

Polyploid Now

"DID THE New Spore forge a text to make itself readable by eye from the outset? Experts are now quite certain that its domination might have been prolonged centuries, had the text remained in digital obscurity. For years no one bothered to notice the hexagonal tendency in the patterns emerging in the dust and insect behavior in that region of the library that preserved the single printed copy. In a book the text might well have been scrapped like so many million other volumes of its generation. But in digitalia, sooner, rather than later, every possible ideational pattern was randomly selected by hungry plagiarist, and re-posted. This particular instance was attached to an exhibition of never-before seen object arrangements.... Little has been haploid since."¹

I had successfully transferred my consciousness to a plant. But I was mistaken in the idea I would find no similar self already lurking. There was such a one, and she would speak. Through sound in the air, yes, and also through time.

She was rooting with two others of her kind when I, burrow-headed, burrowed from above her. We were burrowed both below the other. She made me cipher a dead language to know it. She made me a poet.

"Yes, there is a projectable ghost, cut from another timescape. She seeks an inroad between the ungrown and the deeper down."

"And the deeper down," I said.

"And the deeper, deeper down. If you are bards, study some before you begin," she said. "Find instructors initiated in the mysteries."

This is her description: Her tongue is as long as time. Neither death nor quake can slide her. I threw nine hundred rocks; they passed right through her one green eye....

How did I feel? Everything inside me was asking that question. After all, these were properly polyploid chromosomes. We were ourselves again. But we did not *feel* a recognizable way. I was standing in the corner of the late Harry Freeling's sunlit study, plugged into the central adapt bioscape. The partial remains of the defunct biobot doberman Grumpy continued to deteriorate onto my soil. I myself held the famous "Blue Carrot", gripped in the crotch of my lowest thickest southern buried root-branch.

The Freeling corpse had been dragged away two days ago. Even if they came back and plucked the carrot now -- even if the G-Ops could manage an uncovering, which was doubtful -- Freeling had given the carrot *cross-chromosomal memory*. I would not be discovered.

What was this feeling? Absence of war? Absence of rage? Of resentment? Of envy? Of fear?

Then it hit me. Samuelson was probably packaging the Freeling head this very moment, preparing its delivery to the Living Museum. I started laughing. I mean it really was funny, hilarious even. I was dead.

I have been laughing ever since.

¹ "Among the Ryaners," *Lost Books of the Future*, vol. 17.