

The Spheres

I can remember the specific details vividly, but the general facts—who, what, when, where, why—I can't bring together. I clearly recall arriving at a party. Maybe I already was, as the saying goes, *three sheets to the wind*.

Inside the apartment, attention was gathering on a man performing parlor tricks. A floating sphere appeared, hovering in the soft air of the living room. The sphere looked to be made of granite, its surface coarse and grainy. Roughly the size of a *bocce* ball or softball, it conveyed a sense of gravity and heft. But strangely, as stone-like as it appeared, it nonetheless pulsed with an unnatural sherbet-green fluorescence as it hovered and bobbed in mid-air.

This granite sphere seemed to be “making the rounds,” so to speak. It would hover in front of one guest, bobbing slightly, as if it were a curious pet sniffing a stranger. Then it would dart away to another guest. I was surprised by the speed of the sphere as it flitted among the strangers. (I couldn't help thinking what damage it would do if it overshot its mark and slammed someone in the face. A granite sphere that size would surely shatter the skull.) But no one seemed to object; all were transfixed by the sphere, “oohing” and “aahing” with each unpredictable jettison.

Then the entertainer turned our attention to another, larger sphere. This one was bigger than a basketball and also looked like solid granite. The sheer mass of this sphere—which also was hovering impossibly—looked like it must have weighed three or four-hundred pounds. That it hovered like a helium balloon was no less astonishing than its curious slow-motion bobbing. The big sphere pulsed with an unearthly copperish halo.

This tremendous globe then followed the pattern of the smaller one, floating, bobbing, darting

from guest to guest with the same unpredictable jets of acceleration. This sphere, because of its overwhelming weight and size, was making guests visibly nervous. The thought of it rushing out of control was unsettling.

A strong sense of impending dread filled the room like a noxious fart. Our showman shushed his audience and pointed to the larger sphere. As we gazed, spellbound, the massive sphere slowly sank to knee-level. Our guide whispered to pay heed while the granite sphere bobbed gently once, twice, three times, as if considering some impish mischief, when suddenly—and I mean as fast as a bullet—the sphere shot across the room and blasted a hole through the wall. The entire building shook as if a wrecking ball had just slammed it. Pulverized sheet rock, lath and plaster surrounded a gaping hole in the wall. A plume of dust hung in the air where moments ago the great sphere had floated.

The party was dumbstruck. The showman stupefied. The silence was so intense all I could hear was the sifting of shattered plaster and the creak of untenanted furniture.

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