

## **An Astronaut's Daughter Speaks**

The rot in this supermoon sky  
is spreading into the floorboards  
of your former home

where your ex stands,  
thoughts percolating  
within her Castle Rock cortex.

I stand in the front yard,  
wet grass spiking through my toes

beneath an army of constellations,  
poisoned since you left

Denver's light pollution  
leaking into my 1-87 horizon.

I was two when the fire lifted you  
into the Universe's bed sheets,

into the secret belonging  
of wormhole propulsion.

The sky holds on, ruthlessly  
to your silver-plated spacecraft  
spearheading through that particle density,

separating you from an alien's face.  
How many noses, mouths, brains?

I of course have one of each  
at the dinner table you made,  
a family gathering with only two?

If you return, will I greet a hero  
or a skeleton in a suit?

Mother returns with milk & eggs,  
staples we must nail down  
to sustain what remains.

You must understand: when I speak  
of we, I no longer include you  
beyond the biology I'm bound to.

Once she finishes frying up her omelet,  
we'll eat in silence

after dissecting the gossip  
in our small star cluster town.

## **The Cosmos is Born**

The Milky Way is stretched out  
like a lover  
across my family's wheatline sky.

I peer into my viewfinder  
to capture the sultry curves  
only found in her gas plumes,

but I am quickly hooked  
by the worlds

of ice and volcanoes  
spinning in her eye-socket orbits.

Blink once and we'll miss  
the death of her Patriarch star.

Father yells  
through the screen door,  
demanding his son

sit at the supper table  
and pray to the Almighty Lord.  
Dear God,

we must not remiss  
in our recluse

of ceaselessly searching  
for Heaven  
over a chemical bath soaking.

The Cosmos is born  
in a blue light delight

just as Mother finds escape  
in the pooled  
darkness of her bedroom.

Let's lose ourselves  
in a splattering of hydrogen burn  
on our gelatin creation.

## **Jacob as an Asteroid Miner**

We landed within a vacuum  
of electromagnetic radiation,  
lasting one solar orbit

on a rock-ice body  
as named for the Roman goddess  
of home and hearth.

The mine, the saloon,  
the one-story schoolhouse:

all front-porch visible  
as we breathed chunks of atmosphere.

Over a Vestan year,  
Jacob rose with the droves

before descending  
into the black soup of pursuit,

into a mob of mineworkers  
schlepped down an elevator shaft.

At dusk, the screen door  
swung wide upon his return,

that frostbite breeze  
cooling my Irish stew.

When the iron-rich clay  
blackened his face, he wiped  
the soot from his eyelids

and doled out a passing kiss,  
sliding our supermarket survival  
into my pocket. Just as fast,

he threw his mask of love  
and rust-stained jeans  
onto the bedroom floor.

I meanwhile dished out  
steaming supertime platefuls.

## **Moon Trash**

A trashman skids to a stop.  
The colonizers hired him  
to feed relics  
into a mouth of metal teeth,

slicing the past like his grandfather's  
serrated knife skinning a rabbit  
in Lake Cadillac country.

*70 rovers, modules, and crashed orbiters —  
2 golf balls — 96 bags of urine, feces, and vomit.*

The man moves on  
to where Charles Duke left  
a crinkled photograph in the highlands:

the wife in a sea-green dress;  
the youngest with a hand on his mother's knee;  
the oldest is still a boy in a tie and button-down;

the astronaut is of course smiling  
behind everyone, but he's of course not  
an astronaut when the Ann Arbor-native  
gazes upon that black ocean stare;

he's of course a father, a husband  
standing with his today and tomorrow  
under a white crescent Moon  
stitched into the fabric of a light blue sky.

The Michiganite returns the snapshot  
to the soil, vaulting back up  
before his Earth crust home  
crawling into the wolverine claws of his eyes.

## Planet X Soap Opera

Neighborhoods of rabbit ear  
TeeVees picked up an exobroadcast  
shoveling pixels

into the living rooms  
flanked by apron-clad glee.

A Riverside wife went into  
convulsions, a Newton priest  
performed an exorcism

on his RCA, and a Flat Earth believer  
swam into the Atlantic,  
seeking to breaststroke off the globe.

I for one dropped my jaw to the floor  
like a milk carton, dairy spilled  
before the plot points

of a lesbian love triangle  
conveyed by exoskeleton females  
purple to the touch  
quacking in off-Nowhere theatrics.

At a scene's wrap, the production  
cut to a commercial for extraterrestrial  
body wash: some reptilian creature

lathered himself  
while reading off cue cards.

Suddenly, Walter Cronkite  
discontinued the disturbance,  
announcing technical difficulties

to a suburbia wailing in hysteria.  
Yes screams piped in  
through my kitchen window

as I fashioned my remote  
into a projectile at my screen,  
mouth cranked open  
to our Solar System's data stream.