

Three Siblings: Sun, Earth, the Comet Hyakutake

by F. Nelson Stover

The Universe watched in awe
 as a hydrogen star exploded
in a remote appendage of the Milky Way.

Myriads of new forms congealed
 out of this fiery furnace.
Three—a sun, a comet and a planet—
 would see each other every now and then.

The fused hydrogen atoms
 which had become helium
drew each other closer
 until
They ignited like billions of other
 helium stars throughout the cosmos.
Their massive gravitational fields
 served as a pillar
 around which the rest of the
 system of siblings revolved.

Some hydrogen pairs,
 which found new oxygen atoms
wandering in the stew
 of the celestial inferno,
 congealed into a ball of ice
launched out on a trajectory
 high above the galactic plane.
Aeons passed before the sun's pull drew the comet back.



Nearly 100 million miles beyond
the sun's searing heat
the heavier stuffs from the
hydrogen fire began to convene.
The irons, carbons, golds and gases
spun a ball which brought
fresh creativity to the Universe.

Two hundred thousand times the comet
returned to the solar plane--
It saw the third node out from
its flaming sister
turning blue.
and its water molecules reverberated
with joy
as their peers prospered on
planet Earth.

Another two hundred thousand times
the comet returned to its family --
The blue node had taken on a
greenish tint,
and its carbon molecules
reverberated with joy
as their peers
tapped solar power to photosynthesize.

On its six hundred thousandth trip
the comet knew it was being watched
and heard observers call its name,
From its ice core to the tip of its gaseous tail
Hyakutake trembled,
knowing it had brought
awe to the on-lookers from afar.

A rock watched this rendezvous
from its valley home.
Knowing it was forged in the same fire
and having seen these siblings pass
countless times before.
The rock had felt the hands of humans
and hoped the ones who give names
would survive to join future
convergences of these celestial siblings.

I watched the siblings pass,
Rejoiced at their diverse creativity,
Stood in awe of their longevity, and
Realized my consciousness flickered as
the tip of a solar flame.

The Universe, too, saw their passing
Rejoiced that is-ness persisted
Stood in awe of the multiplicity of forms of the cosmos, and
Wondered what shapes it would see
after another one, two, or six hundred thousand
convergences of the three Milky Way siblings.



Editor's note: This poem is included in *The Rocks Sang Om*, a collection of sixty poems published by the Institute of Cultural Affairs: Nepal. Copies of this publication are available for \$10 each from the author at 5911 Western Trail, Greensboro, NC 27410 (ICAGboro@igc.org). All proceeds from the sale of the book benefit women's literacy programs conducted by ICA Nepal.

