



I am in love with a dragonslayer



Franklin Veaux

 tacit

<https://tacit.livejournal.com/>

2006-

Once upon a time, the planet was tyrannized by a giant dragon. The dragon stood taller than the largest cathedral, and it was covered with thick black scales. Its red eyes glowed with hate, and from its terrible jaws flowed an incessant stream of evil-smelling yellowish-green slime. It demanded from humankind a blood-curdling tribute: to satisfy its enormous appetite, ten thousand men and women had to be delivered every evening at the onset of dark to the foot of the mountain where the dragon-tyrant lived. Sometimes the dragon would devour these unfortunate souls upon arrival; sometimes again it would lock them up in the mountain where they would wither away for months or years before eventually being consumed.

The misery inflicted by the dragon-tyrant was incalculable. In addition to the ten thousand who were gruesomely slaughtered each day, there were the mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, children, and friends that were left behind to grieve the loss of their departed loved ones.

When I first met AMBER, we recognized each other immediately. There are many things the two of us share--not just common ideas about relationship, or shared values (though we do have those), but something else. We both share the experience of seeing the Void--the inescapable realization that we are, each of us, mortal, and the understanding of what it means that we are going to die.

If you have seen the Void, it never leaves you. Some people seek escape in religion, which offers the promise that once we're past the grave, nothing can go wrong. Some people seek escape in raising a family, or in the notion of reincarnation. For some of us, though, all these things have a feel of intellectual dishonesty about them; in the end, the most parsimonious idea, and the one that is almost certainly true, is that there will be a time when we cease to be, and that ultimately, that is all there is. And that is not okay.

Some people tried to fight the dragon, but whether they were brave or foolish was difficult to say. Priests and magicians called down curses, to no avail. Warriors, armed with roaring courage and the best weapons the smiths could produce, attacked it, but were incinerated by its fire before coming close enough to strike. Chemists concocted toxic brews and tricked the dragon into swallowing them, but the only apparent effect was to further stimulate its appetite. The dragon's claws, jaws, and fire were so effective, its scaly armor so impregnable, and its whole nature so robust, as to make it invincible to any human assault.

Seeing that defeating the tyrant was impossible, humans had no choice but to obey its commands and pay the grisly tribute. The fatalities selected were always elders. Although senior people were as vigorous and healthy as the young, and sometimes wiser, the thinking was that they had at least already enjoyed a few decades of life. The wealthy might gain a brief reprieve by bribing the press gangs that came to fetch them; but, by constitutional law, nobody, not even the king himself, could put off their turn indefinitely.

The relationship between AMBER and I has been at the same time both effortless and extraordinarily difficult. It's been effortless because that shared recognition of one another makes understanding easy, and that understanding makes our shared experiences easy. It has been extraordinarily difficult because we connected at a time when our connection was not acceptable to many of the people around us, and we have had to forge the relationship we now share at great cost. In a number of important ways, neither of us is the person we were only a few years ago; indeed, neither of us would likely ever again begin a relationship so fraught with difficulty and pain.

For some people, though, recognition is worth almost any cost. For those of us who live outside the bell curve, the idea of meeting another human being who can really see us, and who can not only understand but cherish those things which make us unlike the people around us, is a thing precious beyond price.

For many centuries this desperate state of affairs continued. Nobody kept count any longer of the cumulative death toll, nor of the number of tears shed by the bereft. Expectations had gradually adjusted and the dragon-tyrant had become a fact of life. In view of the evident futility of resistance, attempts to kill the dragon had ceased. Instead, efforts now focused on placating it. While the dragon would occasionally raid the cities, it was found that the punctual delivery to the mountain of its quota of life reduced the frequency of these incursions.

Knowing that their turn to become dragon-fodder was always impending, people began having children earlier and more often. It was not uncommon for a girl to be pregnant by her sixteenth birthday. Couples often spawned a dozen children. The human population was thus kept from shrinking, and the dragon was kept from going hungry.

Humanity is a curious species. Every once in a while, somebody gets a good idea. Others copy the idea, adding to it their own improvements. Over time, many wondrous tools and systems are developed. Some of these devices – calculators, thermometers, microscopes, and the glass vials that the chemists use to boil and distil liquids – serve to make it easier to generate and try out new ideas, including ideas that expedite the process of idea-generation.

Thus the great wheel of invention, which had turned at an almost imperceptibly slow pace in the older ages, gradually began to accelerate.

Sages predicted that a day would come when technology would enable humans to fly and do many other astonishing things. One of the sages, who was held in high esteem by some of the other sages but whose eccentric manners had made him a social outcast and recluse, went so far as to predict that technology would eventually make it possible to build a contraption that could kill the dragon-tyrant.

The king's scholars, however, dismissed these ideas. They said that humans were far too heavy to fly and in any case lacked feathers. And as for the impossible notion that the dragon-tyrant could be killed, history books recounted hundreds of attempts to do just that, not one of which had been successful. "We all know that this man had some irresponsible ideas," a scholar of letters later wrote in his obituary of the reclusive sage who had by then been sent off to be devoured by the beast whose demise he had foretold, "but his writings were quite entertaining and perhaps we should be grateful to the dragon for making possible the interesting genre of dragon-bashing literature which reveals so much about the culture of angst!"

I have written many times in this journal about a philosophy called "transhumanism." This philosophy, or if you prefer this way of viewing at the world, holds at its essential core the notion at each of us is made of the same stuff as everything else in the universe, and that that stuff is bound by the same physical laws. It also holds that as human beings become increasingly clever, our ability to make the matter and energy from which the universe is made jump through hoops at our command becomes increasingly precise. The development of written language took seventy thousand years from the dawn of mankind as a species; the harnessing of the atom required less than half that time from that point. The ability to create machines which could store and manipulate information needed about the same amount of time; the ability to carve those machines into patterns mere dozens of atoms thick onto objects scarcely visible to the eye required but sixty years after that.

I was introduced to transhumanism by [REDACTED] a person who has also seen the Void and in whom I also see that essential spark of recognition--fitting, I think, in an arch-nemesis. Through him as well I was introduced to Dr. Ralph Merkle, a pioneer in the field of biomedical nanotechnology, a science whose goal is nothing less than the ability to rebuild and repair living systems at the level of the molecule, doing for medicine what the development of solid-state logic and the integrated circuit have done for computers.

Meanwhile, the wheel of invention kept turning. Mere decades later, humans did fly and accomplished many other astonishing things.

A few iconoclastic dragonologists began arguing for a new attack on the dragon-tyrant. Killing the dragon would not be easy, they said, but if some material could be invented that was harder than the dragon's armor, and if this material could be fashioned into some kind of projectile, then maybe the feat would be possible. At first, the iconoclasts' ideas were rejected by their dragonologist peers on grounds that no known material was harder than dragon scales. But after working on the problem for many years, one of the iconoclasts succeeded in demonstrating that a dragon scale could be pierced by an object made of a certain composite material. Many dragonologists who had previously been skeptical now joined the iconoclasts. Engineers calculated that a huge projectile could be made of this material and launched with sufficient force to penetrate the dragon's armor. However, the manufacture of the needed quantity of the composite material would be expensive.

The anti-dragonists met again to decide what was to be done. The debate was animated and continued long into the night. It was almost daybreak when they finally resolved to take the matter to the people. Over the following weeks, they traveled around the country, gave public lectures, and explained their proposal to anyone who would listen. At first, people were skeptical. They had been taught in school that the dragon-tyrant was invincible and that the sacrifices it demanded had to be accepted as a fact of life. Yet when they learnt about the new composite material and about the designs for the projectile, many became intrigued. In increasing numbers, citizens flocked to the anti-dragonist lectures. Activists started organizing public rallies in support of the proposal.

When the king read about these meetings in the newspaper, he summoned his advisors and asked them what they thought about it. They informed him about the petitions that had been sent but told him that the anti-dragonists were troublemakers whose teachings were causing public unrest. It was much better for the social order, they said, that the people accepted the inevitability of the dragon-tyrant tribute.

AMBER has a determinism in her which, once is awakened, is ferocious in its intensity. Meeting Dr. Merkle energized her in a way that I have never seen before. We spoke with him for less than an hour, and by the end of that time, the rest of the course of her life had been determined.

Within weeks of our return from Atlanta, where we'd been introduced and spoken to him, she was obtaining transcripts and applying for school. There were a couple of people who said her interest was fleeting, some people who said that pursuing a degree in biomedical nanotechnology was not an endeavor suited for her, even one person who believed that it was simply a ruse on her part to win my affections by assuming an interest in things that interested me. The thing that all these people had in common, I believe, was that they

did not see AMBER, and because of that, they could not recognize that fire inside her. Those people around us who do see AMBER never doubted her for an instant.

The king, who was at the time enjoying great popularity for having vanquished the rattlesnake infestation, listened to his advisors' arguments but worried that he might lose some of his popular support if was seen to ignore the anti-dragonist petition. He therefore decided to hold an open hearing. Leading dragonologists, ministers of the state, and interested members of the public were invited to attend.

The meeting took place on the darkest day of the year, just before the Christmas holidays, in the largest hall of the royal castle. The hall was packed to the last seat and people were crowding in the aisles. The mood was charged with an earnest intensity normally reserved for pivotal wartime sessions.

After the king had welcomed everyone, he gave the floor to the leading scientist behind the anti-dragonist proposal, a woman with a serious, almost stern expression on her face. She proceeded to explain in clear language how the proposed device would work and how the requisite amount of the composite material could be manufactured. Given the requested amount of funding, it should be possible to complete the work in fifteen to twenty years. With an even greater amount of funding, it might be possible to do it in as little as twelve years. However, there could be no absolute guarantee that it would work. The crowd followed her presentation intently.

Next to speak was the king's chief advisor for morality, a man with a booming voice that easily filled the auditorium:

"Let us grant that this woman is correct about the science and that the project is technologically possible, although I don't think that has actually been proven. Now she desires that we get rid of the dragon. Presumably, she thinks she's got the right not to be chewed up by the dragon. How willful and presumptuous. The finitude of human life is a blessing for every individual, whether he knows it or not. Getting rid of the dragon, which might seem like such a convenient thing to do, would undermine our human dignity. The preoccupation with killing the dragon will deflect us from realizing more fully the aspirations to which our lives naturally point, from living well rather than merely staying alive. It is debasing, yes debasing, for a person to want to continue his or her mediocre life for as long as possible without worrying about some of the higher questions about what life is to be used for. But I tell you, the nature of the dragon is to eat humans, and our own species-specified nature is truly and nobly fulfilled only by getting eaten by it..."

The audience listened respectfully to this highly decorated speaker. The phrases were so eloquent that it was hard to resist the feeling that some deep thoughts must lurk behind them, although nobody could quite grasp what they were. Surely, words coming from such a distinguished appointee of the king must have profound substance.

The speaker next in line was a spiritual sage who was widely respected for his kindness and gentleness as well as for his devotion. As he strode to the podium, a small boy yelled out from the audience: "The dragon is bad!"

The boy's parents turned bright red and began hushing and scolding the child. But the sage said, "Let the boy speak. He is probably wiser than an old fool like me."

Throughout all of human history, we have seen that the sum total of human knowledge and ability increases exponentially. For the vast majority of our time on this planet, existence has been hard, ugly, brutal, and short. But we today live in a time unlike that of any of our ancestors, even a few generations ago. We take for granted things that would have been miracles only a century ago, let alone a thousand or ten thousand years ago. And looking ahead, we can see the sum total of our understanding increasing at a rate more rapid than many of the people alive even today can comprehend. We are at the most interesting point of the exponential curve--the part of the curve where it just begins to shoot skyward, and things become very interesting indeed.

The path AMBER has set herself upon is a very difficult and often lonely one; the first people to see a new possibility are rarely recognized or rewarded for it, and it is not until after the impossible has been done that the majority looks back and says "Oh, that was obvious."

At first, the boy was too scared and confused to move. But when he saw the genuinely friendly smile on the sage's face and the outreached hand, he obediently took it and followed the sage up to the podium. "Now, there's a brave little man," said the sage. "Are you afraid of the dragon?"

"I want my granny back," said the boy.

"Did the dragon take your granny away?"

"Yes," the boy said, tears welling up in his large frightened eyes. "Granny promised that she would teach me how to bake gingerbread cookies for Christmas. She said that we would make a little house out of gingerbread and little gingerbread men that would live in it. Then those people in white clothes came and took Granny away to the dragon... The dragon is bad and it eats people... I want my Granny back!"

There were several other speakers that evening, but the child's simple testimony had punctured the rhetorical balloon that the king's ministers had tried to inflate. The people were backing the anti-dragonists, and by the end of the evening even the king had come to recognize the reason and the humanity of their cause. In his closing statement, he simply said: "Let's do it!"

As the news spread, celebrations erupted in the streets. Those who had been campaigning for the anti-dragonists toasted each other and drank to the future of humanity.

Thus started a great technological race against time. The concept of an anti-dragon projectile was simple, but to make it a reality required solutions to a thousand smaller technical problems, each of which required dozens of time-consuming steps and missteps. Test-missiles were fired but fell dead to the ground or flew off in the wrong direction. In one tragic accident, a wayward missile landed on a hospital and killed several hundred patients and staff. But there was now a real seriousness of purpose, and the tests continued even as the corpses were being dug out from the debris.

Despite almost unlimited funding and round-the-clock work by the technicians, the king's deadline could not be met. The decade concluded and the dragon was still alive and well. But the effort was getting closer. A prototype missile had been successfully test fired. Production of the core, made of the expensive composite material, was on schedule for its completion to coincide with the finishing of the fully tested and debugged missile shell into which it was to be loaded. The launch date was set to the following year's New Year's Eve, exactly twelve years after the project's official inauguration. The best-selling Christmas gift that year was a calendar that counted down the days to time zero, the proceeds going to the projectile project.

The fire inside AMBER is nothing less than the desire to defeat the Void, to strike back against the notion that old age and death are the inevitable heritage of mankind. She has set herself on a course toward a Ph.D. in a science so new that it does not even have a universally agreed-upon name yet. This will probably consume at least the next ten years of her life, and when she has that degree, she will likely have tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt to go with it--and that degree is only the means to an end, not the end in itself. That degree represents only the tools to do the thing which she actually wants to do, which is pure research--in a field so few people believe in that she will probably earn about as much money as the person down the street whose job it is to ask you "do you want some fries with that?"

When she started school, one person predicted that she would quit within a year. not only has she not done so, she has not stopped even for summer break; she has not left school for more than two weeks since the first day she walked into a classroom. AMBER has declared war upon the Void; the stakes could not possibly be higher.

The cost has been high. She studies for sixty hours a week, not counting the time she is in class. I see her only a couple of hours out of the day. When we drive somewhere, she has a textbook in her lap. When we go out to eat, her organic chemistry text comes with us.

There is beauty in this; in chemistry and in biology, AMBER sees the Matrix--the underlying processes by which the universe itself works, the code that makes it all happen. Philosophers, poets, and sages have nothing on scientists when it comes to seeing the majesty and wonder of the physical world. It is a very hard road to take, though, and one few people understand or even see the value in.

The last day of the year was cold and overcast, but there was no wind, which meant good launch conditions. The sun was setting. Technicians were scuttling around making the final adjustments and giving everything one last check. The king and his closest advisors were observing from a platform close to the launch pad. Further away, behind a fence, large numbers of the public had assembled to witness the great event. A large clock was showing the countdown: fifty minutes to go.

An advisor tapped the king on the shoulder and drew his attention to the fence. There was some tumult. Somebody had apparently jumped the fence and was running towards the platform where the king sat. Security quickly caught up with him. He was handcuffed and taken away. The king turned his attention back to the launch pad, and to the mountain in the background. In front of it, he could see the dark slumped profile of the dragon. It was eating.

Some twenty minutes later, the king was surprised to see the handcuffed man reappearing a short distance from the platform. His nose was bleeding and he was accompanied by two security guards. The man appeared to be in frenzied state. When he spotted the king, he began shouting at the top of his lungs: "The last train! The last train! Stop the last train!"

"Who is this young man?" said the king. "His face seems familiar, but I cannot quite place him. What does he want? Let him come up."

The young man was a junior clerk in the ministry of transportation, and the reason for his frenzy was that he had discovered that his father was on the last train to the mountain. The king had ordered the train traffic to continue, fearing that any disruption might cause the dragon to stir and leave the open field in front of the mountain where it now spent most of its time. The young man begged the king to issue a recall-order for the last train, which was due to arrive at the mountain terminal five minutes before time zero.

"I cannot do it," said the king, "I cannot take the risk."

"But the trains frequently run five minutes late. The dragon won't notice! Please!"

The young man was kneeling before the king, imploring him to save his father's life and the lives of the other thousand passengers onboard that last train.

The king looked down at the pleading, bloodied face of the young man. But he bit his lip, and shook his head. The young man continued to wail even as the guards carried him off the platform: "Please! Stop the last train! Please!"

The king stood silent and motionless, until, after while, the wailing suddenly ceased. The king looked up and glanced over at the countdown clock: five minutes remaining.

Four minutes. Three minutes. Two minutes.

The last technician left the launch pad.

30 seconds. 20 seconds. Ten, nine, eight...

As a ball of fire enveloped the launch pad and the missile shot out, the spectators instinctively rose to the tips of their toes, and all eyes fixated at the front end of the white flame from the rocket's afterburners heading towards the distant mountain. The masses, the king, the low and the high, the young and the old, it was as if at this moment they shared a single awareness, a single conscious experience: that white flame, shooting into the dark, embodying the human spirit, its fear and its hope... striking at the heart of evil. The silhouette on the horizon tumbled, and fell. Thousand voices of pure joy rose from the assembled masses, joined seconds later by a deafening drawn-out thud from the collapsing monster as if the Earth itself was drawing a sigh of relief. After centuries of oppression, humanity at last was free from the cruel tyranny of the dragon.

The joy cry resolved into a jubilating chant: "Long live the king! Long live us all!" The king's advisors, like everybody that night, were as happy as children; they embraced each other and congratulated the king: "We did it! We did it!"

But the king answered in a broken voice: "Yes, we did it, we killed the dragon today. But damn, why did we start so late? This could have been done five, maybe ten years ago! Millions of people wouldn't have had to die."

The king stepped off the platform and walked up to the young man in handcuffs, who was sitting on the ground. There he fell down on his knees. "Forgive me! Oh my God, please forgive me!"

The rain started falling, in large, heavy drops, turning the ground into mud, drenching the king's purple robes, and dissolving the blood on the young man's face. "I am so very sorry about your father," said the king.

"It's not your fault," replied the young man. "Do you remember twelve years ago in the castle? That crying little boy who wanted you to bring back his grandmother – that was me. I didn't realize then that you couldn't possibly do what I asked for. Today I wanted you to save my father. Yet it was impossible to do that now, without jeopardizing the launch. But you have saved my life, and my mother and my sister. How can we ever thank you enough for that?"

"Listen to them," said the king, gesturing towards the crowds. "They are cheering me for what happened tonight. But the hero is you. You cried out. You rallied us against evil." The king signaled a guard to come and unlock the handcuffs. "Now, go to your mother and sister. You and your family

shall always be welcome at the court, and anything you wish for – if it be within my power – shall be granted.”

AMBER has picked up the sword and the armor of the dragonslayer. There are no higher stakes. I do not believe she will put them down until the dragon has killed her or it is slain itself.

Today, she and I ordered a pair of rings. I will be leaving for Atlanta within weeks, and we wanted to exchange rings before I leave. She will remain here, in school, studying the ways of her enemy and the tools and weapons by which to defeat it. The rings are made of titanium (atomic number: 22; atomic mass: 47.867; melting point: 1,660 C; number of neutrons: 26; number of electrons and protons: 22) and are engraved on the inside. Mine says "No Fate But What We Make." Hers simply says "Dragonslayer."

The young man left, and the royal entourage, huddling in the downpour, accumulated around their monarch who was still kneeling in the mud. Amongst the fancy couture, which was being increasingly ruined by the rain, a bunch of powdered faces expressed a superposition of joy, relief, and discombobulation. So much had changed in the last hour: the right to an open future had been regained, a primordial fear had been abolished, and many a long-held assumption had been overturned. Unsure now about what was required of them in this unfamiliar situation, they stood there tentatively, as if probing whether the ground would still hold, exchanging glances, and waiting for some kind of indication.

Finally, the king rose, wiping his hands on the sides of his pants.

“Your majesty, what do we do now?” ventured the most senior courtier.

“My dear friends,” said the king, “we have come a long way... yet our journey has only just begun. Our species is young on this planet. Today we are like children again. The future lies open before us. We shall go into this future and try to do better than we have done in the past. We have time now – time to get things right, time to grow up, time to learn from our mistakes, time for the slow process of building a better world, and time to get settled in it. Tonight, let all the bells in the kingdom ring until midnight, in remembrance of our dead forbears, and then after midnight let us celebrate till the sun comes up. And in the coming days... I believe we have some reorganization to do!”

AMBER has picked up the sword and the armor of the dragonslayer. There are no higher stakes. I do not believe she will put them down until the dragon has killed her or it is slain itself.

If i were the dragon, I would be very, very worried.



The full text of the dragon fable, which is © Journal of Medical Ethics, 2005, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp 273-277, is available [here](http://www.nickbostrom.com/fable/dragon.html) (<http://www.nickbostrom.com/fable/dragon.html>).

TAGS: [transhumanism](#)



17 comments



[October 30 2006, 20:11:06 UTC](#)

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Beautiful



[October 30 2006, 20:18:02 UTC](#)

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I have never read a blog by someone I've never met, that has made me cry. I too have seen the Void, and it still haunts me.

AMBER has my thanks in advance, even if "nothing" is accomplished in our lifetimes. :)



[October 30 2006, 20:37:55 UTC](#)

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Beautiful.

And congratulations



[October 30 2006, 20:56:23 UTC](#)

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Bravo. This is great, inspiring stuff. Thank you for putting it out into the world. I'd love to meet AMBER someday.



[October 30 2006, 21:27:50 UTC](#)

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm crying a little here.

That is awesome.

Yay for rings and defeating the dragon!



October 30 2006, 23:23:59 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Wow. Just... wow. I must admit I got a wee bit misty reading this too- particularly the inscription on Shelly's ring.

I've always admired AMBER's self-awareness, but it occurs to me that she may also have the clearest perspective of the world around us of anyone I've ever met. Really, what other endeavor can hope to compare in importance with what she's doing? Most of the rest of us are wasting our lives by comparison, and I admit that I'm a little ashamed of myself for that.

As I mentioned to you earlier today, I keep The Fable of the Dragon-Tyrant posted in my cube at work. I've just put your post next to it. It's touching and inspiring, and I'm honored and flattered to have played some small role in this quest, even if only peripherally.

Deleted comment



October 31 2006, 06:04:10 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

ONAMI is one starting point.

(<http://enr.oregonstate.edu/research/clusters/mmd.html>)



tacit

November 1 2006, 16:57:21 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Most of the people going into the field right now have undergraduate backgrounds in either chemistry (particularly biochemistry or molecular biology) or physics (particularly materials physics). AMBER's going the biochemistry route, as many of the people with physics backgrounds seem to end up working in manufacturing nanotechnology rather than medical nanotechnology.

A handful of schools have undergrad programs in nanotech, though most places seem to offer nanotech primarily at the graduate level. The University at Albany in New York has just invested billions of dollars in a new College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, which includes programs in biomedical nanotechnology; the Web site for it is at

<http://cnse.albany.edu>



November 2 2006, 01:09:41 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I meant to respond to this and got caught up in other things; but you've reminded me :).

When I first looked into it, it seemed that physicists and chemists were working together and heading

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
up the new nanotech programs. Physicists told the chemists what was possible, and the chemists tried to work it out. I chose chemistry because it seemed most practical and hands on - and I'm still not sure what kind of program I'll go into in grad school.

You kind of have to dream up what's possible, and try to lay a foundation so you can help. It seems that we will either be able to repair what we've got (nanotech), or replace it all together (uploading). Either way I think we'll find our solutions in biology - as we're made of molecular machines that can perform amazing feats. But the solution may be somewhere else. I suggest you do what you love, spread your interests around, and keep your eyes open.



October 31 2006, 06:06:22 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Will I finally get to meet the two of you [here](#)?



October 31 2006, 23:22:14 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Damn Franklin. You've both managed to make me cry now (AMBER with [this](#) post). That was amazing. I'm very glad to know you both.



November 2 2006, 14:32:14 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Awesome as this is, I feel the need to inject a little levity (with a serious suggestion): perhaps she could help you design a new bumper sticker, only instead of a carbon ring of people, it could be a long chain of them.

A polypeptide.



November 3 2006, 22:49:06 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

Thank you for writing this. Sometimes I'm such a lone transhumanist I think I've made the whole thing up.

AMBER is an inspiration. She's fighting for all of us, even those who don't believe in her. Because how much you wanna bet they'll buy into the treatments her research made possible once they realize they'll grow old and die if they don't?

Seriously, the void is scary, but not so much anymore. I hope one day to be among those who recall the old axiom "Nothing is certain but death and taxes" ... and laugh and laugh and laugh.



[The void](#)

Anonymous

June 9 2016, 03:00:59 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I felt the same way, I thought I was alone looking into the void but it is nice to know there are others.



November 20 2007, 01:55:16 UTC

CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I only just saw/read this post now, but I'm really impressed with AMBER. Since she gave up journaling, I've lost track of what she's doing, but I'm so glad to see that she's pursuing this still (I assume!).

 tacit[November 20 2007, 22:12:12 UTC](#) CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

She is indeed still pursuing it--and taking 17 credit hours this semester. Plus research.

 [REDACTED][December 5 2012, 06:02:20 UTC](#) CHECK [COLLAPSE](#)

I shed a tear at this journal. I know you can't take full credit- it's a marvellous story you quoted, but the feeling is there all the same.