

YEVGENYA IORDAKIEVA

## LETTER TO AN ASTRONAUT

Dear, the garden grows and wilts each year.  
How many sweeping orbits has it been  
since your bright feet jumped off the earthly pier  
and dimmed, dissolving in the astral din?  
Our sons are only young in snapshots now.  
They watch the empty sky with gleaming eyes,  
and I have aged; no use explaining how  
to one whose body moves in timeless skies.  
Maybe you've seen the god out there who's heard  
each prayer for your sterile, barren home  
that whirs in darkness like a naked bird,  
a shelter for your bones, a tomb of chrome.  
The stars seem closer, even though they've died.  
These two still burn: the Sun and ours inside.

## REPLY

My wife, each day (however long it lasts)  
I feel myself erode from man to eye  
that searches for reminders of a past:  
dear dirty planet, life left on standby.  
The yawning void sends only light and rocks  
that glide by fast: no greeting or goodbye.  
The depth my wish for a horizon mocks.  
Each course shown by my compass is a lie.  
Last night in my brief dreams you came, I prayed  
it really was your skin, your skirt, your face,  
that our shared reaching was enough to wade  
through swarms of time, contracting cosmic space.  
But you are far. The closest that I get  
is circling the globe. No homebound markers yet.