

The Statue

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I put my arms around her shoulders but there was no way I could comfort her.

The STATUE

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There is a time for doing and a time for going home. But where is home in an ever-changing universe?

ewis," Martha said. "I want to go home."

She didn't look at me. I followed her gaze to Earth, rising in the east.

It came up over the desert horizon, a clear, bright star at this distance. Right now it was the Morning Star. It wasn't long before dawn.

I looked back at Martha sitting quietly beside me with her shawl drawn tightly about her knees. She had waited to see it also, of course. It had become almost a ritual with us these last few years, staying up night after night to watch the earthrise.

She didn't say anything more. Even the gentle squeak of her rocking chair had fallen silent. Only her hands moved. I could see them trembling where they lay folded in her lap, trembling with

emotion and tiredness and old age. I knew what she was thinking. After seventy years there can be no secrets.

We sat on the glassed-in veranda of our Martian home looking up at the Morning Star. To us it wasn't a point of light. It was the continents and oceans of Earth, the mountains and meadows and laughing streams of our childhood. We saw Earth still, though we had lived on Mars for almost sixty-six years.

"Lewis," Martha whispered softly. "It's very bright tonight, isn't it?"

"Yes," I said.

"It seems so near."

She sighed and drew the shawl higher about her waist. *

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