

Jacob D Gregory

**Pioneer Voyage — Gliese 581 C
International Shuttle: “Mayflower”
Day - 4348**

The Captain drifts through his cabin
silver coffee pouch cupped in a hand—
a squeeze, and the liquid leaves the tube
rising, gathering in a dark resin sphere.

When the Captain had turned nine
his father took him to sea,
and as the land became a speck
between two endless blues
the Captain felt light,
and he lost his stomach to the waves.

He swats at the liquid globe,
and it shatters, scatters, multiplies
and thirty, forty pebbles now float about
perfect dark gold orbs
that glisten under the fluorescence,
slowly, slowly, moving further away.

That night on the ocean his father woke him,
carried him onto the deck.
The Captain was reluctant, but the winds were quiet
the waters like glass. In the dark,
they sat together, and with a hand
his father taught him the stars.

Centaurus *Virgo* *Cancer* *Leo*
Canis Major *Orion* *Gemini*

There is only one window in the cabin
and the Captain keeps it covered.
Outside it are the same stars with the same names,
but the Dog, the Lion, the Virgin, the Hunter
they are far, far away.

A squeeze,
a swat,
and they

shatter

scatter

shine