

The Majesty of the Infinite

by Brianne Baxtali

The other night at work, some kid was in for swallowing a snail's shell. He was nine and, according to the computer, did not have cognitive insufficiency. That last bit was probably put there to make us all not feel guilty about laughing at him.

Setting down my book (*VALIS* by Philip K. Dick, actually), I wondered aloud what the hell would possess a nine-year-old to do something like that — after all, he was old enough to know better. Also unclear was if the snail was still affixed to its home. My co-workers instead said something about *Jersey Shore*; sighing, I resumed the text.

As I read about Zebra or Sophia or whatever point Mr. Dick was trying to get across (the parts of it that weren't elaborate drug flashbacks or untreated epilepsy, anyway), an image of a nautilus flashed in my mind; really, that shape would be the perfect way to describe this book. The idea of infinity, or lack of infinity (since, evidently, time doesn't exist), of past and future selves being laminated on top of one another, and that composite at the end is what God is, or what God should be. Admittedly, I wasn't sure of that part.

What if that kid's God at the end of *his* book thought it would be funny to tell him to swallow a snail shell? It's no more ridiculous than (a) God telling somebody to kill his only child, then at the last minute going “omg lol i can't believe you fell for that!”

Maybe the universe is an irrational place because its point is to quell the boredom.

