Starlog II

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It had been difficult for Shevek to take the space walk. Takver felt his discomfort with it. As a physicist, Shevek knew the dangers well enough for a healthy case of hypochondria. Takver knew the probabilities well enough to know more about his hyper emotional body awareness than he did. It grew out of the earth they lived on, another wave relation in their space. Another subject, another language.

Cornelius surveyed the orange plains of the martian riverbed through vizov. The life there was growing by his efforts, and those of the PDC in raising atmospheric elements. The terraformation of Mars would achieve its next milestone this quarter.

Shevek looked down at the planetoid under him and entered the airlock. He sat three hours. She was here. He exited with a copper and gold visor, and pulled himself to the stations nadir. Takver grabbed him when he came over the aerodynamic bow of the structure. She was home.

Cornelius would build a lake in this place, wooded with pine and oak. It would take a hundred years, and would be named Lake Stuart. The next decade would develop an increasingly large scale dirt farm, emerging from the ecosystem of the lake bed.

Last month it rained ten inches. The clouds cooled the atmosphere at his altitude of three hundred meters above the planned tidal mean. When they cleared it

was fifteen degrees. A typical thunderstorm lowered the ambient temperature by five degrees.

Stuart's farm covered the two miles of flood plane at its greatest extent. The hills rose to fifty meters. Covered in grass, the plane sprouted wild flowers, worms and wasps. Cornelius readied for trees and bats and birds. This quarter he would introduce dragonflies, ahead of the birds.

With the pines came warblers and then woodpeckers. The PDC's seeded species had come to bloom across Stuart's and many similar areas across the planet. Arid covering projects had achieved the area necessary to the lifecycle. From space the planet had become green and tan and black. Water production balanced the ground projects. Oceans were scheduled for coming decades.

Cornelius sat at the table Anna set for him. She prepared soup on a wood fired stove that was molded into the hillside, into their home. Over the decades they had constructed and reconstructed the structure to better fit into the evolving landscape.

Fifty years ago they had started the lake project. The PDC's projections were combined with a dam to add a lake to the river, and from that foundation the heart of a wood that could survive them.

Cornelius was two thousand, seven hundred and thirty seven years old. The grandson of Shevek and Takver, who lived on earth and its moon. His lake was the center of his hemisphere. Anna was the same age. Friends knew Cornelius and Anna of mars and

Shevek and Takver of luna as a theme. While Shevek and Takver were much older, and they only rarely met, analog communications links permitted the human society on earth, moon and mars a great deal of intercourse.

Shevek's reply to his message about the bird virus included a modification to his STC. Cornelius lifted the virus from the dead bird with success. He could trace environmental effects for their sources, and with this knowledge judge the benefits of introducing changes. The processes were well understood. The virii were regulated by the PDC, but their evolutions interacted with the environment. They shouldn't be killing birds.

The STC analysis revealed a process operating in his wood and elsewhere. He identified a viral inhibitor and its possibility space. Shevek's modifications to the STC permitted Cornelius a greater level of confidence in the probable outcomes from releasing the genetically modified descendents of his birds into the wild. Shevek had said something about orders of magnitude greater compute power, but how he did it and what he did with it rambled into the ocean. The birds concerned him. He knew that a good outcome was a no-brainer, and that a probably good outcoome worth doing. In this case, the outcome was good.

The birds would stop dying. Under these conditions the environment would stabilize.