

Ursula K. Le Guin

*Le Guin's
Three Short
Science Fiction Stories*

Notes by

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まえがき

本書は、現在、アメリカのSF界を代表する優れて著名な女流作家 Ursula Kroeber Le Guin(1929～)の短篇集から、内容が興味深く、しかも読み易いと思われる三篇を選んで、講読用のテキストとして編んだものである。

最初の作品“Things”は、作者自身の覚え書きにもあるように「サイコミス」(psychomyth)である。「サイコミス」とは要するに、「過去や未来という現実の時間を超越した物語」(“The Stars Below”につけた Le Guin 自身の覚え書きより)のことで、主人公を取り巻く極めて困難な状況の中にあって、《いかなる「精神」をもってその難局に立ち向かうか》という「普遍的な精神のあり方」がテーマとなっている物語と言えるであろう。終末的破局が訪れようとしている町の中で、自己を失ってしまった人々の群れに加わって愚かしい空しい行動に走ることを避け、brickmakerである Lif は自分の仕事に誇りを持ち、夢に現れた希望を実現させるために黙々と仕事を続ける。そしてその結果、幼な子を連れた母親と共に、人々の居なくなってしまった町を通り、彼が毎日丹精して作った海中のレンガ道を一步一步進んで行き、もうそれ以上先がない最後の一步を踏み出そうとする時に起こるクライマックスは、それまで《どうなるのか?》と固唾を飲んで読み進んできた読者の気持ちをホッとさせる感動的なものであると言えよう。Lif の「精神」が最後に勝ったのである。

二番目のやや長い作品、“Vaster than Empires and More Slow”では、Le Guinの多くの長編SFに共通する彼女独自の構想による、ハインを中心としたはるか未来の架空の世界が描かれている。(Le

Guinが展開させる未来の宇宙世界の生成発展については、『闇の左手』[ハヤカワ文庫SF]の巻末の解説に要領よくまとめられている。)その意味でこの作品は、Le Guinの本格的なSFの系列に入れられるべきものである。1973年にHugo賞を受賞した中篇SF、*The Word for World Is Forest*と同じように、惑星全体に繁茂する植物が物語の重要なファクターとなっていることも、この作品をいかにも彼女らしいものにしてしている。タイトルが、どうも彼女の心酔しているらしいイギリスの形而上詩人、Andrew Marvellの有名な作品の詩句から取られていることも示唆的である。と言うのも、Marvellは「植物愛」の詩人としてもよく知られているからである。

しかし、この作品の主たるテーマは植物ではなくて、得体の知れない星にやってきた調査隊員達の心の問題なのである。そして、この作品が我々日本人に親しみを感じさせるのは、「切腹」という日本語が出てくることにもよるが、それよりも特に、潔癖な心優しい日本女性を連想させるようなTomikoという調整担当官が登場し、彼女がかなり重要な役割を担っていることによるのである。「たったひとつの人間の頭脳でも、星や銀河という大きなスケールで織りなされる模様を感知し、それを『愛』であると解釈することができるのです」と語るTomikoの言葉は正に、この作品の中心的テーマであるのみならず、Le Guinのすべての作品のテーマに通じるものであると言えよう。

最後の作品、“The Stars Below”も作者の語っているように「サイコミス」である。ここでは、天文台を焼き壊され、さらに自由な研究に迫害を加える当局の搜索を逃がれ、地下の鉱山に身を隠すことになった天文学者Guennarの「精神のあり方」がテーマになっていると言えよう。地上に出て見つかれば火刑に処されるという困難な状況の下にあっても、自分のなすべき仕事に信念

を持っている Guennar は、焼け残ったレンズを職人のように磨き上げ、その他有り合わせの物で望遠鏡を完成させ、それによって、遂に地下の暗黒の世界に、きらきら輝く銀の星を次々に探し出すのである。

“Things” は “The End” というタイトルで1970年に、“Vaster than Empires and More Slow” は1971年に、“The Stars Below” は1973年に、それぞれ雑誌に初めて発表されたのであるが、本書は、他の短篇と共にまとめて収録されている、*The Wind's Twelve Quarters, Volume II* (Panther Books, 1978) を底本にした。注を作るに際して、おそらく Le Guin 自身が勝手に考え出したと思われる、いくつかの注釈者にとって未詳の単語があったことをお断わりしておく。もっともこれは、注釈者の思い違いであるのかも知れない。読者諸賢のご指摘をお待ち申し上げる次第である。

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注 釈 者

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THINGS

On the shore of the sea he stood looking out over the long foam-lines far where vague the Islands lifted or were guessed. There, he said to the sea, there lies my kingdom. The sea said to him what the sea says to everybody. As evening moved from behind his back 5 across the water the foam-lines paled and the wind fell, and very far in the west shone a star perhaps, perhaps a light, or his desire for a light.

He climbed the streets of his town again in late dusk. The shops and huts of his neighbors were looking 10 empty now, cleared out, cleaned up, packed away in preparation for the end. Most of the people were up at the Weeping in Heights-Hall or down with the Ragers in the fields. But Lif had not been able to clear out and clean up; his wares and belongings were too heavy to 15 throw away, too hard to break, too dull to burn. Only centuries could waste them. Wherever they were piled or dropped or thrown they formed what might have been, or seemed to be, or yet might be, a city. So he

had not tried to get rid of his things. His yard was still stacked and piled with bricks, thousands and thousands of bricks of his own making. The kiln stood cold but ready, the barrels of clay and dry mortar and lime, the
5 hods and barrows and trowels of his trade, everything was there. One of the fellows from Scriveners Lane had asked sneering, Going to build a brick wall and hide behind it when that old end comes, man?

Another neighbor on his way up to the Heights-Hall
10 gazed a while at those stacks and heaps and loads and mounds of well-shaped, well-baked bricks all a soft reddish gold in the gold of the afternoon sun, and sighed at last with the weight of them on his heart: Things, things! Free yourself of things, Lif, from the weight
15 that drags you down! Come with us, above the ending world!

Lif had picked up a brick from the heap and put it in place on the stack and smiled in embarrassment. When they were all past he had gone neither up to the
20 Hall nor out to help wreck the fields and kill the animals, but down to the beach, the end of the ending world, beyond which lay only water. Now back in his brickyard hut with the smell of salt in his clothes and his face hot with the sea wind, he still felt neither the
25 Ragers' laughing and wrecking despair nor the soaring and weeping despair of the communicants of the Heights; he felt empty; he felt hungry. He was a heavy

little man and the sea wind at the world's edge had blown at him all evening without moving him at all.

Hey Lif! said the widow from Weavers Lane, which crossed his street a few houses down,—I saw you coming up the street, and never another soul since 5 sunset, and getting dark, and quieter than ... She did not say what the town was quieter than, but went on, Have you had your supper? I was about to take my roast out of the oven, and the little one and I will never eat up all that meat before the end comes, no 10 doubt, and I hate to see good meat go to waste.

Well thank you very much, says Lif, putting on his coat again; and they went down Masons Lane to Weavers Lane through the dark and the wind sweeping up steep streets from the sea. In the widow's lamplit 15 house Lif played with her baby, the last born in the town, a little fat boy just learning how to stand up. Lif stood him up and he laughed and fell over, while the widow set out bread and hot meat on the table of heavy woven cane. They sat to eat, even the baby, who worked 20 with four teeth at a hard hunk of bread. —How is it you're not up on the Hill or in the fields? asked Lif, and the widow replied as if the answer sufficed to her mind, Oh, I have the baby.

Lif looked around the little house which her 25 husband, who had been one of Lif's bricklayers, had built. —This is good, he said. I haven't tasted meat

since last year some time.

I know, I know! No houses being built any more.

Not a one, he said. Not a wall nor a henhouse, not even repairs. But your weaving, that's still wanted?

5 Yes; some of them want new clothes right up to the end. This meat I bought from the Ragers that slaughtered all my lord's flocks, and I paid with the money I got for a piece of fine linen I wove for my lord's daughter's gown that she wants to wear at the
10 end! The widow gave a little derisive, sympathetic snort, and went on: But now there's no flax, and scarcely any wool. No more to spin, no more to weave. The fields burnt and the flocks dead.

Yes, said Lif, eating the good roast meat. Bad times,
15 he said, the worst times.

And now, the widow went on, where's bread to come from, with the fields burnt? And water, now they're poisoning the wells? I sound like the Weepers up there, don't I? Help yourself, Lif. Spring lamb's the
20 finest meat in the world, my man always said, till autumn came and then he'd say roast pork's the finest meat in the world. Come on now, give yourself a proper slice ...

That night in his hut in the brickyard Lif dreamed.
25 Usually he slept as still as the bricks themselves but this night he drifted and floated in dream all night to the Islands, and when he woke they were no longer a wish

or a guess: like a star as daylight darkens they had become certain, he knew them. But what, in his dream, had borne him over the water? He had not flown, he had not walked, he had not gone underwater like the fish; yet he had come across the grey-green 5 plains and wind-moved hillocks of the sea to the Islands, he had heard voices call, and seen the lights of towns.

He set his mind to think how a man could ride on water. He thought of how grass floats on streams, and saw how one might make a sort of mat of woven 10 cane and lie on it pushing with one's hands: but the great canebrakes were still smoldering down by the stream, and the piles of withies at the basketmaker's had all been burnt. On the Islands in his dream he had seen canes or grasses half a hundred feet high, with brown 15 stems thicker than his arms could reach round, and a world of green leaves spread sunward from the thousand outreaching twigs. On those stems a man might ride over the sea. But no such plants grew in his country nor ever had; though in the Heights-Hall was a knife-handle 20 made of a dull brown stuff, said to come from a plant that grew in some other land, called wood. But he could not ride across the bellowing sea on a knife-handle.

Greased hides might float; but the tanners had been idle now for weeks, there were no hides for sale. He 25 might as well stop looking about for any help. He carried his barrow and his largest hod down to the beach that

white windy morning and laid them in the still water of a lagoon. Indeed they floated, deep in the water, but when he leaned even the weight of one hand on them they tipped, filled, sank. They were too light, he
5 thought.

He went back up the cliff and through the streets, loaded the barrow with useless well-made bricks, and wheeled a hard load down. As so few children had been born these last years there was no young curiosity
10 about to ask him what he was doing, though a Rager or two, groggy from last night's wreckfest, glanced sidelong at him from a dark doorway through the brightness of the air. All that day he brought down bricks and the makings of mortar, and the next day,
15 though he had not had the dream again, he began to lay his bricks there on the blustering beach of March with rain and sand handy in great quantities to set his cement. He built a little brick dome, upside down, oval with pointed ends like a fish, all of a single course
20 of bricks laid spiral very cunningly. If a cupful or a barrowful of air would float, would not a brick domeful? And it would be strong. But when the mortar was set, and straining his broad back he overturned the dome and pushed it into the cream of the breakers,
25 it dug deeper and deeper into the wet sand, burrowing down like a clam or a sand flea. The waves filled it, and refilled it when he tipped it empty, and at last a

green-shouldered breaker caught it with its white dragging backpull, rolled it over, smashed it back into its elemental bricks and sank them in the restless sodden sand. There stood Lif wet to the neck and wiping salt spray out of his eyes. Nothing lay westward on the sea but wavewrack and rainclouds. But they were there. He knew them, with their great grasses ten times a man's height, their wild golden fields raked by the sea wind, their white towns, their white-crowned hills above the sea; and the voices of shepherds called on the hills.

I'm a builder, not a floater, said Lif after he had considered his stupidity from all sides. And he came doggedly out of the water and up the cliff-side path and through the rainy streets to get another barrowload of bricks.

Free for the first time in a week from his fool dream of floating, he noticed now that Leather Street seemed deserted. The tannery was rubbishy and vacant. The craftsmen's shops lay like a row of little black gaping mouths, and the sleeping-room windows above them were blind. At the end of the lane an old cobbler was burning, with a terrible stench, a small heap of new shoes never worn. Beside him a donkey waited, saddled, flicking its ears at the stinking smoke.

Lif went on and loaded his barrow with bricks. This time as he wheeled it down, straining back against the

tug of the barrow on the steep streets, swinging all the strength of his shoulders to balance its course on the winding cliff-path down to the beach, a couple of townsmen followed him. Two or three more from Scriveners Lane followed after them, and several more from the streets round the market place, so that by the time he straightened up, the sea foam fizzing on his bare black feet and the sweat cold on his face, there was a little crowd strung out along the deep single track of his barrow over the sand. They had the lounging listless air of Ragers. Lif paid them no heed, though he was aware that the widow of Weavers Lane was up on the cliffs watching with a scared face.

He ran the barrow out into the sea till the water was up to his chest, and tipped the bricks out, and came running in with a great breaker, his banging barrow full of foam.

Already some of the Ragers were drifting away down the beach. A tall fellow from the Scriveners Lane lot lounged by him and said with a little grin, Why don't you throw 'em from the top of the cliff, man?

They'd only hit the sand, said Lif.

And you want to drown 'em. Well good. You know there was some of us thought you was building something down here! They was going to make cement out of you. Keep those bricks wet and cool, man.

Grinning, the Scrivener drifted off, and Lif started

up the cliff for another load.

Come for supper, Lif, said the widow at the cliff's top with a worried voice, holding her baby close to keep it from the wind.

I will, he said. I'll bring a loaf of bread, I laid in a couple before the bakers left. He smiled, but she did not. As they climbed the streets together she asked, Are you dumping your bricks in the sea, Lif?

He laughed wholeheartedly and answered yes.

She had a look then that might have been relief and might have been sadness; but at supper in her lamplit house she was quiet and easy as ever, and they ate their cheese and stale bread with good cheer.

Next day he went on carrying bricks down load after load, and if the Ragers watched him they thought him busy on their own kind of work. The slope of the beach out to deep water was gradual, so that he could keep building without ever working above water. He had started at low tide so that his work would never be laid bare. At high tide it was hard, dumping the bricks and trying to lay them in rough courses with the whole sea boiling in his face and thundering over his head, but he kept at it. Towards evening he brought down long iron rods and braced what he had built, for a crosscurrent tended to undermine his causeway about eight feet from its beginning. He made sure that even the tips of the rods were under water at low tide, so that no Rager

might suspect an affirmation was being made. A couple of elderly men coming down from a Weeping in the Heights-Hall passed him clanging and battering his empty barrow up the stone streets in dusk, and gravely
5 smiled upon him. It is well to be free of Things, said one softly, and the other nodded.

Next day, though still he had not dreamed of the Islands again, Lif went on building his causeway. The sand began to shelve off more steeply as he went further.
10 His method now was to stand on the last bit he had built and tip the carefully-loaded barrow from there, and then tip himself off and work, floundering and gasping and coming up and pushing down, to get the bricks levelled and fitted between the pre-set rods; then up
15 again, across the grey sand and up the cliff and bang-clatter through the quiet streets for another load.

Some time that week the widow said, meeting him in his brickyard, Let me throw'em over the cliff for you, it'll save you one leg of the trip.

20 It's heavy work loading the barrow, he said.

Oh, well, said she.

All right, so long as you want to. But bricks are heavy bastards. Don't try to carry many. I'll give you the small barrow. And the little rat here can sit on the load
25 and get a ride.

So she helped him on and off through days of silvery weather, fog in the morning, clear sea and sky all after-

noon, and the weeds in crannies of the cliff flowering; there was nothing else left to flower. The causeway ran out many yards from shore now, and Lif had had to learn a skill which no one else had ever learned that he knew of, except the fish. He could float and move himself 5 about on the water or under it, in the very sea, without touching foot or hand to solid earth.

He had never heard that a man could do this thing; but he did not think much about it, being so busy with his bricks, in and out of air and in and out of water all 10 day long, with the foam, the bubbles of water-circled air or air-circled water, all about him, and the fog, and the April rain, a confusion of the elements. Sometimes he was happy down in the murky green unbreathable world, wrestling strangely willful and weightless bricks 15 among the staring shoals, and only the need of air drove him gasping up into the spray-laden wind.

He built all day long, scrambling up on the sand to collect the bricks that his faithful helper dumped over the cliff's edge for him, load them in his barrow and 20 run them out the causeway that went straight out a foot or two under sea level at low tide and four or five feet under at high, then dump them at the end, dive in, and build; then back ashore for another load. He came up into town only at evening, worn out, salt-bleared and 25 salt-itching, hungry as a shark, to share what food turned up with the widow and her little boy. Lately, though

spring was getting on with soft, long, warm evenings, the town was very dark and still.

One night when he was not too tired to notice this he spoke of it, and the widow said, Oh, they're all gone
5 now, I think.

—All! A pause. —Where did they go?

She shrugged. She raised her dark eyes to his across the table and gazed through lamplit silence at him for a time. Where? she said. Where does your sea-road
10 lead, Lif?

He stayed still a while. To the Islands, he answered at last, and then laughed and met her look.

She did not laugh. She only said, Are they there? Is it true, then, there are Islands? Then she looked over
15 at her sleeping baby, and out the open doorway into the darkness of late spring that lay warm in the streets where no one walked and the rooms where no one lived. At last she looked back at Lif, and said to him, Lif, you know, there aren't many bricks left. A few
20 hundred. You'll have to make some more. Then she began to cry softly.

By God! said Lif, thinking of his underwater road across the sea that went for a hundred and twenty feet, and the sea that went on ten thousand miles from the
25 end of it— I'll swim there! Now then, don't cry, dear heart. Would I leave you and the little rat here by yourselves? After all the bricks you've nearly hit my

head with, and all the queer weeds and shellfish you've found us to eat lately, after your table and fireside and your bed and your laughter would I leave you when you cry? Now be still, don't cry. Let me think of a way we can get to the Islands all of us together. 5

But he knew there was no way. Not for a brick-maker. He had done what he could do. What he could do went one hundred and twenty feet from shore.

Do you think, he asked after a long time, during which she had cleared the table and rinsed the plates 10 in wellwater that was coming clear again now that the Ragers had been gone many days— Do you think that maybe ... this ... He found it hard to say but she stood quiet, waiting, and he had to say it: That this *is* the end? 15

Stillness. In the one lamplit room and all the dark rooms and streets and the burnt fields and wasted lands, stillness. In the black Hall above them on the hill's height, stillness. A silent air, a silent sky, silence in all places unbroken, unreplying. Except for the far 20 sound of the sea, and, very soft though nearer, the breathing of a sleeping child.

No, the woman said. She sat down across from him and put her hands upon the table, fine hands as dark as earth, the palms like ivory. No, she said, the end will be 25 the end. This is still just the waiting for it.

Then why are we still here—just us?

Oh, well, she said, you had your things—your bricks—and I had the baby...

Tomorrow we must go, he said after a time. She nodded.

5 Before sunrise they were up. There was nothing at all left to eat, and so when she had put a few clothes for the baby in a bag and had on her warm leather mantle, and he had stuck his knife and trowel in his belt and put on a warm cloak that had been her husband's, they
10 left the little house, going out into the cold wan light in the deserted streets.

They went downhill, he leading, she following with the sleepy child in a fold of her cloak. He turned neither to the road that led north up the coast nor to
15 the southern road, but went on past the market place and out on the cliff and down the rocky path to the beach. All the way she followed and neither of them spoke. At the edge of the sea he turned.

I'll keep you up in the water as long as we can
20 manage, he said.

She nodded, and said softly, We'll use the road you built, as far as it goes.

He took her free hand and led her into the water. It was cold. It was bitter cold, and the cold light from the
25 east behind them shone on the foam-lines hissing on the sand. When they stepped on the beginning of the causeway the bricks were firm under their feet, and the

child had gone back to sleep on her shoulder in a fold of her cloak.

As they went on the buffeting of the waves got stronger. The tide was coming in. The outer breakers wet their clothes, chilled their flesh, drenched their hair 5 and faces. They reached the end of his long work. There lay the beach a little way behind them, the sand dark under the cliff over which stood the silent, paling sky. Around them was wild water and foam. Ahead of them was the unresting water, the great abyss, the gap. 10

A breaker hit them on its way in to shore and they staggered; the baby, waked by the sea's hard slap, cried, a little wail in the long, cold, hissing mutter of the sea always saying the same thing.

Oh, I can't! cried the mother, but she gripped the 15 man's hand more firmly and came on at his side.

Lifting his head to take the last step from what he had done towards no shore, he saw the shape riding the western water, the leaping light, the white flicker like a swallow's breast catching the break of day. It seemed as 20 if voices rang over the sea's voice. What is it? he said, but her head was bowed to her baby, trying to soothe the little wail that challenged the vast babbling of the sea. He stood still and saw the whiteness of the sail, the dancing light above the waves, dancing on 25 towards them and towards the greater light that grew behind them.

Wait, the call came from the form that rode the grey waves and danced on the foam, Wait! The voices rang very sweet, and as the sail leaned white above him he saw the faces and the reaching arms, and heard them
5 say to him, Come, come on the ship, come with us to the Islands.

Hold on, he said softly to the woman, and they took the last step.

N O T E S

- (LDCE) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1978
 (OALD) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 1976
 (OED) *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1933
 (POD) *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1969
 (W) *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, 1976

Things

page line

- 1 13 **Weeping in Heights-Hall** 「『高原会館』での『涙を流し
 嘆き悲しむ集会』」
Rager 「自暴自棄になって荒れ狂う人」, 「破壊者」<rage
 16 **too dull to burn** 「燃やすにしても燃えそうにない」
 2 5 **his trade** 'brickmaker' (*p.13, l.6*) である彼の仕事は、
 レンガを焼いて作り、そのレンガで家を建てることである。
Cf. p.4, ll.2-4.
 6 **Scriveners Lane** 「代書屋横町」
 7 [Are you] **Going to build ...**
 8 **that old end** 「例の終末」 この町には間もなく世の終末が
 訪れようとしており、住民達も終末が近いことを知っている
 ののである。 *Cf. 'the end' (p.1, l.12), 'the ending world'*
(p.2, l.15.)
 13 **with the ... heart** 「心にそれら (レンガの山) の重みを

- ズシリと感じて」
- 14 **free A of B**=free A from B
- 20 **wreck the ... animals** Cf. Rager (*p.* 1, *l.*13.)
- 26 **communicant** 「神にすがる人」
- 3 3 **Weavers Lane** 「織工横町」
- 9 **the little one**=my little baby
- 13 **Masons Lane** 「石工横町」
- 20 **work at ~** 「~にかじりつく」
- 23 **as if ... mind** 「まるでそう答えるだけで充分であるみたいに」
- 4 5 **right up ... end** 「正に最後の最後まで」 *e.g.* right after supper
- 7 **my lord's flocks** 「ご領主様の羊」
- 16 **where's (=where is) bread to come from ... ?** 「パンはどこから手に入れることができるだろうかねえ?」 'be to ~' は〈可能〉を表わす不定詞。
- 18 **they**=the Ragers
- Weeper** (間もなく世界の終末がやってくるということで) 「泣きわめく人」, 「叫喚者」 Cf. *p.* 1, *ll.*12-14.
- 19 **Spring lamb's (=lamb is)**
- 20 **my man**=my husband
- 21 **roast pork's (=pork is)**
- 22 **Come on ... slice** 「さあ、自分で適当な厚さだけ切って下さい」
- 6 2 **deep in the water** 「水の中に深くつかりながらも」
- 9 **young curiosity** 「好奇心にあふれた子供」, 「詮索好きな子供」
- 11 **wreckfest** 「破壊を喜ぶ祭」(Ragerはこの世の終末が来るというので、絶望的な自暴自棄の状態となり、あらゆるものを破壊し、焼き尽くすのである。)

- 21 **would not a brick domeful** [of air float]? 「(もし空の
コップや手押し車が水に浮くのなら,) 空のレンガ製のド
ームも浮かないということがあろうか?」
- 23 **straining his broad back** 「大きい背中に力を入れて」
- 7 1 **a green-shouldered ... backpull** 「青い大きな荒波が白
く泡立つ強い引き潮でそれ [=レンガ製のドーム] を捕えた」
- 6 **wavewrack** 「波に漂う漂流物」 < wave + wrack
they = the Islands
- 18 **Leather Street** 「皮屋通り」
- 27 **straining back ... barrow** (道をくだる) 「荷車が引っ張
る力に負けないように思い切り力を出しながら」
- 8 3 **winding** [wáindɪŋ]
- 9 **strung out** 「ずらりと並んで」 Cf. string out = be,
become, spread out at intervals in a line (*OALD*)
- 21 'em = them, *i. e.* the bricks
- 24 **was = were**
some of us [who] thought you was (= were) ...
- 25 **They was ... you** 「奴らはあるたをこなごなにすつも
りだったんだ」
- 9 15 **they thought ... work** 崖の上の町からレンガを運んで
きては海の中に投げ入れている Lif を見て, Rager 達は,
彼が自分達と同じような破壊作業にせつせと勤しんでいる
と思ったのである。
- 24 **crosscurrent** 「潮の交差流」
- 25 **causeway** 「土手道」, 「通路」
- 10 1 **affirmation** 「補強作業」 Cf. affirm < L. *affirmare* (*ad*
[=to] + *firmare* [=to make firm])
- 5 **It is ... nodded** 世の終末が来るというので Weeper 達は,
商売や仕事を捨て、自分の住んでいた家や、すべての「物」
("Things" —— この短篇のタイトルでもあることに注意)

から逃れて、ただひたすら泣きわめくのである。そういう彼らから見れば、重い手押し車をガラガラと音をたてて引いている Lif は、正に「物」に束縛されていると映るのであり、自分達はそのような「物」の束縛から逃れていて幸せだと考えるのである。

- 13 **to get ... rods** 「前もって立てておいた鉄の棒と棒の間に、レンガをでこぼこのないように、きれいにきちんと組み立てるために」
- 22 **But bricks ... bastards** 「でもレンガというのは重くて手に負えないいやな奴だよ」
- 24 **the little rat = your little baby**
- 11 13 **a confusion of the elements** 「水と空気の入り乱れた世界」
- 12 22 **By God!** 「ああ、何ということだ!」
- 25 **Now then = There now** 「ねえ」、「よしよし」
- 26 **Would I ... yourselves?** 「私があなたと赤ちゃんをここに置いてけぼりにすると思いますか?」 ‘Would’ は假定法の過去形。假定法の条件は、〈仮に私がここを出て行くとしても〉というようなことであろうが、はっきりとは示されていない。
- 27 **the bricks ... with** 「私の頭すれすれにあなたが落としてくれたレンガ」
- 13 14 **That this is the end?** 「今のこの状態が実は（人々があんなに恐れていた）世の終末だと〔あなたは思いますか?〕」
- 25 **the end ... end** 「終末というのはやはり文字通りこの世が終りになることなのでしょう」
- 15 17 **what he had done = his causeway**
- 18 **no shore** 「岸辺でない所」、「海の深い所」
- 19 **like a ... day** 「つばめの胸に夜明けの太陽の光がきらりとあたたった時のように」

この物語についての作者自身の覚え書きを下に引用しておく。

Damon Knight, editor mirabilis, first published this story in a volume of Orbit, under the title 'The End'. I don't now remember how we arrived at it, but I suspect he thought that 'Things' sounded too much like something you see on the television at one A.M., with purple tentacles. But I have gone back to it because — at least after reading the psychomyth — it puts the right emphasis. Things you use; things you possess, and are possessed by; things you build with — bricks, words. You build houses with them, and towns, and causeways. But the buildings fall, the causeways cannot go all the way. There is an abyss, a gap, a last step to be taken.

Vaster Than Empires and More Slow

- 17 1 **the League** 「大宇宙連盟」
 2 **on the ... voyages** 「とてつもなく長い宇宙旅行に」 'on' は〈従事〉を示す前置詞。Cf. go on a trip; on business
 3 **beyond the pale** 「はるか遠くに」
 pale = boundary (POD)
over the stars and far away
 Cf. And I would love you all the day,
 Every night would kiss and play,
 If with me you'd fondly stray
Over the hills and far away.
 —John Gay (1685–1732), *The Beggars' Opera*, I.
 なお、'over the hills and far away' は日常よく使われる表現である。
- 5 **Founder on Hain** [hein] 「ハインの（大宇宙連盟の）創