

5-1-1996

Diamond Cufflinks, Part Three

Alan Foreman
NSU University School

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Recommended Citation

Foreman, Alan (1996) "Diamond Cufflinks, Part Three," *Hieroglyphics: the NSU University School Literary Magazine*: Vol. 3 , Article 20.
Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/uschool_litmag/vol3/iss1/20

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Diamond Cufflinks

Part Three

Alan Foreman

My parents had died when I was very young. My only brother, who was older than I, raised me and for all intents and purposes, was my father. He was my only family, and I hadn't heard from him in four years. I had never married and never had any children. In my mind, that made me the best candidate to fly the mission. That didn't make me fearless. Far from it...I was terrified. It was eerie. With all that was going on outside the ship, the locker room was so quiet that I could hear the squeak of a mouse. I went topside and stood on the runway. The sky was black and gray, even more so now. And the funnel was larger, as if it had grown.

The dark blue-green water shot upward into the funnel. The world was being sucked into space. As I stood on the runway next to my aircraft, it seemed as if the ship were empty, as if I were the only one on board, as if the funnel were there for me. The funnel was calling me. I looked at the eye of the camera, and it stared back at me. Its eye was empty—cold, black, emotionless. I didn't know what it was there for. It did not know its purpose or its mission. It did not know to be afraid. For a moment, I wished that I were like it — fearless, emotionless, numb to everything around me.

Then I noticed the silence, the calm before the storm so to speak. All the sounds were gone — the rushing water, the wind, the voices, the howl of the funnel, and the screams of thousands of men and women.

And for a moment I looked at the funnel and noticed its beauty...its simplicity. Was it a beautiful creation of nature calling me to it? Or was it the gateway to hell, ready to bury me? I would soon find out. I walked to the ladder, and before I boarded the plane, I kissed my hand and placed it on my metal chariot— so that it would protect me in its bosom.

TO BE CONTINUED...