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Particles

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I Hold Life in My Hand

Ciara Laing

I am the fiery purple searing the dusk sky
With a sunflower shape swaying
In a warm, seductive summer breeze

I, the Toccata and Fugue in D minor,
Pounce on your delicate ears
While my Thai noodle taste, splattered
With peanut sauce taunts your mouth

I, the electric violin, seize
The soul behind your eyes;
My sea turtle body invading
Every inch of your ocean mind

I, the cherry blossom, shade
You from Death’s gnawing obliteration
While you flee to the white sand beach
In your ‘65 mustang: bleach pink

I am the third mermaid that plunges
To the bottom of the abandoned lake
Searching for the overstuffed couch
From which you came

Particles

Jeriann Watkins

Floating, flying, dancing through the air as we usually do, we orbit our moon. We shoot out to the limits of gravity’s pull and squeal with excitement as we get pulled back into her cool embrace. We do this constantly, always moving. Moving is how we obtain our knowledge. Sounds and actions, thoughts and colors from all over the universe bounce by at lightning speed. If we move quickly, we can see them.

This is how we learned that the humans are coming. Any day now, they will be here. We can see the rocket — large and white — leaving fire in its wake. We hope that none of us are harmed when it arrives. The humans are gigantic, though not as large as the rocket. What will we look like to them?

When the ship arrives, we feel the disturbance in our atmosphere. We are sucked toward the center of our moon, pulled by the powerful vacuum. We feel the heat and hear the humans plan their landing. The spaceship is even more monstrous than we thought. As it lands and powers down, we circle the giant machine. Their technology is wonderful! The exact measurements in both the temperature of the fire and the shape of the vessel show how hard they have worked. Oh what the humans can invent! They are surely one of the more advanced species we’ve seen in several millennia.

We gather in front of their ship, waiting for them to emerge. We listen to their conversation; they are looking for life forms. They don’t want to be harmed while leaving their ship. We hope they know we are friendly.

“There’s no sign of life out there. Looks like we’re alone.”

That’s not right. How can the machines not sense us? We will have to tell them that their equipment is flawed. Slowly, the door opens. Out walks a gargantuan human, made even bigger by his astronautical suit. Glancing around, he looks right through us. We are everywhere, yet we do not even register in his vision.
Maybe these humans are not as advanced as we thought.

We try congregating in his line of sight and hovering around their life-sensing machine, but nothing works. We put all of our weight on the buttons of their equipment. They do not detect us.

They stay for several days and we learn wonders about their world, but we cannot share what we know about so many other worlds. We cannot tell them our own story—our moon's history—about which they are so curious but could not even begin to imagine. These humans are a puzzle. Parts of their brains are very developed, as shown by their ability to be here. But vital parts of their minds seem unused, hidden from themselves. They leave without knowing that they have been observed this whole time, disappointed by the lack of life on the beautiful grey organism that they see as a rock.

We wish we could help them, but we have tried everything. So, we continue zipping about our moon, enjoying the lightness that returns with the departure of the vacuum-spaceship. The next visitors will be able to communicate with us. No other species has ever had this problem. We keep track of the humans though, to see if we can determine where their flaw lies. Perhaps someday, we can find a way to overcome it.

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Swamp Thing

Erin Jamieson

In the swamp, I live serenely. My fang-like teeth have speckles of dark mud. The bugs crawl on my stubby toes and my hair flows freely down my back. I press my feet hard against the grass and I charge through the reeds. The air smells like my wet bathing suit when I forget to hang it up to dry. A sweet peace fills my entire body. There is no gap between what I think and feel and where my limbs take me. Everything is aligned.

I hear a sharp whistle.

I know that it is time for dinner. It is my father's signal for me to make my way back. I crawl through the reeds, hop some stones, and quickly make my way onto the porch.

"Swamp-thing!"

That is what my brothers call me. My hair is in my face and there's dirt just about everywhere. My feet thud against the hard wood floor.

I love my brother, Dan. My other siblings tease me and make fun of me, but my brother Dan—he loves me. He's nice to me. He'll let me hang out with his cool high school friends. I get to have special handshakes with each of them. I want to marry his friend Christopher. He is a valid victorion and super nice.

Ah! Now there's one smell I will never mix up. My mom probably didn't feel like cooking tonight, so my dad picked up pizza on his way home from work.

"Now who would like to pray?"

Silence.

"Holly?"

"Thank you Jesus for this food and for this food."

We all grab a piece for our plate. I am very tired from all the work I did out in the swamp. I had to run around and catch all sorts of bugs and then put them in the house I made for them. And I didn't even get a simple "Thanks." My mouth is dry.