

Fruition

by Samuel Morgan

www.JustStuffThatHappens.com

Upon the Earth it all began
To space and further still imagination ran
Through sight, sound and sense of preeminent potency
...I travelled
An explorer of new dimensions
Bypassing limits of rational comprehension
So that I may witness, out of body
Watch without doubting
Feel without grasping
The resplendent unfolding
Of Mystery unravelling but ever deepening
Seeing with an inner eye
kaleidoscopic soul-scapes
As I moved across the cosmic dance floor
To music made of light
I felt a thousand years, a million minds, the Universe and more
Yet completely myself
Greeted by an alien race
(or just some Other aspect of the human face)
Beamed aboard the Mothership
From a kingdom in the sky
To a world beneath the sea
Magical chambers and crowning light
Ecstatic beings of pure delight
To suddenly, drifting dead within a void
The Universe's bath plug pulled
No name, no face, and all alone
Even love unable to penetrate this twilight zone
Then from nothing to something
I am reborn!
The gift of life resounding to the core
But bitter sweet
Remembering I was engineered
By an artificial hand

As past perspectives crumble
I'm shaken and humbled
Mourning what I *knew* before
Wondering what to make of it
If love is just some chemical
And life somehow mechanical
As reality turns from gold to dust
Again yielding swords of mistrust
With rusted core but silver crust
Defining and separating
As we carve our way
Grasping shields forged from fear
Deflecting the light of Oneness
Believing in good, but seeing only darkness
But there, in the silence of our Starship Souls
When we pause to listen for a while
A rhythm still penetrates
To enflame our spirit and lift a smile
And as we look anew with eyes and heart combined
We fuse the shards of space and time
And form a mirror to reflect and to remind
Of extraordinary friends in far out places
Of a perfect cosmic order
And the void that lurks behind
That 'truth' is all in the mind
Of the courage we must muster
To carry on moving
To turn the page
To forge a New Age
But most of all
To be ourselves, the alien et al.

Part 1

Lift-Off

One minute I'm just sitting there, on the purple soft and spongy couch, the next, standing, aloft, though still seated. Floating. Though not in one place, it seems. Shifting locality. Veering modalities. Rising. Seated. But rising. Awareness expanding.

Confused? I don't have time to be.

Moving through the sky now, looking down at her: that familiar and reassuring sphere, that cradle of life; Mother Earth. Then higher still; hoisted heavenward towards the star-sprinkled canopy of outer space.

As I glide through the stratosphere of Earth's slowly spinning sphere, I begin to see all 'wrongs' in the world. A stream of joyless imagery, as if projected upon some giant formless screen. Each image fusing into the next. Violence, famine, rape - the works.

From space now. Through the scenes of suffering, war and nature's demise I fly. An ever faster and more furious succession of bitter imagery. Portraying every dismal and beastly aspect of our human story. Emotionally however, I notice I'm detached; free from any real judgement at the horrors and hardship I'm observing. Perhaps the slightest tinge of sadness, if that. I simply observe the insanity unfold and replay, as if flicking mindlessly through channels on a TV set.

All of a sudden a great, blue haze forms from nowhere, and begins to encircle and cloak the Earth. I know it's *good*, whatever that

means. I know it for the feeling of love that now fills my heart. Like that blue fog before me, is love itself.

It washes over all the chaos, ills and evils I've just witnessed, dissolving the bitter images in great, purifying waves, until a peaceful ocean-like ether envelopes the entire planet. Its 'waters' gently ebb and flow, glide and swirl like the Earth's own weather patterns, but quicker, more free-flow and blue. Beneath, it effortlessly soothes her scars.

Calm and settled now, the ocean blankets the now orb-like Earth in a soft, warm glow. A Niagara of joy gushes through my veins with such intensity it almost burns, and my entire being floods with a sense of truest *freedom*. All the while I feel lighter and lighter.

As I look down upon the tight ball of light that now embodies our planetary home, Earth-azure, glowing and serene—I realise the time has come.

The time has come...

For what? At that moment it seems the most natural, obvious and glorious thing in the world. A moment before the thought had come it would no doubt have seemed bizarre, unfathomable. But there it was in my mind, a seed planted by a divine hand. It needed no rational explanation or analysis—that part of the mind was refreshingly silent. There was just this sense of a new beginning; the start of an exciting journey; a new chapter. The Earth had simply been a stage, and everything had played out perfectly.

The Earth is at peace, and so am I. It feels like I truly *know* peace. Its simplicity. Its wholeness. For a moment, I don't just feel it, I *am* it. A *total acceptance of all that is* fills my being

with a pristine lightness. Weightless, free and full of joy, I gradually rise up and away from the Earth. I watch for a few moments in utter gratitude as she shrink and drifts into the distance. A glowing, blue ball. Home. Then, ready somehow for the new journey ahead, I turn and head into space. A flight so intense, so beautiful, and so deep into the realms of the splendid Unknown, I can never forget.

HyperSpace

Like an arrow shot by Earth herself, the equator as her bow, I hurtle into space at breath-taking speed. In the room in which I'd been sitting perfectly 'conscious' only moments before, I feel my body sink deep into the chair's soft rolls of spongy fabric as a colossal acceleration kneads my entire body backwards. The skin upon my face stretches for my ears, or so it feels.

Tumbling inwards, hurtling outwards; my virtual speed and trajectory seemed to tear at the very seams of space-time reality itself. With enough force perhaps, to punch through its fabric and transport me to another dimension altogether. Time crumbled, and lost all meaning.

I eventually reach a steady, though still phenomenal speed and the pressure upon my body recedes. I feel a sense of utter awareness. Or at least, more aware than I ever thought possible. Stars twinkle, and are *everywhere*. It's awesome. I watch them appear as tiny points in the distance barely moving, then rapidly become streaks of light in my peripheral vision as they spiral past. Or I spiral past them. There's the occasional planet too. Each unfamiliar, gradually growing in size and definition, suddenly appearing large and lucid in my vision, then gone.

I remember one vividly—a tiny planet with wispy orange rings—but there were hundreds. Such beauty, as I'd never seen before. Such exquisite feeling, as never previously felt. Breathtaking.

The speed and distance already travelled seems enough to overwhelm me. But whatever part of the brain could be 'overwhelmed' right now is temporarily disengaged, and that which still functions is perfectly at home, and quite enjoying the ride. Further and further I fly.

After a short while in 'hyperspace' (though for quite how long, who knows) I notice myself begin to slow—the stars settling into place around me, my body lurching gently forward in my chair—until once again, I'm at rest. It feels like I've travelled to the far side of the Universe, literally. Perhaps I have. But it feels more than mere distance travelled. I'm in a *new* place altogether now—I *know it*. I don't know how, or where, or what part of me. But in my reverent state of wonder, that doesn't matter.

Close Encounter

I come to rest amongst the multitude of stars like molecules balanced in gravitation. I sit cradled in a sea of infinite space. Despite having journeyed so far from Earth, I feel closer to *home* than ever before. Totally whole and at peace in my Aloneness. Because *feeling* is everything, isn't it? Isn't it?! perhaps I'm a fool to think so. But right now, *feeling is everything*. And it feels good. Delicious. Divine.

As my two friends could of course testify, I didn't actually move from my seat in Ahmed's front room in Kuala Lumpur at all. Not physically, at least. Perhaps the simulated experience of travelling such vast distances at such colossal speeds was somehow necessary to break the shackles of my conventional view

on reality. So that I might accept entirely this *other* place I now found myself. Perhaps whereas some people just need to read the right book, or 'find themselves' backpacking through abroad, I had to leave the Earth entirely...!

As it turns out, I'm *not* so alone here, after all. Before me, perhaps no more than ten meters away and drawing closer all the while, a lone figure awaiting my arrival, suspended in space just like I am. How do I know he's waiting my arrival? Well, he's there,; what's the chances of bumping into him in this remote part of the galaxy? And he's looking right at me. And I just *know*, ok. But this is all after thought. I'm experiencing, not thinking. What a refreshing change. Let me get back to it...

I'm close enough now to see him clearly, this...*being... entity... alien?* (words seem so utterly insufficient). He (and his sex is somehow obvious) has a peculiar appearance (though this must be an afterthought. I didn't think so at the time), possessing the body of a human, though stockier, and the head of a rhinoceros. Strong, thick skinned, but sensitive. His skin is blue. He's blue! To his elbows and down to his knees he's wearing brown, medieval looking garments. A leather-looking strap grips each wrists, and there's a wide one with several polished buckles about his plump waist. About his neck are thick flat links of gold jewellery. Despite his alien appearance, the connection between us is strong and familiar. Impassioned by a friendship that feels as old as time itself, I know he is there to welcome me. Warmth and wisdom emanates from his eyes. Eyes that don't seem alien, animal or unfamiliar to me in the slightest.

He begins to dance. Slowly at first. Gracefully moving to the music that flows from the speakers in Tun's living room (wherever that reality now is). His presence is an utter mystery, but one that delights me, my lips fixed in the widest of smiles. There's

something so fluid and reassuring about the way he moves. Hypnotic almost. A visual nectar, nourishing to behold.

Who are you blue man? Who are you? Again, I only ask such things on reflection. At the time it didn't matter. I *knew*.

Next I notice his right forefinger was beginning to glow a golden orange. He hold his hand up and out in front slightly now as he dances. Transfixed by the golden illume, ever brightening, I watch as he moves his finger through the space between us. I realise he is drawing something; retracing the same pattern over and over. A symbol imprints on my mind, becoming as bright as a sparkler waved about on bonfire night. The feeling of love is intense. I wonder if my human heart can contain it, or if I might burst. I hope the heart is a far bigger vessel than I previously dared imagine.

I begin moving again. Slowly at first, and backwards this time; away from my new alien acquaintance. As I do so, new beings come into view—all dancing, happy and joyful. All emanating a great love for me. As well as the blue male beings, there are now white female ones. They too have human-like bodies, though more slender and delicate in appearance, and with oval-shaped, almost robot-looking heads; a long straight mouth running right from one side to the other, much like the martian in the 1970's *Smash* TV adverts.

Faster. Outwards. Away. More and more aliens teem into view. Hundreds quickly become thousands, millions. A countless number of happy dancing beings fills my vision. Soon I can see that they are all dancing together in two great parallel lines, one blue, one white; a great parade of male and female energies flowing side by side. As I hurtle backwards and they shrink and fall into the distance, the colours appear to merge, forming a single line in the shape of the same symbol the first alien had traced with his finger. For a few brief moments, the emptiness of open space

returns, then quickly, again and again, new collectives of beings fly into vision from behind. An incomprehensible number of aliens all moving together as one. In the shape of the symbol.

Further out and away I fly. Out, out, out, at ever-greater speeds, the frequency of 'symbols' appearing and then paling into the distance before me increases. I'm aware of the unfathomable number of beings that composes each one, and I'm spellbound. Occasionally, when one sweeps into vision from directly behind me, for the briefest of moments I again see the individual aliens dancing, white or blue, happy and smiling, before rapidly becoming an indistinguishable part of two coloured lines, and then one line, white, pink or gold, then none. Like a chaos pattern or mandelbrot set played in reverse. I would never have guessed the Universe was so... *full*. A Universe composed of countless beings on the infinitesimal scale, yet formed in the shape of their individual dance on the grandest.

In one sense-jolting instant, my speed increases yet further. *How is this possible?*, my rational mind might have asked, had it still been engaged. It's like I pressed the nitrous button on my hyper-dimensional psychedelic sports car; hard to fathom, in light of velocity at which I already felt to be travelling.

Further, faster, outwards, away—synapses flash, quarks sing, elf's clap, and black holes hiccup right across the unknown universe. Again I feel the force of acceleration knead my body, though this time in reverse, and then all of a sudden I break through the limits of space (experiencing a mild revelation that this is even possible; that there is an 'outside' to the galaxy) and in my vision appears a giant eye. The image of a giant eye. Or actually a giant eye—how can I possibly say?! All I know is everything has become utterly still.

Kingdom Come

This 'place' I now found myself in was again somewhere *entirely* new. A realm where concepts like up, down, right, wrong and time (especially time) I expect would instantaneously self-combust. Yet, there I was.

After some 'time', the eye transformed into a huge red heart. The caricature version of a heart that is. The one that cupid likes. The visions, though simple, almost clichéd, abounded with a sense of power and meaning. Quite what that meaning was, I cannot tell you. (Perhaps there wasn't any. We humans do like to cling to 'meaning', when in truth there isn't any; we make it up).

As mentioned, the journey was primarily one of *feeling*, not thought. And *feeling* at that moment—wonderful, humbling, and abounding with love, and fed by the sights I'd seen and new, wider sense of *space* and *speed*—forced tears from my eyes. I remember feeling them filling my eyes and rolling down the cheeks of that physical aspect of myself still sitting in Tun's living room—their warmth, the saltiness on my lips—and how for a few fragile moments these physical sensations drew enough of my consciousness back to that room to hear a muffled voice ask, "Is he ok?", and another reply, "Yeah, just leave him be...". Thank god they did just that. Thank god.

I'm looking up, at a brilliant white light hailing my sight from above. Then, gracefully, I begin rising up towards it.

I find myself within a great white kingdom curtained in clouds. White—all very, very white. Yet as the Eskimos know, there are many shades of white (well, don't they have fifty names for snow, or something?). The beauty is simple but immeasurable, and I feel the presence of what I can only (and feebly) describe as a *great force*. A force composed of an energy, intelligence, and compassion that

knew no bounds. I again wonder if the love filling my human heart can be contained there. *Never have I felt so... full.*

More tears. A stream now. Tears that feel like they've flowed through every nook and cranny of my being, cleansing and purifying as they went. There's no hiding here, in Kingdom Come. Whatever lies behind this veil of impenetrable light before me, and certainly there is something or someone there, can see every part of me. Knows every facet and detail. Knows every secret shame, hope, and fear. Like it had flowed with each individual tear through me. I'm naked, in a sense. Maybe literally. More than you can ever know. And it's impossible not to surrender and... be myself. And there is an unimaginable sense of relief in that.

Who have I been pretending to be? What masks have I been wearing? And why? What has it cost me in joy, in relationships, in... peace of mind? Afterthoughts. Still, years later.

I drift towards the hallowed light. A light composed of more than mere photons. Bright and impenetrable, yet at once gentle, comforting and inviting to the eyes. Like light depicted on an oil painting. But *alive*. Very much alive. Only revealing so much. The soul of universe the canvass.

Next, awe, mercy and bliss tingle and effervesce along my spine, as down upon my head is laid a gleaming crown. Immense. Unforgettable. *Beyond words.*

More tears. A frisson of joy emanating from the deepest fissure of my being.

I felt a resplendent pride. Not puffed up in the egoic sense (though this whole trip may be my super ego in superdrive?!). Rather, a deep love and self-regard. A self-respect. I felt an

incredible happiness and gratitude to be honoured in this way. To feel worthy. Perhaps my self-regard had slipped so low I needed an experience of such colossal proportions to tip the balance? I doubt it, I was eighteen years old, but who knows?

I return from the kingdom in the sky, exalted and awestruck, descending down... down... down, until I am again back... in space? The Universe? The darkness of space has indeed returned, but to my delight so too had some familiar faces. My alien friends are all around me in the space there, suspended, floating, dancing, celebrating. All so happy to see me. Proud, even. The crown? I cannot see if I wear one. I doubt it is a visible thing, though. All that matters is there joyful, dancing forms, near, far and everywhere, each slowly drifting upwards and out of sight as I descend. There's incredible feeling that they had come to welcome my return. I I'm surrounded by admirers. What joy.

I look down, in the direction of my decent, and in doing so realise I'm in some kind of tube, it's cylindrical edge distinguishable as a faint purple haze perhaps twice the diameter of my height. I hadn't noticed it before because looking directly out it appears transparent.

Leaving my friends behind, I descend into something, or somewhere, distinctly subterranean. Immediately, I begin flying through a labyrinth of dimly lit caves, tunnels, and caverns. The rock looks like wind-weathered Arizona sandstone, subtly shifting shades of reddish orange as it sweeps sinuously by. How I'm flying I don't know, and—you guessed it—doesn't matter. This is another ride I'm loving.

Eventually I slow and come to rest at the entrance to a great, tall circular chamber. Oh such plain and foreign splendour! It leaves me spellbound. My eyes trace the soft salient glow of hundreds upon

hundreds of multi-coloured lights, each glimmering in tiny crevices throughout a great rock wall that curves round and rises vertically towards a giant domed ceiling that in contrast, flashes repeatedly with a silent and utterly enchanting lightning. Again I feel the presence of a great force, and like the chamber itself, know it's somehow connected to my alien friends. Of their world. Of their making, perhaps.

No white light this time. But once again I am crowned. And feeling the same immutable joy and gratitude at being honoured in this way. There is so much love, I feel I might lose my 'self', shattering and dissolving into the matter or non-matter of the known and unknown universe. But to be crowned. Little 'me'. Well, maybe that kept me bound together.

Yes, you're here to be *you*, an individual. A seemingly separate part of a unified diversity. You are not here to be *the All*. Or *the nothing*. Wait for death for that. You are ok being you, aren't you? - a voice that speaks to me as I type this up now, years later. Perhaps that's what all this journey was about... coming to be comfortable in my own skin, as it were. To feel justified, even, in being *me*. I don't think I've made it just yet. Have you?

The music track playing in Tun's living room begins to fade, and in a flash I'm outside that twinkling alien world. Outside, but still in space, however—and hurtling outwards at breathtaking speed, even faster and further than before.

Then...

Everything—all that had been on my journey, all life, the Universe itself—coalesced in an instant, appearing as a single bright dot in the top left of otherwise total blackness. Like a

lone star in space. A speck so insignificant in sight, yet so unfathomably full. Perhaps just like every point of form we ever look upon, I'd later think, when thinking was ok again. Just like every tic of time. Holographic. Somehow containing within it every part that makes the Whole.

It remained in my vision for a few poignant moments. Then it too
d i s a p p e a r e d .

I came to, very gradually. Returning to my body shaking, trembling, tearful. Not daring to open my eyes for several minutes for fear of overloading my mind with such a sudden reality shift, and then, barely doing so. The next record started. A deeper, darker tune. Once again I closed my eyes.

Part 2

Void

The dust speck of light has vanished. Darkness endures. A bitter contrast to the fullness and colour of the Universe I inhabited before.

I'm outside everything that is familiar; the white is now black and *they* were gone.

There's just this absolute void. Even that is hard to describe, for in a sense I'm not anywhere. I'm unsure if I'm still a body, or a soul, or a spirit.

With such lack of self-definition perhaps it's unsurprising, how can there be anything to relate it to? Or perhaps, visa versa is

true. Perhaps we need an outside or other reality, in order to reinforce our own sense of self within it. Contrast.

Through whatever consciousness remains, it's *me* here, drifting through the void. Alone. And this time my aloneness is bitter, raw, and shocking.

Drifting

Here, now, in this black frameless chasm, there is nothing. No prisms to splinter light. No world in which to delight. Just the hollowed echo of silence. No glow to bask in. No warmth, over-spilling. Here, can love even penetrate?

I sense something about the nature of human existence. An underlying reason for the innate paradox of life. I'm unable to grasp what exactly, or think of it now. But even clawing at nothing, I knew, it was there. Something...

Perhaps it was just to help me know I was there; the one doing the grasping.

Either my awareness has increased, or my form (and that of my surroundings) has, but I'm now aware I'm drifting through the void in some sort of capsule. It wasn't there before, I'm sure of it. Nothing was.

I'm lying horizontally within it and from what I can make out it's smooth, opaque and shaped like an egg. An elongated body-length egg. *Some kind of spacecraft? Or am I dead?* (and ironically this 'egg' really my coffin?!)

After some time drifting through nothingness (and here, any time feels like eternity, i.e. too long), I notice something flicker in

the darkness. Tiny threads of light begin to appear, bright and vivid green. They quickly grow in length and multiply in number, branding the perpetual darkness in neat parallel vibrating lines.

More lines start to appear, but this time perpendicular to those already present—a glowing crosshatch of laser-like lines forming around me. Some kind of grid... or Matrix? (there are the same colour as in the film of the same name). An underlying form of some kind revealing itself... or being created. I can literally feel the space around me thicken as it gradually becomes more defined.

And once again, to my great relief, I am *somewhere*.

Control Room

I come to rest in some place. A room, perhaps. All signs of the green matrix have vanished. It's very dark.

Still lying encased within the capsule, I can't see anything too clearly, but I scan my new surroundings for clues as best I can. Thin slithers of pale light fall here and there, enough for me to make out the contours and boundaries that confirm I am indeed in some kind of room.

Not only is it dark, but the room's surfaces themselves are smooth and black like tourmaline crystal. On one side of the room, an array of tiny pulsing lights hinted at some hidden circuitry and functionality. *A series of switches and dials perhaps... a control panel of some kind?* Just above it, I notice a monitor.

The screen is black at first, but as I instinctively focus my attention there it flickers to life. Appearing on it are the same vibrant green lines that appeared in the void previously. They move erratically in random waves at first, but then begin to cluster and

organise somehow, a pattern emerging. I watch intently. Though never ceasing to shift and oscillate, the green lines draw together to form the flickering frame of a head and shoulders, and at once the impression of *another*.

Maker

This place is the nerve centre of something—a control room of some kind. I *know* it. (I seem to *know* a lot of things, don't I). And the strange presence now represented on the screen is the one in control, connected not only to the circuitry in the room, but to some greater 'mainframe' outside of it; a web of information into which it's busily plugging away; inputting, calculating, monitoring like some master programmer. Though just an ill-defined outline upon a screen, I sense it represent an enormous power and intelligence. A version of *intelligence* so far from what I know, the word almost seemed inadequate. And knowing how minuscule my understanding is in comparison, to be at it's mercy, to respect it utterly, is the only choice I have. Not that 'I' could do much, anyway, lying here cocooned as I am. *Who am 'I' now?* Right now I have no idea if or how I exist.

I'm still acutely aware of what I can *not* sense or feel. Love or warmth or friendship, for example. I'm merely aware of this immense, but unfeeling intelligence. That, and a gradual, almost imperceptible, *becoming* of things. A coalescing of matter. Something forming from nothing.

A peculiar and unnerving sensation arises within me. A feeling of... falseness. I *myself* feel 'alien'. Like I'm artificial in some way. Mechanised, even. But not in the crude way the technology we know permits. Rather, like I am of some alien, or ultra-advanced technology. Yes, I feel more humanoid than human. Or worse still, fully 'human' and coming to realise just what that actually means.

Naked

It's obvious now that the flashing dials and displays are very much to do with *my* presence in the room. Every flicker and on-screen fluctuation somehow linked to the subtle transformation I am now experiencing. It's unnerving to be in such a cold, artificial, almost clinical setting, at the mercy of such an apparently detached and ill-defined authority. It isn't good or bad, I suppose (such dualistic thinking was still absent). It performs its task, whatever that is, like a surgeon carrying out another routine operation.

But it's *me* here in this room. Oh mercy! *Me* lying in a capsule that now feels more like an operating table. And I care! Am I the only being in the universe to care (to feel) right now? Am I the only being left in the universe, full stop?! Where did all my friends go, alien or otherwise? I don't have long to ponder such thoughts, however.

In one electrifying instant my capsule is removed. Like a pressure cooker on boil with it's lid pried off in one swift steamed-filled instant, the sense of release is phenomenal. I feel a rush of pure ecstasy, and utter relief. Relief to be feeling something again. Something good, at least.

Within the sense of liberation, is a realisation of just how limited and imprisoned I'd been previously. All the while the control panel faintly flickered and flashed.

The activity on the monitor screen intensified. It's as if the intelligence there—still represented by the oscillating green lines taking on a roughy upper-torso shape—is somehow concentrating more. The pattern has become more frenzied, less defined. *The surgeon, at*

some critical point in the operation? There's no 'stress' or 'concern' on it's part, of course—there's no emotion, at all—just an increased processing of information.

Next, effortlessly and quite without warning, something *more* is removed. My mind grapples to comprehend it, but it's like a drunk shuffling on all fours to get to the car in which expects to pass his scheduled driving test. *Some inner invisible shell remaining from my capsule?*, my mind manages to ask, dizzy. *A space suit? My... body?!* Whatever it was (and I suspect it was the later), a by-no-means-insignificant part of me exploded apart in slow motion—neat segments detaching and separating, now drifting away and... disappearing. My mind abruptly falls silent again, neurones drawling, synapses shuddering, defeated by the futility of it's attempt to *understand*.

I'm still here. In the same spot I arrived in this room. Whatever left me just now, *I* still seem to be here. Whether a spirit without a body, coding without a motherboard, a hard-drive without a computer, or program without it's robot, I'm there. And it's an incredible, but most peculiar, feeling to suddenly be so very... *naked*. Brain-fart aside, it actually felt great. Like removing heavy plates of armour after fighting in a long hard won battle. A 100-year battle! Armour that had served me well, but was no longer needed. Not here, at least. Where ever here is. Oh, the relief! It's like I've journeying through a thousand lifetimes, in as many different bodies, and finally come to rest beyond the veil, and only now, am realising just how tired I really am; only now remembering just how far I've journeyed. It feels good, to say the least.

Reboot

I watch the monitor, transfixed by the pulsing presence upon it, hoping for some clue or explanation, perhaps. Or some acknowledgement. Even a 'hello' would do. But no attempt is made to communicate or 'connect'. Nor is there anything to intuit—my maker remains entirely indifferent. Why do I call him my maker? Well, I sense he's there for me, or I am his current focus, at least. And something is happening to me. Void seems less and less. I seem, more again.

Does it matter my maker isn't warm to me? Doesn't speak to me? Seems not to care one iota? Oh, let me get to it... my make seems an artificial intelligence? Whatever it's doing, how can I not be grateful for my new *becoming*? And the more I peer at that monitor, the more it's like watching a great artist or master perform with unconscious brilliance. Working with absolute power, precision and creativity. How can I not feel reverence and awe? He, or she, or it—utterly immersed in its task—~~me~~—yet paradoxically, detached and indifferent— has returned me from the void.

I'm being recreated in some way. I know that now. Redesigned. Reengineered. From *nothing, or very little*, again becoming... someone. I can *feel* it. And yes, I *know* it. The room and space around me are also taking on greater and greater form.

I remain unable to communicate. Helpless to do anything but observe. Both witness to my transformation, and increasingly, the *experiencer* of it. Then, it happened. A moment that eclipsed all others. Some threshold reached. Programme complete, installed and ready to reboot? Click.

I'm reborn.

I'm alive.

Anew.

Unforgettable!

Had I known death? I suddenly wonder. But then all that matter is the feeling of aliveness. Cherishing the gift and miracle and mystery of it. The relief, of it!

I'd been trapped under a frozen lake and had finally broken free,. My lungs fill with sweet summer air, and ice suddenly no where to be seen. As new life courses through my veins and that familiar but never tired of *ecstasy* returns, I don't just feel gratitude, I *am* gratitude. I am the Universe. I am life. I am love.

I delight in sensing real 'space' around me once more. Tangible reality. Even 'outer space' now seems so full compared to the void I'd known. And the distance from the Earth and the sun, just a hop and a skip. If it's true that the longest journey you'll ever make is from the head to the heart, had I been shown a short cut?

I'm aware it's not over yet. *I'm* not ready. It seems more *programming* is required. The dials and displays begin pulsing even more intensely. Then, in a flash the green latticework reappears, criss-crossing space like when I'd first experienced it. It remains like that for a few moments, then, with sudden and sense-shocking awe, the grid, and everything within it, takes on a new dimension of form. As if someone had flicked from 2D to 3D on some ultra-modern TV or virtual reality machine. The new definition and realness is so visually spectacular, for a few moments I feel my brain literally strain at the limits of its processing power to catch up.

Ever more form, ever more real. Somehow, now I know my trip is over; I'm ready to return.

Reentry

Re-entry to Tun's living room is a roller-coaster of emotion, as thoughts charge my mind and feelings swing between hope and despair, unsure where my feet will finally land.

"*I know now...*", I whisper. (But what that knowledge is, I can no longer tell you. More delusions of knowledge, perhaps.)

After the initial rush of rebirth, a painful realisation occurred adding a bitter chord to the mainly sweet symphony of sensations. Remembering the sight of electric sensors and displays, the coldness of the room and the numb intelligence that had 're-made' me, I can't help thinking how artificial the whole process had been. A thought that readily dissolves my ecstasy, and invalidates my new sense of aliveness.

But should I let it?

Life... was it real?

Were such questions pointless, or did they matter?

What did I *know*?

Crushing doubt, confusion and despair take hold.

What thought have I unwittingly taken as the 'truth'?

It's something to do with awakening to what life really is. Like Neo in the film Matrix when he sees humans harvested for their energy. Though, not like that, of course.

And in this moment I feel desperately alone in that. Deserted by everything I thought I *knew*.

I'm shaken to the core. I feel like the last child in a classroom of a billion souls to get some joke. Everyone is laughing.

An aching sense of loss arises. And sorrow. A sense of betrayal, almost.

Perhaps, it's just the temblors of a death. The death of some part of my former identity. Or some idea I'd had about life. And it's a healthy thing. Perhaps what I feel is ok. A healthy death; not one to be mourned.

I'm search for something to bring me back. An antidote thought to whatever I thought to make me feel as I do now.

I need a way point. An anchor. Is this why people turn to god?

but i'd see 'god' to artificial.

but, what about the rest of my trip. why was i forgetting it. just because the control room came at the end, didn't mean it was any more real than the other parts. What about the kingdom in the sky?! or, the symbol!

Yes, the symbol. My mind grabs it like a captain to an buoy spotted through thick fog. Suddenly it's after glow was there again in my vision. I have to remember the symbol... or what it meant to me.

I blink open my eyes. And I smiled. The *unfeeling* intelligence had made all feeling possible. perhaps that wasn't the true beginning, or the end of the story. and perhaps there is something to embrace here: paradox and mystery. And something to drop: truth and meaning. Life—whatever the source it, whatever the mechanism,

whatever it's purpose—is precious. Even if the Universe is just some virtual reality, life somehow mechanical, ourselves just holograms, and love just some chemical, it *feels* infinitely real. and that's what matters, right?! Perhaps happiness had been made simpler than ever.

Oh, how I held these fragile final thoughts so very tightly. And redrew the memory of the symbol over and over in my mind. I had too. It felt like it's was all I had to stop life and reality coming crashing in around me. 'After the ecstasy, there is always the laundry', as i remembered the book of the same title says.

As I returned to normal waking consciousness (and it is always so hard to return), I gradually open my eyes. Concentrating on my breathing, my heart beating in my chest, and the clammy feel of my skin, the wetness of my cheeks, the aftershocks of such sweet frisson still reverberating through me, and the feeling the sofa holding me from beneath, help me to ground after such an out of body experience. I didn't look at the others, instead straight ahead. Then, a wide, generous and genuine smile settled on my face. I lift a hand and mov it in the space before me. To my delight, a rainforest scene appears, right there, superimposed onto the far wall of the living room. I great relish I discovered I could paint the scene alive. Each stroke of my hand would hail new birth—a stream gushing forth through the forest, four purple birds emerging from the canopy and into the sky—like a magician waving a wand of creation.

but what magic could I make in the real world? Imagination was just the beginning. Love, you have to show it.

I hastily informed Jez and Tul of what had just occurred. All but the last opened-eyed painting part that is. That was just for me.

They'd been waiting for an explanation, of course. Their eyes grew wide with amazement and amusement as I recounted my outer body flight through inner space in as much detail as I could.

"Fuck man, you woz gone less than five minutes", Tul said, after I finished the story ten or twenty minutes later. He handed me a pen and some paper so that I could draw the recurring symbol I'd seen: that potent emblem the alien had drawn with his luminous finger and subsequently the entire Universe had formed; *what did it look like...? What did it mean...?* Strangely, though I still had a real sense for how the symbol appeared, nothing I drew seemed quite right. After several attempts I handed the paper back to him. He held it for a few moments looking it over, poker-faced, looked at Jon, then at me, and said "It looks like a fucking tomato!"

And boy did we laugh. His comment seemed just perfect to me. To return me to earth. and remind me not to take any of it seriously. And why not a tomato - it's a sacred and remarkable as another other thing in this Universe.