

The logo for Black Spot Comics is enclosed in a thin black circle. It features the words "BLACK", "SPOT", and "COMICS" stacked vertically in a bold, black, serif font. A horizontal line is positioned between "SPOT" and "COMICS". The letter "O" in "SPOT" is replaced by a solid black silhouette of a pirate's head with a skull-like texture.

BLACK
SPOT
COMICS

PROLOGUES

I see the crack in the wall.

We could only keep the water at bay
it was never meant to last
This long.

I warned them against this. A patch covers
Up the damage but the cracks
Still appear.

In one swift movement I
Move for the patching tool. It's bright
Red handle stands out in the darkness.

I see the white hot spark as I begin to
Patch the crack. Red and white in the darkness
My heartbeat rises
Sound competes with
Sight.

The crack is patched. I pause.
I hear the creak of the wall. I hear
The pressure behind it. The pressure that
We've all known was coming.

Rubble falls and I know what's coming
I clutch the patchwork tool and run
I run
I run
I run.

First, I see the crack in the hull.

We were not meant to stay
Amongst the stars
This long.

They warned me of this. First day of the
Job, 'Too many people and the cracks
Will appear'

Then, in one swift movement I push myself
Off the ship, I am engulfed in the darkness
I float around and feel the tether
Yank me back home, back to humanity.

At this speed I'm going to bounce
Right off the side of the ship and miss
My target, I push the air pressure on my suit
To slow me down, no sound out here but I
Know the sound. I make the sound.

I see the condensation fill my helmet
It quickly disappears and I land at my mark
I can see the air stream blowing from the crack.

The patchwork tool in my hand it's bright yellow colour
pressed up against the white of the ship
I think of the sun, I can't wait for them to see it.

EXIT↓

I hear the sirens kick up.
I'm near the exit.
I can see the green sign in the blackness.
I hear the rush.



The patch seals nicely. I stare at it for a moment.
In twenty four hours we'll have to move
In twenty four hours we'll have new guests
In twenty four hours we'll have left a home.

I burst through the door and hear the water
The water we've all been fearing
The water that nearly took us all those decades ago
Was there more I could do?



I hurry down the stairs
All six flights
Barely catching my breath
I know what awaits me at the bottom
The despair
I'm not stalling
It's fear.

I push myself off the ship and hit the communicator
My manager answers
'Yes?' He says
'Patch is cleared up.' I say
'Perfect. Head back in at the northwest dock.' He replies
'Right'o, what's next?' I reply
'We're clearing lab 2456 ready for our guests.' He states.



I cling to the truss
My tether becomes tighter and tighter as I move nearer
The northwest dock, I can see the new tether
Here it comes, the moment we all fear.

My manager arrives, his hard hat
Is dented, a knock to the head?
He's barking orders at all of us
'It is too late' I say.



I detach my tether and for a moment there
It is just me and the darkness
If I let go of this pole I will drift
Drift and
Drift and
Drift.

A large crack, thunderous, a clap
That pierces every borough
It is an odd sensation to know that
All twelve are staring in your
Direction at this moment
Asking 'Could you not fix it?'



I reach for the second tether
Despite having done this over and over
I feel the sweat on my palms
I grasp the tether I clip it

There is only one person I think of
He always told me I spent too much
Time here.

I tried to describe the stillness of it once
The whirring sound of the dam wall
The slow swish and swash of the
Water.

I hope he doesn't feel alone tonight.
I hope he knows that despite the
Heartbreak, the loss and the pain
That he remembers that
Tonight
Someone somewhere is thinking
Of him. That he is never alone.
Forever in my heart. But,

I look around me, all these engineers
All these brilliant minds
All the degrees and none of us could stop this
The wall wasn't built to protect us
Forever.
Walls are meant to come down.

I see more of the water cascading down
The wall, like tears on a dry face
The water filling in the cracks
Smoothing out the rough parts
There's not much to do now.

To my suit
I am safe.

In moments of panic I think of one person
She tells me I spend too much
Time out here.

I tried to describe the stillness of it once
The slow swish and swash of your movements
The endlessness

I hope I see her tonight.
I hope she knows that despite the
Loss of our home, the fear, and the pain
That she knows that somewhere
Tonight
Somewhere someone has a plan
A plan to give us a new home
A home full of love.

With the tether attached I push myself off the ship
I float through the air
Occasionally I press the air stream to guide me
Towards the dock
Once there I begin the process.

First I step inside the airlock
I watch the doors clap shut
'Decontamination.'
The mist fills the room

Everyone rushes around me
Everyone rushes for family
Everyone rushes for contact
Everyone rushes for connection
I stand still.



'Proceed.'

I remove my helmet
I take a deep breath. But,

It is not like a deep breath down there
The air here is processed
Like on a aeroplane
It is filtered
Shared, I guess
It is nice to know that we all share
Something.

I stand here
I see the largest of all the cracks appear
The patchwork tool still in my hand
I think back to being a child
All those swimming lessons

I see the rush of water break the
Joints of six flights of stairs
The iron collapses
It is swept up in the tide
I brace myself

As it rushes towards me
The sound takes over all of my senses
I close my eyes, no point
In giving myself a headache at this point
I guess at least I tried.
Right?
I tried.

I enter into the lab
In twenty four hours
This will be home to the rest of us
It will be full of scientists, doctors and survivors
Families will be reunited
Legacies will be continued.



I begin to clean up the lab
Discarded notes from intellectual folk
Trying to fix or cure what happened to us
They tried.

Illustrations by James Folland.
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