

Possibilities

Short Stories by Jonathan Axelrod

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Physical Mementoes

One night many months ago, I awoke to the sounds of strange birds that spoke a language I could not decipher. I left my home with a small lantern that provided just enough light for me to see my feet; the moon showed the world to me.

It was then that I saw the invisible Panther with green eyes and an iridescent black coat; She walked slowly but didn't notice my presence. I wearily followed as she moved between barbed wire fences; covered in rust and moss their lines were jagged and old Leaving long scars across the landscape.

With the help of a silver moon that changed to blue, I could see her follow a trail of feathers. They were large and looked like long opals, golden like memories of life that flicker through your mind as a lanterns flame.

I decided to follow her beyond the grassy field, which swallowed my legs and saturated my clothes. I soon became cold as the intensity of wind increased, and the Branches clanked together like the chains that held together the sky.

There was a raccoon paw found behind a small shelter at dawn

Cougar

The sound of moth wings heard above a small black pond

Reflection

It was one of those Sundays that seemed to last longer than several experiences I care not to mention. I climb up a tree and sit several feet from the forest floor. My body is splattered by shadows. Blue dragonflies navigate through dense underbrush. My vision is limited to about thirty feet. Yet I can strangely feel a breeze which causes ripples Above my shadow pond.

This place brings back memories. Feelings I seldom experience today.

I soon come across a collection of very old bottles. One is filled with liquid that is certainly many years old. I am beginning to become a little claustrophobic within this forest, constantly hunched over.

I am haunted by these creatures that drag animals into the forest to be dreamed. Sometimes new life grows in its place. Young mango seedlings sprout up begging for more light. So many living things never make it. The floor is a pile of aborted limbs and fallen leaves.

I drag myself out of this mess of consolidated plants. Yet the appearance of the world is not as large as I had expected.

I pull myself from this cage of sap soaked branches. On hands and knees I crawl past old bottles and mango seedlings

Along a path I walk. I see several large Australian pines guarding a soft patch of ferns several yards below. Some of the pines are broken at the waist. To my right I see the platinum ripples of water in motion. Seen through a screen of trees. With leaves in motion. Branches slapping together bark slowly peeling away. Clouds diffuse the sun allowing me to see a newly fallen tree without heavy shadow. The older trees have carpets of fallen leaves. With small enterprising ferns that grow.

I see a green heron with an extremely large fish for its size. It takes almost a minute to swallow. I keep my distance so to not interrupt. When it turns towards me I understand how it is able to catch fish so easily. It is camouflaged like a brown branch but only in front on its chest on its back and sides it is more green And blue for camouflage from Above and the sides.

Rugged

Horrible Sasquach bleeding from emptiness. Hiding beneath wind carved badlands.
Escaped from operation table with drugged up motions. Barely alive, last of his kind
bursting with regret and sadness. Nocturnal situations become difficult, he builds tools to
ensnare baby mice and builds intricate sculptures from the bones. To ensnare more
difficult animals. The hours go by; he has built fine sentences from his encounters with
the doctors. Alien nightmare shadows and broken stone underground hiding places.
Freedom from arcane humanoid inquisitions. Relentless measure and sample.

Marble Expert

Fine specimen from druid glass excavation. Red velvet courtship display mechanism from gothic times. Unknown functions. Ornate wooden and marble model of the solar system

with proto-god rings encompassing the inner and outer planets.
In a misinterpreted cosmological vision.

Underwater worm evolution into cosmic being of infinite potential.

Aliens control dreamtime situations, trials of an afterlife dialog with everything and nothing. Our left over molecules would fuse together if the sun exploded.

Embracing Saltwater

Glowing transparent slime coats a mirror of ice. Billions of glowing soft florescent green arms. Reaching through the current, eating without eyes, within the underwater winds. Radium of calcium carbonate extruded from our lungs and gathered by corals. Magenta slime, slightly purple, coats everything slowly.

Wobbly jelly organisms quiver in the cold ocean. Patterns encircle the edges, ridges and zigzagging bumps undulate softly on the sea floor. Florescent green fades to florescent aqua then red. Impossible to tell where one color meets the other. Colors from underneath, above and in the middle. Yellow beneath florescent green. Hardness beneath softness. So red it's black, so black it's invisible. Yellow skin with blue blood and a green body.

Floating bits of color on a clear body. Glass like arms bunched up near the base. With slightly opaque tubes rising above.

Small iridescent turquoise colors are curious, uncertain how to float.

A coral shelf offers its polyps to the sun. The angle fish swims sideways beneath.

Bubbles of oxygen arise out of the fibers of algae, silver beads of insoluble air. Red algae releases a bubble, it zigzags to the surface, around the path of a parrot fish. The surface of the water from below, above the sea of bubbles, entangled in puffs of algae too soft to feel. Low viscosity thick wind; legs struggle in the water.

The symbiotic guardian, swimming through poison, feeding the tentacles fighting giant clams. The tentacles swell, as a blown glass tube filled with liquid nutrients.

Two species speaking the same language. The symbiotic guardian moves aside obstructions for the blind provider. The symbiotic collaboration is neutral. The guardian is fed, looked after, cleaned. The symbiotic creatures have culture.

Frequencies of Eons

The shell of a snail crumbles from moon spray. It seals the cracks with tarantula spines floating on air. “Baby tarantula on moon beams” the mantra of the great horned owls; they spin feathers to land upside down on ochre cliffs. The ledges crumble from clouds; the bird disappears into a larger black cloud, swallowing up the tree tops in mist, leaving behind frost, sealing the cracks of snake scales. It wiggles and shatters the ice, collecting in a line on the side of an antelope’s horn. It digs through dirt, finding its eyes buried again for the last time.

The antelope leaks thoughts into footprints behind it. It was anxious, a rumbling tiger came out of the rapids and sprayed the toucan with water, combing into one large drop. The toucan swam inside, safe from glow bugs. The bats sung secret frequencies, gathering wing motions around swarms of moths. They metamorphosed back into caterpillars then eggs, to be reborn in the Pleistocene, becoming attached to the large intestines of primitive giraffes.

Lavender clusters above shelves of green desire cascade forward. Concealing the most important images from life. Young rhinos skirmish in powdery sand at dusk. Tripping over tubers, crushing beetles into chips and flakes. The tubers become mashed into fluid, that seeps into caves through cracks in mud. The minerals crystallize into stalactites, later becoming submerged by an new ocean. It spreads far as the sun can reach, boiling when it floats too close, wrapping around Pluto’s path, creating a crystal ring. It shatters from a comets path. Its pieces coalesce into a dirty icy body, wobbling and wavering at an orbital position. It’s pulled periodically by motions of an undiscovered planetesimal. Always behind another planet, meteor, or comet, dodging the eyes of astronomers that wonder for years, before ensnaring reflected photons smearing through outer space, colliding with the glass of a telescope. They named it blind spot, celebrating its discovery under a space shuttle still warm from reentry.

The night was cold; it blew horizontally into the embers of a fire catching bird. It uses light to collect moths in the morning, before the sun appears. The sun scrapes across horizons in the arctic, never disappearing. Rolling as a tiny sphere into curving goblets of valleys.

A glacier vaporized without dripping into the mouth of the lama. It fainted from thirst, inches from an oasis that appeared overnight, from earthquakes that broke the subterranean reservoir. It leaked from the wounds, staining the yellow sands dark brown. The sand clumps up and tumbles downhill, grasping seeds and plant sprouts until it reaches the sea, floating ten thousand miles as the plants grow into a small forest. New species of flies adapt to the salt; and use their wings to propel the island into a gyroscopically stable position above the Mariana Trench. Giant squid attach their tentacles into a chain from five miles below; they died, but still hold the island in place during storms. Birds come and shed feathers, creating soil for the plants to evolve in. The waves break into fractals; spraying mist that sprinkles crystals onto the leaves that

became upside down; designed to receive light from thousands of reflected suns, bouncing off of feathers on the forest floor.

The wind never reached the interior; it startled the infants who crawl up trees tying vines into knots. The trees fall when dead but never reach the ground; they're eaten by beetles and termites collaborating symbiotically to form a meta-organism three feet long. It swims through dead trees and explodes bark from the inside. Dust falls into neat piles, moistened by temporary waterfalls. The island transforms from the edges; pieces break off for millions of years, piling up from the bottom, changing position. Magma intrusion seep up through lava tubes, diverted by strong magnetic fields caused by sunken metal hulled ships, electrically charged by unknown forces. The tubes form long spirals, breaking and re-growing into new branches, as the magnetic field wavers position.

Explorers missed it every time, because clouds descended, concealing it from the glass eyes. Legs weakened from the search, they gave up and fell onto coal from the furnace, forming diamonds. The porthole windows bubbled out from the heat; the hull melted into the shape of a tear drop. It ran aground and spontaneously generated a new island. Spreading out into a new continent; its tectonic plate slid over another, creating friction, causing bubbles of glass and droplets to eject; they cool in the air, forming a transparent hill, magnifying the light of the moon, burning a black spot that never catches fire. It retains the heat from the day and melts the snow even at night, creating a ring that was encircled by a confused mouse. Walking until its legs shortened and eyelids fell down. Light was captured, wrapping around the inside of the glass pile, multiplying spots of light, creating another set of stars from the night sky, influencing dreams of the mouse.

The Unlikeliest

The sky became embrittled, hail fell for weeks, the oceans choked the forests,
crabs took over, barnacles attached to moon beams. Fire burnt underwater.

Rows of dinoflagilates embarked through the red mangrove roots.
The snappers rest beneath shelves of oysters and razor clams.

Black water chills the leopard at night. Under the moon shade it ripples, laps and foams.
The turtle grass washes ashore in tidal strips. Crabs rummage through the Sargasso weed
Drinking the sand in a storm.

Tumbling under the surf, dragged beneath a mile long wave of air bubbles.

Floating on a turtles back, on a whales back.

Tangibility

When the sun returned we were not yet ready.

When the cantaloupe was ripe I was not hungry

As the seeds were given out the children cried out in anger, demanding rounder plumper more smoothly polished seeds.

Little did they know that that the seeds they were given were for opalizing orchid tentacles.

But instead they were given empty onion bean, a bitter herb with large round leaves.

“Troubled thieves have dialog with beetles?”

Twisted beast and long trees.

They said with raspy trachea, “Love me, leave 3 beans for me to sleep.” The female said shyly in private. I did not understand. Why was bean required for sleep? Why was it confidential?

This time the electric eel and the fur coat became entangled and experts had to be called. One came in about an hour and four more a little later. They all stood there scratching their heads and wondering what to do. A battery touched the eel and got charged. We were all shocked by the force of the thing. It made sounds like glass crumbling and we could see little blue lines of electricity.

We all watched as it glided through the fur as a salmon climbing upstream.

Future Animals

The sea shell firecracker was upside down beneath a skylight that became a whirlpool for 13 moons. The leaves decide to change color in unison while the soil breathes ozone before a pressure front. The underwater window we could lie down on was near a cove draped in willows and ferns heavy as large cat.

Sour florescent eyes but not earth gravity. A sea of opaque light blue became choppy and the fish could fly with out needing the in between stage of land based evolution. A fish that might have been the first organism to fly; before pterodactyls and archaeopteryx.

Red cliffs inflate above the jade orb.

As lightning melts the soil in your flower pot,

The birds sleep while opening the cage in their dreams. They used feathers and fastened them together to mimic insects to attract other creatures to let them out of the cage, but it didn't work. Now one bird sings a lullaby by to keep Raquel asleep as the other flies strong enough to lift the whole cage from the inside and fly out the window with the cage and all.

The 300 lb gorilla crushes diamonds with its eyes.

A thousand years in the sun collapses the hydrated objects, wrinkled into folds, mountains form between ant legs.

A thousand years in the ocean swells the mountains. Underwater reservoirs filled with gemstones, garbled together in earthquakes. Up thrusting light breaks atomic bonds and molecular chains, which formed three thousand years ago.

The mountains slid over a soft spot on the earth, sinking into the clay and volcanic ash. Waves flow through the arms of a koala grasping the eucalyptus leaves, falling in a hurricane. A thousand dreams melted away, no need to watch the rain fall no need to crawl in the leaves, beneath powdered tree limbs.

The smell of a forest was remembered by someone who's never seen one.

A fire in memory, everlasting gravity contained within the palm of a dreamer.

Arms that don't exist, places that don't exist. A dream that was so unreal it was a dream.

A dream that flowed smoothly into a lake bottom. The edges of a memory fade into the beginning of a figment. A long arrow so heavy it pushes the archer back.

The rains missed this spot every time, in a torrential downpour every drop missed this one spot. Each falling sky tear froze before splashing. It becomes ice before melting in the grass. It flourishes in a glacier, connected to a compressed sheet of ice. Ribbons of ash from volcanoes ten thousand miles away stretch out into stripes. It curves around a mountain burning from wild fires set by lightning storms Twenty three miles downhill. The flames are put out by the thin atmosphere.

A lack of oxygen keeps the embers from staying alight.
The wind feeds fires nutrients of atoms.

The animals gather around the aurora borealis to watch the mayflies swarm to the east, in front of the moon. Mist blocks the view of a mountain, with waterfalls, that can be heard for miles. Thundering rain scours away mammoth teeth, found with grass still in between, after forty thousand years it was blue with vivianite.

One million actions of mitosis in one second.

Shadows are a copy as well, leaving behind wet marks. Thousands of leaves creating shadows that change shape in the wind, a million shadow spots on a boulder. Each one a flower stuck to a mountainside with fibrous roots soaking up nutrients leached from marmot nests. Bacterial wastes converted into nutrients. Eaten by krill, fed to a whale in a tank. A crack in the wall filled the building with saline. A thousand thousand buckets submerged a computer lab, covering computer chips with crystals.

The nights froze the tulip petals that crunched together in the wind. Shards of purple and red scattered across a ponds frozen surface. The lynx walks across, slowly cracking the edges of the lake with cushioned paws.

The edges of a boulder field were openings for burrowing owls with underground nests, filled with feathers and reflected photons. Stones extruded from a sandy hillside become climbing holds for a snow leopard, it jumps exactly as high as it can. Foot trails of nocturnal animals uncovered by diurnal beasts. Claws shed bark from a fallen pine, the bears scratch grooves in the soft wet wood, searching for grubs who tunnel through, before metamorphosing into shiny black June bugs. It lays eggs in the same forest it was born, three feet from where its mother laid eggs. Dragon flies hunt through the cat ears, diving into a pond searching for mosquito larvae. Nearby four hundred baby koalas rampage through the thicket, branches are bent and re grow. Ice shatters and fuses back together. Blue jewels of sapphire are smoothed by a rapid. A sudden downpour crushes the new shoots struggling to hold onto the loose soil. Grains of quartz melt into fulgurites overnight, and then a fulgurite was melted again by another bolt of lightning.

In a field outside Tampa, a cow becomes agitated by the sound of distant thunder, it crawls in the mud and rolls in the grass. The cool sandy soil sticks to its body in the morning. A falling leaf slips through the arms of a tree sloth, it reaches for a ball of algae and can just barely grasp it, the wind weakened it. The branches clanged together and splintered the mahogany limbs. They re grow only to reach for the sun again, shifting with the equinox, bending to the tilt of the earths axis as it rounds the sun.

Flowing out of a path, slipping down a hill; falling through branches. Taking off across a cloud, floating through a transparent barrier.

Mangroves catch feathers blown in from the sea. Long hours waiting for the sunset, so that dreams can begin.

The most powerful force just inches a way, vibrations sent horizontally through marble offering pedestals. The motions of clouds brushed shadows into the eyes of blind sun worshippers. The feeling of a shadow on the palms, curving across the toes, wrapping around the waist, pulling the hips into the darkness.

The winter extinguished its last breath, it turns into a seed four thousand miles away. The gravity of it wasn't enough to awaken the nymph, who metamorphoses into an unidentified creature which never spoke to a taxonomist. The hours under a magnifying glass heated the eggs into maturity. The chamber that was a belly opened the light passageway, caused by eating glow bugs. At night they clustered around obsidian boulders, which confused the ant eater, who had been tracking the lights of stars for thousands of years.

One thousand legs syncopated to the chirps of the forest floor, the earth cracks open from the dryness. A curving marble of marble half submerged in clay, sun bleached on one side. The edges of the soil meet a blanket of roots upturned by a flash flood. A landslide grabs a lion cub and transports it while asleep; one hundred miles into an underground reservoir. The cave entrance was found by the lioness that licked her paw before crashing through the darkness. Her eyes wetted by the reservoir, she splashes through a soup of leaves and roots to grasp her cub; found asleep on a large tuft of grass. Salts evaporated from its eyes, it winces at the sound of thunder in order to jump six feet onto a boulder to look for danger. The wind blows the cub onto a pile of leaves which camouflages it during a hyena raid. The scratching sound of claws on dry sand compacted by the footsteps of elephants. The wind was smelled and the danger gone, all the animals left the jungle; they crawled into the sunlight on a plain and went out to the edge of a ravine.

The sky made my eyes blue six thousand years ago. My belly burnt from the sun, becoming sensitive to the wind from birds lifting off. Thousands of dry petals tumbled across a rocky plateau. The sound was scratchy and dynamic; thousands of voices overlapping before silence.

The whirlpool collects seeds from across three thousand miles, they settle in an eddy on the bank; sprouting into a dynamic cluster, giving shade to the raccoons, as they wash their food before sleep. The sound of tears from a mourning lion awaken the crocodiles who become agitated before splashing fish onto a bank for the gulls to eat. The afternoon window was lost. One attempt to crawl under a boulder failed.

Igneous Curves

The sky was solid as earth's core. It was nine hundred degrees and rained sulfuric acid. The ground was covered in pools of molten lead; flowing uphill because of a magnetic meteorite that fell six thousand years ago. The lead crystallizes into cubic colonies; a stack of silver mirrors dented by rock falls, frozen by comets, collected by whirl pools of sand.

Small olivine shards blew in from the west, collecting at the beginning of a four hundred mile wide cave. Oceans of magma poured in, blocking the entrance three hundred years ago. When the sky became black with volcanic ash, the temperature dropped and the earth cracked open upon contact with six hundred thousand degree meteorites.

Showers of golden trails light up black clouds of volcanic ash, creating chondrules that rain upwards into orbit. Pulled by a newly collected moon into an orbital disk, it spins and cuts into a nearby planetesimal and captures several new moons. They merge into a rocky body that deforms the shape of the host planet. It creates tides of molten lead that crystallize in layers, producing vast sediments that reflect the light of distant supernovae. Powerful x-rays penetrate the surface and ignite massive eruptions that fill orbiting rings with new carbon, iron and silica.

Magnesium ignites and falls into water, it illuminates an entire deep sea trench, twelve miles deep and one mile wide. Boiling an area of liquid water two hundred square miles, it expands into the stratosphere and water escapes into space. It crystallizes and aggregates into a comet cluster knocked into an elliptical orbit by meteors.

Powerful magnetic energy attracts an iron rich meteor, simultaneously repelled and attracted by two contradictory charges, it spins into an orbit that gathers a huge amount of dust. The core is ignited by a large amount of friction, light heats the surface producing one hundred thousand mile long clouds. They blanket this new young planet in shadows, igniting a storm caused by thermal inconsistencies. The planet is cloaked in storms, that never end.

The Dreamed Up

The poacher of starfish eggs was found exhausted between fruit trees. A string was attached, upon which dried cantaloupe slowly compressed into orange triangles of light. With bush meat stuck between his teeth he slept for years, before realizing he would rather keep the earth alive.

With thunder claps and lightning strings dangling, the sky flashed as unseen forces photographed the entire landscape with a single bolt. The light penetrated transparent bodies recording information from above. It told a story of waste. The time spent hiding could have been spent living. A tumble of regrets burns chest tendons and moves hot stones in the belly.

The traveler walked for days until reaching the palace of flower massage. It held cold wax statues of insects.

The floor was reflective,
Everything was reflective,
Everything was completely mirror reflective.
There were special rooms intended to amplify certain art forms, or even physical actions.

The Forgotten Secret

All the Egyptian idols gathered around the obelisk; they spoke of imminent tectonic activity, revealing the future events to a crane, who decided to tell humans with symbols and signs left in river sediments. A young child deciphered them and secretly coordinated the movements of herds of buffalo to safety, away from the shifting tectonic plates, which brought in water from the Indian Ocean. An inland sea was created in two hours, and all the animals were safe. The trees were submerged in an underwater forest, with seeds floating up and drifting to the edges of the sea. They sprouted and made shade for the crane, who began to write a new code in the mud.

The Egyptian idols returned, this time one was cloaked in shadow, they orchestrated an eclipse to give concealing shade to the rock python. Its coils loosen as it prepares to strike a water antelope; it misses and catches a passing bird who was about to lay an egg. It falls from the air and lands in a rapid; it travels six miles and is floated onto a nest in a flood and adopted by a bird that was nesting on a river bank. The nest of the mother bird was burnt by a brush fire; it wouldn't have been born if not for the rock python. The antelope that dodged the rock python created a future for the eagle hybrid.

The egg hatches into an eagle hybrid; it flies off six miles upstream and catches a young rock python. The offspring of the rock python that caught its mother. The offspring of the water antelope startled a mouse; seen by the eagle hybrid, it swooped down but missed, breaking its wing on a branch swung back by an ocelot. Clenching its teeth to match the power of an elephant stampede it remembered from years ago. The branch was let go in a daydream and in reality simultaneously.

A traveler stops to inspect a scrawled jumble of characters in the mud; the second message of the crane. Half of it was erased but the other half seemed to say south east. The traveler decided to follow a new path and suddenly came across the injured eagle hybrid. He collected it and nursed it back to health, intending to use it as a scout.

One day while on the face of a mountain; the traveler was surrounded by baboons. As they moved in, the traveler let the eagle go in fear. The eagle went onto the other side of the mountain; finding the same rock python, it dropped rocks from above, forcing the snake into the path of the baboons.

As they run off they uncover a skull; an early human. It was found still clutching a primitive tool, a new type of bola made from spider silk.

It was constructed from knots that taught a string theorist a new way to break open reality with a series of complex turns and motions. It was also found with an unknown figurine, placed alongside the Egyptian idols in a temperature controlled glass case. Nearby the skeleton, a story was displayed, about an eagle hybrid and a traveler.