

The Man on the Moon

The Russian conflict with Ukraine bore heavy on my spirit. I endeavoured to think positive thoughts, happy thoughts, but a worldwide nuclear war still lurked in the back of my mind.

It was a nice clear night, so I went outside in the warm air and leaned over a fence to take in the view of the city. The street lights blinked through the trees in the middle field and the moon's glow, lit up the scene. I saw my fox watching me from behind some trees, his eyes glinting yellow in the reflection of the light; he was waiting on the food that I put out for him every night. It was a full moon, a huge round ball in the night sky and I felt I could almost touch it. I looked up and wondered.

Li Qiang switched off the power drive to his spider cab, an eight wheeled electric vehicle which he used to travel back and forth from the mining site, some 200 metres away from his base, a pre-fabricated moon module. His daily work consisted of drilling down into the moon's crust for Helium 3 samples using a mobile drilling platform. The electrical power to maintain the base, the platform and to charge batteries came from a hydrogen gas driven generator. Every 6 months a supply ship arrived to deliver food stocks, water and hydrogen gas.

He entered the air lock of the module and removed his helmet, space suit and underclothes. He entered the cleansing cubicle and stood naked as the dry chemical reaction cleaned any dirt and contamination from his body. He dressed in a cotton shirt, cotton trousers and canvas shoes before entering the lounge. The moon module consisted of a bedroom, a lounge, kitchen, a communications room and a conservatory. He sat down on a comfortable chair with a glass of Baijiu which he had distilled in his kitchen from his home-grown grain sorghum in the conservatory. He looked at the massive digital screen on one of the walls and marvelled at the image of the Earth, some 238,555 miles away. Its image filled the entire screen, thanks to the module's power telescope that magnified it. Li Qiang enjoyed watching the beautiful planet because he could clearly see the land masses, the vibrant blue oceans and at night the city lights in each country, blinking like miniature galaxies.

Eventually, he grew tired and retired to bed. After 8 hours, he was awakened by the soothing piped sounds of Strauss and arose to enjoy a coffee in the lounge and listen to the music. He sat and watched the dark outline of the earth on his screen and the flickering lights of the tiny city galaxies. Suddenly, he thought he saw a firefly, its yellow and red mating flash popping up on the screen, and then another and another. His first impression was that they were dancing in front of the telescope but that could not be the case; there were no fireflies on the moon. More appeared, and he realised they were not on the telescope, they were actually nuclear explosions on Earth. Entire cities were being destroyed. Strauss played in the background and the flashes on the screen seemed to be in synchronisation with the music.

The atmosphere of the planet turned into a maelstrom of vibrant red and black clouds. The dust and heat from the nuclear explosions converged to form a worldwide firestorm with massive flashes of lightning cutting through it. On the land, volcanoes erupted, spewing forth lava and firing dust, debris and flaming rocks high into the sky.

Li Qiang now saw the Earth as it had been viewed, billions of years ago, when it first formed. The man on the moon faced an uncertain future and I knew how he felt.

Copyright Conditions

This article is free for worldwide distribution by electronic means or hard copy on the condition the copyright is maintained whereby it cannot be used for commercial use without the owner's permission. Richard Lawrence has asserted his right to be identified as the 'Author of this Work' in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Website: www.lawrencephotographic.com

Adapted from [Shadows of my Mind](#)