
1957.

A 5-ton spaceship named Sputnik 1 was launched.

This top secret satellite carried a life-sized “mannequin cosmonaut”.

The mannequin must have been an ancestor to cosmonaut “Ivan Ivanovich”, a dummy that flew on subsequent Sputnik 9 and 10 missions.

Unfortunately, the flight of Sputnik 1 was doomed. Five days after launch, the rocket re-entry system was activated to bring Sputnik 1 back to earth. A major malfunction caused the capsule to become incorrectly oriented... it drifted into space, trapped in its unwanted orbit until reentry.

Space debris.

Man-made material orbiting the earth that has outlived its useful lifetime.

Satellites that have become inactive,

Discarded rocket bodies,

Pieces of material jettisoned or having flaked off spacecraft,

Small objects that are the results of collisions or explosions.

A vast field of dead non-humans inhabits the space above our heads.

Approximately 4,200 launches have been executed since 1957.

More than 10,000 objects larger than 10 centimeters inhabit the Earth orbit.

7% operational craft.

52% non-operational craft.

41% debris from fragmentation.

The score between life and death in the sky is 7 to 93 in percentage.

The word HEAVEN originates in circa 200 years b.c.. In Hebrew, Greek, Germanic and Roman languages the same word denotes the divine heaven and the physical sky.

The items range from whole broken-down satellites to bolts - and even a glove lost by the US astronaut Edward White during a 1965 space walk.

A floating rubbish bag once halted a Space station Mir docking. A rubbish bag that travels at the speeds 18,000 metersperhour can do severe damage if it strikes anything.

Roadside Picnic is a science fiction short novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, published in 1972.

The plot reveals an alien visit to the earth, leaving behind a number of artifacts of their advanced technology. The places where such artifacts were left behind are areas of great danger, known as “Zones.” The Zones are laid out in a pattern which suggests that they resulted from the impact of an influence from space which struck repeatedly, striking different places as the Earth rotated on its axis.

The name of the novel derived from a metaphor proposed by the character Dr. Valentine Pilman, who compared the visit to a roadside picnic. After the picnickers depart, nervous animals venture forth from the adjacent forest and discover the picnic garbage: spilled motor oil, faded unknown flowers, a box of matches, a clockwork teddy bear, balloons, candy wrappers, etc. He concludes that humankind is much in a situation similar to that of the curious forest animals.

May 15, 1960

Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

A piece of Sputnik IV falls in on North 8th street. It is the first report of space debris reentry.

A field of nouns without verbs.

It once was a creation in which form followed function, but falls back onto earth as pure form.

January 12, 2001

A large fragment survived reentry after falling in Saudi Arabia. It was discovered lying in the sand, weighing some 70kg. Named PAM-D (payload assist module), The module completed its task and became space junk, eventually decaying from orbit.

The launch of a rocket into space used to be a glorious event. Whether from the western or eastern side of the iron curtain's point of view, we all have that glorious image printed in our memories. We all counted down at least once holding our breath. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

The way back, on the contrary is a non-event. It is imageless, an immemorial act.

November 1, 2007

An object was predicted for re-entry (into the Earth's atmosphere), which would have put it near Indonesia.

Instead, it ended up in the backyard of James Stirton's cattle farm in Queensland, Australia.

The 20kg thing turned out to be a tank from a rocket, that most likely had been launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida on October 26, 2006.

In secular modernity heaven exists only as an internal space of each individual. The sky is public matter. A matter of study, conquer and exploit.

September 1, 2004

A capsule carrying interstellar dust reentered the earth's atmosphere after a six-year trip.

According to Christianity Heaven is a site where all are united in love with one another and with God eternally. Opposite to that state is Death and a graveyard 1.5 m below ground.

One of the discussed solutions in isolating space junk is to collect it into a safety zone in upper orbits creating a sort of a massive orbital graveyard.

1997, Oklahoma, US.

A woman named Lottie Williams was hit in the shoulder by a piece of blackened metallic material. It was later confirmed to be part of a Delta II rocket which had launched a U.S. Air Force satellite a year earlier.

Although every individual piece is the outcome of brilliant inventions, lucidly planned by human intelligence, boosted by infinite computation, their sum spells the end of Enlightenment, its resurrection as farce.

April 27, 2003.

Mataquesquintla, Jalapa, Guatemala.

Several pieces of an Atlas rocket stage launched in 1998 fell on a farm.

In the history of the arts, god and the angels are always depicted descending from the sky, and humans: ascending to the sky when they reach divination.

1997

Cocoa Beach, Florida, US.

A large piece of debris from the Space Shuttle orbiter Challenger washed up almost 11 years after Challenger exploded.

Modernity had a rational program: to share the blessings of science, universally.

Space junk is its apotheosis. More than 600,000 pieces of those bursts of blessing are spread around the globe. The program reaching its ultimate limits.

A Message in my Backyard

(2008 - 2009)

Krassimir Terziev

two channel video installation

16', HD Video, PAL, Color, Mute, Widescreen

transcript