

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

September 18-24, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 47



Photo from "Joplin or Bust" by Thomas Hart Benton; haiku quintet by Wanda Sue Parrott.

*study this painting
try to see the president
as a pioneer*

*then recall flag day
scientists claimed life in space
had been discovered*

*think outside the box
could this china virus be
homeless aliens*

*"imagination
can save the world from this mess"
help prove these words true*

*please think of your vote
as vaccine that saves mankind
on November 3rd*

“COULD THIS ‘CHINA VIRUS’ BE ALIENS FROM SPACE?”

By Wanda Sue Parrott

(Taking youthful fantasy Twilight Zone trips inspired me to write sci-fi “think pieces” as an adult. If you enjoy puzzle pieces, here’s one I wrote in 1992.)

VENUSIAN DIET

LOSING excess weight wouldn’t be easy. The planet’s atmosphere was leaking. The Minister of Inspiration exuded frustration as his engorged body shrank: “Foof-foof-foof.”

He’d noticed young students growing too large too soon. His security council, aides and underlings were also expanding. “We must act hastily!”

When the atmosphere was unpolluted by sulfur rain, the lung-shaped people inspired pure methane gas, which transformed them to bright orbs. Now the Minister of Inspiration addressed the problem. “Fellow Venusians, we are an overfed, undernourished society. We must launch our food-finding expedition now. Are the students’ body suits ready?”

The head scientist waved his sight pods, which doubled as arms. “Fabricated, yes, to enable the students to survive in the mine fields. . . But they’ve not been briefed on self-defense maneuvers.”

“Assemble the students and instruct them swiftly!” the head minister ordered, turning his antennae toward himself. His left lobe was semi-radiant, but his right lobe was freckling with dark pocks. “Stop gawking at my horrid age spots and look at yourselves!”

“Foof-foof-foof” filled the council circle with escaping gas.

The scientist gasped, “You plan to send them without leaders?”

“There’s no choice. While they’re gone, we’ll plug the atmosphere’s methane leak. . . “

That evening, the expedition orb, loaded with thousands of student miners in thin-skinned silvery body suits, was launched. Hurling through space. outside their mine field’s stratosphere it collided with a satellite and cracked.

The dazed Venusians awakened when, propelled by their trajectory over massive chunks of snow-covered terrain, a familiar odor seeped through the proboscal hoses of their head masks, vivifying them with inspiration. Methane! Beaming, streaming methane!

Hungrily sucking the regenerative gas into their flagging lobes, they dived into the stream and slithered, slipped and swam toward the source on the planet below. Gathering into a swarm, the hungry miners embarked upon their mission.

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Homer Gourley’s cow was out to pasture, and he was in the barn cleaning the milking machine when the portable radio announced, “This news just in from Polk County Sheriff, Eustis V. Battle: eight more cows were found mutilated this morning, bringing the total cattle mutilations in Missouri to forty-five this month. Investigators believe the mutilations are the work of satanic cults. . . “

Moments later, Homer’s old truck was rattling toward the neighboring farm, where earless cattle carcasses were strewn, their tongueless mouths open and empty eye sockets staring dumbly at something no human eye had yet seen. They had been gutted from their throats to their milk bags and stomachs. The body cavities were encrusted with flies, so many that the air seemed to hum, but not a speck of blood was on the ground.

Homer joined the group. “That ain’t the work of a cult,” he said. “Something’s eaten ‘em alive.”

He offered condolences, then headed home to his black-and-white Holstein, Bossy. “Daddy’s coming, so hang in there, old girl,” he muttered. “A killer’s on the loose, and I ain’t about to let you be hurt.”

When Homer screeched to a stop, the arthritic old cow moaned, belched, flicked her tail at the cloud of flies circling her hind quarters, and limped toward Homer.

“Don’t give me no sass, you old bag of wind,” Homer said. “You’ll be safe in the barn.”

He barricaded Bossy’s stall with two tractor tires, a rusted harrow, hoe, shovel, broken chair, pitchfork and the DDT spray can his wife used to exterminate grasshoppers before her death.

“I’ll be up to the house. If you need Daddy, call.”

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The Venusians divided into search parties. There was more than enough methane in this mine field to sustain them and everyone on Venus.

As their empty gas packs began to fill, they transformed to lavender. A gas pack fully inflated turned deep silvery purple.

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Drowsing by the dark kitchen window, a shotgun across his lap, Homer saw a faintly luminous glow, floating and cloudlike, near the barn door as the squalling of Bossy awoke him.

“Daddy’s coming!”

Homer bolted toward the barn, shotgun in one hand. flashlight in the other.

Bossy’s pain-filled eyes glowed maroon in the beam of light. She bawled like a baby as buzzing, creeping, crawling things infested her tongue and anus. She exuded a smelly fart.

Homer dropped the gun and flashlight and grabbed the insecticide sprayer, pumping it dry. The trampled straw was littered with tiny writhing lights that went foof-foof-foof.

Lifting one between his thumb and forefinger, Homer dangled the creature in the flashlight beam and said, “Dang it, Bossy. Daddy ain’t never seen such a big horsefly before. Why, this one’s got shiny purple wings.”

###

The Minister of Science floated like a bloated balloon past the Minister of Inspiration. He gasped, “We sealed the planet’s atmospheric leak. The miners who made it back could not get in. They’re homeless in space.”

Inhaling to express his consternation, the Minister of Inspiration’s swollen body popped. As his deflating corpse whistled toward the surface, the Venusians gained another dietary word: SSSsssss.

--The End--

What inspired this tale? I witnessed a bloodlessly mutilated cow in a field in Missouri.

If interested, click this link to see the photo of such a latter-day bovine victim. Note the ears, eyes and tongue have been removed. <https://de.sott.net/image/s12/253485/full/head.jpg>

What do I think? Aliens aside, socialized housing programs will solve human homelessness regardless of how Covid-19 got here, or which party wins the election in November. What do you think?

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About this Column: “Homeless in Paradise” is a free public service self-funded and produced by the author.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, this column appears regularly on the last week of each month in the Cedar Street Times at www.cedarstreettimes.com (and as periodic FLASH columns). It also appears on Facebook, in

Nextdoor and on private email lists. If interested in being added to the list, submit your request to the contact info below.)

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