

## Wilderness House Literary Review 9/3

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### **This I know**

At the end of time, when the Universe ceases to exist, there will be no record of my existence. All history will come to an end as all grows cold and dark awaiting yet another Big Bang if such a thing is possible. Long before that happens our Sun, in a few billions of years, will swell larger and larger becoming a Red Giant. Eventually the surface of the Sun will encompass the orbit of the Earth, drying the oceans, incinerating the land killing all remembrance of life itself. If humankind moves on to a more hospitable environment can I hope they will bring a faint remembrance of who I was with them?

Long before the incineration of the earth it's likely that famine, fire or some other disaster, an asteroid perhaps, will visit what passes for Civilization, and render our lives as unknown as the pioneers of ancient Egypt, China or Ur. How many Romans do we know and remember? Did the dinosaurs have names?

I will die. That is certain. I have no progeny willing to carry forward my good name or my genetic code. I am the last of the line, already extinct. I no longer have "skin in the game."

When I was a child, when the Universe was still infinite, we played soldiers and Cowboys and Indians in our back yard, our hundred acre woods. I could not afford the specialized weapons of youth, the cowboy hat with duel cap pistols or the plastic rifle suitable for an assault on a German foxhole. Instead I found a magic stick that could be transformed, at will, into a sword, a flintlock, a machine gun or even a spaceship if the game required it.

Later I found that a pen was more convenient and the games and stories grew more involved and evolved. My legacy became the words I wrote on paper, no longer the seed of my flesh and blood. I have to ask myself, are my words good enough to live after me? Are the times willing to remember me? Is this Athens of 425 BC or the Athens of 350 BC? Is this the Rome of 100 AD or the Rome of 600 AD? What literature was written in 350 BC Athens? We'll never know. Likewise was there a Cicero in 600 AD? Why Shakespeare in 1600 and not 2013? Why not?

The world will end, Amen. The dinosaurs built nests that would never see children. We write to an audience that may never be born. This much I know, this much is all I know.