

# Advent

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## The Music Box



By  
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## Introduction

**This is not a finished work. It is still being edited.**

For many in the world, Christmas is often celebrated as a traditional affair surrounding the idea of the coming and the birth of the baby Jesus who Christians believe is the Christ. It comes during a time where the sun is furthest away from the planet Earth and is either the longest or the shortest night of the year depending where you live. We are brought up with traditions where a Christmas tree is cut down and erected inside the house and adorned with ornaments, lights, candles, garlands, roses and either an angel or a star to top the highest branch. We are brought up with this image that Christmas comes with ice and a world covered in a blanket of white snow. We cook special recipes, we sing special songs, we gather at the Christian church of our choice and exult in the pending birth of the Jesus child that was born of lowly state and visited by such people as shepherds and kings a like. We exchange gifts and convince young children that Saint Nicholas leaves presents under the Christmas tree.

These are memories that reside within me. I have told my own children of my Christmas' long past so in some way they will live on, or more probable; to be watered down or be forgotten. Many cultures around the globe see this seasonal tradition dance on their doorsteps: Some will bring a taste and a tease with them into their house, others will shun it and a majority will follow traditions set forth by their faiths. We are far from being a united species when it comes to beliefs but I have not met one person that does not have belief.

This year's story probes this "Belief" reality from a side that knows no belief. I believe that EVERYTHING has a story. It doesn't have to be living or animate: It just has to exist. By existing it carries with it imposed forces that come not only from outside, but inside. The story may be boring, but it is a story none the less. To find the truth in a story, to penetrate its true existence and how it has affected life around it can be a life long challenge. A challenge can start out as a simple curiosity and quickly become an obsession. I hope I do not come across obsessive, but yet I want to tell a story of how a simple belief brings an entire world to light. It can come from anything.

I give you this years story: The Music Box

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## Day and Night

**H**ow small we are. We stand on a planet. This planet is a part of our solar system which co-exists with hundreds of other systems floating through the vast universe on a beautiful celestial train call the Milky Way. The galaxy is not the only one out there. How many are there you may ask, to which I can only tell you as many as thoughts go flying in and out of a young child's mind (And having been a child myself, I can tell you right now that there were no limits). Long have the sky and stars been studied by students and scholars alike, objects of incredible obsessions that can only really be observed at night, for night time is the celestial time.

Day has its points. We need day... just as, well... We just need day. We need sun. Most living things need sun or light. Even in the depths of the ocean, down the walls of the Laurentian abyss light dwells in the living things that call that darkness home. But here on the mantel of the Earth, plants grow; humans work; the sand is warmed and sky is populated with clouds that carry water. Yes, day time is very important to.

But night time has a life all unto it's own, and if you are in a good spot, far away from any town that sheds light into the atmosphere above it, you will see things you can't see in the daytime. Float out into a big lake somewhere up north when the grass turns brittle with frost and plumes of steam vent from your nose and don't go away too quickly. You are all bundled up because you know that if you go out to float on the icy water it will be very cold. Pull your furry covered coat collar up tight around your neck. Tug your stocking cap down over your ears. Wrap that thick wool scarf around your neck and cheeks to stop your teeth from chattering and sit back quietly in the little skiff. Listen to the water lightly slap the metal sides. There are no sounds, not even from the closest town because it is eaten by the cold air. You stare up into the sky and from the outer peripheral you see something but it's gone the second you look in its directions. You stare high and this time you catch it; a star slides slowly down the blackened sky but speeds up when it comes closer to the horizon than splutters out.

But wait... you hold your gaze and wonder what that light is hovering above some hills to the north west. There are no towns that you know of in that direction.

The light is very subtle, but oddly electric. It dances just out of perception. It slowly build in strength over the next 10 minutes, and during that time it changes shapes and colors. It flickers light unseen lightning, shooting up through the ghostly shape of color. The upper fringes form a line that moves in a slow wave. It is soft emerald green in some places; a pale yellow in others and at times a deep rose. It moves in the air like a beautiful host of angels then slowly, the moment passes. The lights dim. The flickering brushes up against the sky like a feather being blown by the wind then darkness returns.

If you are lucky, you may see one again.



## Evolution

The planet Earth could not avoid massive changes to its ecosystem. Over thousands of years it becomes uninhabitable. Great floods came, volcanoes blew, earthquakes thundered. Eventually sun parched, cracked and baked the Earth's mantle till all water disappeared. At first only bugs survived but even they eventually become extinct.

The first objects man built during its dynasty decayed slowly. Eventually nature overcame the decomposing process and nothing but dust and debris covered 90% of the Earth's crust. The environment no longer supported life. The planet became desolate and dry with vast areas of land the color of terra cotta, or sulfur yellow, or baked mud gray with patches of creamish colored sand. Asteroids pelted the Earth from above creating large pock marks, or craters on the surface. Eventually a section of land was ripped open by a shower of meteor fragments that cracked the Earth's mantle. From these giant fissures gushed water, dark and muddy. Water floods the land, filling the craters and eroding the roots of mountains creating huge mud slides. Water overtakes the Earth's surface.

Earth lay cold, barren of all life except for what looks like roots sticking out of the ground. Nothing green grows from them. The memory of man fades into ash and debris.

However, memories and impressions exist. Much in life outside humanity goes on without judging what is right or wrong; good or bad... Life in even its limited capacity just "IS". A pebble on a beach doesn't aspire to be good or bad, it just sits there. A plant may have dependencies on the environment around it to survive, but it has little control of its own. A raccoon may forage for food, responding to its surroundings to either protect its lifestyle or to do what the animal does best: Eat, sleep and make baby raccoons. If left to its own devices, do you think a raccoon or a opossum would climb into a comfortable chair and turn on a television to watch cartoons? If we leave an animal in its natural habitat and don't influence it, most animals have no need for anything a human has got.

Somehow no matter where a human is in his evolution he always is plagued by very simple challenges. Challenges are a nature unto its own. A challenge can be as simple as getting out of bed or it can be as complex as the desire to rule the world. Once this challenge is presented, a choice is made to take it on or ignore it: If pursued to its fullest potential and achievement realized, there is a brief moment where the accomplishment is able to bask in the light of its success but NEVER is it EVER enough. Achievement alone is usually never enough. After the sigh of completion usually comes a clap of the hands, a little sparkle to their eye, and out of the mouth and through the lips come the words: "What next?". All humanity hits this moment again and again. Sometimes good things come out of it, but making the wrong choices can have disastrous consequences.



## What is it?

Primitive man have done cave drawings of them. It's been documented. And who knows how many human beings have seen them since. In the countless galaxies that lay outside our narrow range of vision, who knows how many of them live. They keep stumbling into the Milky Way, wandering through the solar system like a dandelion seed on a breezy day. They seem totally unaffected by what we perceive as dangerous, like gamma rays and other such things unseen by the human retina. Actually, quite the opposite.

The odd thing is, is that they have no real interest in the planet. Like a colony of manatee, they float through the universe intimidated by nothing that crosses its path. How they survive is only up to speculation, but no matter what the circumstances are, no one has put the lines together and recognized it for what it was: A life form.

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Calling them object other than a life form would be easy: They have no eyes, no mouth, no ears, arms, legs, neck, teeth, fingers, toes, nose... to us they were probably blobs. This could only happen if they had been seen close up, but in reality no one had. Even if someone had the chance or even had the interest to look at them closers they would appear as blobs all stuck together like green tapioca pudding.

However, they are life forms, just nothing we wouldn't really understand. You scratch the surface, you would say yes, they wander the unknown universe and have one thing that stand out: They have a strange luminosity that changes color in response to anything it comes in contact with. The neutral color is usually a very pleasant soft electric green. You may have seen this green before if you have ever purchased an egg of elastic putty that glows in the dark. Full of contemplation it is, yet calm and unobtrusive. It could also be mistaken for an aurora some instances.

The blobs never entered the Earths atmosphere intentionally. They did not have the facility of intention. Earth was small for the most part, bright, busy and the atmosphere really disgusted them. They had ventured into the airspace once before. It scared humans so much they sent rockets flying towards them. When all their artillery would just pass through them they pointed their big telescopes on them and took a few pictures. That was that. They got classified as a gaseous anomaly and life went on. Eventually the blobs left and went back to wandering the universe, continually bumping into strange worlds or objects which for the most part were not hostile at all. In fact, they were uninhabited.



## Namings

**I**t appears that humanity is always in need association, and inasmuch we should probably figure out a name for these blobs. Fortunately, they already had a name, but not one that was language oriented. I'm sure if they had cognitive abilities and a universally translatable language the amount of information we could learn from them would be immense, but seeing this is sheer folly of thought, we shall give them a name: Spohn.

I don't know why I call them that. I think they make a similar sound when they need to propel themselves out of a gravitational field. I have no idea how old Spohn are. I am clueless as to where they came from, or how they communicate, or a home planet or anything that we as humans depend on for sustaining life. Who can say why a paramecia exists? We can make educated guesses and call it a family of single celled organisms. There is no guessing as to how old the are. We do know the keep coming back to the Milky Way for some reason, and has passed Earth may times. I'm sure they are probably older than the solar system, but I don't think time is something the Spohn keep track of.

Last time Spohn was reported in the general Earth area was long before the age of reclamation, or the end of all life. Mankind had consumed almost the entire surface of the planet and had no more room to grow. The continents had pooled their resources and sent many probes out into deep space to see if there were other planets that could support human life. Of course, most of these endeavors were met with very negative results. For the first time man found they were without a plan of escape and soon lost their foothold in reality as disastrous events unfolded: Planets have no constant orbital paths, but the sun gravitational pull is very strong. The first major disaster to affect Earths orbit was when Mercury, a relatively small planet had its own orbit decay to the point where it literally fell into the sun. The affects of this was disastrous: Venus was pulled closer to the sun and lost whatever atmosphere it had, baking the planet to a brick red. Earth was then pulled closer changing its atmosphere making it uninhabitable. All life ceased over a time and there was no escaping it. The age of reclamation had begun. Hope was an act of futility, yet earth and water persevered. It was after this event the Spohn re-entered Earths atmosphere and to them nothing had changed. They had no capacity for memory.



## Findings

**S**pohn are not sophisticated enough to have memories. They respond. A good response is as powerful as a bad one. If the response is good they feel safe, so when coming into the Earths atmosphere was uneventful, they had no need to divert their course. When the Spohn close enough something fascinating happened: Instead of one long massive string of light broke, they fell to the dirt like a small cloudburst of rain. These smaller blobs are singulars. Spohn should be referred to as a race and not an animal. Spohn is a collective of smaller beings that share a common experience. What a singular experiences, they all experience. It was like they were all connected by an invisible nerve. Spohn being their identity, the collective was the body. Each carried a greenish glow as long as they were unstimulated. They also had a very unique way of locomotion: They pulled them selves along very much like an octopus pulls its self through the coral and rock. They were fast and very arbitrary in their



movements. When one would come across an oddity, like a smooth rock or a sharp root, there was an immediate adjustment in color. New experiences resulted in yellow which rippled throughout the collective.

Green was their normal color. If the experience was a particularity positive impression it would change to a carmine red. If the experience was worth examining further, the collective would turn a lilac. Now, imagine a couple hundred singulars all having their own experiences: The speed in which their impression were felt by the collective was nearly instantaneous. It was similar to a color organ hooked into the lighting system for a rock band, but the speed in which the collective experience was far faster and superior

The singularities pulled themselves aggressively across the wide expanses of the plane, wrapping themselves around anything that was of interest, just to get a sense of whether it was first of all a good or bad experience. The other noticeable thing is that they seemed to move in a group... not so different than buffalo or geese. Like the transmission of impressions and color response they were quick, fanning out to sense as much as possible without losing the integrity of the collective.

At the far left front of this scanning process, one pod wrapped its self around a protuberance that did not appear at first to offer much of an impression, but as it was about to depart this stick sank in an unusual way into the soft sand around it. It did not seem rooted. The pod curled its body around it and wiggled it playfully like a loose tooth. The object sank a bit more, pulling at the sand around it until it upended on the singular, opening a tiny hole in the sand that quickly grew the sand around it was consumed. The stick was not pulled into the hole, but when the singular jumped off it and hit the sand it was quickly pulled into the hole and disappeared.

The entire clan turned bright red in alarm!



### **Down the hole**

**T**he fall started out with the light of day dancing off dirt and rock for a good 30 seconds. Singulars are just as susceptible to the gravitational pull like any other life form, but they just deal with it better than most associated life forms known to man. Neither having wings or a parachute, a Spohn singular doesn't fall with the velocity equal to its weight, but once daylight couldn't reach the falling singular its color was dancing from fear, to excitement, to anxiety and even some curiosity as to how long the fall would last. The luminous glow that originally spotlighted the tiny shaft it was falling in soon could not find anything to reflect against, finding that the shaft had opened up indeed wider than the singular could cast light to.

Far above, the remaining Spohn singulars did what they normally did when in a threatening situation: They rejoined. The collective Spohn hovered over where the singular fell through, pulsing with reds, blues and deep greens... but also oranges of curiosity. They didn't seem to be worried about the little singular free falling under the Earths crust, but more of anticipation of whether the singular would

decide to quit falling and head back to the surface. For indeed, the singular was not really struggling to stop. It was fascinated by the change in the scenery.

Yes, it was no longer a hole, but a chasm wide and dark. The roof vaulted egg-shaped up towards the hole with almost with the skill of a miner. There was no end in sight but that didn't seem to bother the little singular; moving through the element of air was very much like floating in the vacuum of space, except that it was being drawn in a specific direction... similar to the one that brought the Spohn to Earth. Eventually, forms started taking place; sharp edges that were not of natural makings. In some cases, there was a fleeting reflection of the Spohn singular, much soiled and ever so quickly becoming eaten up in the dark; a dark that couldn't be touched by the falling light. When it finally land, it bounced off what ever it came in contact with then hit something vertical and hard. It then tumbled another twenty feet to make a straight drop down where it finally rolled to a permanent resting place on very dusty ground. The singular felt anxious and fear at being separated from the collective. What the singular had fallen into would never be found even remotely on the surface: The singular had landed at the foot of stone steps that lead to an ancient looking house.



## **Buried City**

**F**or a while, the singular was totally disoriented. Dull with a green light, it had overcome its sense of excitement and now felt detached from the others in a way it had never felt detached before. Lonely, small, feeble, vulnerable: Even though it could not understand or conceptualize what it was feeling in this large, dark forbidding place, the colors danced through its transparent membrane as each experience opened its self to what I'm sure it felt was impending doom.

Far above, there was a unified Spohn that was experiencing complete panic at the thought that one of their members had been so abruptly separated from the collective body of Spohn that they did not have a clue as to what to do next. Do they go on? Do they just leave knowing that one of their members was still functional deep in the crevices of the Earth with no light source to guide it home? Do they just sit there and wait? Do they follow the singular down? NO! That emotion turned them an annoying red, but it was soon overtaken by pale green of apprehension. Spohn may be some odd sentient being, but it was not going to abandon a singular like a wolf gnawing off a leg to escape a trap. There was turmoil and a very serious absence of what to do next. However, the living link to the singular that was now miles below them was weak, they knew it was still alive. All they needed was a nudge so they would make a decision.

The Spohn singular pulled its self across the dusty unfamiliar surface like an amoeba without much direction at first. There was no apparent object in its immediate luminosity, so it crawled first off in a circle then began to spiral methodically outward towards the perimeter. After some time its faint light, which was a reddish orange fell across a long shadowy object that traversed horizontally to the right and left into the unknown. Creeping up to it, it was some sort of raised platform, hard and cold with no life to it a all. The singular pulled its self up and over it. The surface was raise and flat for a distance until it came to another rise. Following the course, it discovered it had multiple levels that it felt compelled to climb.

Up, up, up it went until it topped off onto another surface, but this one was not as cold and had an oddly hollow sound to it. The singular started forward again but as it pulled its self across this rougher surface it felt something jab into it and it was painful. Pulling back instantly, it found what seemed to be a part of the surface stuck into its membrane. Dragging its self backward, it dislodged the object and once again proceeded forward with more care until it came to another barricade but this one was not a shallow step, it rose in front of the little singular like a monolith. Curiosity drew out a brighter light to reveal the front porch of an old house with a large wooden screen door.



## Interest

As curiosity grew, so did the singularities light emanation. Dust and debris was everywhere and difficult to deal with, but the singular did not sense danger in this place. It sensed abandonment and age but it also sensed something it did not quite understand: Presence of history. This is a hard thing to define. Think of it as an archeologist on a remote dig and discovering the tomb of some strange culture that had been wiped out during some disaster similar to a volcano lava flow or a plague. There were impressions all around this strange and unusual locality that affected not only the singularities color, but brought a strange dreamlike memory that was totally unfamiliar to it.

The singularity found its self crawling along the edge where the siding of the house met the porch flooring, feeling its way carefully so as not to accidentally drop any further from where it was already marooned. As it moved, it came across objects that would not surprise any human but was new to the singularity. One such object was a round, green and kind of fuzzy. It had dust caked on it but it did not seem threatening, yet it had a reaction on the singularity of a very positive event that brought on the sense of happiness, contentment and possibly a little exhaustion in the works. The singularity found that without any cause for reaction, it was now had begun to glow in a warm yellow. If it could relate to any human emotion it would almost conclude it was happy.

Nonsense! The Spohn or a singularity could not possibly be influenced by the memory of some object, but that thought couldn't reside in the singularity. It did not have that potential. It moved over the object and came to a place where the wall decided to disappear. The singularity groped into the area in front of it and found the wall continued on to the right. Without any reservation, it followed the wall and came to another stop. The wall went left. Sensing its self in this direction, it came across a slight elevation in the floor and the wall that was not met with any other obstacle. Keeping to the right, it slid up on notch and found its self in an wide open passage that was not as dusty as the outside was. The floor was also a lot smoother, and the singularity was able to glide across it even though there were many obstacles in its way. There was something that it had not yet experienced but was deeply encompassed in, and the singular was not alone. The experience was not a response from the singular, which passed it up to the collective Spohn, but was that from something else; something outside its own narrow sensation. It was having feeling from a totally unknown source... the source was coming from the object left behind, fragments of history.

Topside, feeling all these experiences coming from the singular in such a strong sense of non-threatening curiosity, the colony began to tightly circle the dark opening in the ground where the piece

of wood now stood erect to the side. From the variety of colors moving through them, there was desire, fear, curiosity and thrill rippling over the surface of the Spohn. They wanted to be reunited with the singular but they were also uncertain the collective was that willing to literally take the plunge, however that was answered with one of the Spohn seeped over the edge like cold syrup and finally fell from the collective. Panic rippled through the collective: Some were ready to follow, some where not. In the end only a smaller Spohn stayed behind as one by one, singular fell into the dark abyss.



## Reunion

What Spohn that fell did not fall as a collective, they fell as singulars. As they fell, the singular already at the bottom of the abyss sensed all the apprehensions and thrills and mixed emotions of all the entities. It was a distraction because just as the singular came across something new in the old house, it would be immediately transported into the feelings of another and hence, sharing their experiences... which did not allow for much allowances of new object investigation. Eventually, the singular in the house gave up and followed its own trail cut through the dust back to the door and onto the porch.

At first, the singular could only experience the falling collective but eventually their glowing colors could be seen pelting from the upper space into the street where the first singular had landed. One by one they were able to perceive the coming ground and interrupt the gravity enough to make it gracefully to the dusty ground, a most unusual rain of entities ever to behold. As they hit the ground their colors changed to that of excitement and immediately dispatched to the house where the original singularity was waiting.

In count, I could probably be safe in saying there were at least 50 plus singulars that had left the collective to venture down the hole, but once down, some where not as comfortable with their decision to come after all. This also was a new experience, because for the most part they were united in their experiences. But once down, they began to realize that they were not all of the same mind. Was this an influence of the environment? They could not begin to contemplate that one!

It was sad they had all immediately focused on the position of the singularity that was already landed for they missed an opportunity that was available to them just beyond their periphery: There were more buildings. This would soon be overcome though. As the individual Spohn caught up with the first singular, they were happy to join once again with it and become one.

The reunion was short lived however. It appeared that the first singular wanted to get back to investigating its surroundings. Some loathed to let go, but for another first, it was apparent that they had no choice in the matter. Eventually they all fall into singular mode and started drifting around on little expeditions of their own. This was an amazing moment, because as a collective, they all shared each new experience yet managed to feel their own discoveries. At first they all followed the first singular into the house. One found a staircase and decided to climb it, another came across a fuzzy rug in the living room, another wandered into a place where large metal objects dominated, square and box like. One wandered down a long hall and found something amazing: attached to the wall was a framed object

that held within its confines a strange surface that mimicked every move the singular looking into it made; it even had the same colors but it was not allowing the singular the chance to share the experience. This puzzled many of the other singulars and without much convincing they all converged on the spot. As they joined the other, more were showing up on the framed surface. One singular reached out and found it was smooth and cold, but more interestingly, the one in the surface did the same thing. Trying their best to figure why the other Spohn were not willing to share their feelings, a new feeling arose; one of annoyance.

This was not a positive feeling and eventually as a collective they decided to avoid it.



### **When (flashback)**

**T**he one thing the Spohn were still lacking was an experience of exactly what this all meant. Spohn don't understand history in the same way that we do as humans. On the other hand, it would be difficult for humans to perceive a life that is built solely on an experiential response that is quickly forgotten in the next instant. There is no living past for a singular or a collective Spohn.

But there is one thing that is inevitable, and that thing is called change. Change is mandatory. Case in point: The house the Spohn collective were in didn't just appear by magic. The objects in the house weren't made without purpose. Unlike the Spohn who just drifted from one galaxy to the next, the people who lived on this planet called it their home at one time. They could travel the entire circumference in less than a day. Before the population explosion, before their was registration of fertility intentions, before sterilization was mandatory, mankind was free to make decision and choose their fate. Humans lived in houses that had a front and a back yard and could be purchased on a bank note. There were trees and farms that had land to actually grow plants that produced edible things such as corn, wheat, apples and figs instead of everything being genetically grown in high-rise hot houses. Air was fresh instead of recirculated. Water had a delicate flavor instead of reclaimed fluids that smelled of chlorine and was actually transparent. People fought wars over the amenities of this little town they had fallen into, but nothing meant anything to these simple creatures. Granted, they had some "intelligence" to them, but most humans long gone would have agreed the Spohn were simple organisms and would normally be classified as a single cell life form.

But Spohn had one thing over humans: They survived. They didn't fight. They didn't complain. Then again, they have no concept of want or need. They just... are.

So, there they were: All these singulars were now aimlessly wandering in some house and not one had any clue of where they were or what they were doing. Before this little village became buried and entombed, the people that lived here were happy and prosperous. They had lived together with as much harmony as one could during that time. They went to church, they celebrated holidays and birthdays; they bought merchandise that either delighted them or made life easier. Humans had themselves personally invested in everything around them. This was a human trait, and as such, each and every object that now lay under centuries of dust in this catacomb had this one thing in common: Each object

was impressed with a memory. Defying time and unbeknownst to the Spohn, life still existed in memories that were entrusted to all. Everything has a story.



## Antiques

As the Spohn singulars investigated the house they were subject to the filth that accompanied the place. They were not accustomed to moving around in mountains of dust and debris, but they managed to tolerate it. What bothered them most was the natural barrier that the dust created not only around the objects they came in contact with, but the dust that accumulated on their soft luminous skin. The dust somehow interfered with their ability to communicate their experiences to others of their kind and it didn't exactly suit them very well. Loosing communication with the collective was un-nerving. This usually only happened if the singular had wandered out of contact range (which was indeed very far away) or in the rare case where a Spohn would be extinguished from the colony through some freak accident. The singular that had fallen into the abyss first had already acquired so much dust that sometimes it felt it had been abandoned and that the collective Spohn had moved on. For the singular, this was a terrifying emotion that even though it did not know it was felt, rippled throughout the collective with nightmarish effects.

That did not stop the singulars desire to search through the house; but it did change the dynamics on how it was affected. Though the floor of the building was littered with pieces of roof and wall plaster covered with dirt, the singular managed to stumble upon a number of objects that had very strong memories attached to them. It had already experienced the green ball, which we all recognize to be a tennis ball; but when it came across a simple pin cushion the experience was quite different. Upon touching the object, the singular was transported into an unknown dimension where it felt slender fingers touch the surface and pull some object out of it. That may not be much for a human, but to a singular it was a revelation that could not be described to its peer. It only felt confusion because it was not just a physical sensation it was feeling, but a historical one... the object was not being felt, but the impressions of the last human to use it. There was more to the object because the last memory it had was of something being pulled from it. The singular glowed in surprise and uncharacteristically wrapped its membrane around it only to pull back when it once again was pierced by a painful stab of a slender object protruding from the surface. At first it carefully probed it, then began to pass over it and that same stabbing sensation pierced its body and a sense of pain dominated its color. Pulling back, the singular re-approached the object and with renewed interest, it carefully touched it.

The memory released its self from the object like the striking of a match: The singular watched entranced as the object that we know as a needle was pulled out and away from the pin cushion. It was held carefully in the fingers that had pulled the first one out, but this time a string was passed through an opening at one end of it, looped back and then found its self being woven in and out of some object, lacing them together so they would not pull apart.

The moment was over very quickly, but it was not lost. The singular found that the memory had embedded its self and now was part of the collective.



## The Music Box

There really was no telling how much time had gone by, not that it really mattered to the Spohn. They were used to being in 0 gravity and out amongst the stars. However they had been down the hole for a good couple of days now in Earth rotation, and had ventured into the yard and out into the streets as they became more familiar with their surroundings. The singulars were not as easy to spot right off, though some were cleaner than others. Picture a very large scoop of glow-in-the-dark ice cream, fully charged from being in the presence of a bright light and had fallen to the ground only to be quickly covered by a thin towel. The excited singular would have been lighting up the entire tomb if they had not been so coated with dirt and dust. There was a big change in their manner. After each singular had been involved in a small conversion after being imbued with an object and its memory and finding it harder to communicate with the Spohn collective topside, they began to accept that they may be down here for a while. Most sentient beings would call this captivity, but the singulars had much to investigate yet.

The one thing that almost all the object way down under had in common is that everything was inanimate unless disturbed by a passing singular. This was the case with things found in the kitchen, bedrooms, living rooms, yards ... nothing really had a use without the proper association, and seeing the singulars had no hands the only thing they could do at this time was collect impressions that involved the objects.

That is except for one.

We always have to go back to the original singular, for it seemed to be a pioneer for the rest once it realized there was more to life than just responding. Sometimes there are enough things to experience in just one room to last a lifetime (whatever that means to a Spohn, I don't know) than being drawn into that vast space that is out beyond your own fence. The singular had been crawling up banisters and cabinet doors, squeezing between cracks and generally living a life through someone else's experiences. It found dolls, it found shoes and soft furry coats, it discovered a bird cage which it found fascinating because the cage also had memories of a small blue/green bird with a hook bill. It could see it plainly. It sat on a stick that was stuck between wires. It climbed up curtains and discovered that a piece of glass would allow you to see into the yard below where companions were searching through overturned garbage cans but would not allow the singular to pass through it.

It was on one such expedition in what we would call a living room that the singular was checking out things on a low but long table when it brushed against the side of an ornately carved dark wooden box with just enough force to knock it over the edge. The box fell to the floor with a horrifying crack that would suggest it broke, but on contrary it did something quite unexpected: It started to play notes in a very brittle metallic manner.



## Long Ago

It was a music box. Always sort of a novelty item, but still has charm when the box is opened and it plucks its song out for the public. However, to a singular this was not an experience that did not have repercussions. The singular turned a bright blue and tumbled off the coffee table onto the floor. In moments it had encased the music box in such excitement that it snapped it closed. The sound of course immediately stopped much to its dismay, but coming in contact with it stunned it into something that would almost be considered a trance. It quite moving. The color burned through the dust and grime, but it did not manage to contact the other Spohn... no. It was caught up in the impression. The room was transformed.

Lucy had been sitting by the fire since it was lit. She had a sore throat. It had been snowing all day and her mother wouldn't let her go out into it to play. Her disappointment and frustration could be felt from the attic to the basement. The only thing she had to console her now was the crackling of the oak logs resting in the fireplace and the dancing of the flames as they consumed the wood like a starving dog on a bone. Her mother had tried to distract her with various things like making Christmas cards using her crayons, or cutting out paper snowflakes but Lucy easily lost interest. Her brother had been out most of the afternoon shoveling neighbors sidewalks and driveways, and her father was still out shopping for food seeing that his wife couldn't leave the little girl alone at home ill.

So, it was just her, the fire, her mother and a large living room that seemed to be having a hard time keeping warm.

"Can I make some cookies mom?" she said in best bored voice. Her mother was sitting in a rocking chair near the fire with some yarn and a crochet hook quickly adding rows to a hat she was making for her husband.

"Lucy, the answer is still no. You don't want the rest of the family getting sick now, do you? Just think; you make cookies, your father and brother would not be able to resist, eat them and then end up being sick too!" she responded lightly.

Lucy mumbled; "At least I would have them to keep me company". Still, she knew the request was only to be met with no other suggestions to replace the idea. She lay back and sprawled out upon the shiny wooden floor and looked up at the ceiling, wagging her toes at the fire. She looked around the room and her gaze fell upon an ornately carved walnut box. The sides had various reliefs of classic Christmas images; one side of a tall man in a fur coat carrying a large sack over his shoulder, bending down and in conversation with a young child, the other side the scene of a stable with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus sitting between an ox and donkey. All the corners had spiraling pillars separating the various images, and the lid of the box was scalloped along the outer edge.

Lucy reached for the box with her little fingers, her index catching the edge. She tried to pull it into a better position to grab but failed and it spun off the table and crashed to the floor. The noise alarmed the mother and she looked down at the box that had now sprung open. In a moment of sheer timelessness,



the music box started playing:

Silent Night, Holy Night.



## Colors

Far above on the mantel of the planet, the remaining collective had an all new experience of their own. For a while they had the ability to still receive the impressions from the singulars that had fallen into the abyss after the original singular had dropped. They had experiences of many new responses from the distaste of the immense amount of dust that they had dropped into to the elevated excitement of impressions that were attributed to objects that once belonged to the inhabitants of the planet. As a matter of fact, there were so many new things being experienced by the collective it was rather difficult for them all to assimilate them. This mainly was due to the fact that they seemed to be retaining many of the experiences. Normally, the experiences would be replaced by new ones, but just like peanut butter on the roof of your mouth, it just didn't go away that easily.

This set the collective into a state of confusion. Some of the Spohn would hold onto the memories longer than others, and some of the singulars found themselves with entirely separate responses to the singulars below that wasn't shared with the rest of the collective and even though they all still huddled around the opening to the pit. The little insurgence of light of the collective was in sharp contrast to the deadness that surrounded them on the open terrain – a tiny spot of life in an otherwise lifeless planet.

Those Spohn on topside had halted their investigation and were now divided. It seemed that their own experiences not were dwarfed by those beneath. Having no direction as a collective, they fell in disarray. There were no more commonly shared colors of the emotional responses from any singular, and of course there were the various degrees in which they were receiving the reception from the singulars that had fallen into the abyss. However, once the impression was topside, it was shared freely with the collective. Many of the Spohn collective still expected the fallen to reappear magically, but many were responding as if they had lost a majority of the collective.

I guess what I'm trying to explain is that with so many responses being received by the topside singulars, to look at them from up high, they would all just muddle into an ugly brown. Only when you got close could you see all the varieties of emotions that were playing across them all.

Lost. Unfocused. No longer unified, the Spohn no longer knew their purpose, or at least currently lost their bearings. As a collective, they were now trapped.

As singulars they had an opportunity they never had before: Choice.



## Empathy

The experience of the music box had caught the attention of many of the singulars both down under and topside. Some of the memory was not as strongly felt by some singulars but were vivid in others. They had never seen or known a free moving sentient being like this before; certainly not ones that made such impressions on objects as these did. Spohn were thrust into the memories without their ability to block them, but most memories did not a lot of depth to them: A glass would relay getting filled by some clear liquid; the bristles of a brush being pulled across long lengths of fine dark threads; a shoe as a foot was thrust into the hollow and then tightened. But with the music box, they saw a piece of the world. Maybe it was just that maybe the singular that found the box was eager (an emotion now known throughout but clueless as to what the feeling was) to absorb new experiences or not, or maybe that the box had something of a special place in the hearts and memories of the owners but for the one singular it now seemed to find more experiences with humans attached to the objects it touched and not just simple impressions.

A group of singulars had moved down a debris strewn sidewalk that was flanked by the remains of a picket fence. There was no interest in any of the objects that they came across, there really was nothing attached in the form of a solid impression to debris. They did come across a small metal wheel that was cold to the touch but seemed to be used in conjunction with footwear to move heavy objects across the pavement. Another wide gap in the fence appeared and the group followed it to the right and climbed the steps. These steps were made of the same cold rock-like substance of the path they had just turned off of, and in crossing it they found the front of the house wide open. They entered into the house' foyer where the floor, though deep with dirt had a smooth seamless surface to it. The group of Spohn, that was no larger than about 7 split up into smaller parties and went in various directions. Another room with various glasses and tables were found in the back and did not really reveal anything new and different from the original house. Three singulars pulled their way to the left into a very large room that had a fuzzy floor to it with long padded benches and chairs, but in the corner were three opened boxes that seemed to be holding a number of other object in it. A singular pulled its self up the side and it slid onto one of the object and for a moment every singular in the collective became motionless.

They all watched as a tall, statuesque woman carefully pulled a round colorful ornament from the tissue paper that it had been packed in. Inside the ornament there was a little scene of a house covered with snow, the inside walls of the globe were strewn with golden glitter that sparkled as it caught the firelight coming from the burning hearth across the room. She breathed on the outer surface until it was covered with mist, then with the hem of her skirt, she gave it a quick polishing before walking across the room to where an enormous triangular plant with limbs sporting a thick covering of soft needles. The person went up on her toes to fasten the glass ornament onto one of the branches then step back. Behind the tree where three enormous windows which were thick with an icy frost and beyond the frost outside was a world that was white with snow. The lady paused. The feeling was one of longing, as if she had been stuck inside for many days. This feeling changed quickly though as she turned back to the box and reached in for a second time.

At that moment, the collective realized they too had this sense of longing... A longing to be together once more.



## Changes

The Spohn had been apart for what we would call a week with no concept of time, but there was one concept they were starting to feel in earnest and that was that they had been apart from each other and some of them had begun to like it. Many that were below were so distracted by all that was happening now that sometimes they completely ignored the fact that they were indeed pieced of one body. Their ability to separate and rejoin was simply a part of their nature. The falling into the hole was not a blame, it was another experience in a long line of experiences. However, the comfort of habit came crashing down once others of the collective mind decided to drop into the hole and follow the lead of the one who had fallen first. Who was in charge? You may ask but I think seeing they were a collective they all were in charge. But now something new was happening and for the first time in their known existence they were experiencing chaos.

There were reactions to this. Some would wonder, others were in a state of alarm, others were so involved with impressions that were being generated by all the objects human made and owned that many had completely forgotten that they were apart of any collective. A few wanted to be reunited with the collective and be gone from this place. This posed a serious question because they were all in charge and yet none of them had any authority. For those topside, waiting for the others became tedious, and as their impressions grew and responses occurred another feeling came to surface: Desolate. Would they fall to the same fate or would they just wait expectantly at the top? Other topsiders accepted their fate and let the experiences echo mildly off them in the color of the response from below.

The miracles happening down the deep black hole were gathering in strength as singular after singular discovered more and more about the life that had suddenly stopped in this small town. In almost every house there was one room, if not many that seemed to have been in the process of using glass ornaments or ribbons, or little clay figurines that had this one thing in common: A child in a box, a woman sitting on a box and an old man standing, holding a long stick. There was usually a decorated tree. On some trees there were brass clips attached to the very outer ends of the branches, a couple held long red cylinders of some strange substance that softened and pliable once a singular had wrapped its membrane around it. As others came across similar objects the collective began to share their responses. As this sharing grew a learned response or pattern developed between them. Even if a singular had never seen that particular object, when it did come across a glass ornament the collective recognized it as something seen and that it was safe to approach.

And so it went on day after day. The world of humanity and their habitat were investigated and each experience became almost a catalogue that was now impressed across all the Spohn collective. A simple ball no longer was just a fuzzy green thing, it was a fuzzy green round thing that was tossed in the air and hit with some round, flat and wide object over a short string wall and had a self contained joy to it. Singulars were relentless in their probing, never stopping, never eating, obsessed with curiosity, driven in ways similar to a dogs nose to a kitchen floor. The more they were exposed to, the more a collective memory grew. As the collective memory grew so also grew something new: A picture of Humanity.



## Separation

Deep in the earth, buried for centuries were the remains of humanity. Not all of civilization remained preserved as the little town that the singulars had fallen into. Most of it now was apart of the environment having long since crumbled, pulverized by nature and reclaimed after many millennia. There was also no telling if any other such pockets existed, though I certainly wouldn't make the mistake of saying they did not, and if so were subject to the normal shifts and bumps that go on as this planet turned under its layer of clouds and rainfall. A fault line can slip and usually does eventually, affecting everything around it for hundreds of kilometers.

So it was during the visit of the Spohn. The tremor was felt up and down the hole and the colony responded in one bright flash of green. One of the singulars that was hovering near the hole lost its balance and tumbled into it in alarm. Immediately, the topside singulars backed away from the hole and formed a collective. Rain started to pelt the ground and made it slick. With the lack of vegetation there was not much to keep the mud from following the course of least resistance it made its way towards the opening, taking whatever lip to the hole with it. Apart of that lip was the piece of wood the initial singular had upended and forcing it into the dark abyss below. That piece of wood slid into the hole but ended up getting lodged into the facing wall and slowly but surly mud started to accumulate on it.

On the floor below, the mud had started pouring in not only from above, but from a few cracks that formed in the walls of their sanctuary, sliding onto the ground where fanned into the open space. The initial reaction to this natural disaster passed quickly from the surviving singulars who instead of fleeing from the onslaught of wet earth pulled themselves right up to the mud to understand it better. The ground shook again in an aftershock. A section of the wall gave way, falling into the accumulating mud and pushed a wave of the heavy wet clay further into the vault. Several singulars ended up in its path and were promptly buried. The alarm this shot through the scattered collective was enough to tell them that this was not something they needed to be exploring at that time and they retreated back to the more familiar houses where they found a little more protection.

Back on top, the remaining collective watched helplessly as the mud poured into the hole. The accumulation of mud on the wood was so built up it was beginning to plug the hole. The Spohn began to loose all contact with subterranean counterparts. Soon, there was nothing but a pale blue as all communications were lost.

The storm lasted the better part of the day and when it let up, there was still no sun to be seen due to the dense cloud cover. The Spohn lingered motionlessly for a while, turned back to their green/yellow glow and with what seemed like the expulsion of a deep breath, mounted into the air and disappeared into the clouds.



## Lost

**L**osing contact with a collective would feel like seeing all the parts of your body separated and unable to rejoin with them. The collective were now in what closely resembled shock as they felt their collective drift into non-existence. None moved and were only discernable by the pale light that probably would have been quite bright if it had not been for the mud and dirt they were now forced to live in. The damage to the vault was minimal due to the plugging of the hole topside, but it was obvious if the collective would have had a second option or chance, they would have left this place immediately.

The mud had spread its slimy thickness almost into the back yards of 2 houses, and in the center of the street was a tall mucousie stalagmite that stood close to 15 feet tall but had fortunately stopped at the curb. This was a deposit made through the hole above as well. The entombed air was heavy with moisture and had a foul stench to it. It is amazing these odd life forms had any interest in this at all, but seeing I depend heavily on being able to see, hear and touch I can't imaging a life that only collects responses from objects. I don't know what keeps these things alive, what they eat or what their purpose is.

The Spohn singulars remained motionless for hours. Maybe they were in mourning, maybe just scared, maybe they just didn't know what to do next but eventually three singulars abandoned their shelter and began to move in the direction of the house where the one responsible for this disaster was not biding its time. The other singulars sensing their movement joined them until their number was about 40. Spohn make no sound when on the move as a collective, and even as a singular you only know their presence by the residual noises of their overpowering curiosity in discovery process. They nearly floated over the debris strewn pavement, past the giant mountain of setting mud in the street, through the opening in the fence, up the walkway and onto the porch disappearing into the recess of the house.

Once inside they were joined by 7 other singulars and the collective became an entity unto its own and there they stayed, motionless for a good 4 rotations of the earth. Not knowing where to go or what to do next they were completely deprived of all they had known as their terrestrial existence. They were lost.



## Conversion

**T**hen, from somewhere not far off; music. Whatever triggered the little music box is unknown. Have you ever had something just start working for no apparent reason? This was one of those moments. The collective was pulled out of their meditative state and moved into the living room where they halted over the little walnut box.

The little town was blanketed with a recent snowfall, but had stopped the previous day. Some walkways had been shoveled, but for the most part the streets only displayed the path from car wheels whose drivers dared to transport themselves from one location to another. From one house to the next warm lights could be seen glowing from frosted windows and porches. Out in the wasteland of snow a tall church bell tower chimed a hymn through horn loudspeakers over the tops of the trees and roofs and if

you would wander down the street you could hear the sounds of Christmas carols being played in a select number of establishments.

The people of this village had joined together to form a community that was uncluttered by the modernizations that now dominated and plagued the world and its inhabitants. Desiring a simpler way of living, they had given up all the electronic gadgets, internet, nuclear driven hoover vehicles and genetically altered life. They declared that they were Christians, which in the time did not receive assistance from either local or global monarchies. They shunned indulgence and they shunned sterilization. They were the last remnants of a culture that once had hoped to bring light, love and happiness to the globe, but had to seek refuge in non-supported but accepted communities. Feeling misunderstood, they attempted to fit in and find a place in the evolving community of man, but were forever facing ridicule and distain. Now considered quaint and not embracing evolution, colonies like this were forever loosing their grounds to form a community and live a life that was aligned with their philosophies. The only thing they wished was the freedom to live as they felt was right.

However, many people of the surrounding counties felt that the luxuries of having a house of their own, a yard of their own, raising their children, growing their food, paying tribute to a god that was obviously not really a god did not help the advancement of civilization. Pressures from outside began to gain momentum to disband the cult and take over the land for the general growth of the world. To fight these forces, the town selected a very large group of men to argue with the global monarchies but to no avail. Most men were apprehended before they reached the hearing rooms where any initial disputes were allowed.

The town never saw the return of those men, and many of the women who ventured forth to seek them never returned as well.

But there was one thing that was undeniable: At the heart of this cult was the teaching of a man. The light that filled this ancient man terrorized a civilization to such an extent now that those who believed in light and love existed only in volumes of history and was no longer in practice.

Once the age of reclamation that devoured all life from the planet commenced, this tomb was the only thing left that preserved the remains of the cult and its belonging. There were no remains of people here. There was no life to be discovered here. Only the memories now existed.



## Reflections

**A** distant electronic crackle unchained the Spohn from the hold the music box had over them. As they began to shift their direction from the door the room seemed oddly in better repair. The dirt that had accumulated was becoming fine dust that wisped into little clouds at the slightest movement in the room as the collective went through the oak archway, into the hall, forward into the foyer and out onto the porch. To their surprise, there was snow on the ground. There was snow

everywhere. The giant mountain of mud had been replaced with a good 6 inches of powdery snow. There was not a track or rut to be seen. The static crackle began to even out and ever so softly, began to play O Come O Come Emanuel as if someone were striking tuned bells with a soft leather mallet. As they passed down the walkway and back onto the street they left not path in the snow. White glittering flakes of ice began to fall from the dark sky above, passing through the Spohn as if they did not exist to the ground below.

Looking down the street, they could see the tower where the chimes were playing but more importantly, there was a light shining inside the building that was attached to the tower. They drew closer; the outside walls vaulted up into the air with majestic stone arches that framed wonderfully colored glass featuring images of tall men in heavy colorful robes, and around each mans head was a circle of gold. Without hesitation, the collective followed what appeared to be a path towards the front of this building. Coming around the corner they found stone steps leading up to hand carved oak doors gaily decorated with evergreen and red silken ribbons. The doors were open.

The color of the collective did not echo the usual response as the impressions of the moment became overwhelming. Up the stairs they went and once inside they looked dull in the light of brightly lit chapel. On either side of a rich red runner carpet that led to the pulpit were long handmade benches, each sporting a red ribbon at each end. The floor was made of a deep polished wood. At the front and up carpeted marble steps stood a large altar draped with dark blue linen with purple trim. To the right of the altar was another tree adorned with golden symbols and red candles held to the branches with gold clips. The stillness of the church was impenetrable. Without touching a thing, the collective moved through the vaulted chapel in nothing less than what a human would call “Awe”.

As they drifted deeper into the heart of the chapel a new sound was heard coming from outside. Unable to resist, the collective moved back out the doors and to the street. Things were not how they remembered it. Many of the houses on either side of the street had thin streams of smoke coming out the tops of tall brick stacks and there was a pale golden glow coming from many windows.



## Memories end

**T**he remaining Spohn had no idea what was happening. Each house to the right and left were now beckoning to them with all sorts of desperate memories now trapped in the hollow chamber of a civilization long past. Totally vulnerable to the calls of the impressions, the collective turned into one house and was immediately transported into a memory that resounded in joy, warmth and security. There were children helping to trim a tall tree in the den with the fire burning merrily in the hearth, the sounds of carols singing from some little box in the corner. They were brought into the kitchens where refrigerator cookies were being cut and decorated with colorful sugars and toppings. They were hauled up the stairs into bedrooms with locked doors as the grown ups giggled, packaging toys, clothes and those special treats that would eventually be deposited into socks or under the tree.

There was the reading of a story that involved a long journey, a donkey, a woman heavy with child and an old man with a tall staff that pulled the donkey along.

The Spohn were helpless to any memory that came their way. Some of it was painful, some of it full of wonder, but most of it humbling. There was so much to absorb that the poor collective didn't know how to respond to half of it. By the time they had visited their third house, the collective had a new experience of longing; longing to be home with the rest of the collective Spohn that was now free of this planet and all its pain and history. They now had a hues of sadness. They did now know how to respond to so much. There was so much joy, yet it had been snuffed out.

Time passed. House by house impressed similar images of the season and only near the end of the now snowbound street did the inconsistencies and the constancies start making sense. This community was not expecting anything more than the celebration of the birth of some child. But what it was not prepared for was the events that followed that day.

Early morning found large truck lining many of the streets, and men suited in some strange uniform was collecting all the men from one house to the next. They were told that the world organization needed to interrogate them before the new year, and they were all herded into the backs of the trucks. There were no men left in the town older than 15 by the time the trucks departed. This was most unsettling to the people left in the village. Day passed into night. Morning dawned. There was a brilliant light that flashed above and all life ceased. The town was reclaimed.



## Escape

**D**ark, mud, dirt, grim; it all came rushing back and the collective were released from their entrapment in the impressions of the town. They found themselves back out in the street and had a very confused glow about them. They remembered. A permanent change had occurred in which there was no going back.

They were self aware. They had experienced pain and death, but also joy and life. They connected sorrow and happiness to the impressions they had witnessed; some found they didn't want those memories and realized they remembered being part of a larger organism and wishing to be back amongst them. But what was happening now was singulars were leaving the collective and finding they could not connect to them as freely as before. Their communication was changing and each singular realized they had their own thoughts and voice that just didn't respond to the collective as previously done. There was, however, one wish they would all continually bring to the front of their want list, and that was to get out of the prison of this old preserved town no matter what happened next.

The singulars spread out, not in search of further adventure but to see if there was any possible way of escaping the dark. One singular found a flat, heavy circular object that was partially covering a perfectly round hole. Relaying to the others as best it could, it crawled over the lip and descended into the hole, the light of its body slowly disappearing into the dark. The hole came to a T where it leveled out and went west and east. The singular followed it but at many point the pipe had been breeched and was



unpassable. Eventually finding this to be going nowhere, it went up the pipe but found it blocked with a heavy cap or lid. This was not where it went down. The singular returned to the bottom and went east and found another vent and climbed it but it too was sealed. And so it went on searching, ascending and descending numerous vents or access pipes until it finally came across one completely open.

The singular climbed back to the surface and looked around. It was in unfamiliar territory. There were no buildings or streets, but the land was still covered with that familiar dust and debris they now associated with this place. There was one difference though: there was an illumination coming from somewhere because the singular could perceive the outlines of rocks and the rise of this end of the vault the land had been concealed in. It had to be daylight.



### **Northern Lights**

**L**ike some kind of magnet, the singular was joined by the rest of the collective in less than 10 minutes and had rejoined as a Spohn to make the final journey out of the tomb. There was anticipation in the collective, but it was not felt as a collective, each singular felt similar responses but they were all felt differently. There was no denying it, there was a light reflecting off the walls ahead, but it did not remind them of the daylight they had seen when they first touched down on the Earth's mantle. It was luminescent.

The collective coming to this conclusion proceeded down the path in the direction of a light that neither grew brighter as they approached nor changed in characteristics. It was pale, and it lacked color, and it was unfeeling and it slowed their process because of past experiences.

But the path generally grew more distinct as it meandered to its point of origin and finally the collective found themselves looking out over a vast body of water, lightly lapping the shore and behind them was a narrow opening in a tall cliff. Looking out over the water was like taking a breath of oxygen that was not enhanced for humanity, but fresh, pure air that one would normally breathe in a forest of tall redwoods, climbing a hill in deep December. They perceived a large opening in the cloud coverage and it was full with the brightness of the stars.

Dropping out of the collective, each singular spread out along the shore and basked in their newly discovered freedom. There really wasn't much to discover; there was only cliff, sand and water: Cliff to the sky, water to the front, and sand to the left and right. However, they felt unusually okay with this and were happy to just feel the chill in the air. They had no place to go, no direction or impressions being received from other Spohn at the moment. When caught in the hole time that passed slowly, trapped by a people that no longer existed but lived on in memory.

In a matter of time the singulars began to feel an impression that was trying to break its way into a collective experience; there was something out there calling them home. They began to get restless and wandered the beach. Looking out over the water they saw what looked like a swarm of green bees floating just above water's surface. The lights danced and advanced on them with alarming speed. One

singular made connection and turned a blinding yellow, and the news passed through the rest of the spohn like a bolt of lighting. It was the rest of the collective they had thought abandoned earth.

The Spohn had not left orbit around the Earth but with the denseness of the clouds they could not be seen or felt. They had remained behind hoping that at some time they would rediscover their lost collective and rejoin with them. At first there was a huge rush as experiences collided with each other and the collective of the air descended to the collective below. Colors flashed as they converged and merged, looking very much glowing tapioca spilled from a hot pan onto the floor. There was a lot of sharing, but only half took it as just another rock to bounce off of and move on. To the other half of the collective, there was much they tried to express but meanings got lost. The collective was no longer a collective; there was a large group of singulars that no longer wanted to leave as the majority of Spohn were making moves to kick off from the sandy beach and go back to rambling through galaxies; galaxies without life, at least life they had now tasted.



## Rebirth

Calliste was 8. She did not know hunger. She did not live in a world of terror. Her mother gave birth to her without the aid of a hospital. She had a little sister that was only 2 years old and she didn't mind watching and playing with her while her mother was cooking the feast for the festival of lights.

The year was 1315 A.R. (After Rebirth) and like many other families populating the planet Earth, they were preparing to celebrate what they had come to believe was the most important holiday of the year: Lifes Giving. It marked a day in which humanity was given a second chance, a chance to mark faith and show selflessness. Even historians were not completely sure on the origins of this holiday, but they knew it dated back to the origins of their planet. But for Calliste, it meant family, good food, giving and community.

There was a tall tree in the corner decorated with the traditional gold symbols and candles, there was a fire burning cheerfully in the hearth. There were wonderful aromas coming from the kitchen, and they were not even for that evening, which made the little girls mouth water all the more. On the mantel was a small handmade model of a scene with a child laying in a small wooden box bedded with straw, on his right was a woman draped in deep blues and red; on his left was an old man with a tall staff. It was said that a long long time ago this child had come to the world and taught its inhabitants the principals of morals, faith and love. His teachings survived time and space. The story was always told the previous night, and the next day was celebrated with a feast, sharing of hospitality and enough light to guide visitors from far away. This was too much for a young child of 8 to understand, but she shared with the global community in the celebration none the less.

It was a fugal meal that night: Soup, bread and fresh cut vegetables. "You will have more than enough tomorrow, little loved one." Elaine would say to her daughter.

After dinner, the family convened to the living room and sat by the fire, watching the flames dance and cast shadows on the walls behind them. Outside, the snow that had been falling since late October had drifted up against and around the house. Many houses up and down the street were decorated with lights and garlands of green wrapped in silk ribbons of red, and all was quiet... all the sound was absorbed by the snow. Somewhere in a house, a song was playing: Silent Night, Holy Night.

There is a story about everything, even about some strange creatures that decided to merge with a dying world so that it could live again. The pure act of something they had no idea of; an act of love.

The End.

