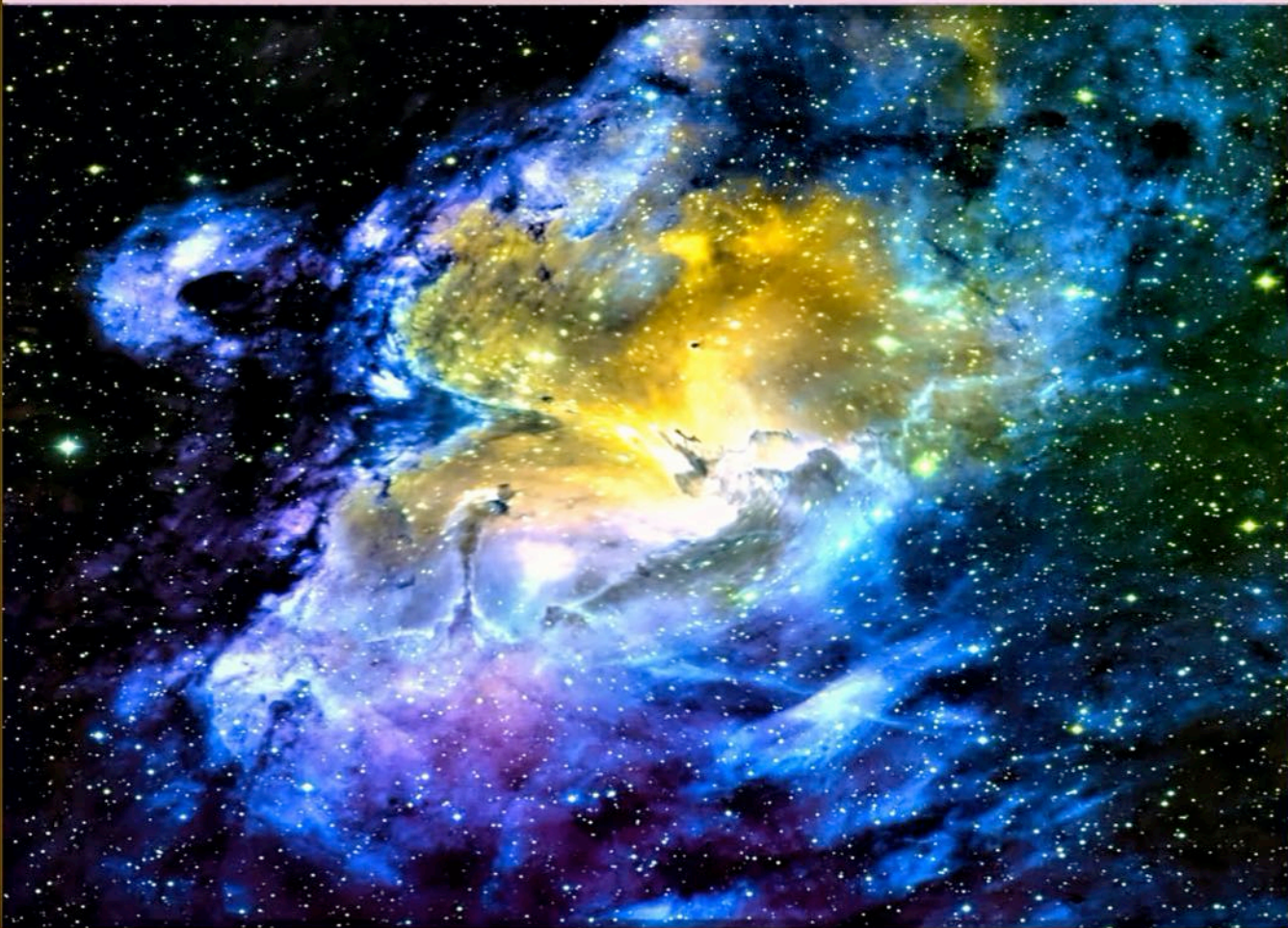
*“From the outside of me? I sort of understand  
But I cannot quite imagine.”*

“When mirrors first appeared on Earth  
In the form of polished metal,  
People thought them magical,  
And even in modern times  
One could watch with wonder  
The amazement of babies or small kittens,  
Who, though they both quickly got used to it,  
Thought first that they’d seen  
Another of their species.”

*“Kittens? Cat?”*

“Small furry animals.  
Domesticated—meaning tame or not wild.”

*“Animals? Wild?”*





"They are other forms of life,  
Some with four legs,"  
I explained, ever so patiently,  
For there were no animals on her planet.

It was in this way  
That we often got nowhere fast with words,  
But then all of a sudden progressed  
With great leaps and bounds,  
Especially with material ideas;  
However, abstract concepts took longer,  
And concepts like darkness  
Were still pretty much incomprehensible to her.

*"We had animals in the old days," she said;  
"There are drawings on some of the cave walls  
Of such as you speak.*

*They are all gone now, like your Earth.  
You seem so sad when you speak of Earth.  
It must have been wonderful.  
What do you miss the most?"*

I thought for awhile,  
Thinking of the scorched surface  
Outside our cave.

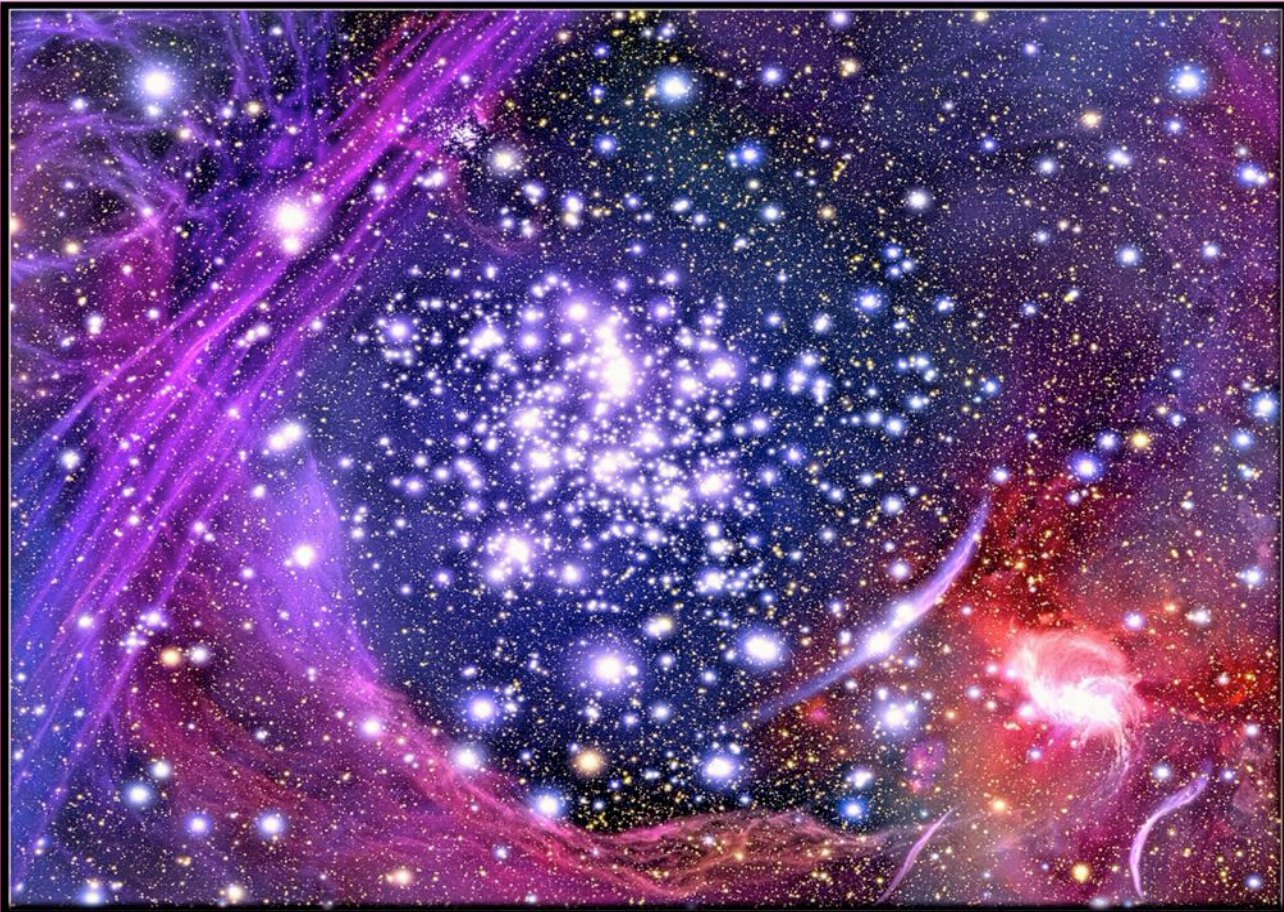
"What I miss the most is not the darkness,  
For I can simulate that here when I sleep,  
And not love, for I surely have that now with you,

And not the cold, for I never liked it,  
Nor life, for I am happy to have it here,  
If nothing more;  
But what I miss most,  
If I had to say some particular thing,  
Is the color green,  
For green is a color  
Which does not seem to exist here—  
The hue that is the soothing and lush  
Life-giving restful green of Earth.  
It was said the be the sanest color,  
Evoking serenity, as in your name."

(Next, we'll turn to the colors lone, to see  
The whatfor of their light's activity,  
But first, let's ask, Are there any missing hues,  
Unknown, hidden in rainbows, or not used?)

(Hidden colors? No, for I see how red goes  
To orange, graduating through the rainbow  
Into yellow and on through green, to let  
Blue into indigo to become violet.)

(Perhaps, between green and blue, lies some new  
Tincture, unique enough to be it's own hue,  
But alas, those turquoise waves everyday,  
In tropic seas, wash that theory away.)





(Yet, there may be some new colors that lie  
Before or beyond the spectrum and the eye,  
Like infrared or ultraviolet,  
Or gold, which only the fairies can see.)

(But what of clear, white, silver, gray, or black?  
Well, they're not true colors, for, either they lack  
All color (black, clear) or hide all hues (white)  
Or are mixtures (gray, silver): black-white.)

(But wait, there is a well-known color,  
One quite common in both dress and nature,  
That cannot be found in the rainbow—  
Give up? It's brown—and has nowhere to go!)

(Brown is the color of death, like the leaves  
That crumble dry and lifeless when earth grieves,  
Which is why the faeries won't let it show  
In their magically spectral rainbow.)

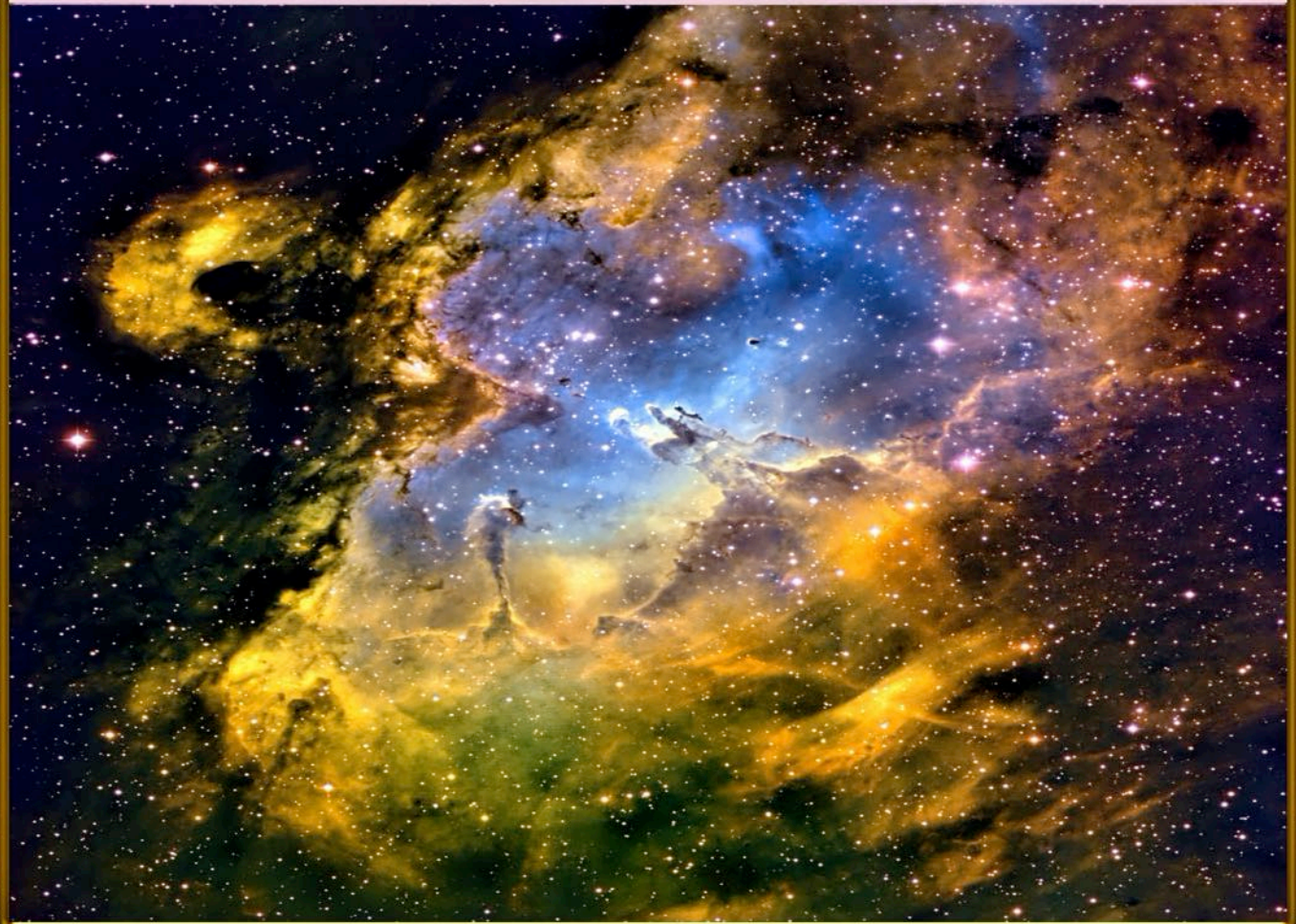
(But alas, brown's new hue is not to last,  
For brown's no more than red, yellow, and black.  
So, onward we move: What do colors mean?  
What's nature's physiological scheme?)

*"What is the color green?"* she inquired.  
*"I know the blue sky, the golden suns,  
The tan rocks, the brown leaves*

*And the brown vegetation,  
The pink of your hidden parts,  
The red of our blood and of your hair,  
The orange flashes of fire,  
The darker brown of trees that almost suggests  
The strange black color that you speak of,  
The gray shadows, and the yellow of phosphorous,  
But I have never known there  
To be a color called green.  
What is green?"*

*"I wish I could show you, Serena,  
But there is no green on your planet,  
Not even a tint or a shade of it.  
On Earth,  
The leaves and the vegetation are mostly green,  
But here, the same are all born brown,  
Even in the shadows of caves.*

*"Some people on Earth have green eyes even,  
But alas, mine are brown,  
And there is no other body part that is green.  
Although nothing much else on Earth is green  
But the vegetation, green has,  
Even more than the blue of sky and ocean,  
Come to be regarded as the sweetest color on Earth,  
For it represents all that is living  
And supportive of life.*





"It is very calming and serene, like you,  
And therefore many people use it  
As the color of their carpeting.

"Many of the other colors have drawbacks  
Or more specific uses:  
Red, for example means danger, blood,  
But having red tablecloths in eating places  
Makes people hungrier and so they order more food;  
Pink is debilitating, and so many of  
The game playing sports teams have painted  
the visitor's locker rooms in that hue;

"Blue is energizing and is  
Often used in working places;  
Yellow is bright and cheerful, the sun's color,  
And is often used in cooking rooms called kitchens,  
Although yellow can also mean caution, danger  
Even, especially with black,  
As on stinging insects called bees;

"Purple is used for mourning death  
Or for the regal Kings and Queens, the rulers;  
Our brown, like all around here,  
Is actually the most popular non primary color  
And is not, therefore, even in the spectrum,  
For it is made up of red and yellow (orange)  
And black."

(When we see red, we see danger: Stop! Blood!  
Metabolism rises, adrenaline floods—  
And, so, restaurants use red tablecloths  
To increase both the appetite and the cost.)

(Yellow, the quickest color we can see,  
Means caution, as with black on a bee,  
But yellow's bright and cheerful, too, and lends  
Light to small and sunless rooms like kitchens.)

(Healthful orange is the common man's color;  
So, to make the expensive look cheaper,  
Such as with a hotel, they paint it orange,  
And put some shiny polish on the door hinge.)

(Blue invigorates, and, therefore, provides  
Extra strength and power, so blue's on our side  
When the home team's locker room is painted  
In its hue (visitor's was pink—they fainted).)

(Blue, as was said, is good, except on food,  
For few foods are blue; so, in diet mood,  
Put a blue light in your kitchen—and lose  
Weight avoiding repulsive looking food.)





(Pink (red tinted with white) debilitates,  
Sapping strength and temper, so, that is why  
It's used in prison cells and locker rooms,  
For it calms the most violent inmates.)

(What of purple? Well, it's mournful, but, too,  
It's stately, regal, and virginal, new.  
Of green, though it's seldom worn, none complain;  
And use it in their carpets to stay sane.)

*"But," she persisted, "what is green like?  
If you can't tell me what it is,  
Then maybe you can say what it is like,  
Or perhaps you can say what it is not like."*

"Either way that's hard to say,  
For green is a unitary hue, and also primary,  
And, so being, means that there is nothing like it,  
No overlap; although if I had to say so,  
I think green is more like blue than any other color,  
But I only say that because green  
Is a cool and soothing color like blue,  
And not a fiery color like red, orange, or yellow.  
But, I should tell you that blue is certainly not green,  
Nor is green blue. If I myself had not known green  
Then I doubt that I could have  
Conceived of its existence."

*"That is fine philosophy," she said,  
"But it does not tell me what the the color green.  
Have you any green clothes?"*

"I do, or I did, but they're not with me—  
Not even the slightest thread,  
for I've already examined  
All my clothes and space suits.  
It's not that I don't like to wear the color green,  
Although it is seldom worn on Earth,  
Except on St. Patrick's Day—  
I guess there was already so much green on Earth  
That we all came to prefer more of a contrast.  
And my spaceship, it's all metallic skin  
And fiber optic conduit—  
There's no green anywhere in it or on it."

*"Patrick, I really wish that I could know green."*

*"Too bad there are no rainbows here or waterfalls."*

*"Rainbows?"*

*"Caused by water vapor falling from the sky,  
Called rain, or fog or moisture  
That divides white light into the colors  
That join to form it."*





*"Waterfalls? Falling water?"*

"There are none to be found here—  
The rivers dried up long ago,  
Leaving only those ruts in the ground  
That I sometimes call canals.  
I really miss green, though—  
It is somehow a part of me,  
But let's not give up on it so easily, Serena."

We ventured outside the cave,  
To begin a search for green,  
There being only one sun up now,  
Although it was still a scorching 95 degrees outside.  
We lifted some rocks,  
Finding various insects thereunder,  
But they were either brown, gray, drab, or colorless.  
I next peeled back some bark from a 'tree',  
Hoping for some inner tint of mossy green,  
But it was only tan.

I pulled up a plant and tore open a leaf,  
But had no luck with that either—  
Evidently chlorophyll played no role on this planet.  
Next we cracked open a rock,  
But found not the fabled color.  
This planet was indeed a greenless world.

*"I guess green is not necessary for life here,"*  
She said.

"I guess not.  
This reminds me of the time I read a book  
Which did not use the letter "e",  
The most frequent letter in our alphabet.  
I didn't even notice it at first,  
Although I had a vague feeling  
That something wasn't quite right."

Even though I was now very tan,  
I didn't dare stay out in the sun too long,  
So we gave up our green search for today  
And headed back to the cave.

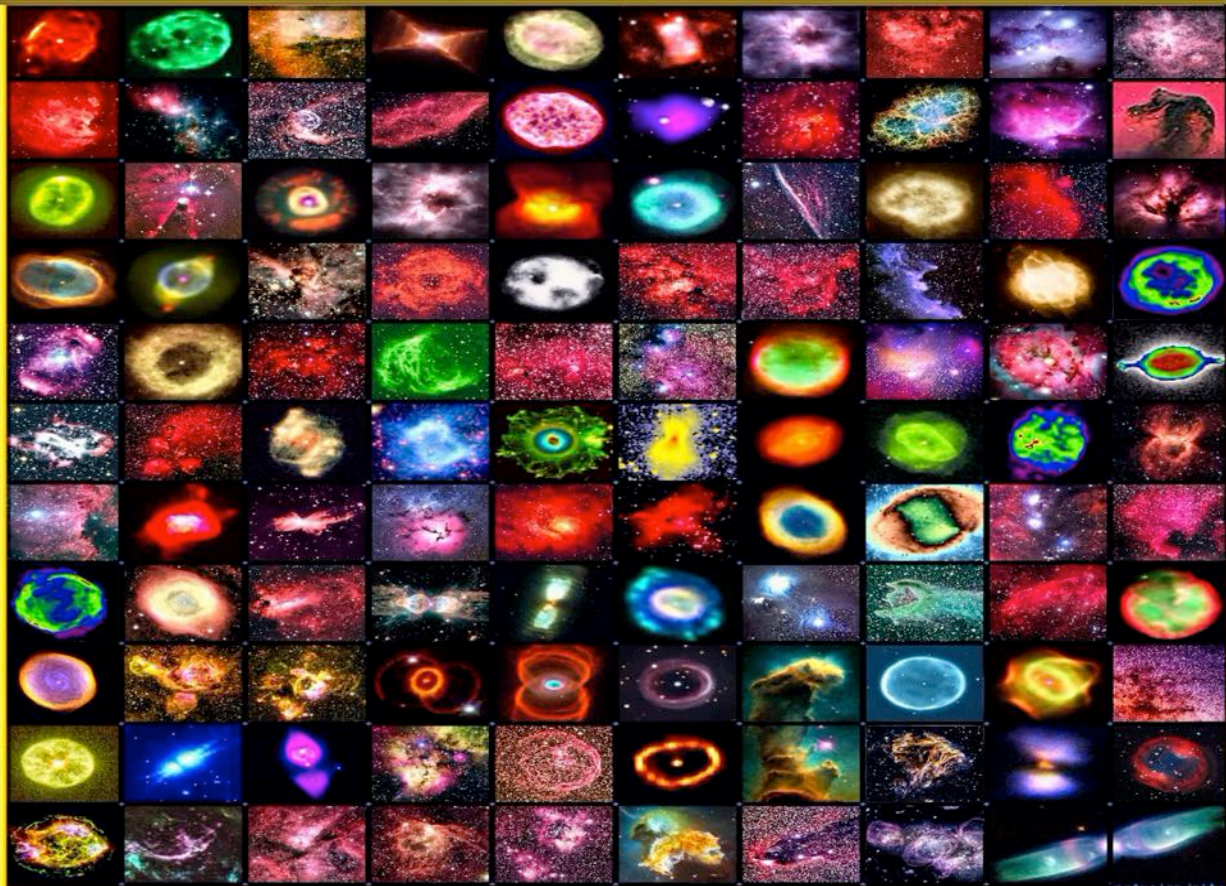
"I wish I had some ice," I said.

*"Ice?"*

"Solid water—hard as a rock,  
Nut so refreshingly cold."

*"Make me some ice, Patrick."*

"That I can never do in this climate.  
It never gets cold enough."





*"What is cold?"*

"It's hard to explain if you've never felt it,  
But it's sort of like how the underside of a rock  
Does not burn your hand because  
It's cooler than the top;  
Only "cold" means much much more cooler."

*"I know not this thing called cold,"* she replied.

I looked fondly at Serena  
As we walked back to our eternal cave.  
Her skin was a very deep bronze, all over,  
For she always went naked.  
She had blonde hair,  
But no other body hair,  
since her race had never known cold, I guess.  
Her hands and feet were wide and leathery,  
With six toes and six long slender fingers.

She had no real eye lids to speak of, or eyebrows,  
But otherwise had all the other humanoid features  
And anatomy—  
She was a human first cousin, perhaps.  
She was completely vegetarian by necessity.  
She had not a violent thought in her head,  
Having, I suppose, no natural enemies to fear.

For dinner, we gathered some brown leaves,  
Which evidently contained  
All the nutrients that we needed,  
Since we were still healthy,  
And then retired for the 'day'.

*"What else do you miss from your Earth?"*  
she asked as we lay together.

"Well, at night, for this is night to me now,  
I miss the stars—those suns of other worlds  
That I told you about, the stars that shine  
Across the blackness of space,  
For they are far away and thus appear very small."

*"You mean that the space between the stars is black?  
At least I think I know what black might be.  
And the suns are not bright and blinding  
Since they are so far away?"*

"Yes, but we will never see the stars here—  
And how I miss them all,  
That night sky full of lights.  
I used to look up at it as a boy  
And dream of going to the stars.  
Then the transwarp drive was invented  
And my dreams took wing."

*"What do stars look like exactly, at night?"*

## Eternity's Nursery

Nebulae put their young  
to sleep in soft beds,  
Blanketed by webs  
of gossamer threads;  
The stellar creatures cast  
their spectral glow,  
As infant stars of astral light  
start to grow.



"They are very small, just points of light really,  
But they twinkle like jewels,  
Such as diamonds and sapphires,  
And some stars are even emerald green—  
Like the close star companion of Sirius!"

*"Jewels? Diamonds? Emerald? GREEN!"*

"Jewels are stones that give off light  
In colorful gleams and sparkles,  
Like when you cover your eyes  
After seeing a bright light,  
Or like the gleaming sands outside."

*"I see them in my mind.  
Are there a lot of stars?"*

"Trillions—so many that some areas  
Of the night sky appear as cloudy white patches."

(The stars are not just white, they scintillate:  
Sirius is blue, its companion green;  
Betelgeuse, red; many, like Sol, yellow;  
Arcturus, orange—all jewels constellate.)

*"I wish that I could see stars, Patrick."*

"There are so many things that you'll never see!

If only I'd brought some photos of Earth with me!"

*"Photos?"*

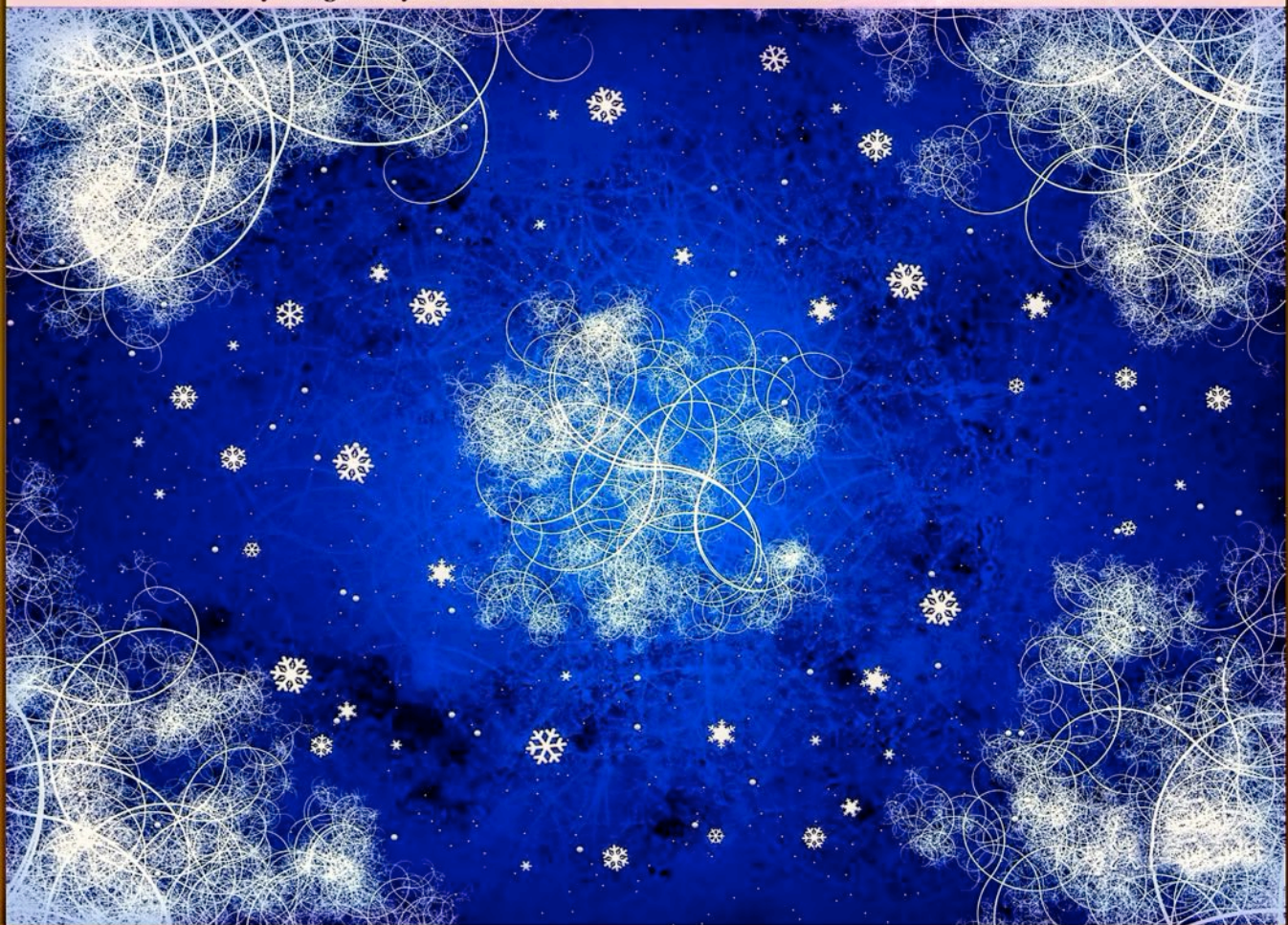
"Yes, they are like permanent mirrors."

*"I could see Earth and yet not be there?"*

"Yes, and it would look about the same.  
We even have  
Three-dimensional holographic pictures."

*"Oh, that there are such wonders!"*

As I fell asleep in her embrace,  
I had some dreams of Earth—  
At least I could still go there in my sleep.  
Oh, how often had I taken Earth for granted,  
Not appreciated it when it was there;  
I even left it time after time  
To go off into the cold and colorless void.  
I tried to forget it, but I could not.  
Well, at least I was alive in this strange sort of Eden.  
Anyway, life was life, and more and more  
I realized that I didn't really need  
Anything fancy from life,  
Except love, of course.  
Yes, love was enough—  
And it is reason for all that we do.





Well, my spacecraft was still in working order,  
But was there any place out there left for me to go?  
Was there any life still out there?  
Or had it all withered away by now  
For lack of support?  
There were plenty of  
Borderline class-K planetoids around  
Like this one, but, unfortunately,  
None of them were anything like Earth  
For a long ways in every direction.  
Perhaps I could head in some chance direction,  
Running out of fuel, of course,  
But coast at a high speed for years—  
No, it was too risky—  
My ship was only of the intersolar type  
And was not meant for distant star travel.

I could, though, return to the main mining base,  
An artificial world built on an asteroid;  
But, no good,  
For it too was a world with an uncertain future,  
A world even more sterile than Serena's planet.  
No, my life was here now.  
Anyway, all the greener worlds  
Had nasty diseases and organisms  
Against which I could never be immunized.

Yet another of those endless  
Overly tropical days dawned,  
But only in my mind,  
For the sun never rose or set  
Without another sun  
Already in the sky before it.  
No dawn, no dusk, no half light.  
I had brown leaves for breakfast again!  
Talk about the simple life!  
I was becoming a modern day Thoreau.

*"Tell me again about the mysterious colors  
Of black and green," she asked.*

"Black is easier to tell of,  
So let's start with it,"

I answered.

"Black is the absence of all color,  
And so it is the opposite of white,  
Which, amazingly, is the sum of all colors,  
Although white reveals not a one of them,  
Except through a prism.  
Since your life is based on phosphorous,  
You see a dim yellow even as a background color  
When you shield your eyes.  
But when I close my eyes  
I see a black background."





*"I can't think what would be there  
If not for the yellow glow."*

"I'm afraid I'm not doing a good job of explaining."

*"Try harder," she encouraged,*

Then it hit me! "What a fool I've been," I said.

*"I have an old-fashioned ink pen  
Somewhere in my spaceship,  
One that writes in black  
On something old called paper!"*

*At once I retrieved it,  
And the pen still worked  
As I ran it along my skin.  
"That is the color of night, my dear.  
This is black. See how dark it is?"*

*"I see now," she said. "It is as I thought,  
Being the limit reached by the removal of all light,  
The color hinted at by shade and shadow,  
The color just past brown, at least for me—  
A lack of color really, like you said;  
But I still do not understand what is green.  
Do you have any green ink?"*

*"No, people don't usually  
Write with green ink.*

Red ink, yes."

I quickly ran outside  
And went through my spaceship  
With a fine-toothed comb.  
The ship was all white and metal gray;  
There was not a shade of green to be found  
Anywhere on it or in it.  
The seats were simulated leather  
And all the electronic readouts were orange on blue.  
All the supply kits were yellow  
With the insignia of the mining company.  
I had trouble even finding anything blue on the ship.

*"We're a long way from Ireland,"  
I said, exasperated.*

*"Ireland?"*

*"It's a country on Earth  
Known for its forty shades of green."*

*"I wish that I could see Ireland, Patrick."*

*"No one will ever see it again except in memory,  
Although I came from there."*





*"Can you not make me the color green somehow?"*

The question struck me dumb,  
For it was really a very good question as asked.

"Wait a minute," I said.  
Green is made from mixing blue and yellow—  
But, unfortunately I don't have any paints  
Or such mixing materials,  
Although I do have a bluish-black pen,  
But of course not a yellow one,  
For who would write with yellow ink."

*"Worse than writing with green,"*  
She added, smiling, catching on.

"Yes, writing with yellow ink is silly  
But yet, there must be some way to produce green.  
Serena, can you logically mix blue and yellow  
In your mind and then imagine the result?  
No, forget it, that doesn't make much sense,  
For yellow and blue give no hint  
Of the resultant green like, say,  
The way yellow and red readily hint  
Of the resultant orange."

We sat silently for while, stumped,  
The heat growing stronger all the while.

She looked down at the ground, disappointed.  
I, too, looked glum for a time. Neither of us spoke.  
We saw nothing but yellow phosphorous  
And the yellow sand gleaming even more golden  
In the light of the twin suns—

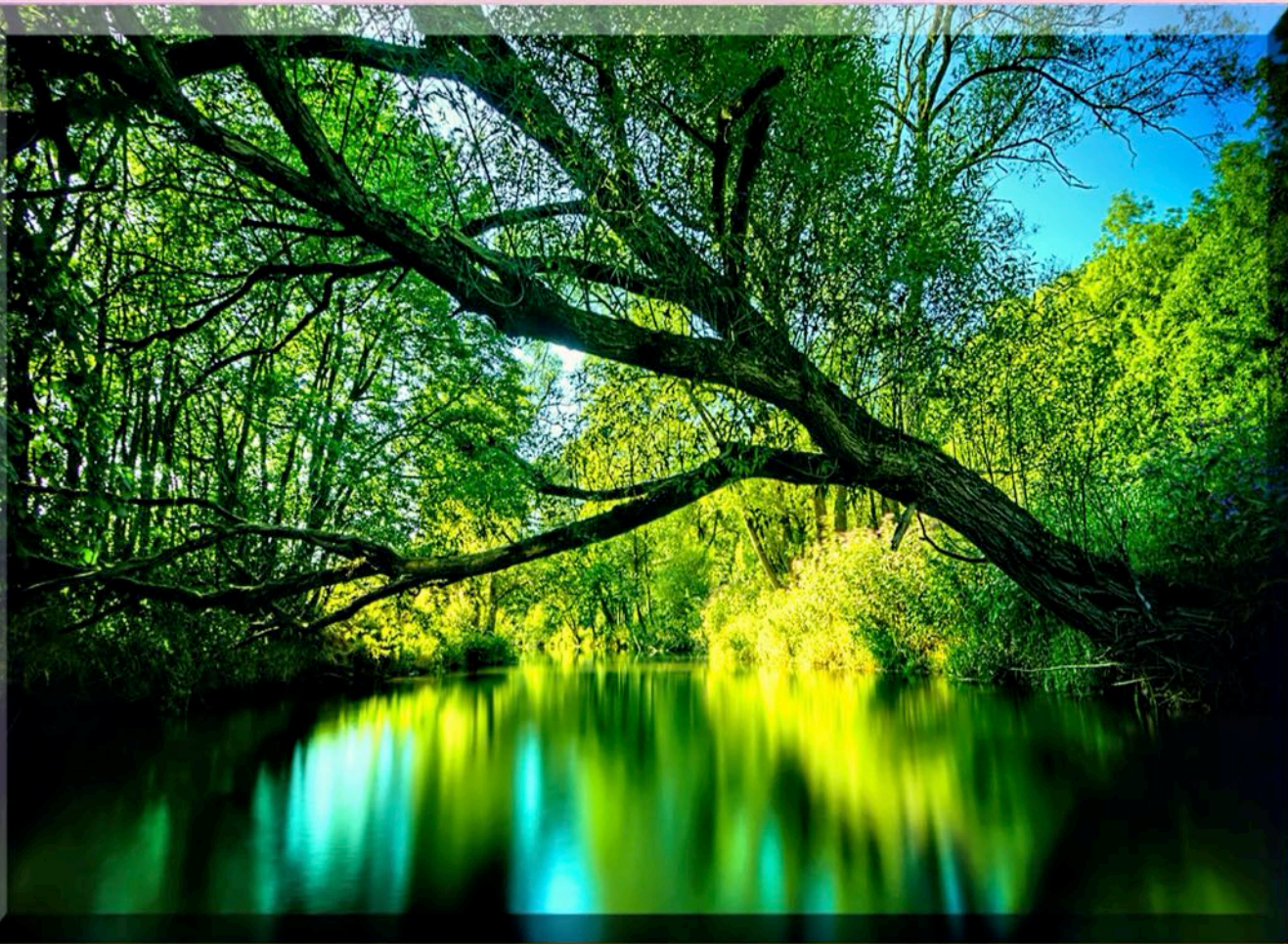
There was yellow everywhere we looked—  
Hot warm glowing yellow and more yellow  
Until it had fully saturated the eyes and the mind.

Then I noted a flash of inspiration on her face.  
She smiled and suddenly looked straight up  
Into the bright blue sky, as none had ever dared to,  
Then covered her eyes and screamed with delight.

*"I see green, Patrick!"* she cried.  
"I see it. It's green!"

I quickly did the same as she, and, yes,  
The mixing of the blue sky  
With the yellow afterimage  
Of the phosphorous ground  
Had produced a clear and vivid green.

She had, at last, seen the verdant color of Earth.





(Well, as colors go, so, then, do we, see:  
Hues are just differing wavelengths of light  
That the brain interprets, in its own right,  
For some natural colored necessity.)

(May I chance upon a land of strange rainbows  
Of elfin-hued flowers: red delphiniums,  
Black tulips, orange fuchsias, white marigolds,  
Bronze grass, and the legendary blue rose.)

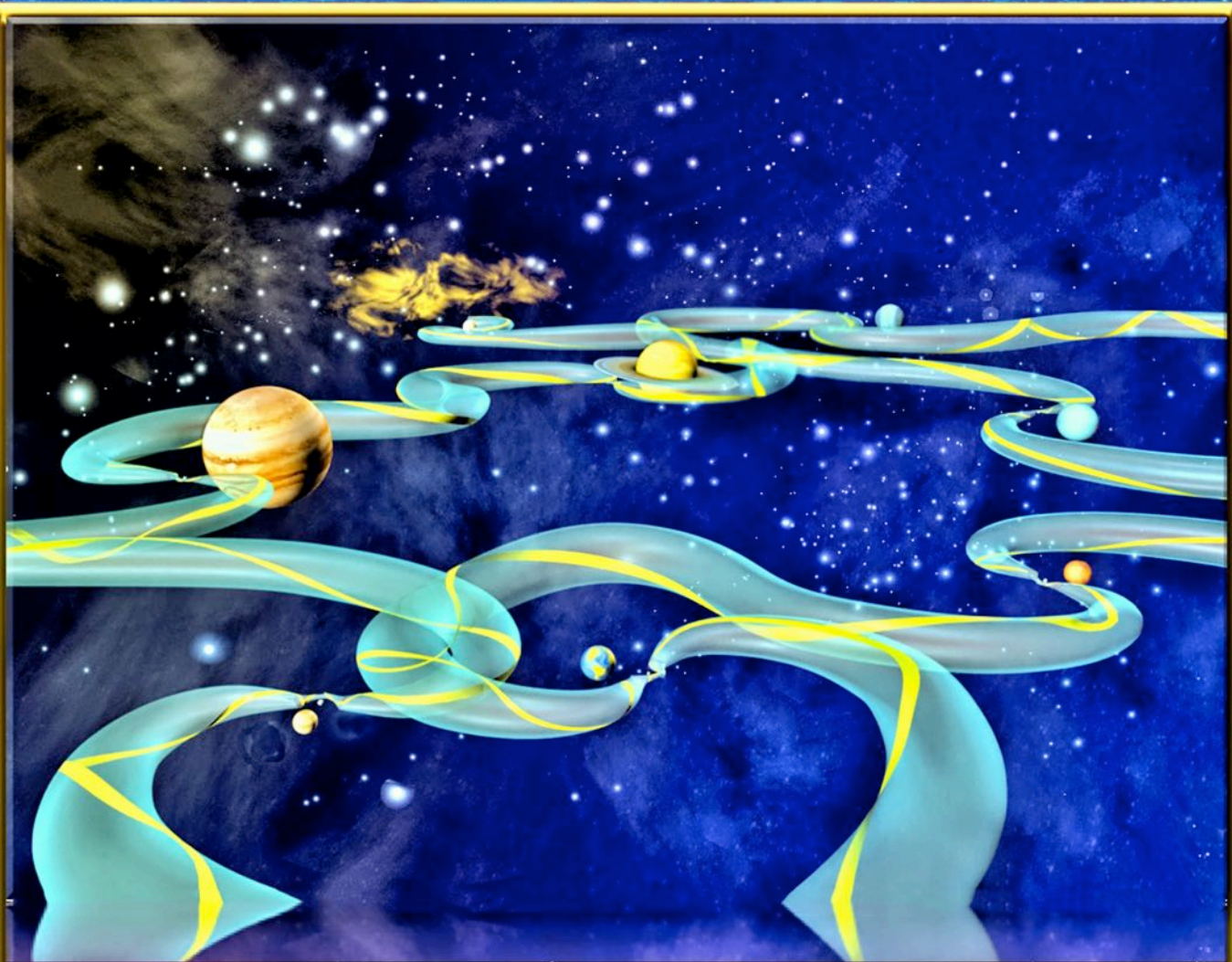


To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour.





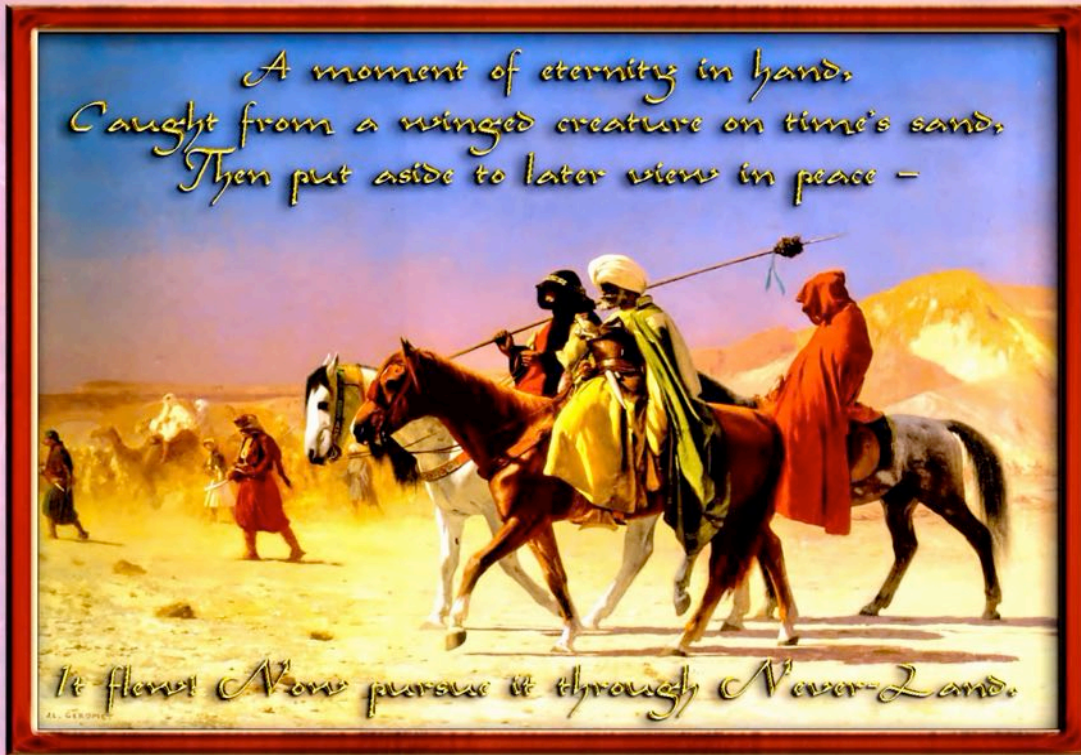






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*A moment of eternity in hand,  
Caught from a winged creature on time's sand,  
Then put aside to later views in peace -*



*It flows! Now pursue it through Never-Land.*

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