

Coming up for Air

By Frank Jousen

“I am the last astronaut. The last human being as far as I know.”

I’m speaking into the sound system of my space suit for the simple reason that I can and because no

one else can speak to me anymore.

I’m not suicidal. No more than the rest of mankind was, that is. And I’ve just made up my mind to

have a little space walk because I’m feeling pretty claustrophobic in the last existing spaceship.

All systems check, double check. Seven minutes left of oxygen, the maximum. So I’d rather take one

last look – another of those ‘lasts’ – at good old Mother Earth. ‘The blue planet’, we used to call her,

but all I can see from here are red and yellow clouds from the explosions that have been going on for

days on end now.

When the messages of World War V reached us I had a déjà vu: atomic war on a hitherto unknown

scale, evacuation of Mars, everyone out – not out of logical thinking, but because of a single word we

settlers had never taken the trouble to redefine: home.

Seven minutes left of oxygen, at best, so I have to choose what to think of: My delayed departure,

my lack of supplies, and my endlessly repeated remorse of “too late, too futile, not a chance in hell”?

Thinking of people, sure, but mostly of the beginning: trying to remember something too early to be

remembered by me, but told and retold:

Lying at the bottom of a bathtub. Seven minutes left of oxygen, the maximum, before the umbilical

cord stopped working altogether and some goddess of a nurse dragged me up to see my Mother’s

face at last.

Bio:

Frank Jousen is a German teacher and member of one-world and peace groups. He has had numerous publications, e.g.: In North America in anthologies published by Poet Works Press; Big Pond Rumours, Poets Against War, Poets Against the War Canada, The Gazette, Writer’s Lifeline, Raving Dove, New Verse News, The Pedestal Magazine, Kota Press, Raven Poetry. In G.B. in: Poetry Kit Magazine, Caught in the Net, Pulsar, Poetry Scotland, Poetic Hour, The Measure and Memories, a book with twelve “cancer stories” and 144 paintings; in Ireland in: Boyne Berries; in Australia in: New England Review, Ulitarra, Imago, Southern Review, Eureka Street; in India in: Poet, Poetry Today, Metverse Muse, Muse India, Poets International, Canopy, Triveni, World Poetry, Creative Saplings, Literary Ruminations and various anthologies, the latest one being “Celebrating India” by Nivasini publishers, Andhra Pradesh, 2012.

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His first collection, “Building Bridges”, was published by I.D.E.A.S. in Andhra Pradesh in 2008. He also edited a short anthology, “Anthologies I” containing the poetry of three Indian authors plus his own work, again in India, in 2011.