

Victor Henry

Out There

“your hand touching mine. this is how galaxies collide.” -- Sanober Khan

Until 1929 you didn't know there was an out there.
Your sight was limited by the immensity of your own galaxy,
Thinking it was the entire expanse of the universe,
thinking it was all there was.

Now technology races ahead at the speed of light in vacuum c .
You have traced time back to 380,000 years after the Big Bang,
The universe cooling to about 300 degrees Kelvin.

What you learned in your science class in high school is now old school.
Carl Sagan called earth from a distance, after seeing a photograph, a pale blue dot.
But underneath the biosphere turmoil is treading.

Because of your greed and avarice, you are slowly destroying your planet.
Your addictions and your rapacious appetite for commodities,
Measured in profit and loss, has led you finally to the brink of extermination.

Your planet, born in Goldilocks conditions, was just right for more complex things to emerge.
And now in the bad Anthropocene epoch you have generated huge inequalities,

Millions living in dire poverty, while the world's richest
8 men own half of the world's wealth.

Though your species appeared 200,000 years ago,
When the sun novas in 5 billion years, expanding into a
red giant,
The rock planet you live on will vanish without a trace
you were ever here.

The Dead Within the Dead

“The secret of being a top-notch con man is being able to know what the mark wants, and how to make him think he’s getting it.” -- Ken Kesey

Every now and then the country loses its moral compass, historically takes a right turn, embraces fascism, nationalism, authoritarianism, shares a hatred for democracy, dissent, and human rights.

Some of the old timers, still alive, trapped in the historical past, remember Tail-Gunner Joe from the early 1950s, and Mr. Welch’s statement: “Have you left no sense of decency.” McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin, remembered for what he said: "The State Department is infested with communists. I have here in my hand a list of 205—a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department."¹ Who can forget the Catholic priest, Father Charles Coughlin and his National Shrine of the Little Flower Church? The first demagogue to utilize the power of the airways to promote a political and social agenda, remembered for his use of the radio to promote bigotry and anti-Semitism. Fast forward again now to 2018 and we have a misogynistic, pussy-grabbing, egotistical bully, a Caligula, fomenting cruelty, sadism, extravagance, and sexual perversion, a maniacal authoritarian dictator with tiny hands, spewing hallucinatory delusional pathological distortions of reality in the White House. In front of a podium he proclaims, in a speech to his base, he’s a nationalist. Like Joseph Goebbels, he becomes his own propaganda ministry. And in less than 140 characters, the maximum of a tweet, he incoherently tweets what his ego has just heard on TV, tweeting, for example, a strange midnight sentence fragment about “...the constant negative press covfefe.”

Another example of his half-baked conspiracy theories. When he leaves office, he will be remembered for his uncurbed lack of civility, his orange tint, his small shaped “o” of a mouth. His small hands. The image of toilet paper on his heel as he boarded the steps of Air Force One. The cruel, insensitive, arrogant words he spoke foolishly of the middle class, the poor, the vulnerable children. We rarely speak of our heroes in conversation with others. But when we do, we think of the bad guys first: Genghis Khan, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, LBJ, Nixon, George Bush. Public memory will remember Trump as the worst president the U.S. has ever had, an accolade he will contest by touting his Nero like greatness. How he made America great again, never defining it for the middle class, but anyone with a scintilla of the truth knew it was for the Gilded Age extremes, the Republicans and their 0.01 percent, the esoteric few who have a net worth of more than 100 million, the Corporatocracy that has been gifted off shore banking to hide undeclared income. Now in this era of AI and robotics, when Big Data analytics and algorithms know almost everything about you, culled and compiled from infotech and biotech information, Trump’s base, devoid of empathy and neurologically dead, revere his aesthetics of vulgarity, Live like single cell prokaryotes, lacking cognitive clarity to split into two, live like reptiles in the Holocene epoch, sunning themselves on the rocks, live like a gathering of religious primordial underdeveloped souls, living an un-lived life. His base, which makes up his whole, raised on American historical ignorance, devoid of reason and evidence, remain voluntarily conned sine die.

Victor Henry is the author of *What They Wanted*, a book of antiwar Vietnam poems (FutureCycle Press, 2015). He lives in Marina, CA.