

On Mars

by Darby Larson

We brought oxygen with us because we knew, everyone knows, there is no air on Mars. Everyone told us this as they waved goodbye back on Earth. Jay's mom even said, "Goodbye, honey, have a nice time and remember, there's no air on Mars. Are you aware of that?" except that, I just realized, there is air on Mars, but it is not made of oxygen.

My friend Jay brought some pot to smoke while we lived on Mars. Jay is a genius. Not because he brought pot, I don't know why he brought pot, but he does know how to build rocket ships and so that's how we went to Mars, in a gigantic rocket ship my friend Jay built.

Also, Jay brought his banjo.

So now we have a house on Mars with a front porch and two rocking chairs that Jay and I sit in while we watch sunsets, because watching sunsets is the only thing to do on Mars. Except for, also, smoking pot and playing Jay's banjo and juggling rocks and exercising occasionally and eating canned peaches.

As I said before, there is no air (oxygen) on Mars and so to breathe, we wear glass globes on our heads that Jay built using some old goldfish bowls.

I've become a very good juggler of rocks. Once I climbed on our roof and juggled red Mars rocks all night while Jay sat on the porch and smoked pot. I even stood on one leg and juggled and yelled down at Jay to check out what I was doing. I said, "Jay, check out what I'm doing!" He looked up at me and said, "Are you some kind of monkey up there?"

You might be wondering how Jay can smoke pot through his fish bowl helmet. You might be wondering a lot of things. Then again, you might not be.

Sunsets on Mars are a lot like sunsets on Earth, only on Mars, the sky is much darker and the ground is much redder.

Jay is an amazing banjo player. He wrote an entire song on the porch one day. It was called 'Oh My Pretty Baby Lucy.' Jay did fancy finger-picking when he played it. I was envious. I told myself I would learn to play banjo as good as Jay.

Later I asked him, "Who's Lucy?" He said, "She's my pretty baby."

I was really in the mood for popcorn one night. We had none. All we had were canned peaches.

A few nights ago Jay woke me up in the middle of the night because he wanted me to go on a jog with him. I think he was stoned, but I went anyway. It's nice to get out and do things.

When we were about a mile away from our house we stopped running so Jay could puke. I patted him on the back while he puked. It's always something I want to do when I'm around people who are puking, pat them on the back and tell them it's going to be alright.

Jay coughed up the last of whatever it was and we stood over his puddle of puke. Jay sat down next to it and began to cry.

I sat down across from him, the puddle between us, and looked up at the night sky. I had never seen so many stars. That's probably not true. I probably have seen as many stars. It's just that looking at stars is not something I think about alot.

When Jay stopped crying, we walked home. I plopped onto my bed

and fell straight asleep. When I woke the next morning, Jay and the rocket ship were gone.

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Last night, I walked back out to the spot where Jay had puked. It was all dried up, but there was a tiny sprout of a plant growing out of the red dust. I lay down next to it and stared at the sky. I closed my eyes and imagined the future:

The tiny sprout was an oak tree and I built a tree house in it. I was living primarily in the tree house instead of the land house a mile away. Every night, Jay would fly his rocket ship across the sky in figure eights while I sat on a branch, my legs dangling, playing a mean banjo.

