A vertical rainbow arches across a cloudy sky, serving as the background for the title page. The rainbow's colors are soft and slightly blurred, blending into the greyish-blue tones of the clouds. The entire scene is framed by a dark blue border.

# The Bow in the Clouds

by

Steve Doyle

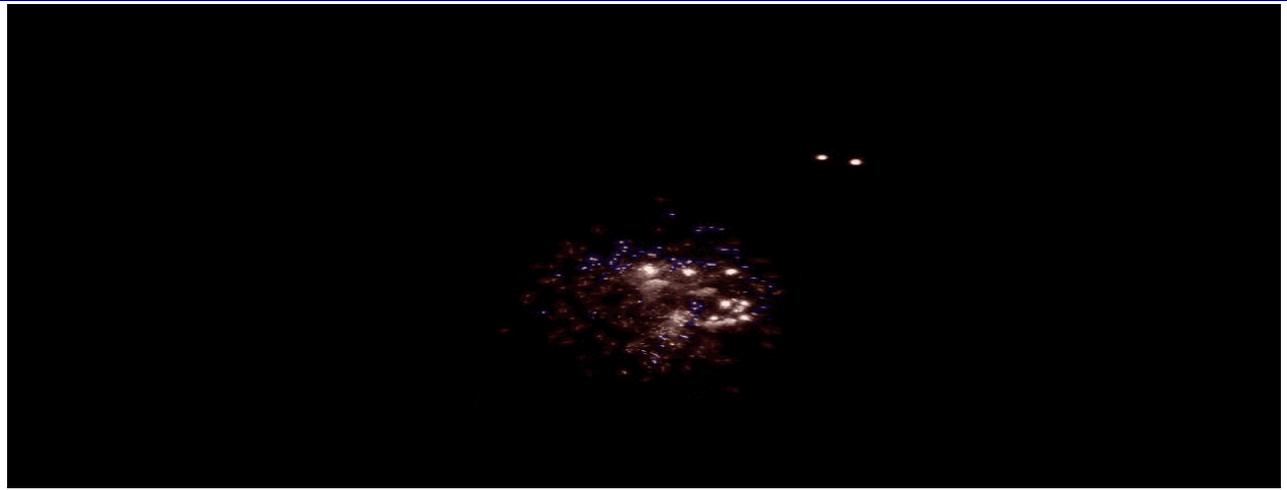
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## **I Was There**

I was there when the Sky was born  
When the Stars scattered  
And the Earth saw Dawn.

I was there when Time began.  
The Mountains rose up  
At My command.

I was there to wave the Hand  
That ushered in  
The Age of Man.

I was there for all that grew.  
So fear not, young one,  
I'll be there for You.

Photography by Susan Doyle



## The Apple

The apple was sweet.  
A delicious piece of fruit;  
Crunchy and juicy.  
I enjoyed it immensely.

Plucked from the tree  
At the peak of ripeness  
It had been given to me  
By my friend  
Eve.

## A Logbook Entry

Day 38.

Guess what, more rain.

Another surprise—

There's still no land in sight.

Rain tomorrow is a pretty sure bet.

The kids keep asking "Are we there yet?"

But I'm not sure to where we're bound.

I'm a man of the soil and there's none around.

The animals we've taken in as guests

Are making the ark a mighty mess

And the racket, you just can't guess.

Especially the monkeys.

I wasn't sure if the Lord meant two monkeys

Or two of every kind of monkey.

I played it safe, so the place is crawling with monkeys.

And rabbits!

You should see all the rabbits

Though I only started with two of those. . .



## The Bow in the Clouds

As the waters receded  
And the Earth became dry  
The voice of the Lord  
Came down from the sky.

He made a solemn promise  
That never again would He bring  
The waters of a flood  
To destroy every living thing.

He placed a bow in the clouds  
As an everlasting sign  
That the covenant He established  
Would remain for all time.

*As long as the Earth endures  
Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat  
Summer and winter, day and night  
Shall not cease.*

(Genesis:8.22)

Photography by Malin Larsson

# The Shepherd

As I was tending my flock of sheep  
A man came running toward me  
And pointing to a star in the East  
Said, "Man drop everything!  
"Come and see the newly born King!"  
I told him I couldn't just leave the sheep  
But he insisted that I come and see.

I followed somewhat reluctantly  
And we traveled many miles it seemed  
Finally arriving upon the scene.  
In a stable's trough a baby lay  
As if in a crib matted with hay.  
From across the miles Kings had come.  
A young boy stood playing a drum.  
I was stricken as if in a dream;  
It was the most peaceful thing I had ever seen.

Ultimately I had to get back to the sheep  
And as I turned from the place to leave  
All my fears suddenly left me.  
Although there are wolves  
And sheep have wandering hooves  
When I returned to the flock  
Not a single one had moved.

## Lamentation of a Soldier

The man smiled forgiveness down upon me  
Even as blood ran down his cheek.  
From a woven crown of thorns he bled;  
A crown I'd placed upon his head.

To a cross I'd nailed his hands and feet  
Then hoisted him up for all to see.  
As drops of blood fell to the ground  
I looked up and he looked down.

It was then I realized what I had done  
For this man truly was the Son.  
It was the very Son of my Holy Lord  
Whose hands I had nailed down to a board.

Many in the crowd continued to yell:  
**He can't even save Himself!**  
**If He is the Son of God**  
**Let Him come down from the cross!**

But the smile on the face of that man  
Meant I was not counted among the damned.  
I dropped to my knees before Christ Crucified  
And for their eternal souls—I cried.

It was at this time Christ raised His head  
Lifted His voice to Heaven and said,  
*Father, this I ask of You:*  
*Forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

## A Phone Call

Hello, Mr. Donovan. Good morning.  
This is Father Flaherty calling.  
I'd like to confer with you about your son.  
Maybe we can decide what should be done.

You see, I gave the kids an assignment  
To find out what the letters "INRI" meant  
That were on the cross above Jesus' head  
And you'll never believe what your son said.

He says he asked you about it and you told him  
"INRI" stood for "I'm nailed right in!"

## What Would You Do?

The Archbishop was looking for a few priests  
To represent his Archdiocese.  
He announced that he would ask us each a question  
To determine our level of qualification.

My uncle whispered to me  
“It's many years since I left the seminary  
“And I'm sure I don't remember everything.”

I said, “Uncle, you needn't worry.  
“I will answer the Archbishop's question loudly.  
“You will hear it and answer the same as me.  
“It'll be alright, you'll see.”

I entered the room and the Archbishop's test  
“If you were saying Mass in Bucharest  
“And a fly were to land upon the Eucharist  
“What would you do?”

I answered loudly and clearly  
(So my uncle would hear me)  
*I would hold it over the flame of a candle  
Until it was completely consumed.*

Much impressed, the Archbishop smiled as I left the room.

I winked at my uncle as he went in.  
I heard the Archbishop ask of him  
“If you were saying Mass in Mexico City  
“And a cow were to wander in from the street  
“What would you do?”

My uncle's answer, loud and clear  
Had the Archbishop laughing to tears.

*I would hold it over the flame of a candle  
Until it was completely consumed!*

# I Thank Ye, Lord

I thank Ye, Lord, for this bountiful yield  
Which Ye hath provided from our field.  
For keeping the horse healthy and strong  
So he could pull the plow the whole day long.  
For keeping us warm with plenty of sun  
And giving us rain when we needed some.

I thank Ye, Lord, for this house we hold  
Which keeps us mostly free from the cold.  
And for seeing to it that our little beds  
Are safe places to lay our heads.

And for these here seated that I adore  
Though the children sometimes skimp on their chores  
I thank Ye, Lord.

## About the Author

Steve Doyle is an active member of “The Herscher Project”, an online group of artists and writers from all over the globe.

His poetry has appeared in e-zines such as *Wayfarer's Journal* and *Residential Aliens* and in *Strange Worlds of Lunacy: The Galaxy's Silliest Anthology*. A short story “The Waking of the Dead” is included in the anthology *Light at the Edge of Darkness*.

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