

The Whale Shark, the Butterfly, and Me

A Mind Wandering by Lisa Hering

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He came up from the deep. It was quiet and still. And then, there were sounds, like air escaping from a balloon. Soft, gentle whistles, sound waves, being carried by water. He came straight up. He was so big, he kept rising and rising, like a long, long train that passes in the night. He was in no hurry. He was simply moving his massive body. He was a gentle soul.

Then, as he approached the water's limit, raindrops on the surface made sparkles and splashes. He breached the water barrier and was immersed in a refreshing shower of water from above, teeming with life as below, for within each droplet, he could see himself, a spotted whale shark, exactly like him, swimming in a microcosm of blue, blue water, blue sky, and white clouds. Each droplet was the blue planet, our planet, the one we share with whale sharks and butterflies. And the droplets began to float as though in outer space. There was no gravity. I was floating with this marvelous creature who seemed to me to be as large as a skyscraper. And we were surrounded by a million tiny water bubbles each of which contained the two of us in many small Earth's. Though floating high above the salty waves, we could still swim as though we were in the ocean depths. My hair migrated around me, weightless, and I smiled. I reached out and touched one of the globes. A butterfly came out, and grew and grew until it was almost as big as me. It had wings of blue and purple iridescence outlined in black. She flew to each of the bubbles and saw her reflection shining back at her.

I looked for the whale shark. He was heading down towards the sea. I held on to his tail as he passed and dove with him. The bubbles turned back into rain as he plunged through the ocean surface. Back under the water, he swam in huge circles, around and around, and I, still hanging on, was holding on for the ride. He spiraled towards the ocean floor. Yellow fish, red fish, gold fish, blue fish, giant clams and a treasure chest with an octopus guarding its contents. I wanted to see. I went close. The octopus recognized me, and opened the chest for me. Inside, was a mermaid's tail. It was iridescent purple and blue, and turned into a butterfly. It moved its wings and flew towards my feet, whereupon

it sat and became a part of me. She propelled me with her wings, and I moved where she guided me.

Up, up, up we went, and soon, I was surrounded by a million tiny bubbles, each containing a whale shark and me, side by side. And then I looked next to me to see my friend, the blue-purple whale shark with white spots. And we went around in circles, in harmony, as counterparts, as compliments, a fairy dance, a fairy above water, a mermaid below. I couldn't tell which was which anymore. Was I above, or was I below? It didn't matter. It was all the same. Below is as above, above is as below. Large is as the small, small is as the large. We were microcosms inside of microcosms inside of even more microcosms. At first, atomic sized beings, and then, Earth sized beings, then astronomical sized beings, planets, teeming with life, all alike, all living, all circling, all breathing, growing, spinning, moving in perfect mathematical phases, as they should, as they must, as they can do no other. We are all connected, the big and the small. The butterfly moves her wings, and knows not what will happen. But the universe does. The universe sees all. And as the butterfly guides me, she also serves me, and is humble at my feet. She takes me and the whale shark out into the universe, and the globes become twinkling stars.

The stars are fixed in patterns, spinning and rotating, like water whirling down a drain in slow motion. It's peaceful here. We three are on a journey. We are traveling companions. An ocean creature, a land creature, and an air creature. Yet, we don't notice that anymore. Because we are free from the limitations of natural forces. We are in a space, we are in space, where there is enough space, for each of us to have as much space we want. I sit upon the whale shark's back and we go. We simply head forward, through the Higgs field of waves and light. And as we go faster and faster, we expand with the universe and become nothing more than accelerating mass. And we are so close to the speed of light, we can see a surface, a plane between darkness and light, an interface where one medium meets another, like where the ocean meets the air, it is the tangible surface of the speed of light. In that plane, only light travels. But we are the travelers of the universe, and we must cross it, not only to see what is on the other side, but to no longer be limited by speed. To go the speed of light and beyond. What is it like? We get closer. As I try to reach for it to touch it, to feel it, will it hurt? Will it burn? As my hand approaches it, it begins to travel at a different speed than the rest of my body, and it stretches out. My hand is larger than me. And it is sucked into the light, yet still attached to me. Our mass

begins to expand infinitely. My head crosses the barrier, as well as my body and my feet. We are all three pulled instantly into the light, at the speed of light. We are light, nothing but light. We lose all form. We simply exist as three photons in a stream of light that stretches on and on.

And I wonder how much light exists. Can it be quantified? Is it a number that is comprehensible? Is there an end? It seems there are light beams everywhere, crisscrossing like the contrails I used to see in the sky above the earth. We are bold and bright and lack nothing. We give warmth to everything we touch. We give energy and food to plants. We light up a child's face. We do. Yes, us.

And as we approach eternity, I see the next surface, the edge of light. Beyond that, we pass above the speed of light. There, we go faster than light. We cross the barrier. It feels like a water fall or a strong wind coming from a narrow vent. As we cross it, I see my head again, big huge, like a distorted image from an old fashioned projector, a film showing truly in the heavens. Our bodies reappear as projections of the light in enormous and almost infinite sizes. And in an instant, we pass the light beam below us which seemed so endless, and now seems almost slow. It is slow, relatively speaking. We head it off, like an air plane gaining on a train, and then passing it. We are going so much faster than the light. How easy it is.

I see the little spheres again. They are all lining up this time into an array or a grid. I look inside one. It contains us three, the divergent species, looking curiously at us, just as we look curiously at them. Each sphere contains the same. Perhaps, it is merely a reflection. Perhaps, whoever looks in, finds themselves. But what I see is simply love, peace, harmony, as we are all the same. We are all made of the same thing. And it all boils down to love. Attraction. That is what makes the universe go, the attraction of one to another, positive to negative, yin to yang, boy to girl, light to dark, wherever there are opposites, they will attract, constantly rearranging dance partners, forever changing, but intrinsically the same momentum. And they will space themselves out equally, the negative forces repelling according to their magnetic field, and the positive forces attracting according to their magnetic field, and they will form this perfectly aligned grid of love, a crystalline structure of bosons. And this is where eternity and immortality exist.

This is where God lives, within this grid inside each particle, because he is love. This is heaven, and in between the particles of love is hell, the spaces without love, with no attraction. But there is nothing there. And that is good, because that means hell is vacant. And love is all that remains. And that grid, filled with God's particles, unseen but felt, is the giver of mass, and it gives us back our mass after we pass back through the beam of light and approach the end of the universe. We slow down enough to see the edge, and we become as we were again, and we stop to watch. I expect it to be vacant. But it isn't. It isn't vacant, and it isn't still. It isn't dark and it isn't peaceful or quiet. Yet it's more beautiful than I could have ever dreamed of. What do we see when the universe ends?

We see fireworks, an immense display of fireworks, bigger, more colorful, and more numerous than any celebration. It happens along the entire boundary of our universe and appears like a dome above spectators in an indoor sports arena. At the end of the universe I should see nothing, only vacant space. Yet, the end of the universe is on fire. From what? How could this be? Then I look further, past the great explosions. Beyond them, I see, coming towards us, a mirror image, another universe, with the same force and vigor that we are traveling towards it. And not just one. Our universe is surrounded on all sides by other universes, all doing the same thing. Expanding. And surpassing the speed of light in each one's journey to find a companion, a mate, their opposite in direction. And when they meet, fireworks, chemistry, biology, a mixing of their own beings, a multiverse of sexual reproduction of inorganic matter. Two adjacent universes come together to form a brand new universe, each one giving parts of themselves, recreating themselves in a new, small, living being. And as the particles of each collide into the other, their journey ends, and they stop searching, and they start a new home. They attract pieces of everything around. They begin to amass up-quarks and down-quarks and sideways-quarks and every flavor imaginable. And before you know it, the gravitational pull sucks up absolutely everything within its reach. And this is repeated all around us at each merging of two universes. And these new balls of mass, filled with billions of years of potential energy, exert so much pressure on themselves that they squeeze themselves down into the size of a pin head, so tiny they cannot be seen. And it is dark because they have absorbed all the light. And it is silent because they have absorbed all the sound waves. And there is total peace. And there seems to be nothing, nowhere, blank, vacant, still.

Time passes. Gestation. Forces and particles prepare. And then, with little warning, there is a blast of such atomic and nuclear proportions, it seems there is only white light and sound shaking the very ground zero of the new universe. And this will expand, as it did in our world, ever expanding and accelerating, building up speed as it grows and matures and becomes strong. As it expands, its rate of expansion increases. Why would it increase? Wouldn't friction slow it down? But then I realized, there is no longer anything in its center to hold it back, yet out there, in front of it, there are masses of attractive new universes pulling ours towards it, and the faster the universe expands, the faster it will go. The fast get faster, and it will eventually surpass the speed of light in its quest to find its mate, just as we humans, just as whale sharks and butterflies. And with each expansion and contraction, it breathes, it respire, again and again, in its own time, which is much slower than ours, relatively speaking. And while it exists, each planet, each star, each galaxy, circulates within its system. It is born. It cries in its first moment. Its bloodstream of living cellular stars circulates within its body. It breathes through expansion and then contraction. It makes a journey. It has experiences. It finds a mate. It intersects that mate, and in so doing, it dies. But in so doing, it also gives new birth. It is alive as much as the whale shark, me and the butterfly. It is a living, inorganic being, as is big so is small, vastly incomprehensible to us, that is, except to us three, because we've seen it.

Thank you, and good night.