It Seems You've Stumbled Upon My Bildungsroman

by Matt Rowan

Why yes I began writing this, my bildungsroman, *Who is Mitsy Jackson?*, in spring, 1974 or thereabouts, and thank you so much for asking. As to what brought it to life those many years ago, I was thinking rather unfocusedly one day and in my mind it popped -- fwomp! (it made that sound, it did). From its fwomping, there needed only be words applied by my oddly mutant penmanship onto whatever paper, wood planks or random bits of pleather materials were available to me.

Likewise, this should answer your questions regarding why I have so much wood stacked atop itself here in this room.

The tale is a tale as old as time immemorial -- the tale of Mitsy Jackson. What a biddy she was! What a sourpuss and sharp tongued too! No one ever knew, though, and oh how I laugh at the thought! Because she was a mystery to them; because they didn't know her, who she was, at her core!

It wasn't any ordinary landscape that she found herself in. No, not hardly. Somewhere in my travels I became interested in worlds beyond our own, you see. And as you might imagine so too did Mitsy Jackson. She was destined to be not an ordinary soul soaring through an ordinary life. She was destined for the stars, the great wide beyond of space! Yes.

That's right, she becomes an astronaut, a space pioneer!

It's all in the bildungsroman, all 5700 pages, and planks, to date! And counting!

We follow Mitsy Jackson through all of her ages, starting with age zero on the day of her birth to who knows when I'll finally stop? How many pages fill a life? How many wood planks? So far, 5700, but time will certainly tell.

How many light years?

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“Mission Moon, Exploration in Travel Time” would be her mission handed down from NASA. Their aim was to get her, the best among them, to the moon by stardate 2004. (I've considered modifying the date to a more futuristic point, but it was literally carved into my manuscript many multiple times, and I think there is something very unsettling and ominous about the year 2004, since occurring concurrently was the very presidential race for which Dick Gephardt failed to attain the Democratic nomination.)

She meets so many aliens who wish her well and who learn as much from her as she does from them.

Upon her return to earth, she has lived many light years longer than the average person, and her body is not visibly any older. But she has the wisdom of a woman many moons and stars over her age, and she teaches so many people so many things. All the while, she and old friends as well as new get into all sorts of trouble.

But do be careful around the bildungsroman. I wouldn't want you to trip and hurt yourself, whilst simultaneously knocking over all my hard work. My hard work is also rather hard in fact, actual fact. That is to say, tangibly it is hard. Those planks, you know.

Heavy.

It could, in theory, crush you, were it to tip over on you.

Oh, but there it tips, and there you go beneath it. Oh.

My, my, my.

That's going in the bildungsroman!