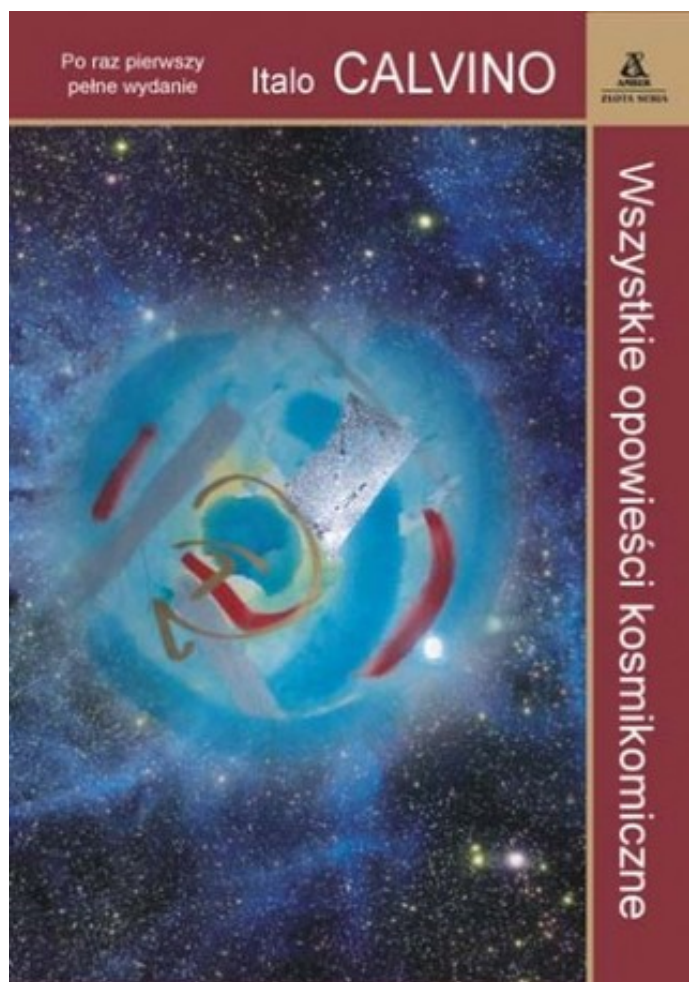


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**Italo Calvino**

**Wszystkie opowieści kosmomiczne**



Title: Wszystkie opowieści kosmomiczne

Author: Italo Calvino

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## Description

An enchanting series of stories about the evolution of the universe. Calvino makes characters out of mathematical formulae and simple cellular structures. They disport themselves amongst galaxies, experience the solidification of planets, move from aquatic to terrestrial existence, play games with hydrogen atoms -- and have time for a love life

## Insightful reviews

Kirstin: Cosmicomics is just what it says it is, a series of short comedies about the cosmos. The opening story, The Distance of the Moon, is so wonderful, I smiled the entire time I read it. Calvino takes scientific facts and theories and gives them a human perspective (without any human characters), and does it all in the most simple, quirky way you could imagine. I loved every one of them. The Aquatic Uncle and The Spiral do deserve a special mention for being so lovely. How appropriate, to give this book stars!

Greg: Reading these stories by Calvino I couldn't help but think of Borges constantly. Maybe it was the character names that all sounded like they came from titles of Borges stories. Actually the whole collection felt like Borges to me, but if Borges had decided to write his stories based on science instead of about books, history and arcane knowledge. Since I don't really have much interest in science I never really got into these stories, although they are fun to read.

Christopher Klein: This is a strange and creative work. The briefest of descriptions about Calvino say something like "he's one of the world's greatest fabulists". So, generally people know what they are getting into when they crack the cover. But I'm not sure that I know what I experienced, even now.

So, the set up is easy--a bunch of stories about the evolution of the universe. But what the hell does that even mean?

For one, each story begins with an italicized blurb that reads like something out of a science text book. But is that really what they are? None of these epigraphs are attributed to a source, so I have to assume that they are Calvino's own paraphrase, but should we take them as "scientific fact"? Or are they something else?

Take the blurb that heads "Games without End" for example:

*"When the galaxies become more remote, the rarefaction of the universe is compensated for by the formation of further galaxies composed of newly created matter. To maintain a stable median density of the universe it is sufficient to create a hydrogen atom every 250 million years for 40 cubic centimeters of expanding space. (This steady state theory, as it is known, has been opposed to the other hypothesis, that the universe was born at a precise moment as the result of a gigantic explosion.)" (63)*

Wasn't steady-state theory largely debunked before Calvino set these tales down? Granted, he

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calls "big-bang" the "other hypothesis," and devotes the preceding story ("All at One Point") to just that idea, but all of this and the title itself makes me think that Calvino was laughing on the page. Perhaps his point was to loosen the tie of dogmatic scientism. Perhaps simply to point out that even hard science requires a narrative to have significant explanatory power. Perhaps something else?

Sometime in your life you've heard the advice: "Write what you know." At one time in my life, I was convinced that this is all authors ever really do. But this seems to be the opposite of what Calvino is doing here, to dazzling effect.

All eleven of these tales are good, but if I had to pick a top-three-in-no-particular-order, they would be:

- 1) All at One Point
- 2) How Much Shall We Bet?
- 3) The Light-Years

A quick word about the translation:

I read William Weaver's Italian-English translation. I don't read Italian, but from the English end, it seemed very well done. The prose read so fluidly, yet so playfully idiosyncratic, I almost forgot that it wasn't written in English.

Madeleine: Calvino opened this gorgeous little assortment with "The Distance of the Moon," a story from the times while the lunar panorama should be reached with not anything greater than a ladder and a few well-timed gymnastics, so it struck me as acceptable that I started interpreting "Cosmicomics" at the evening of a whole moon. I had its richly resonant first tales working via my head whereas riding domestic from paintings that evening. The 1st half my go back and forth is a trip illuminated through the factitious lighting of either trade and my fellow impatient motorists earlier than giving solution to a boring stretch of interstate road, providing helpful few spots of gap-toothed skyline that permit the night sky to damage through; this type of rare openings provided a glimpse of the looming, swollen moon. The distortion of a whole lunar sphere simply starting its ascent, an engorged orb placing so low and heavy that she may well cross for the grandest a part of the man-made horizon, is one among my favourite monitors provided through my favourite celestial phenomenon: I've had a specific affinity for the whole moon ever given that I found that strangely well-lit night walks have been the main trustworthy antidote for my teenage moodiness. The optical phantasm that makes a low moon loom gigantically renders a well-recognized sight unusual, and stealing a couple of glances of it in the course of my day-by-day trek lent a tangibility to Calvino's tale I wasn't looking forward to yet did not relatively shock me. This could now not be the 1st (and I clearly doubt the last) time I could not support yet practice Calvino's imaginative and prescient to a real-world occurrence. Those tales make the type of feel that goals do, in a way. Whereas sincerely mismatched phrases don't rhyme upon waking as they do in nocturnal narratives and the person that represents a unique entity in sleep turns into an evidently symbolic amalgamation of strangers and forgotten pals as soon as the dreamer is jarred into consciousness, the construction myths Calvino weaves into surprising truths truly do delay upon extra examination, no matter if they do require the occasional suspension of disbelief; still, who's to claim the cosmos and the inhabitants that

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arose with it adhere to a similar stringent truth we've come to accept? While the early life of the cosmic terrain -- the Earth and its lunar satellite tv for pc incorporated -- are decidedly alien of their loss of accepted suggestions (just as our commonalities have been novel then: "You understand? It was once the 1st time. There had by no means been issues to play with before. and the way may perhaps we've played? With that pap of gaseous matter?"), the inhabitants' stumbling confusion approximately what is going on yet reliable simple task that whatever's occurring is critical did not require a bounce of mind's eye to understand. Calvino imbued his solid of nonhuman characters with decidedly human interest and awfully human failings, which is helping to floor an differently airy choice of interweaving stories in achingly relatable terms. What struck me so much approximately this booklet is how actively shameful impulses have formed and pushed self-aware creatures since, rather literally, there were self-aware beings capable of impact their environment. these jealousies, these prejudices, and so much of all these proud insecurities have been allowed to arrive a boiling aspect and bubbled into the exterior world. the consequences were not continually catastrophic yet they did go away lasting marks at the nascent universe. to contemplate that the universe as we all know it (what we all know of it, anyway) was once crafted neither through a happy, scientifically defined coincidence nor the whim of simply yet avuncular deities, yet really a few traditional guy's egocentric factors and a necessity to go away a cosmic "I wuz here" smear of existential facts is a viewpoint shift worthy mulling over. I nonetheless hold that this is often perfection in 153 pages. My moment come upon with Calvino was once simply as fortuitous and spilled off the web page into actual existence simply up to my first -- so much, in fact, that i purchased one other one in every of this books shortly upon completing this one simply because I simply are looking to glut myself on Calvino's unequalled prose. Simply, the fellow jogs my memory of what a paranormal adventure a great ebook is and why examining has been certainly one of my favourite interests for so long as it has. it is a quickly learn that calls for the reader to speed him/herself to correctly stay at the densely packed beauty within.

Daniel Villines: while i glance at house from the protection and confines of our Earth I continuously examine that massive illumined expanse with extra ask yourself than knowledge. yes i do know a couple of issues concerning the velocity of light, planets round different stars, and the composition of comets, yet what i do not comprehend is so massive in the context of my view, that I develop into a believer of my very own imagination. as well as the intense issues of nuclear fusion, I additionally see existence on different worlds, the destruction of alternative planets, and the foreseeable time whilst not anything will exists at all. And if I ask myself do i feel this stuff to be true, i might say yes, I believe. those tales are only that: easy ideals tethered to the truth of the universe. But that isn't a small thing! The universe is a systematic position and technology is unyielding. In fact, to be scientific, you might want to solid apart unfounded beliefs, that's to claim try to be a piece much less human. technology is cold, it truly is unforgiving, and it'll rightly spoil lives if that is what technological know-how requires. Calvino offers entry to this unyielding international by means of growing cracks in which the human mind's eye can sneak in, stream around, and event technology in non-scientific ways. The technology continues to be there, however the human spirit is there too.

Simona Bartolotta: «Così incominciai a fare los angeles prima cosa che mi venne, ed period una conchiglia. [...] Non mi veniva mica di farla perché mi serviva, ma al contrario come a uno gli viene di fare un'esclamazione che potrebbe benissimo anche non fare eppure l. a. fa, come

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uno che cube “bah!” oppure “mah!”, così io facevo los angeles conchiglia, cioè solo in step with esprimermi». Una delle cose che amo di più, delle storie, è il fatto che si mettano a raccontare di un mollusco, un insignificante mollusco, o di un segno nello spazio imprecisato che non sappiamo neanche come sia possibile farlo, o di un pesce o di un dinosauro o dei colori, e poi arrivi alla high-quality e scopri che in realtà, gira e rigira, parlano di te. Le Cosmicomiche, in keeping with mia grande gioia, sono in pratica questo, schizzi, istantanee, ritratti di umana umanità tracciati con pennellate attente e allo stesso pace estremamente naturali. Dalla loro dimensione fantastica, ci parlano di ciò che eravamo e di ciò che siamo diventati, differenza che viene a volte enfatizzata e altre volte, al contrario, resa ancora più labile, il tutto attraverso un significativo gioco di anacronismi che Calvino inserisce in alcuni punti strategici, come accade, advert esempio, alla wonderful de I Dinosauri, quando vediamo Qwfwq lasciare il villaggio dei Nuovi e prendere un treno, in quella che avevamo pensato essere l. a. fase iniziale della storia dell'uomo. Oltre questo fattore comune, però, ognuna delle Cosmicomiche ha un suo segno di riconoscimento, un suo marchio. Gli anni-luce, e un po' anche los angeles forma dello spazio, parlano dell'incomunicabilità, della mancanza di dialogo, ma soprattutto delle inevitabili incomprensioni che sempre di creano tra le persone, che sono come un abisso siderale a prova di velocità della luce, o come «linee rette proceed parallele che non significano altro che se stesse nel loro continuo scorrere senza incontrarsi mai così come non ci incontriamo mai nella nostra continua caduta io, Ursula H'x, il Tenente Fenimore, tutti gli altri» (da los angeles forma dello spazio). C'è poi, in Senza colori, l. a. paura del cambiamento, l. a. ritrosia di fronte alla trasformazione, e c'è l'esatto contrario in Lo zio acquatico, racconto lacerato tra tradizionalismo e progressismo, e in cui poi a spuntarla è invece los angeles voglia di riscoperta dell'antico passato, una voglia che forse ha anche i tratti della nostalgia. Su questo tenore si potrebbe continuare advert libitum. Il filo di Arianna, l. a. legge di continuità in tutte queste storie è, come spesso accade, l'amore. L'amore devoto, l'amore spensierato e l'amore perduto, l'amore impossibile, l'amore non concesso né reclamato, l'amore silenzioso e persino l'amore primigenio che diventa l. a. scintilla del gigantic Bang nel meraviglioso Tutto in un punto: «Lei signora Ph(i)Nko, quella che in mezzo al chiuso nostro mondo meschino period stata capace d'uno slancio generoso, il primo, «Ragazzi, che tagliatelle vi farei mangiare!», un vero slancio d'amore generale, dando inizio nello stesso momento al concetto di spazio, e allo spazio propriamente detto, e al tempo, e alla gravitazione universale, e all'universo gravitante, rendendo possibili miliardi di miliardi di soli, e di pianeti, e di campi di grano, e di signore Ph(i)Nko, sparse in line with i continenti dei pianeti che impastano con le braccia unte e generose infarinate». Arriviamo così all'ultimo pezzo del puzzle, l. a. perla che completa los angeles nostra collana. Si tratta de l. a. spirale, significativamente posta a chiusura della raccolta. Effettivamente, trovo che questo racconto sia quasi un compendio di tutte le storie precedenti; direi che in essere Calvino apriva delle porte in line with poi chiuderle ne l. a. spirale. Immagino che sia uno di quei testi da interpretare liberamente, uno di quelli in cui, mentre io ci vedo A, tizio può vederci tranquillamente Z, anche senza che qualcuno dei due sia in errore. A me, personalmente, ha parlato della scoperta di se stessi, di autoaffermazione, della meraviglia da scovare nel mondo e dell'interconnessione tra tutte le cose. Mi ha parlato di una poesia che tutti dovrebbero leggere almeno una volta. Ma non nella vita. Al giorno. Così, almeno in keeping with ricordarsi di essere vivi. «E questa conchiglia period una cosa diversa da me ma anche l. a. parte più vera di me, los angeles spiegazione di chi ero io, il mio ritratto tradotto in un sistema ritmico di volumi e strisce e colori e roba dura».

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