

# Reveals for SKY Readers

This information comes from records about writing and designing the novel Sky. Kim Stufflebeam and I developed the graphical elements together during three years of open collaboration and creative discovery. Although readers may discover these embedded elements without assistance, it may be rewarding for curious readers to find some validation and possibly clarification by looking through these notes. I would be quite happy to hear from any readers about this discovery experience.

## (1) Background Images

### Embedded Quote: Left Hand Jama Pages

"Freedom arises from the knowledge that Truth heals. Welcoming the Truth others bring into our ex

01000110 01110010 01100101 01100101  
01100100 01101111 01101101 00100000  
01100001 01110010 01101001 01110011  
01100101 01110011 00100000 01100110  
01110010 01101111 01101101 00100000  
01110100 01101000 01100101 00100000  
01101011 01101110 01101111 01110111  
01101100 01100101 01100100 01100111  
01100101 00100000 01110100 01101000  
01100001 01110100 00100000 01010100  
01110010 01110101 01110100 01101000  
00100000 01101000 01100101 01100001  
01101100 01110011 00101110 00100000  
01010111 01100101 01101100 01100011  
01101111 01101101 01101001 01101110  
01100111 00100000 01110100 01101000  
01100101 00100000 01010100 01110010  
01110101 01110100 01101000 00100000  
01101111 01110100 01101000 01100101  
01110010 01110011 00100000 01100010  
01110010 01101001 01101110 01100111  
00100000 01101001 01101110 01110100  
01101111 00100000 01101111 01110101  
01110010 00100000 01100101 01111000

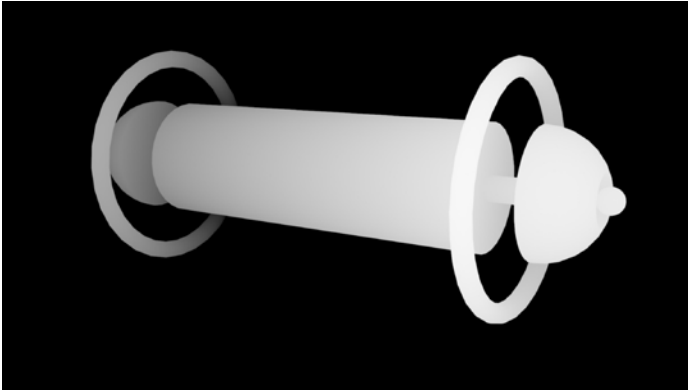
### Right Hand Jama Pages

perience creates an opening through which we may grow. We have never been alone. Jama of Luminar"

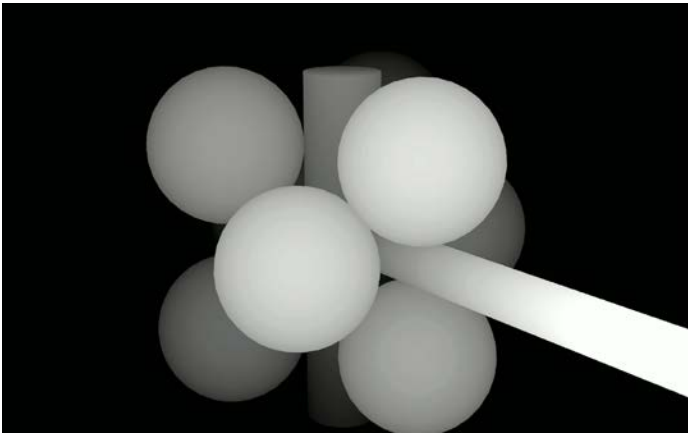
01110000 01100101 01110010 01101001  
01100101 01101110 01100011 01100101  
00100000 01100011 01110010 01100101  
01100001 01110100 01100101 01110011  
00100000 01100001 01101110 00100000  
01101111 01110000 01100101 01101110  
01101001 01101110 01100111 00100000  
01110100 01101000 01110010 01101111  
01110101 01100111 01101000 00100000  
01110111 01101000 01101001 01100011  
01101000 00100000 01110111 01100101  
00100000 01101101 01100001 01111001  
00100000 01100111 01110010 01101111  
01110111 00101110 00100000 01010111  
01100101 00100000 01101000 01100001  
01110110 01100101 00100000 01101110  
01100101 01110110 01100101 01110010  
00100000 01100010 01100101 01100101  
01101110 00100000 01100001 01101100  
01101111 01101110 01100101 00101110  
00100000 01001010 01100001 01101101  
01100001 00100000 01101111 01100110  
00100000 01001100 01110101 01101101  
01101001 01101110 01100001 01110010

## **(2) Stereogram Images (grayscale depth maps)**

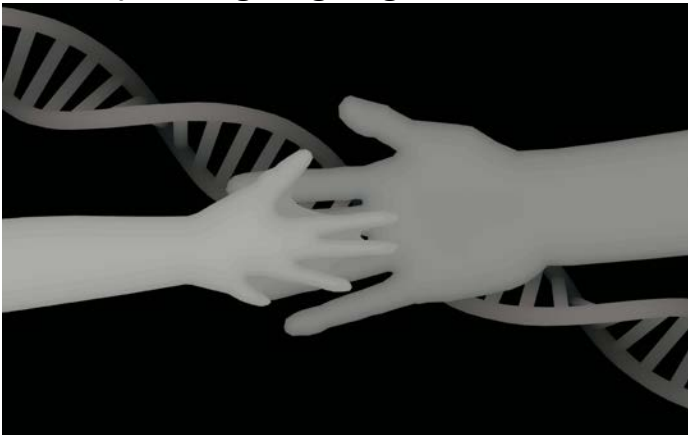
### **Part I (Jama/Duan ship mother – AutoCAD depth map by my son Michael)**



### **Part II (floor dwelling pods – AutoCAD depth map by my son Michael)**



### **Part III (meeting long forgotten relatives – depth map by Kim and me, via collaboration)**



### **Notes about Viewing Stereograms**

Observers must look beyond the image, so that double vision is experienced. Circles at the top of the page will overlap forming 3, and at this alignment, the eyes are relaxed slowly back into the page. See the following resource for more information and support about viewing Stereograms:

[http://www.hidden-3d.com/how\\_to\\_view\\_stereogram.php](http://www.hidden-3d.com/how_to_view_stereogram.php)

### **(3) Colored Threads**

These tactile elements are intentional and significant. A guide to thread color, placement and grouping was developed through a long, thoughtful process. It began with Kim's first hand made copy, presented to John in September, 2014. Kim placed a colorful woven thread at each page where he noticed an example of whirlwind communication as it developed in strength throughout the story.

This initial prototype became the stepping stone for developing all the final creative elements. After many reviews and a second prototype by Kim, we came to a more subdued role for the threads – wanting them to whisper the information instead of shout. Because of this, they may appear so minor as to prevent curious inquiry. The following are some simple notes about our intentions, which may help while reading or after completion during a review of the work.

During the book binding process, the signatures were stitched, glued and cut with the guillotine cutter. Then the threads were inserted through stitching holes in the spine with a needle and held in place with a knot, glue and then the spine support papers.

#### **Thread Colors**

Green represents the planet Luminar (Earth)

[pgs. 11, 43, 406]

Blue represents the Jama and Duan group (unnamed species)

[pgs. 9, 11, 23, 26, 30, 43, 80, 255, 261, 406]

Gold represents the Jules and Kevin group (yes, Human)

[pgs. 80, 94, 119, 156, 219, 239, 255, 261, 351, 376, 406]

Red represents the Universe

[pgs. 9, 219, 376, 406]

Blue or gold threads alone suggest that some form of unexpected communication is passing between members of the same species. These instances foretell a latent ability for knowing something about another without speech.

Blue or gold threads mixed with green or red threads suggest unexpected communication between main characters and physical spaces – Luminar or Universe, or both. These instances open the underlying concept that matter may also contain elements of spirit.

All thread colors mixed suggest that all persons and things are connected at a fundamental level, and the realization that we are not actually alone becomes significant.

When threads bridge top to bottom forming a complete loop, this suggests a fundamental change of thinking or experience is happening which connects "loose ends" previously disconnected in the experience of characters involved.

The position of threads in the book vertically in the spine is loosely connected with the strength or level of the experience, however because threads needed to be placed in different positions to keep thickness of the bound book even, there is also a practical basis for position without hidden meanings.

## **(4) Stylistic Perspectives and Images**

### **Contractions and Emotion**

Jama and Duan do not use contractions in speech or thoughts. This was done intentionally – in part to convey a flat emotional experience, but also to suggest a different language which might not have a use or place for contractions. The lack of contractions combined with a dry communication style portends something unexpected in store for the reader, possibly in preparation for the realization that Jama and Duan are not human.

Jama and Duan's ship culture was devoid of significant exploration into emotional states – partly because of their discontinuous existence (in and out of hibernation), and partly because their implants exposed internals if desired, so personal mystery between crew members was not pronounced. The lack of contractions and the inexperience with emotions present as being related. The background of binary codes in the Jama sections suggests an ordered lifestyle, possibly ready for unexpected growth.

### **Narrative Tense**

Part I and II stories are told from a first person past tense narrative. Part III is told from the first person present tense. My intention was to bring focus on Part III as the heart of the story, with the first two parts a little like prologues. I wanted the reader to feel Part III as "right now" – maybe even feel like the story was unfolding in the present tense for the reader as well, while the whirlwind was developing as the basis for communication between characters.

Part III chapters alternate main character perspectives, all in the present tense. In order to help readers identify the narrator, we included "Jama" or "Jules" in bold font at the top of each chapter header.

### **Fonts, Italics and Descriptives**

Jama and Jules tell their stories using different fonts. Jama chapters use a sans serif font and Jules chapters use a serif font. The sans serif font appears subdued, less complicated and rounded, which fits with my intention to develop characters with relatively simple emotional and social experiences. Italic text is used without quotes to indicate either a private thought or a whirlwind expression.

Descriptive words such as echo, intone, lilt, undercurrent, undertone and query are used in Part III to identify types of whirlwind expressions, suggesting the whirlwind has different tones or modes in addition to the experience of color, concept and emotion. For instance, "echo" is used most often in the story, and may be described as an emotional analogue to an acoustic echo in which reflections contain information about a person's response to receiving an incident whirlwind expression.

### **Images**

Jama sections binary background: There is a star field embedded in the light gray background. Viewing an entire open page spread, you can see the constellation Orion, with the belt in the center fold. This suggests that Jama's "homeworld" is somewhere in the belt or sword - but no, I haven't found them yet!

Jules sections background: The background is intentionally dark to suggest life and creativity is dark and restricted on the floor. Naturally, when vision only reveals meters (not kilometers as we know it on the surface), a culture will adapt, possibly losing sight of greater goals and hopes for the future. The dark background with white text alludes to the spark enduring in the darkness, which Jules and Kevin are able to reignite. Once on the surface, backgrounds change to a ocean beach scene with scattered clouds.

Final chapter backgrounds blend to become a nebula star field suggesting a growing connection with the universe, and the final chapter has a darker purple nebula background with white text shining through.

The book cover was painted by my daughter Ellen in acrylic on canvas. The general perspective idea came from a NASA image – the slanting horizon with crescent moon. Ellen added the planetary ring and Floor colonies to suggest the post-Tillman environment. In some renditions of this image, a signature by Jama suggests she is the artist, and the reader may find Jama refer to her painting at the end of Chapter 13 in Part III.

## (5) Themes, Quotes and Allusions

### Themes and Quotes

The first page of each part and of each chapter in Part III contain a historic quote from a prominent figure in one of the two civilizations, or from one of the main characters recalled from future events. These quotes were written spontaneously, and often impacted the subject matter in the following chapter or section during the initial writing process, however their relevance to the chapter is not as significant as their relevance to the themes beneath the story.

There is one quote directly from my personal experience at a men's retreat in 1998. Part III, end of Chapter 18: Via the whirlwind, Jules conveys, "Each of us can participate fully – this is our power." When conceiving what would be a powerful thing for Jules to share, I recall having something like a *déjà vu* experience, and decided to record my prior realization almost verbatim. Manspirit Men take note, for some of you were there, and may remember.

The last lines of Sky say it clearly – even though there seems to be overwhelming western evidence to suggest that each of us are alone in this life, my experience, particularly as I age, demonstrates the opposite – but from a perspective that was not clearly available to me for most of my life. My long held reluctance to accept likeness to everyone around me, and an affinity for all things has been slowly shattered by a growing practice of connection and compassion. *Loneliness is powerful yet fragile, and superiority but a smoke screen for the fearful and lonely – to keep the dancing light at bay.*

### Allusions to Themes and Settings

The "In Gratitude" page at the front of the book contains some suggestive references to elements in the story. These allusions include the following.

- "unknown path" (see Part III prologue quote) - This is a theme of the book, suggesting that unknown paths might be positive experiences, contrary to common western cultural norms.
- "continue to open chapter after chapter" – I couldn't resist this. Since the reader is about to open chapter after chapter, I want them to know I have also done so in both relationship and the writing of Sky for nearly three decades.
- "hand in loving hand" (see Part III Chapter 7 quote) – I consider the value of hand-holding deeper than simply connecting intimate partners.
- "uplifting whirlwind of excitement" (whirlwind communication throughout)
- "something sweet to the surface" (alludes to humans returning from the floor)
- "a little less like strangers" (see Part I prologue quote)

An interesting structural note about the book binding: the two headbands (colorful bands at each end of the book spine) in the handmade book contain 8 and 9 gold thread bands. These unequal numbers were initially a mistake, but after looking for hidden meaning in the mistake, I realized that the sum of the two numbers was equal to the number of prominent characters in SKY. This has now become part of my handmade build requirements!