

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/2

T.N. Turner

**ANYONE ON AN EXO-PLANET
SPEAK THE KING'S ENGLISH?**

"Earth calling anyone
in the Milky Way galaxy!

"Respond, please! I have a question:

"Anyone on an *exo-planet*
speak the King's English?

"If anyone out there, please respond!
I have a question:

"Are you just like us?

"Please tell me...tell me, please:
you're not just like us!"

Stars:

vibrate on ring—on silent.

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MISS UNIVERSE

Such *chutzpa*:
asserting she's most beautiful
in the universe.

If *string theory* correct
about multiple universes,
does the Grand Pooh-Bah claim
Miss Universe most beautiful
in all of them?

You'd assume a Grand Pooh-Bah
aware of *string theory*, wouldn't you?

Wouldn't you expect—*demand*—
a Grand Pooh-Bah know everything?

Wouldn't you (at least) require
a Grand Pooh-Bah read latest research
in the *Journal of Theoretical Physics*?

I mean, really, wouldn't you?
These *aren't* rhetorical questions.

...

Who'd be unbiased judge
of a *real* Miss Universe contest?

What if we meet Neanderthal kin
with fluorescent, emerald green faces,
who've fabricated their own
Grand Pooh-Bah?

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What about interplanetary wars
between fanatical hominids
granted *dominion*
to the *same* universe
by competing Grand Pooh-Bahs?

What effect would *that* have
on a Miss Universe contest?

Also, critical questions arisen
regarding undercover culling
brand of winner:
veiled conformance
to political, *du jour* agendas.
Who'd be a truly unbiased judge?
Would the crown go to one
with fattest *super pac*,
robotic social media campaign,
or most negative ads?
Who'd resolve *hanging chads*?

Furthermore...[clear throat]...um...sorry.
I was briefly consulting with hominids
in another galaxy—lost my place—
in this...ah...poem.

This a poem, right?
Grampa Wordsworth said it was.
Well, not exactly. Poets have license.

If extinctions allowed of perfectly unstained,
individual lives—species—
why quibble over a frivolous question like
“what a poem is, or isn't?”

...

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"Mayday! Mayday! Anyone there?

"Semi-intelligent hominids on Planet 2001
calling hominids (more intelligent than us)
anywhere in this universe!

"Please respond! Respond, please!

"We need a symposium regarding
a Miss Universe contest!

"What?

*You, also, have a Miss Universe contest—
already picked a winner?*

"We chose the winner yesterday!
Our Trojan War started
over something like this!

"What? Oh, right.

Your planet's a thousand light-years away.
You chose *your* winner
a thousand years ago!

"That's a *relativity* problem for Einstein,
and our Grand Pooh-Bah, to resolve.

"*What?*

You have a Grand Pooh-Bah, too?

"Did *He*...?

I assume your Grand Pooh-Bah a man.

"Statistical analysis
indicates 93.75% of Grand Pooh-Bahs
in any universe are male.

That's an 'A' in any Neanderthal class!

"Your transmission garbled. Please repeat.

"Oh!

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Your Grand Pooh-Bah's a man?

That's comforting.

"For a moment, I thought we had
a *real* relativity problem!

"Did He—I hesitate to ask—

"Did *your* Grand Pooh-Bah
grant *dominion* over *our* universe
to *your* species, too?

"Did He delegate

His most splendiferous power
to kill all animals on your world,
completely pollute it, too—
like *we've* been licensed to do?

"*He did? Supercilious!*

"Maybe our virtuous Grand Pooh-Bahs
can have a video conference—
resolve these issues.

"Oh, guess not.

Your Grand Pooh-Bah's already dead."

...

These are *all* serious questions,
conveniently swept under red carpets
by Grand Pooh-Bahs and corrupt enablers
on any planet of any universe.

It's too late, but not too soon,
to consider effects of space travel
on a *real* Miss Universe contest.

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HIGGS BOSON

I'm anxiously awaiting someone finding
a Higgs Boson,
because then (scientists claim)
we'd finally know everything.
I'm looking forward to knowing everything
while I'm still knowable.

Many believe in a Higgs Boson.
I don't *believe* in a Higgs Boson; but
have faith in science:
Higgs Bosons exist.

...

After I wrote this poem
(much to the embarrassment
of theoretical physicists
at the Large Hadron Collider,
who, in hindsight, realize
they were searching the wrong space)—
Ziggy found a Higgs Boson
floating in a bowl
of Honey Nut Cheerios.

After Ziggy found a Higgs Boson,
the last mystery of the universe
is where a homeless man
found a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios.

Only Ziggy knows, because
after finding a Higgs Boson,
he knows everything; but
Ziggy's so disappointed
with civilization on Earth,
he won't tell anyone anything.

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He just sits on a foul, stinking sidewalk
along the *Magnificent Mile* in Chicago—
shaking an empty Burger King cup,
waiting for quarters.