

# The Nebulous Menace

by Eric Norris (February 2018)



SpaceX Poster

*“Cela est bien,” répondit Candide, “mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.”*

*—Voltaire*

Astronomers had seen it first. They  
Could not believe the data pouring in.  
They passed it to their governments. Thus, the world  
Was not to be informed—and was. The void

Grew. Ink blotted out the Milky Way—  
With nothing there to soak it up: nothing,  
No science, no religion. “My God, there goes  
Polaris—the North Star!” Faiths were shaken—

Even in our community on Mars.  
Mars has a few more months to shine. I guess,  
Ours is the last outpost of sanity:  
Sagan Weather Station, Olympus Mons.

I tend to the reactor. At twilight,  
I write. I count dust devils dancing on  
The edge of night. Good for asparagus—  
This Martian soil. Hiroko built a bed

Beneath the dome that we call home. We made  
Asparagus omelets on Thanksgiving  
As Jupiter went out. I don't know  
What Earth expected us to do. To shout?

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**Eric Norris's** short stories and reviews have appeared in: *Foglifter*, *Ambit*,  
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