

# Poem

## SOLSTICE

*by Charles F. Smith*

“What is it all but a trouble of ants  
in the gleam of a million million suns.”—Tennyson

Twice a year, summer and winter,  
so seems to stop the Sun.  
The rolling red ball rests on the horizon  
and moves no more.  
Neither north nor south  
as the orb makes its seasonal sojourn  
Between the inflection points  
of dire December and jagged June.

Twenty-three, twenty-six, twenty-eight,  
old Earth's axis angles.  
The planet surfs on its circle  
as it etches an ever ellipsing orbit.  
The Sun is never still  
yet still solstices as the terrestrial sphere  
Tears around its track  
inclined to show the Sun to slow and stop.

The Sun seems to stand still twice a year  
but it's truth we cannot stand.  
Our star travels through space  
with meager planetary sparks in train.

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Stellar proper motion properly tracks Sol  
over railways of the abyss,  
While the roundhouse galaxy spins and speeds  
on runways vast and deep.

Stops yet never stops Sun in space,  
but someday the same Sun will cease in time.  
The motions of the solaring system and its star  
confound our earthly minds  
That fasten the seasoning Sun  
onto the monthly rack in the wall paper sky.  
But day will come and night  
when surly Sun will surely set and truly settle still.

Then Solstice will come, cool will the Sun to dullest red,  
die down, and expire.  
Mars, Earth, Venus, and the rest will be molten morgues  
as Sun flares out its last.  
The planets will languish as roasted relics  
while yester-Sun slides down to nebula,  
And human hope resides in ships sent to other stars  
—or not at all, at all, not at all.