

*Beyond the Bounds of Sky*  
By Danny Cove

The universe, some say, sits in quiet repose,  
silent as the days after old cities burned.  
But there are things above, alive in the deep,  
great minds and thoughts and races concerned,  
worlds to explore and fathom, or depose.

Think of the poor sleepers of *Charon*,  
of a sun that died above a world of icy tombs.  
Their hearts have stopped, but death does not reap.  
Beyond life or death, trapped on the shores where eternity looms,  
alone in the ice wait the sleepers of Charon.

Think of the world of *Atum-3*, or 4 or 8 or 93.  
So many times has that world restarted its endless war.  
Trapped within the trap of time,  
For a quantum bomb's miscalculation.  
Once a world of corporate caste,  
a liberation team set off a bomb to kill eighteen.  
Now every six decades and half, it happens like the past.  
Repeating all that happened once, with long-since lost causation,  
no one grieves concern, for no one knows the crime.  
This has gone on for a thousand years, perhaps a thousand more,  
The loop may end someday, some say, with a change in the holy sea.

There is the pride of *Turritopsis Nazca*, the immortal, aging race.  
When old, they change, become as babes, their past in blackened spheres.  
When they achieve the age, the age they reached a hundred dozen times,  
they unlock the spheres, become their past, then go among the younger stars,  
each bringing awe through his machine.  
Among a hundred planets found they the worshippers of Mars.  
These immortals in terror response incite hymns and reverent chimes.  
Even now, their past is known, their pride, their tears, their fears,  
for etched within our sand and stone, rests a *Turritopsis Nazca* trace.

There are, of course, more bizarre worlds, like the *Ex-Samsarin* home.  
Dissociated minds and bodies have made this single race now two.  
Their bodies still work and slave below, near mechanic in power and action,  
While their minds stay above to task, ensconced in safe electron clouds.  
Could it be the bodies are soulless, or have the taskmasters become abstraction?  
Perhaps this answer may someday accrue,  
when the clouds dissipate and bodies seek out the Tome of the Ohm.

But stranger still is the pitiless *World of the Broken Silver Cord*.

a meditative world alone, as the ascended minds have gone.  
This is the core of the roving minds, of the spirit thought-entity scores.  
A thousand clouds from a thousand shrouds,  
the clouds of the *Thought-Mind Corps*,  
now wandering as naught but minds alone,  
the Silver Cord remnant left, ignored.

Now deep in the darkness not understood,  
near the center of Cosmic time,  
there rests a cold planet, silent and alone,  
abandoned since the beginning of time.  
What happened here in this cold, sunless place?  
What drew an end to its once-solid race?  
The unknown past of *R.K. Prime* lay etched in the parapets of reality,  
carved in the basis of time and space,  
indecipherable to those who examine the trace.  
This was the planet of earliest prime,  
the one from before stars were sown,  
a rock in a universe of shadow, sublime,  
existing long before it should.

Know you not the world of water, of an endless oceanic sea?  
Here life stayed in life, in the substance of birth.  
the *Rusalki* flourish, Merpeople, we call,  
sirenic in their boisterous play, and calls through the gale.  
Their hatred of the world beyond, and anything it holds,  
has held at bay the knowledge of the their true mentality.  
Much curiosity simmers, and bakes and molds:  
Where do their young derive? Why are all *Rusalki* female?  
What is the deep *Dagonian Cabal*  
they worship far below, in those uncharted depths of rebirth,  
where even shadows dare not be?

And deep down below, where the light doesn't shine,  
the blind *Raians* build wide their labyrinthine designs.  
The horn-tipped, clawed humanoids with their eyeless sight,  
screaming the echoes that give them new light.  
They consider the world that none of them sees.  
The few who have breached the surface of *Raia*  
and screamed to unroofed enigma  
marveled when no sound told them, as messiah,  
of anything beyond these banshees.  
So now their citadels reach up from the night,  
pierce from their substrata like their crowns of birthright,  
and they imagine the awe that the atmosphere declines,  
a concept to them now divine.

What of the many danger worlds, of teeth and jaws and claws?  
Of the monstrous *Kiljar*, littered with bones,  
its outposts laid to waste.  
Rarely anymore is braved  
The monstrosity of *Kiljar*'s stigma,  
or the numerous other worlds depraved,  
of primitive hate and violent haste.  
Perhaps someday they'll reach from the stone.  
On that day we shall pray for escape from those feverish maws.

Or consider those who revere the dark sights  
of a devouring entity on high,  
the pitchy shear of infinite density,  
the remnant of a wandering star.  
The *Charybdites* worship this behemoth  
as the consummate end to all known so far.  
They do not fear this end, this intensity.  
They revere the black eye that stares from the sky,  
those deep and lonely *Charybdites*.

But the hole is not the lone traveler of space.  
No, the great *Old Ones* slither betwixt reality's bars.  
Archaic giants from worlds unknown, they stream their mass in the sky.  
Moving among the stars, hiding among the rocks and the belt,  
they look upon the small ones and glide along their azimuth.  
With tentacles they constrain force civilized man has not felt,  
with eyes they see beyond the faintest nebulae,  
and with minds they think as slowly as the lives of stars.  
In sleep they live, but awake, who knows? Their sleep, it seems, our grace.

Who knows of the *Yormin Worms*, crawling along the *Gander Rings*?  
With maws the size of cities and a liking for the rock,  
the rings around the planet are their home, their hive, their stock.  
The many races down below watch them move among the stone,  
watch them crawl among the rings, those *Yormin Worms* of fear.  
Called the *Ancient Grandfathers*, the worms unite their worshippers as one.  
The fear of monstrous leviathans in the stars keeps warfare down to talk.  
But fear has kept those unions down, contained and chained to their bedrock.  
There is no spreading for the worshippers beyond the *Gander Rings*.

But destruction rains from barbaric forms, like the *Celts* with their death-torcs devised.  
The warrior race, above all they vex,  
attacking and salting the planets they find with their horrendous tempers irate,  
regardless of number, of mass, or location or friend or foe.  
The hatred, their ruckus, appears to be simply a cover for fear

of the inky black darkness which follows them near,  
their genocides attempts to slake the death god unclear,  
hoping to satisfy with inferior foes so it will abandon the Celts filled with woe.  
Now dying slowly, they accept not their fate, their lonely, disintegrating fate.  
The torcs they wear round their less and less necks  
will be all that is left of the race so formally and barbarously weaponized.

A tour of creation cannot be done without mention of the *Mutant Empire*,  
The race of a hundred thousand planets from every corner of a far-flung galaxy,  
having merged into something quite striking and queer,  
an empire of Mutants that slowly and massively lumbers.  
But stumble did they, upon the greatest of wars, *The War of the Galaxies Five*.  
The two allied galaxies were different, you see:  
the diverse galaxy of the *Commonwealth Sea*  
pair-bonded with the larger *Galactic Unity*,  
with the latter suffering most of all.  
Opposed were they by the Axial three, the *Island*, the *Boot* and the *Darkest of Three*,  
led by a galactic beast, *Guaranty*.  
With biting words he can make allies of enemies, or enemies flee.  
He wished to rule all and in maleficent words thrive.  
Upon this chaos did the Mutants arrive and awaken like a giant from slumbers.  
The Empire has joined the Commonwealth Premier  
and soon weapons incomprehensible, and the Unity's bloodied agony,  
shall end the bloodied skies and ashen worlds of the pitiless Five Galaxies' War.

Among the stars move liberators free,  
seeking out oppressed and threatened suns, rock and we.  
Saviors to some, terrors to others, they rescue stars from Dyson Spheres,  
from hungry, gnawing engines and return them to cradled nurseries instead.  
When a star is threatened, or its planet so mere,  
the *Star Shepherds* free the young thrall.  
Disabling the ships and homes of the fear,  
sending commanders and crews adrift, to float until dead,  
or find help from other, friendlier and more ancient gears.  
A score of races from a dozen worlds, the Star Shepherds wander and free,  
their numbers, though small, each epoch shall grow and spread upon reality's sea.

Other races, too, seek all life they can, the *Genesenes* who love it quite dear.  
Their brothers, *Epistemenes*, seek knowledge instead,  
to see how this life began.  
So with violence occasioned and fact but desired,  
the Epistemenes seek all they can,  
to see the twinkle of Genesene love in its stead,  
and to master with great and rampant machines that lost and mysterious frontier.

Fear not the world of the giants nearby,

the goliath tall prophets of *Alia*.  
They mean you no harm, no, none at all,  
unless your sanity is something you treasure.  
For each has been granted a sight down the line, further along temporal plane.  
The past is obscured, save inside their own view,  
to them what shall be is clear as what is.  
Talk to them and know your fate, or how you may possibly fall.  
The issue at stake is disagreement inquired,  
for what the prophet-giants see's a hand on the wall.  
Beyond a trillion free lines, there the end of all is,  
but each prophet-giant may see but few,  
while we, my friend, see but choice, bound by the flow of our own temporal lane.  
And so with their whips of great arcing fire,  
the giants wage wars to forestall  
the ache of their minds as they seek panacea  
for what score-foot prophets descry.

And last but not least is the small of the deep.  
In oceans and prairies and jungles they reap.  
Each eclipse divided by the living eighteen.  
I speak, of course, of our worldly machine,  
the Gaia, the Terra, the Earth 'neath our clouds.  
What is so special about this smallest of shrouds?  
Our religion, our love or our music reality?  
Could it not be the stories we tell, or our destructive mentality?  
Could it be the curious enigma,  
within the dreams we dream in our sleepless stigma?  
Our dreams, it seems, each swell as behemoth.  
They encourage us, urge us, beyond bounded azimuth.  
Nowhere in all of the universe has fear  
fled from a dream grown so strong or so near  
as the dream of humanity, of our lonely Earth, all  
the dreams of the things we can't see in our thrall.  
And though we can't see, we believe, so desired,  
to create something greater and to understand what's inquired.  
So don't overlook the dreams of castles in air,  
for those dreams let us venture through realities concise.  
And thus met by our prayer and divine-granted flare,  
we cry and we strive for our once-lost paradise.