

There has been some grumbling of late in science fiction circles about the dwindling of the sense of wonder. It is true, certainly, that as writing techniques and characterization have developed, flights of imagination have become less soaring. Let us, then, look for a moment outside the field: here is a poem by a man who is not a science fiction writer—he is, rather, chairman of the board of a large corporation and his work-day is devoted to the harsh realities of multi-million-dollar profit and loss. And we confess we find it comforting to think that a man in such a key position has it in him to dream so well.

Infinity

by Rosser Reeves

The probing eye of Palomar
Peers skyward to reveal
A billion molten, fiery stars
In our galactic wheel,
And shows that even this great disc
Is but a firefly burning
Within a much more monstrous wheel,
Slowly, slowly turning.

May not this next celestial wheel
Be but an atom's glow
In some big molecule of stars
In some huge flake of snow?
For may not space flow on and on
From door to opening door,
Like seas that open into seas
And never reach a shore?

If in our atom's tiny flame
A billion stars are whirled,
And millions of these lonely suns
Has each a captive world,

Just follow to the trillionth power
And on beyond to see
What must be true when ciphers link
Down to infinity.

Somewhere red planets swing around
A triple silver sun
And pale, pale rainbows interlock
Their arches one by one.

Somewhere dark girls upon their
brows

Grow curving scarlet horns
And ride in tinkling gardens on
Great golden unicorns.

And somewhere rains of diamonds fall
On foaming, milk-white seas,
Where rockets follow streaming light
From star to star with ease,
And soft-eyed girls with honied lips
Swim up to sing and free
Their water-weighted lashes from
Their native, shining sea.

Great blue-white giant blazing suns
 Control a thousand spheres
 Where reptiles march in glistening
 ranks
 And fight with jeweled spears,
 Where lizards lounge on ivory thrones
 And keep to weave and spin,
 To clean their overlapping scales,
 A smooth-skinned race of men.

Somewhere crustaceans think like
 Gods
 And muse eternal laws
 And write the music of the spheres
 With clicking bony claws,
 Or beetles, fish, and furry things
 Emerge as sentient breeds,
 Or, working with atomic fires,
 Are thinking centipedes . . .

Or coal-black spiders sway in webs
 Beneath chill alien moons
 And finger gem-like instruments
 And strum immortal tunes,
 Or serpent men on serpent worlds
 Evolve to racial prime
 And glide in fourth dimensions where
 The riddle solved is time.

For if there is no end of worlds
 And nature keeps her laws,
 Who knows which life will win
 which world—
 The hands . . . the coils . . . the claws?

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So feathered things and crawling
 things
 And creeping things all go
 Their separate ways on separate
 worlds,
 Around, above, below.

If God employs infinity
 His wonders to perform,
 And there's no end of endlessness,
 Can there then be a norm?
 Would God give souls to sentient
 beasts,
 Or would they still be clods?
 If evolution is God's way
 Whose image, then, is God's?

An endlessness of worlds implies
 A world of every kind—
 Worlds where our past repeats itself
 Until the end of time,
 Worlds where our future's far events
 Enact themselves before,
 Where every closing portal means
 Another opening door.

So if there is infinity,
 If endlessness is true,
 Somewhere Napoleon walks again
 The fields of Waterloo;
 And somewhere, always, in the depths
 Of time's vast shoreless sea,
 Upon the ghastly hill of skulls
 Christ hangs upon the tree.