

**A Scattered Few**  
**Poems of and About Science Fiction**

by

**Jim Michie**

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The font used in this publication is Baskerville Old Face, 12-point.

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## Introduction

The poems in this book are primarily from the 1960s and 1970s—a few earlier, a few later. I have made some minor changes and corrections, but in general, I have left the poems as they were originally created. The largest alteration was in the poem about Venus where three words were changed to suit the reality of today's data rather than to reflect the myths of a fog shrouded planet.

Many of these poems were written in direct response to the plans and events of the Space Race as well as in response to some of my favorite science fiction and what I was currently reading. As an example, the first poem was written shortly after the announcement of the Mercury Program. Fortunately, the fictionalized story-line envisioned in the poem never happened.

I have made the poem titles bold so they would not be confused with the poems themselves.

### **Apogee-Perigee**

Now day, now night, in quick succession fly,  
While I in my immense circumference ply  
The ethereal void of boundless time and space,  
By chance, by fate, shall be my dwelling place.

I wheel above a world of malcontent,  
A world of hazy blue-green wanderment.  
A seething orb of hate and violence,  
But in my womb there is no turbulence.

The air is antiseptic, pollen free,  
Designed by man and checked by chimpanzee.  
Though true, it lacks the brace of woodland breeze,  
Or briny taste of white-capped wind-blown seas,  
It is to me the measure of my life;  
Its waning breath will shortly soothe my strife.

Old Daniel in the den was naught by me,  
Nor Christian hordes when thrown to Leo be  
As great a sacrifice as I shall seem,  
A lofty star to watch, but not redeem.

All mankind's emotions I will excite  
But only briefly will they unite  
In declarations they do not feel,  
Of lamentations on a tomb of steel.

I am safe from molds, bacteria, bugs, and worms  
While my soul and St. Peter come to terms.

For many years in splendor will I ride,  
But then to dust on jet-stream winds to glide;  
In every land interred, at last I die,  
An arching, fiery glow across the sky.

### **First Life**

Drop  
A seed  
Steel-shelled  
To mar the chastity  
Of a world

### **Long Day's End**

A billion years of lusty life  
Have scooped the source  
From his heart  
While shattered mantle rushes in

To wait the wind of funeral horn  
A pyre that gobbles worlds

### **The Outward Urge**

Come loud  
Out of the mud  
To venture in  
On thoughts of scars  
To hear in the quiet  
The blinking of stars  
Come home  
Come home

### **Cosmic-Shave**

For a face  
That will really daze her  
Burn your beard  
With a laser razor  
Cosmic-Shave

If buttons make  
You aggravated  
Our razors aren't  
Yet automated  
Cosmic-Shave

For a shave  
That's slick as a rocket  
We've got a laser  
To fit your pocket  
Cosmic-Shave

A three-headed Martian  
Made the test  
And proved our products  
Were the best  
Cosmic-Shave

### **Lightjammers**

Through whirling gusts of empty night  
Whispering steel in timeless flight  
With arms unfurled against the stars  
To catch the winds of light

### **Exodus**

The rockets will shuttle them out  
The bold  
The adventurous  
The brave  
The hardy  
The cream  
And the meek shall inherit the earth

### **Martian Desert**

To strip the flesh and etch your bones  
To chill the marrow of your soul  
Till dawn approaches with thermals spent  
But rock and sand still lie in wait  
To hold the day into the night  
And bring its dancing Furies

### **Strange Sensations**

Jump high off the fifty meter board  
Doing flips pikes twists  
Gentle cartwheels  
Coming down thistle-slow  
To sink softly in the heated pools  
Of the pleasure-domed moon  
Take two giant steps  
Moving like a diver  
On the ocean's bottom  
But ten times as far  
A long tip-toe  
In steel-soled boots  
Take two giant steps  
May I?  
Hiiiiiiii  
Check your safety-line  
Turn on your shoes  
Go out into nothing  
To stand right-side down  
In a shower of light

### **Takeoff**

breath wheezes hydraulic  
blood coagulates molasses  
every pore fills with mercuric sweat  
each trickle a constricting chain welded to the form-fit rack  
at last leaden sound falls black  
to fill the brain with respite

### **Sweeper**

Black  
Spherical lodestone of light  
Working like a cosmic Hoover  
An unmated irresistible force  
Rending the fabric of space  
Hole

### **Telepathy**

Empathy  
The heterodyning of I and Thou  
Echoing in the chord of woof and warp  
Like simultaneous equations of aura  
Locked as binaries in a single modulation  
Unity

### **Alien Worlds**

Photosynthetic  
Jack Frost trees on a summer planet  
A gay parade of protective color  
Grazing on fields of windswept flame  
And only the seas are emerald green  
Spectrum

### **Nightfall**

The three dancing shadows of giant trade-blown ferns  
Frolic in haste  
Before the blue-white explosion of dawn  
Snuffs them out  
Fleetingly

Red

Of the longer waves refracted out  
From columns, spires, arches, and domes  
Grown cold in entropied empire  
Inertia of a greatness lost  
Dwarf

Quietly

In painfully patient rows up-thrust  
The city's aeries in silence strain  
To hear, to feel a feathered touch  
To know again a nestlings cry  
Waiting

Rings

Of night skies in spectral display  
Spinning echoes of moons past  
Concentric halos in dust and ice  
A cosmic salute, an infinite prayer  
Glory

### **A Revelation**

A cosmic mace across the stars  
Of red-crossed legions and battle mail  
Their templar swords in laser light  
To bring the Armageddon

### **The Kids Today**

What is it with the kids today?

Always begging  
    give me this  
    give me that

Never satisfied with anything

Do you think my father  
    would have traded-in my space-scooter  
    for a new rocket planet hopper?



### **The System**

Flung-out  
Fiery young  
Like incandescent spittle  
On the face of Anywho  
  
Swung-out  
Centripetal hung  
A great gigantic little  
On the face of Anywhy

### **Silver Specter**

An occasional spur of powdery iron silicate  
Humping through the magnetic field  
Screeching against the bottom of the sand scow  
Yawing her slightly then flattening-out  
The thin fast wind quartering in  
Its gritty riders eating at the steel rigging  
Frosting the vision through Clive's helmet  
Rushing from cold heavy night  
To hot light day  
  
The rudder hisses down in the sand  
As she comes about to her last and downwind leg  
With a rattle and flutter of shifting rigging  
And the clatter of Clive's efforts to unfurl her spinnakers  
Shuddering forward as each billows into place  
With the same taught snap as Clive's little sloop in Nantucket  
But gobbling kilometers ten times as fast  
Closing on the base camp  
A line of electron-fluorescence her herald  
  
The men turn-to to see this ship  
Again splayed-out in full-blown splendor  
A silver specter of the past  
Ghosting by the present  
As Clive reefs her glory  
Slips her down the gentle slope of the excavation  
And berths her again in her ancient crypt

### **Early Visit**

Down it came  
    on a pillar of flame  
    with clouds of billowing smoke  
A strange little ship  
    that would wobble and dip

of ring and hub and spoke  
A door in the side  
was flung open wide  
and out stepped strange looking creatures  
They had shiny suits  
and shiny boots  
and oddly mixed up features  
Their visit was short  
of a wondrous sort  
and they rose with a thunderous peel  
But the story was minced  
for the world was convinced  
that Ezekiel had seen a wheel

### **Schizo**

A golden apple of the sun  
Swinging on a branch elliptic  
Rapid years and endless days  
A lifeless schizophrenic

### **Surveyor**

In a puff of leaden dust  
It builds its nest  
Drills its roots  
Runs its tests  
Shouts  
Then rests

### **Peek-a-boo**

Not a heart  
But name divine  
A hidden soul in cloud entwines  
A grizzled head in haut bouffant  
Playing peek-a-boo in hot chiffon

### **Twinkle Twinkle**

Twinkle twinkle  
Stellar light  
My but you are very bright  
A million-trillion candlepower  
Irradiates my home each hour

### **Alien Contact**

Revulsion  
Pulsating from eye to mind  
In waves of nausea olfactory reinforced  
But hypnotically suppressed  
In fair imitation of the somnambulant Ambassador  
Smiling

### **Gusts of Time**

And then the gusts of time  
Whipped her mantle 'round her head  
Revealing the ageless form of strife  
That sucks up meaning  
To spit out doubt  
Pulsing in conflict  
Exploding in death

### **The Search**

We shall search the stars  
And all their worlds in tow  
With shovel, pick, and gouge  
In hope that we may know

### **Earthlight**

Between the domes by monorail  
The speeding coach through silent night  
Carries laughs from game to game  
Into the dawn of gold earthlight  
Soft  
Undulating  
In through the plasti-steel doors  
In the uproar of frolic and fun  
No one listens  
With frantic ear upon the ground  
To know the coming of Mongol hordes  
Across the powder seas  
But they breathe as one  
the dome's spicy air of dreams

### **Foundation Trilogy**

Stretching the shape of things that were  
To be the shape of things that will  
Ghosting the pulse  
In rise and fall  
Waiting  
For Hari  
For the Armageddon  
For Genesis  
For the Mule  
In a race across time  
Restraining man's bauble worlds  
To circle the neck of Fate

### **Dune**

Free  
To flit from dune-to-dune  
As sand on alien sirocco flies  
The desert mouse on dreams of spice  
Goes forth to ride the Maker  
Men

### **Van Vogt**

From the shops  
A beagle's bark  
That sounds to far Centauri  
Hypnotic tones  
Of tendrilled death  
For prey on Rull safari

### **The Long Afternoon of Earth**

Come swing with me  
In the Banyan tree  
Where the fish and termites play  
And I will spin a giant yarn  
And stop the night at day

## **Electron Dreams**

Android

A wraith not God's in fictional form  
That shuns the soul of mortal man  
Mocking the flow of heart and mind  
And dreaming of electric sheep  
Machine

## **4½ Planet?**

In this whorl which never ceases,  
Searching through its endless pieces,  
Wondering from what one can see,  
Why this great catastrophe.  
Its rocks and minerals classified,  
Its plants and animals atrophied,  
Deposits from its ancient sea,  
But still no reason for this to be.  
Then in a sieve sand sifting through,  
At last a clue, a small brass screw.

## **Trojan Point**

Lagrangian  
Dutchman from the true deep  
Compartments filled with emptiness  
An outward urge?  
A failed seed?  
Flotsam

## **Before Banging**

It is nothing  
A static field of quasi-matter  
Pinpoint pulsing expanding scatter  
In perfect order not beginning  
In perfect order never ending  
It is nothing  
But God  
Perhaps

## **Stellar End**

Nova  
And the sun said, "you were but my spittle until you grew like unwanted seed"

And now you presume to control the conduct of my affairs  
But I say the breath of my wrath will shrivel you as you use me for your grapes  
Such is the way of death”  
Glory

### **A Spot of Rage**

A king of gods  
As befits his size  
His violent airs  
His poisonous breath  
And his roving red rage

### **Astride the Mare**

Sprawling  
Craters within craters  
Crater rims like arced mountain chains  
Impact eroding into hills  
Desolation  
  
Barren  
In the powder of spore-like dust  
Only rocks rear up  
No dust devils dance  
These rock-furrowed fields  
Purity  
  
Defiant  
In the sharp contrast of airless shadow  
Time and light in careless play  
Eons of rock in fists up-thrust  
A rugged crown of ridge and rill  
Majesty

### **Project Gemini**

Defy the parabolic  
First Castor  
Then Pollox  
To meet in a twilight tryst  
To join together in metallic kiss  
Then parting in joy  
Take the path of Archimedes

### **The Universe**

Coming from where  
Going to when  
Expanding  
Contracting  
Pulsing 'till then

### **Adam and Eve**

Adam  
Processors parallel in flowing arrays  
Cascading switches, on/off, in phase  
A language of logic, enforcing in sets  
Empowered by circuits, eschewing of nets  
Power

Eve  
Processors matrixed in cross-link arrays  
Pulsing at random, light in a maze  
An ethereal language of flow and ebb  
Whispering logic, at one with the web  
Finesse

### **Nebula**

Hydrogen  
Cold plumes of darkness  
Waiting in brooding billows  
For a seed of gravity  
To start the subtle inward fall  
Coalescing  
Eons slow to start  
But ramping exponentially  
In bubbles of gravity and pressure  
The simplest of atoms  
Fusing  
In pressure's heat  
To speckle the darkness  
With incandescence  
Riding nuclei's clash  
Helium

## **Christopher Columbus**

Someday in the future

Man will venture

To the end of the universe

He will fly to the edge

Fall over the ledge

And be gobbled up by dragons