

December 15, 2012

by Savannah Schroll Guz

All of us here live in small apartments, like so many little prison cells. We're an enclave of the unwanted and forgotten, most of us a step or two away from the nursing home. And me?

I am a genius.

My intelligence quotient is 180 on the Stanford-Binet scale. And I am trapped here on Earth, where limited Newtonian mechanics still dominate and where humans are distracted by petty social minutiae, never thinking about the other, more physically coercive forces. Because there *are* other forces, more potent ones, ones that could simultaneously destroy and unite us all, pull us as thin as taffy, fills us with spatial eddies and black holes and then distribute our particles like jacks.

Everywhere around me, on the subway, on the street, there is maddening perceptual limitation. People simply cannot *see* outside their narrow realities! They think they know how to run their lives. They *think* they have answers to questions that matter. But even their questions are inadequate; they count only in one dimension. These people know nothing about what is *really* at work. Drone on if you want about unemployment, about healthcare, about politics, taxes and retirement. None of this matters in the end. You can't bargain with physics or negotiate with the properties of matter.

Take, for instance, my neighbor, Harold Lawrence Richter (age 75, AARP member, Navy veteran of the Korean Conflict). We've never met, but I've learned a great deal about his irrelevant personal data through the casual perusal of his mail. Harold makes a habit of watching *Gunsmoke* every afternoon at 3:00. And usually, I can hear this crass distraction as clearly as if his television were right in the room with me. When I stand on my dining table and look through

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the louvered air vent between our apartments, I can see him sitting shirtless in his worn out velveteen easy chair, rubbing joint compound into his shoulders with his funny, pained expression. His old man chest hangs from his shoulders like two partially empty saddle bags. His skin has creased itself into soft, bluish gullies. He is another miserable victim of gravity and one of humanity's sad accretions.

Already, I can see that, whenever Harold moves, some of his soul escapes, like an accidental exhalation, like breath on powder. Understand, the spirit parts with the body when it begins earnest decay. And because it is comprised primarily of energy and not—as many people believe—disembodied intellect, it often prevents its own chance to achieve eternal splendor, the fiery magnificence everyone would strive for, were it known and fully understood. Nothing is more profoundly beautiful than plasma. It is the fourth state of matter, the stuff of interstellar gases and stars.

I, myself, have come to recognize gravity as complement to intense sadness. There are times, quite often, when grief — in all its immensity — pulls me down and holds me in place. I feel the weight of all the misery in the world, and there's nothing I can do but lie flat and wait for the feeling to diminish. And when it does lift, I feel like I've come back from a long illness. Gravity, you see, is a great deal of the problem with everything in life. Gravity compounds limitation.

You will probably laugh at my ideas. People usually do. You should know, though, that in my youth, I was something of a mathematical brain. I could do complex calculus by the time I was ten. Yet, my most significant ability was that I could see truth within physical matter itself: an aura's effulgence, the emanation of the seven chakras, the restrained energy of every living thing and the residue-signatures left by the dead.

My mother, who found little other good in me, roundly announced to

her bridge club that I would be the next Einstein. Mother didn't know that much, really. Einstein was the first and easiest comparison she could make. She'd had me late in life, and I frankly suspect I was an accident. An unfortunate one, at that. But she only realized this as she was signing my commitment papers, and I lay strapped to a gurney behind the slide-lock entrance to the second floor ward of Heritage Valley Hospital. The bars on the windows, the shoe prints on the walls, the blood droplets on the floor, and the leather shackles on the gurney...they all made her cry. Oh what to tell the bridge club now?

You see, I make progress towards a different, more meaningful kind of greatness—a beautiful magnitude that might not be mother's idea of distinction—but then, of course, she's never shared my insights. And of course, as with any authentic subject of consequence, the fundamentals of science are involved. In my case, this greatness involves—and I recite these details from memory, for I've no need to write anything down other than to share it with you—like so ...if you can follow along, that is:

First, purely factual information: The heterocyclic compound RDX, at a density of 1.76 g/cm³, has a velocity detonation 8,750 meters per second. I synthesized this stable, colorless solid by combining concentrated nitric acid with hexamine (the white crystalline product of the reaction between formaldehyde and ammonia). What has happened comes down to this, chemically speaking:



Next: There is 92% RDX in PBX-9205, where RDX appears as part of the stable matrix of synthetic polymer.

In the evenings, I press the room-temperature PBX power together and have made myself the imperfect plastic effigy of a human heart. Because it is oversized, it could well be the heart of a giant. And when the time comes, I will place this "Heart of Enceladus" in the

freezer to enhance its unstable properties.

The wall separating my apartment from Harold Lawrence Richter's is where I've been working out the rest of the design. I've pasted feathers to the wall in the shape of enormous wings. They are the theatrical kind intended for masks: dazzlingly white, soft and spectacular to feel against the fingertips. In the evenings, I stand in front of it, put my arms into the leather straps I've nailed to the wall and seek restorative weightless, or as close as I can get to it in this imperfect Newtonian dimension. If I concentrate very deeply, I can see the sun before me like a godhead, preparing to incinerate my body, the wind blowing my physical remains into space as a fine dust. Will there be pain? Perhaps. But the energy released: that is liberation, friends. Genuine *rapture*.

This morning, a maintenance man interrupted my progress. He came, he said, to check my toilet, which was leaking into the apartment below. At first, he babbled on in the 'good-buddy' way that underproductive men often do. I didn't have much to say in reply, but it didn't matter, really. He filled in all the gaps all by himself. When he came out of the bathroom to get his toolbox, he saw the wings and leather straps of my intended embarkation point. "You an artist," he asked. I imagine he intended to be friendly.

"No," I replied, "I am a *genius*."

He laughed amiably, but he stopped talking. And he wasn't there much longer. At the door, he said he needed more equipment, that he'd be back later. But it's after seven now, and there hasn't been any sign of him. I suppose the problem wasn't so grave after all.

Meanwhile, I continue to work on the actual *mechanism*, synthesizing and perfecting. You see, if I make my PBX heart large enough, I can take everyone on this floor with me. They will be grateful for the liberation in the end. In the meantime, however, I

watch the sun, compare it to the projections of my Mayan cosmological *Tzolk'in*, and wait. Within a few days, I will finally be the uninhibited, boundless energy that suits me.

