

A Scalar Boson a Day

by strannikov

“Everyone's in love with five-sigma, everyone” purred the versatile blonde draped over the black leather stool. In the guts of the Bulldog, she straightened with a start just as she started to slide. This would be Grace, spun out exquisitely and only so far and no further in her thirty-one year length. She never ever flew, except on Higgs Day One, when she did fly the hop from Geneva to Amsterdam with a brief stop in Zürich, dropped the cab from Schiphol to the Leidseplein Marriott, then without thought of finding a bike skipped right down Leidsestraat across the Stadhouderskade to the Bulldog not five minutes over the Singelgracht canal, still short of Prinsengracht. This act of relocation all occurred as a single motion occupying her from seven a. m. to just after five-fifteen p. m. local time.

As she slouched in her local Higgs field, Grace looked back at the full momenturousness of the day just passed. She was commonly not eager for neologisms but felt daring enough to coin this one at least for the curved span of this first Higgs day. To Grace's eyes Higgs Day One showed plainly enough that chronons, while they may be more neutrino than boson, or vice versa, are seen to group only in Higgs fields occupied by or with baryonic matter. (No Higgs chronons will be found, *id est*, this much was clear.)

Grace then more or less instantly dismembered or dismantled her mind with five hits of hash in her next hour in the Bulldog's H-field, boson-dense stuff to look at Grace from moment to moment, one hit for every sigma, and only four minutes later she was thinking of a sixth hit only because of the chronometric divisibility of the hour into decimal segments so she lit straight into hits seven and eight, too, in rapid sequence. No, she finally decided after eight minutes: work beckons. Two double espressos, then with stupefied nods out, back to the Marriott, just as two months earlier in Noirlens.

Into her third floor room overlooking the Stadhouderskade and the Singelgracht canal, Grace admitted only the narrowest ribbon of

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light she could arrange by hand. The curtains in fact crossed each other and admitted only a thin gash of light a few inches long onto the wall opposite. From the mahogany credenza she retrieved and opened her black Peruzzi case. Lifting the aromatic lid, Grace peered in to observe two flasks, to see that they remained clasped to their brass holder bolted into the lining of the case inside. One flask was wrapped in maroon velvet, the other tied in electric blue silk: both sat securely settled in the hinged bottom of the case.

Folded atop and amongst the two flasks were a couple of linen handkerchiefs and a two-page précis Grace was holding for publication in November. She was now the author of three papers, and a curious thing about the other two papers she had written is: that each was shorter than the other. Her first paper was another two-page précis but titled "Field Replication of a Higgs Event" and the second paper she wrote originally as a three-page précis but which she only Monday had reduced to the scope of a single-paged (though single-spaced) précis "Foreword to Particle Engineering".

Grace knew her history well enough not to be able to predict her future accurately but to anticipate it adequately. In her interior dialogues and rehearsals she remained non-committal amidst the continual reminders that assaulted and pestered her hour to hour, moment to moment.

She had discerned her qualifications early for her unobserved career. She was of provincial extraction, which had sealed her soul in eternal estrangement from everything that followed and which in fact enhanced the xenophilia she encountered or celebrated along the way. Her taste for alchemy, whether potable or capable of inhalation, whether capable of being pissed or merely excreted, does not pass without mention (she never discerned any requirements for coprophagy, a mild relief to all who knew her). After her initial accident plowing into a thick stand of briars, she'd become an avid cyclist, even with the other minor accidents: stiff headwinds had learned to swirl around her during her rural jaunts and her inter-city expeditions: and the necessary empiricism of the mechanical had

wound tight into her as a consequence, lessons her few calendars could never impart without aid from sundials (shadows inevitably fall), hourglasses (sand most regularly falls with reliable consistency), clocks (pendulums halting in mid-arc would never activate any alarm). Her habit for fishing and rowing was only occasional but sufficient (hook-baiting alone gave her almost all the requisite interest in biology for her studies: for the rest, she permitted spiders to breed wherever she took up residence, trusted them as the custodians of corners with their eight-legged cunning [a mere fancy on her part: she saw spiders as the attenuated psychic residue of cats and their whiskers]).

Between Geneva and Amsterdam she had kept herself occupied. By noon, she had a small Higgs casino running on a quiet street in Zürich, with Higgs cards (the face cards all eight-headed), Higgs dice (dies rolling with 5, 8, 13, 31, or 52 faces), and the hottest game clearly Higgs roulette (by the time she left Zürich, she could see few patrons venturing beyond the fractals spinning from the wheel in five or eight dimensions). She left Zeno and Bruno in charge at two p. m.

By three p. m. Grace was already picking out planets, having finished the first draft of her "Map of Bridges" a half-hour earlier. Her skull remained infested with imaginary sense, her eyes exuding a vision of the square root of negative one.

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