

My UFOs

by [Michael Sandler](#) (August 2025)



Night Crossing (Matthew Wang, 2018)

My UFOs

a new planet swims into his ken –Keats

I almost believe in them
or want to, gazing upward
from a field among crickets
when a peculiar glow
transits the black serene

to blink with mystery.

That blip above Orion
has to be a craft, it looks
intelligent—one of ours?
The streaking beneath Mars
a satellite or booster
or perhaps a shooting star—

of course, there's an explanation.
They want to avoid what?—
panic?—wild surmise?—
which hardly gives comfort as I
watch the next darting flicker
gainsay the pervasive dark.

A fear when staring upward,
our frail thoughts confronting
the vast silence, wondering
if all will end with Nada,
a flash of comprehension,
a trace of a beyond us...

Terrifying to imagine
we're alone—no one apart
from this riven world of doubters,
mavens, would-be gods,
their certitude overwhelming
a mere watcher of the skies.

Souvenir... que me veux-tu?

—Verlaine

Some episodes prove difficult to capture.
Only the traumas, thrills, seem to stand out.

Unconsciously a forest fades without feature—

Vague branches of nonbeing, a recall ruptured,
Evaporated time we treat as nought;
No easy fix opens that past to capture.

I've retained our first night in bed: its rapture
Resonates still, those fragrant blossoms caught.
Quarrels that followed equally sharp-featured.

Unlike these bookends, an unfocused picture
Envelopes much between. Ellipsis dots
Mark the kids' birthdays, first steps, summer adventures,

Excused perhaps by all I've reaped—endeavors
Vacant as clear-cuts let me bring home a lot.
Equations not my gift, love's gauzy factors

Unsolved since your first Yes, a hopeful gesture—
X represents the constants I zero out.
Typical plight? We all let sproutings wither
Unseen—not logging them is just our nature?

Vacation Cocktail

*Drink that gets its name from
the Tahitian word for "good"*
—NY Times Crossword, 11/11/14

I laze among plumeria and palm
after a dip, motionless like a feigning
gecko. A pool attendant shrouds me in
a terry robe, an angel trolleys in

a chorus line of drinks, iced rum fandangoes

with matchstick parasols—says they'll take me
to seventh heaven. I taste a fruited stasis,
the *maita'i* of a lethargy imbuing
a spreading haze...

Flesh softens, a papaya
ripens to ooze and septic odors rise
from a ditch where a great white egret pecks
at putrid pulp as if perfumed; it, too,

evaporates. Maybe this is the point
of basking here, a rattan lounger gauzed
in thatched light and the surf's white hiss, disquiet
emptying its insistence, letting go
a sip away...

I try to see it as *good*,
something to make us unafraid of death.

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Michael Sandler is the author of a poetry collection, *The Lamps of History* (FutureCycle Press 2021). His work has appeared in scores of journals, including recently in *The Ecological Citizen*, *Macrame Literary Journal* and *The Ekphrastic Review*. Previously he worked as a lawyer and arbitrator, has served in the State Department, and taught as an adjunct at the Georgetown and University of Washington schools of law. Michael lives near Seattle; his website is www.sandlerpoetry.com.

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