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Three Poems

by J. Alan Nelson

Science of Uncertainty

Don't ask the subject about age
sex
his marital status,
weight
ethnicity
or disabilities.
His obsession with football
is not a disability.
He lost himself in the middle state
and needs a mediator
between himself and his history.
He sucks in air through his teeth,
tastes the swoosh.
He sees his mother's last breath
waiting for the Big Rip
from the repulsive, violent force
of dark energy.

The physicists rise
from the lower depths
of the cold all forgotten
surface on the sparkling present
of ordinary matters,
between the fond love
and foul hate of people
the feast of the goat
ransomed by someone else.

They soon submerge
flesh to clay to dust
in factory-made caskets
of glass and metal
into a tiny slot
on a continent drifting
the surf of tectonics
surrounded by the Big Bang's afterglow.

Yes, the physicists hover
like static on television
and they know *it's fine*
in this cosmology

--the cathedral of the cosmic microwave
lives life as though each particle scripted.

The subject is a mid-forties, 220-pound man
with the squinty eyes his mother believed
to be mongoloidism
thus went his childhood underground.
He obsesses about Salukis,
the long-legged hunting hounds
the Egyptians consider sacred
six millenniums ago

and he considers them sacred
when they chase gazelle.

Yes he knows *it's fine*
not to be happy
as the pursuit of happiness
or the pursuit of gazelles
represent the difference
between philosophical uncertainty
and precision science.

Susan Nude

I work on my first novel
in my apartment bedroom office
cluttered with junk from college years
in the midst of a great scene,
about how computer-generated illusions bother me
in the way cows standing in fields bother me
bovine appearance
only meager shades of the mighty aurochs,
they make sounds, look after young
run in fear, and mate indiscriminately.
I suspect cows are similar to us
we should heed Francis Bacon instructions
to inquire about the nature of durable and non-durable bodies
(stones and vegetables, as well as animals).

As I write this pretentious scene
Susan walks through the door
long nude legs swing from her world-class ass
breasts with those brown nipples pointed
two shining eyes, lips so pink soaked
they appear computer generated in a 3-D simulacrum
teeth peeking out as she smiles her mating smile
and steps carefully through the remnants
of my university years
and sits naked on my lap
hard nipple against my temple,
chin touching the crown of my head

I send her away
fearful of losing my scene while it flows
and she steps back through the room,
her world-class ass disappears through the door
and I sit, like a man kicked onto the floor,
like a species suspended in time, awakened
to find his own went extinct centuries ago
because the male didn't mate with the willing female.
Susan, that magnificent beast, still walks away nude
away away
though I have a lock of her hair
and could genetically create her body through secret clone labs
Susan will not reincarnate in any form,
except in my memory, a memory which I cannot control
she slips from my lap as I try to write sophomoric scenes
the sheen of her nudity whispering with grace as she picks
her way through temporary crap I thought important
now discarded into the dumps of time
I lie awake, committed to forget her world class-ass,
forget the shape of her back, spine and clavicle,

how her shining eyes look away
from the thorny virtual life I chose,
burns in my bones so fierce
I roar my cries of regret to the world
I repent I repent I repent
words shimmer shimmer
as the air shivers with the cries
like a dream, but seize me aware
all is gone.

Tom's First Year in the Dorm

I had a roommate in college,
who slashed his wrists
the summer before college.
When the guys next door
brought a girl over one night
he pressed his ear to the wall
and listened for hours.
I noticed this from the top bunk.
Then Tom called the room's phone repeatedly,
and hung up when they answered.
Sometimes they'd let it ring.
Once I counted 30 rings through the wall
before they screamed into the handset.
When they tried leaving the phone unhooked,
a warning tone went off as loud as the ring.
They tried covering it with a pillow.
They tried disconnecting the phone,
and found it was the old style, hardwired into the wall.
They discussed breaking the phone,
and then argued who would pay.
Finally, the girl got mad and left.
Tom went to bed.
Before year's end,
he tried to starve himself
under the guise of doing research on fasts.
The guys next door never
brought over another girl.
On the last day of college
he ate a bowl of Rice Krispies
and made fun of multiple personality syndrome.
Sexual maturity now means
I have too much time on my hands, he said.
He didn't come back to school for three years.

J. Alan Nelson is a writer and a lawyer. He has essays, prose and poetry published or forthcoming in the following: *California Quarterly*, *Wisconsin Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Dallas Morning News Book Blog*, *Illya's Honey*, *Red River Review*, *Adirondack Review*, *Red Cedar Review*, *Identity Theory*, *Hawai'i Review*, *Kennesaw Review*, *Driftwood Review*, *Ken*Again*, *Haggard and Halloo*, *Review Americana*, *The Wittenburg Door*, *Federal Lawyer*, *South Carolina Review*, *Pegasus Review*, *Hawai'i Review*, *Illya's Honey*, *Red Cedar Review*, *Fulcrum*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Ship of Fools*, and *TexasBusiness.com*.

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