

# *The Origin of Species and Other Poems*

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The cosmos is natural selection  
and some chance  
(there'd be no evolution  
if everything were chance  
or if there were no chance)

We are so alike  
variations on the same theme  
our head is from the worm  
or "we are all modified sharks"  
the digestive process of an elephant  
identical to that of a bacteria  
the teeth with which I eat a lobster  
are like those of the lobster

Insect bird reptile lily Einstein  
since every transition is slow  
every species appears without transition  
but the whole of life is a single life  
and in it there is a single Incarnation

The same DNA in common  
with all the animals  
and our hands and feet  
of amphibious fish and reptile  
all emerged from the Big Bang  
cosmos not finished yet  
and every day is the Big Bang  
the creation-evolution continues  
traveling further and further away from nothing

a handful of cells go towards  
being a bird that flies

Darwin in the 600 pages  
of *The Origin of Species*  
speaks of the modifications  
of species not the origin  
the origin is a mystery  
that of the tiny fragile life  
in the immensity of dead worlds

Does a special species with  
a special destiny exist?

Destiny that is God-evolution  
a God who abandoned eternity  
and has entered time  
and is future?

The infinite future called God  
a God who is the God of novelty  
the infinite novelty of evolution  
evolution against the status quo  
that bankers desire so much

Life emerged on land  
and began to walk  
slippery fish  
leaning on fins  
like crutches  
from the aquatic limit  
to the limitless air  
when a well dries  
it survives  
walking to another well  
and the fins became paws

The great mystery of life  
all sharing the same origin  
and that such different bodies  
should come from a single cell  
all species relatives  
from orchids to earthworms  
bacteria gradually dinosaurs  
then the dinosaur became bird  
also our mollusk ancestor  
There is only one animal

Evolution unites us all  
the living and the dead  
Darwin discovered it  
(that we come from a single cell)  
that is we are interlinked  
if one rises from the dead  
we all rise from the dead

## GAZING AT THE STARS WITH MARTÍ

The moon like a rugby ball.

At 8 a.m. over the Alps.

All that You touch is so beautiful!

What does the earth look like from the moon?

The astronaut replied:—"Fragile."

Neither can you see any division of nations.

And the sun: its white light in the black sky.

From purely chemical reactions

intelligent life here transpired.

Could there be others like this on other planets? With bodies?

Where might evolution have already taken them?

Some could be merely interstellar cloud.

Or intelligent beings composed only of radiation.

Which in our lexis we might call angels.

We're not thinking of Hollywood films.

The meeting would be another step in evolution.

Extraterrestrials and terrestrials.

Then it wouldn't be change but transformation.

After the meeting nothing but a case of working together.

Children from the same womb of the Big Bang.

<SB>

<P>Three hundred light years away?

Three thousand light years?

The "conversation" is not easy.

The most powerful transmission

would be a faint murmur across the Galaxy.

Hoping they'll be merciful with us.

Although still no signs of civilization in the neighborhood.

But Lucretius had already thought:

other earths must exist in the heavens with people and animals.

Why not? Billions of human planets in the Galaxy

In the USSR it was Leninist dogma.

What impact on our art?

What would another intelligent species be like?

Dyson fears a technology run amok.

And what if all the universe's extraterrestrials, us included,

are trying to build a better universe,

a new universe?

The formula is:

All united but each one is one.

And according to Bohm

all things touch,

all connected with all

and all is instantaneous.

The separation is apparent.

This is the most important gift

of quantum physics, almost  
like a science fiction story.  
There are no separate particles  
says Bohm.  
Science fiction taken seriously.

A child on deck gazing at the stars  
and sitting beside him Jose Martí.  
Later, in his nineties, he recorded Martí's words  
for Cintio Vitier.  
"Do you think it was made for us to contemplate it  
briefly? Don't you think  
my boy, that there has to be something greater than us?  
Do you realize  
what it represents and that we down here  
we're part of it?  
Well just so as you know that it wasn't made to amuse us  
and we have obligations towards what's been created."

Now Wheeler asks  
what use is a universe without consciousness of that universe.  
And adds that the universe is so big  
because it couldn't be any other way.  
And Barrow:  
Our existence is the cause of the universe's structure.  
That's very mysterious physics.  
That physical conditions could produce man, fine.  
But that man could produce the physical conditions  
so he could appear later in the future?

The universe had to create observers of itself."

A child on deck gazing at the stars  
and sitting beside him Jose Martí.

## WHITE HOLES

A fundamental principle, or  
the fundamental principal:  
from two microscopic cells  
millions and millions of cells are born  
and the blue whale dances in the sea.

From the small to the large.  
If a molecule was like a car,  
they say, a cell would be the Ford company.  
From simplicity to complexity,  
from confusion to organization,  
progression in a single direction.  
Consciousness, says Schrödinger,  
the plural of which is unknown,

We grow old and die like automobiles.  
But if time doesn't exist nobody has died.  
So that things don't all happen together  
that's time, Wheeler says.  
Everything is simultaneous. Time  
makes it appear non-simultaneous.  
"Time . . . you who do not exist"  
You who do not exist except in my neurons.  
Turned out there's no separation between living creatures  
nor space nor time which separates. And Einstein  
who said that this was phantasmal and absurd  
got it wrong.  
All those we call dead are alive  
because the past exists like the present  
although unseen.  
And when they wash Che's face  
he becomes a kind of Christ.  
"Che never spoke much about Che"  
says his daughter Hilda.

Consciousness is different from matter and therefore  
can survive the body.

Death will die.

The most universal law:  
everything is born and dies in the universe,  
even the stars.  
What will be born of this universe?

## TRAVELING ON A BUS THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

Many years ago from a bus in Virginia or Alabama

I saw

a pink girl, in blue pants

standing on a ladder, picking apples

(her mother calling her from inside)

and another girl, her sister, blue pants

painting the porch of the house white

—And they gazed at the bus as it went by and accelerated.

Time has gone by like the Greyhound bus

but they've remained, despite the years, the paint

fresh on the porch

the brush dripping

the hand on the apple, their gazes

many years ago, one morning, Virginia or Alabama

forget which state.

## ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO IN KENTUCKY

*Kentucky is a second paradise*, said Daniel Boone.  
He went in search of Kentucky traveling out west,  
and from a hilltop he saw the plains of Kentucky,  
the buffalo grazing as on cattle farms  
and the silent Ohio through the broad flatlands  
bordering Kentucky . . .

(and which now smells of phenol).

Forest Grove Prairie Village Park Forest Deer Park  
frontier names!  
are now the names of suburban condominiums.

Buses cross the prairies where the buffalo roamed.

Where the pioneer of the frontier once camped  
as he migrated in a canoe towards the Missouri river  
with his carbine and tomahawk and his beaver traps,  
following the beavers  
the sound of lawnmowers now resounds,  
the tinkle of highballs, laughter, the raucous radio,  
shouts from the games of croquet and volleyball  
and the dull thud of the baseball in the glove.  
From an open window a hi-fi blares  
and, with the smell of barbecued meats, wafts in the night.

*All was still . . .*

—writes Daniel Boone—

I lit a fire by a spring  
*To roast the loin of a deer I'd killed.*  
*The wolves howled all night long . . .*

And now all the sewers spew industrial waste,  
chemical substances into the Ohio.  
Household detergents have killed the fish  
and the Ohio smells of phenol . . .

## THE EAGLE

I saw the Bald Eagle, the American Eagle,  
in the heart of Oregon. Immense prairies of sage grass  
that only the buffalo can digest, not cattle,  
Which is why they are deserted.

Neither buffalo nor Indians.

In the distance the mesas as though machine-cut.  
In the rickety pickup with Alberto, an ornithologist,  
we watched as it attacked a Peregrine in flight  
that dropped what it was carrying, "maybe mouse or something."  
Down it swooped to where the food had fallen.  
Looking from side to side, its breast puffed out, shoulders hunched,  
sharp profile, ferocious  
just as it is on the coin,  
and rapidly it flew off with what it had stolen from the poor Peregrine.  
The American Eagle

## THE PLACE CALLED “HARMONY”

He was traveling slowly in case he got there too early  
and she was traveling fast because she was going to be late.

He was traveling along one highway and she along another  
and the two cars collided at the intersection  
of the two highways (the place called “Harmony”).

The police said the probability of an accident was  
“a million to one,”  
because the two highways were very wide at that spot  
and the drivers of the two vehicles  
had to have seen each other perfectly  
“unless the two of them had been distracted  
thinking about the place they were both heading . . .”

But the police didn’t know that he and she had made a date  
and that the two cars that collided were heading for the same place.  
The coincidence was greater than the police knew:  
Neither one in a million nor one in a billion  
but one in an infinity of probabilities  
or rather there was no coincidence or probability  
and what happened couldn’t have been any other way:  
he and she had made a date  
and they’d synchronized their watches  
and they were too punctual on the date.

That is all.

## APALKA

Only in summer, in the brief summer, is it accessible.  
Descending the river Coco from the last Miskito settlement  
downstream about five marine miles to the left  
a narrow river emerges called the Caño de Apalka.  
If you ascend this river they say you reach a lagoon  
and then another lagoon  
and then the mysterious lagoon of Apalka.  
(You arrive at an endless plain, full of colors  
orchids and toucans, like in the cinema or in some dream  
and in the middle of this plain: a lagoon.)  
Voices apparently of people are heard on its edges  
and right in the center of the deep waters.  
According to what the oldest Indians tell  
who heard the elders of their tribe tell  
many many years ago  
pirates ascended the Patuca river  
and entered via a secret stream to the final lagoon  
to divide their booty in this hideaway  
and they fought over the booty and all perished.  
You can still see, or can maybe see, the masts and rigging  
tangled beneath lianas and reeds  
and between rotten trunks, indistinguishable from the trunks  
the rotten hulls, a jumble, surrounded by water lilies.  
The Indians of the Coco never venture into the mysterious lagoon  
afraid of the voices that are heard on its edges.  
since the spirits of the dastardly souls still watch over the booty  
and are fighting still  
and you hear the cries (like toucans) and gunshots  
and at night you hear the dragging of chains, like raising anchors.  
Sometimes the thrash of an alligator  
fighting with another alligator . . .  
The occasional fin cutting the calm waters of the lagoon:  
a shark that entered like the pirates through the Pituca  
or perhaps a swordfish.  
When the wet season arrives the Apalka lagoon is no more  
and the plain is no more  
there's just a lake as far as the horizon  
obliterated the place where the Apalka lagoon exists  
with galleons laden with silver and gold and pearls  
and the skeletons of pirates  
everything, skeletons and treasure, sunken in the mud.  
But maybe there's a moon, and the infinite lagoon  
that no one from the Coco visits  
becomes (on the wind the irate voices of pirates)  
by the light of the moon of the Atlantic night, a  
lugubrious lagoon of silver coins.

## CELL PHONE

You talk on your cell phone  
and talk and talk  
and laugh into your cell phone  
never knowing how it was made  
and much less how it works  
but what does that matter  
    trouble is you don't know  
    just as I didn't  
    that many people die in the Congo  
        thousands upon thousands  
        for that cellphone  
        they die in the Congo  
in its mountains there is coltan  
    (besides gold and diamonds)  
used for cell phone  
condensers  
    for the control of the minerals  
    multinational corporations  
    wage this unending war  
    5 million dead in 15 years  
and they don't want it to be known  
    country of immense wealth  
    with poverty-stricken population  
80% of the world's coltan  
reserves are in the Congo  
the coltan has lain there for  
three thousand million years  
    Nokia, Motorola, Compaq, Sony  
        buy the coltan  
    the Pentagon too, the New York  
    Times corporation too  
    and they don't want it to be known  
nor do they want the war to stop  
so as to carry on grabbing the coltan  
children of 7 to 10 years extract the coltan  
    because their tiny bodies  
    fit into the tiny holes  
    for 25 cents a day  
and loads of children die  
due to the coltan powder  
or hammering the rock  
that collapses on top of them  
    The New York Times too  
    that doesn't want it to be known  
    and that's how it remains unknown  
    this organized crime  
    of the multinationals

the Bible identifies  
truth and justice  
and love and the truth  
the importance of the truth then  
that will set us free  
also the truth about coltan  
coltan inside your cell phone  
on which you talk and talk  
and laugh into your cell phone