

1

Figure 1**Dad Meets the Martians**

by Stephen Whiteside

- [1] A flying saucer came last night.
It landed in the drive.
I warned the crew, "My dad parks there.
He'll eat you all alive!"
- [5] Dad pulled up bad tempered,
But his frown became a smile
When he saw the flying saucer,
And he said, "I like their style!"
- [9] He then addressed the Martians,
"Will you take me for a spin?"
They replied, "It's new. Imported
Straight from Venus. Come on in!"
- [13] They flew 'round Earth a dozen times,
And visited a star.
Then they asked my dad if he
Would drive them in his car.
- [17] I simply can't explain it.
I thought they would be bored.
But Dad now drives a saucer.
The Martians drive a Ford.

- Excerpt from "Dad Meets the Martians" by Stephen Whiteside, from CRICKET magazine, January 2006.

Copyright © 2006 by Carus Publishing Company. Reproduced with permission

All Cricket Media material is copyrighted by Carus Publishing Company, d/b/a Cricket Media, and/or various authors and illustrators.

Any commercial use or distribution of material without permission is strictly prohibited.

Please visit <http://www.cricketmedia.com/info/licensing2> for licensing and <http://www.cricketmedia.com> for subscriptions.

Refer to Figure 1 and answer the following Question:

The mood of this poem can best be described as

- (A) Humorous
- (B) Despairing
- (C) Peaceful
- (D) Joyous

Figure 2

Spacewalkers

All or Nothing

[1] It's hard not to think of space as "out there."

In truth, of course, we're "in there" or "in here."

In the midst of the big black

Nothing.

[2] But it's not nothing.

Space is filled with gases and matter and something called

Anti-matter.

And we're all spacewalking through the big black

All.

[3] It's also hard not to think that the Earth has a location,

An address of sorts.

But it's never in the same place twice.

It orbits a star that is always on the go within a galaxy of systems that Constantly travels through a universe that never stops expanding.

Until it does.

And then it All shrinks back to (next to) Nothing.

[4] Those humans who have been in space, but not on Earth – are they Different from who they were before,

Different from the rest of us?

What is it like to be unmoored from the home planet?

Untethered to everyone else?

To look AT Earth?

[5] Is it liberating? Is it lonely like no other lonely?

And what of the future, when people live on satellites or space stations, Perhaps living their entire lives without ever touching the ground?

Will this be a new kind of person with different ideas and hopes and fears?

Different dances and their own set of words?

[6] If one of them were to visit Earth for the first time as an old woman, Would she be terrified by the many options and

Directions that she could take? The sheer number of people and dogs And apple trees and insects? Would it all be terribly foreign?

[7] Perhaps we are fastened to our planet, even if we never set foot upon it.

Perhaps the gravity that keeps us down (most of the time) also ties our Selves to this place, the third rock from Sol, no matter where we are.

[8] But maybe not.

Maybe there's a way to feel at home someplace else, even in a void.

When the real spacewalkers, the brave souls who leave their ships and Venture into the big black Nothing, hanging on to everything they know by a single Thread of metal, when they look around them, do they feel at home?

Are they filled for those minutes with a sense that they really are a part of

All?

A Dangerous Walk

[1] Know the name Alexey Leonov? He was the first person to "walk" in space. This was back in 1965, when space flight

was still brand new. Leonov was on a Soviet space mission called Voskhod 2 with one other cosmonaut. Both men were lucky to survive.

[2] The actual spacewalk took only ten minutes. Leonov was attached to the spaceship by a cord that extended 50 feet. Things did not quite go as planned. For one thing, Leonov's space suit ballooned, and he had trouble bending at his joints. He couldn't take any photographs because he was unable to reach his thigh to operate the camera. His body temperature shot up, and his suit soon filled up to his knees with sweat. Trying to return to the ship, Leonov got stuck in the outer hatch. In order to move more easily to free himself, Leonov lowered the pressure in his suit, a dangerous move which could have given him what deep sea divers call the "bends," a painful condition that can be fatal.

[3] Leonov did get back inside safely, but he and his fellow crewmember's problems were not over. First, they had problems sealing the hatch through which Leonov had just gone. This caused the system to automatically flood the cabin with oxygen, creating a serious fire hazard. Then on the return to Earth, the automatic landing system didn't work, and the two men had to land the spacecraft manually. The ejection seats that are usually found in spacecraft had been taken out to make more room for the crew, so they had no way of escaping if they couldn't land properly.

[4] The spacecraft spun crazily, but the men managed to land safely. However, their problems were not over. No one knew where they were. They had been forced to land in a heavily-wooded part of the Ural Mountains, and the two men spent the night there in the snow surrounded by wolves. Finally, search helicopters found them and the men were rescued.

[5] All these close calls did not seem to decrease Leonov's enthusiasm for his job. He was the commander of the Soviet side of the first joint space mission between the Soviet Union and the United States. This was an important mission with symbolic significance. At the time of his spacewalk, the US and the Soviet Union were involved in a tense and dangerous "cold war," and were competing against each other in a "space race." The joint space mission represented a reduction in tensions between the two powerful nations. Leonov and American astronaut David Scott later wrote a two-person biography and history called *Two Sides of the Moon: Our Story of the Cold War Space Race*.

[6] Leonov is also a talented artist. And while there may be more gifted artists, how many have been able to sketch pictures of humanity's home – the Earth – while looking down upon it in space?

Refer to Figure 2 and answer the following Question:

Which of the following best describes the mood of the poem?

- (A) Joyful
- (B) Concerned
- (C) Wondering
- (D) Frustrated

Figure 3

Onomatopoeia

- [1] Now here's a word you might not know:
Onomatopoeia. We'll take it slow.
For "ono," say "On a." that's the start.
"Mato," like "Ma tuh"
- [5] Then the next part.
"Peia" sounds like "see ya."
So "On a ma tuh peeya."
But what does that mean to you?
Well, take the word "cuckoo."
- [10] A funny sounding word
It's the name of a bird and
If you've ever heard
A cuckoo bird
You'll know that its sound and name
- [15] Are one and the same.
And when we call a thing by the sound that it makes
That's all that it takes to call that word
An onomatopoeia.

Next take the word "bark." It's what a dog does.

- [20] While a bee, as you know, a bee likes to buzz.
"Buzz" can be heard as it flies about
And "bark!" is the sound of a dog's sudden shout.
A dog doesn't buzz; doesn't sound that way.
It sounds like "BARK!" So that's why we say,
- [25] "The dog barked at the buzzing bee."
Onomatopoeia. Are you starting to see?

Animal sounds – lots are like that.
The squeak of a mouse, the purr of a cat.
But this also applies to all sorts of things.

- [30] Why do we say that a telephone rings?
There were actual bells on old-fashioned phones and
The bells went "rinnnnnggg" – they didn't make tones
Or play little songs like they do nowadays, or
"Crack of a whip" – let's look at that phrase.
- [35] "Whip" is the sound, I'm sure you're aware of a
Whip as it speeds on its way through the air.
While "crack" is the noise that makes horses run
(Here's a few more; we're almost done.)

A train through a tunnel it really does "rumble"

- [40] And the wheels on the track – they make a "click-clack."
If you don't speak clearly, you're told "Please don't mumble."
And what about "whisper" and what about "whack!"?
"Zipper" and "clatter" and "splash" and "hummmm."
Onomatopoeias – can you think of some?

Refer to Figure 3 and answer the following Question:

Which of the following best describes the mood of the poem?

- (A) Serious
- (B) Slightly annoyed
- (C) Light-hearted
- (D) Educational

Figure 4

Morning Thoughts Before Rising From Bed

- k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock
 The click of a clock. k'tick, k'tock
 The second hand cruises from nine to ten.
 One minute more it will do it again. But
- 5 what's the real difference 'tween now and then?
 When is now? Then was when?
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock, The
 past and the future both seem to exist. But the
 moment I glance at this thing on my wrist,
- 10 the present is something I seem to have missed.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock, Do I
 travel through time like I travel through space? But
 all at one pace with no chance to retrace my
 footsteps, which keep a perpetual pace in my
- 15 marathon, marching, monotonous race.
 k'tick, k'tock, The next
 moment is always and always and always and
 always and always and always in front of my face.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, Does the
- 20 Future speed toward me, then through me, then on? For the
 instant inside me, it's Present -- then gone! It
 joins with my Past, and will soon be redrawn. For my
 memory edits with each new day's dawn.
 k'tick, k'tock, But
- 25 Maybe it's all an illusion, this motion.
 The notion of time produces confusion.
 Time may be slow. Or not really "go." I'm
 Sure that I'll never know. Ever know. No.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock
- 30 The click of a clock. k'tick k'Buzzzzz!
 The sound of a moment that was.

Refer to Figure 4 and answer the following Question:

What is the mood of the poem?

- (A) Highly suspenseful
- (B) Angry and sad
- (C) Proud
- (D) Slightly tense

Figure 5

The Sub

- [1] The call came at 5:13 in the morning. Lou hit “speaker” so he didn’t need to lift the phone. He did not open his eyes. “Would you be able to teach 8th grade math today at Southview Middle School? If so, please push 1. If not, please push 2.” Lou hit 1, still without looking. “Thank you...” He intentionally knocked the phone off the hook knowing that this would cause an excruciating beeping in one minute that would serve as his snooze alarm. By 6:22, he was showered, dressed, minimally breakfasted, and was pulling out of his garage. By now, his eyes had opened slightly.
- [2] Usually, Nora found it charming when her little brother climbed into bed to coax her up for school. Not this morning. He put his face next to hers on the pillow and opened his mouth wide to display chewed cereal. She turned her head to the other side, which he took as an invitation to a game. “Upsee doozy, Nora Snorer,” he sang, and rolled across her neck. “Ugh. That hurt! Get off!” After a failed attempt at turning *this* into a bit of playfulness, the scorned 5-year old ran to the head of the stairs and bellowed for his mother. By 7:06, Nora was being chauffeured through the rain by a man late to work who was, technically, her father, though an ignorant observer would have assumed that these two scowling people did not know each other or did not share a language.
- [3] Lou had taught at Southview twice before, so he quickly signed in, nodded and half-smiled at a few recognized teachers, and made his way to Room 203, where he consulted the typed notes left by the teacher.

Please begin Unit 5 – Basic Algebra. With a little momentum, you should be able to drag them kicking and screaming through to page 118. If they “get it,” try some of the review questions in the back. Homework – page 121-122. I should be back tomorrow. (Ah-chool!) Have fun! — Fran Bakerson.

- [4] Under this was a handwritten addition:

Ms. Glenski in second period has been especially unruly lately. She's struggling with the work and it's making her defensive. She might try to push your buttons. Best of luck!

- [5] Lou thought that anyone who pushed his buttons this particular morning would be making a spectacular mistake.
- [6] First period went well enough: Half the kids seemed to be impatient with his explanations and half seemed lost. Lou figured that averaged out to an okay lesson. One boy asked a question that Lou thought was a joke, so he joked back, but the kid was serious and took offense. Lou felt bad, but the kid was unwilling to accept any kind of apology. Not wanting to embarrass him anymore, Lou let it go.
- [7] The boy’s name was Trey, and he was one of Nora’s best friends. As the two students passed in the halls:
- [8] “Bakerson’s out.”
- [9] “Who’s the sub?”
- [10] “Some creep. See ya at lunch.”
- [11] Nora entered Room 203, and with a sidelong look at the “creep,” flopped into her desk and stared zombie-eyed out the window. She responded with a just audible “Mm-hm” when Lou called out her name during attendance. “Don’t try it, Glenski,” he said silently. “Do not mess with me.”
- [12] After about 35 minutes, Nora let out a long and louder sigh than she had intended. Some kids giggled.
- [13] “Ms. Glenski.”
- [14] “Mm-hm.”
- [15] “If you’re frustrated because you don’t understand something, tell me. If you’re bored, that’s just too bad. If you’re sick, go to the infirmary.”
- [16] That came out harsher than Lou had intended, but he wasn’t sure how to back down.
- [17] Nora spoke with exasperation. “I don’t understand what you’re doing. I am bored. And I am sick – sick of having to

learn this junk that I will never ever need.”

[18] A few “whoas” came from the class.

[19] “I don’t care if you don’t need it. You need to do it. Now. Now tell me how to solve question six.”

[20] She looked at the problem, with its x ’s and y ’s, and she even made a small attempt to figure out what it all meant. Finally she burst out,

[21] “Look. I just don’t care!”

[22] “Well I don’t care that you don’t care. Do it!”

[23] Their eyes met for the first time, and both shouted,

[24] “Just give me a little respect!”

[25] After a breathless pause, the bell rang. As the kids exited, Nora slowed as she passed Lou’s desk. He spoke first.

[26] “I’m sorry, I lost my temper.”

[27] “I’m sorry, I’m an idiot.”

[28] “You’re not.” He paused. “Look, do you know Room 107?”

[29] “Mm-hm. That’s where they have tutoring for idiots.”

[30] He laughed. “No, it’s not for... well anyway, why don’t you meet me there after you’ve had some lunch. We’ll have another go at question six. Question six will change your life! – not really. How’s 11:40?”

[31] Nora felt like running, like crying, but squeezed out an “okay.”

[32] “Okay. See ya then.”

[33] Ms. Bakerson’s cold turned into the flu, and Lou was back the next day. When he called attendance, Nora responded with a ridiculously perky “Here I am!” Everyone laughed, including Lou.

Refer to Figure 5 and answer the following Question:

What was the mood in the car as Nora’s father drove her to school?

- (A) calm
- (B) playful
- (C) tense
- (D) fearful

- 6 Traffic had come to an abrupt halt. We were furious. Then we looked to the east and saw a scene so beautiful it brought tears to our eyes. We sat for the next thirty minutes, not moving an inch, enraptured with the view of the Basket Islands.
What change of mood occurs in this passage?
- (A) from anger to fear
 - (B) from contentedness to anger
 - (C) from anger to contentedness
 - (D) from tension to anger
- 7 The minute she stepped outside, she noticed the difference. There was a certain crispness in the air and a scent of spring brought a smile to her face. Sally was glad a new season had arrived.
What is the mood of this passage?
- (A) sadness
 - (B) helplessness
 - (C) hopefulness
 - (D) regretfulness
- 8 "I know you are disappointed with your test grade, Jill, but it does show a great deal of improvement since the last test. Keep up the good work and you will do better the next time."
What is the mood of this passage?
- (A) congratulatory
 - (B) humiliation
 - (C) frustration
 - (D) encouragement
- 9 "Don't ever ask to borrow anything from me again for as long as you live!" shouted Felix. "You've taken advantage of me for the last time. You never return anything you borrow."
What is the mood of this passage?
- (A) humorous
 - (B) spiteful
 - (C) jealousy
 - (D) frustration
- 10 If I go away to college, I'll miss my family, but none of the local colleges seem right for me. It's an important decision, and I have to make up my mind soon! The application deadlines are a week from today. Aargh!
What is the mood of the passage above?
- (A) sad
 - (B) thrilled
 - (C) anxious
 - (D) silly
- 11 I stared out the window as the car slowly moved away. My home since I was a child disappeared into the darkening sky. Although I wanted to look back, I could not. Soon, only memories would remain.
What mood does this passage create?
- (A) anger
 - (B) joy
 - (C) some sadness
 - (D) nothing

- 12 The sound had to be coming from the basement, but it was dark down there. I wished there was someone with me. I slowly moved towards the door.
What mood does this passage create?
- (A) curiosity
 - (B) bravery
 - (C) confusion
 - (D) fear
- 13 The team trudged back to the locker room with their heads down. They had been so close to being in the state championship. According to this passage, what would be a good description of the team's mood?
- (A) They are exhausted and eager to get dressed and go home.
 - (B) They are excited about their chances for winning the state championship next year.
 - (C) They are filled with hatred for the team that beat them.
 - (D) They are disappointed that they would not be in the championship.
- 14 Kevin felt something crisp inside the pocket of the coat he hadn't worn since the winter before. His jaw dropped when he pulled out a fifty-dollar bill. Where did that come from?
Which of the following best describes Kevin's mood right after finding the bill?
- (A) He was upset with himself for having forgotten about the bill.
 - (B) He couldn't wait to buy something with the money.
 - (C) He was amazed to discover the bill.
 - (D) He was upset at finding the bill.
- 15 Ever since Barry's dog ran away, the young boy's days seem dark and dreary. His mother's attempt to cheer him up does no good.
Barry is in what kind of mood?
- (A) He is afraid that his dog has been hurt.
 - (B) He is annoyed at his dog for having run away.
 - (C) He is confused about how to find his dog.
 - (D) He is depressed because his dog is gone.
- 16 Jodi was home alone when the wind began to howl. Soon after, the lightning lit up her room and the crack of thunder rattled every loose board in the house. Every creak sent her hiding under the covers.
What is Jodi's mood this night?
- (A) She is annoyed that she has been left alone.
 - (B) She is frightened to be alone.
 - (C) She is enjoying pretending to be afraid.
 - (D) She is determined not to act scared.
- 17 Louise had tried many times to climb to the top of the tree in her backyard, only to freeze with fear halfway up. "Today," she said to herself, "I will not fail."
What is Louise's mood as she thinks about climbing the tree today?
- (A) She is fearful that she will once again not make it to the top.
 - (B) She is overconfident about her abilities.
 - (C) She is hopeful, but does not care too much about making it to the top.
 - (D) She is determined to make it to the top.

- 18 Just as Julio drifted off to sleep, his upstairs neighbor's stereo began to blare. Julio got up and banged on his ceiling with a broom. "Shut that thing off!" he yelled.
What appears to be Julio's mood after being awakened?
- (A) He is dizzy at being awakened suddenly.
 - (B) He is sad that he has to bother his neighbor
 - (C) He is calm, but exhausted.
 - (D) He is furious at his neighbor.
- 19 I have a fun-filled day planned for my birthday tomorrow. I don't think I'll be able to sleep tonight! I wonder if I'll get that new tennis racquet I've been hinting about.
What is the narrator's *mood* in the passage above?
- (A) nervousness and alarm
 - (B) eager anticipation
 - (C) curiosity mixed with worry
 - (D) serious and capable
- 20 Harry could not understand why his friends were acting so strangely. "What are they hiding?" he wondered. His birthday was still six months away.
What is Harry's mood in this passage?
- (A) He is puzzled by his friends' actions.
 - (B) He is excited about a surprise.
 - (C) He is angry that his friends are keeping secrets.
 - (D) He is disappointed that he can't figure out what his friends are hiding.