ENTROPY
by Marshall Ryan Maresca

(A laboratory, where two scientists-- BOSON and HIGGS-- are working at a series of computers. the lights flash bright right when they come up.)

Boson: --and get an accurate measurement of the field.

Higgs: System is giving us the data now.

Boson: How long did it hold?

Higgs: Just a second.

Boson: Karofsky's group supposedly hit 50 picoseconds last month.

Higgs: I know.

Boson: Tell me we beat them.

Higgs: You shouldn't--

Boson: How long?

Higgs: I'm not getting a collapse time.

Boson: What?

Higgs: I'm telling you, there isn't a collapse time showing.

Boson: Damn it, we must have blown the sensors.

Higgs: They're registering nominal.

Boson: There must be something wrong. We blew it.

Higgs: We didn't blow anything. It clearly shows the field formed.

Boson: And no collapse. *(Epiphany)* No collapse.

Higgs: That's impossible.

Boson: The field is stable?

Higgs: No, it must be a malfunction in the... oh my God. It is still holding! This is fantastic.

Boson: No it isn't.

Higgs: But this is what we--

Boson: No, no we need to know how big it is.

Higgs: Big.

Boson: Space the field is taking up. In three dimensions.

Higgs: Do we even know if the field can be measured in three dimensions?

Boson: Of course it can, it's a 10-dimensional object.

Higgs: But then what do our three dimensions even mean, in regard to the field?

Boson: My point exactly. The shape is far longer than anticipated, four-dimensionally. So its size may be greater in every dimension. It doesn't make any sense, though. The field's integrity is quantum-tied to the half-life of the sample. Unless that was more stable than we anticipated.

Higgs: It's holding at... a radius of 120 meters.

Boson: That's impossible.

Higgs: That's what I'm reading.

Boson: If that were happening we'd be inside the field.

Higgs: I'm just telling you what it says.

Boson: This is not good. We can't be inside the field. We'd be dead if we were inside the field.

Higgs: We're not dead.

Boson: Are you sure?

Higgs: I thought you said this wasn't time for philosophy.

Boson: It doesn't matter.

Higgs: It's wavering.

Boson: But not collapsing?

Higgs: It will soon.

Boson: Then hurry up and--

(light flash)

Boson: --get an accurate measurement of the field.

Higgs: System is giving us the data now.

Boson: How long did it hold?

Higgs: Just a second.

Boson: Karofsky's group supposedly hit 50 picoseconds last month.

Higgs: I know.

Boson: Tell me we beat them.

Higgs: You shouldn't--

Boson: How long?

Higgs: I'm not getting a collapse time.

Boson: What?

Higgs: Look! The field is fully formed, and no collapse time. It's stable.

Boson: That's impossible. The field's integrity is quantum-tied to the half-life of the sample. Unless that was more stable than we anticipated. Can you get a reading on its size?

Higgs: Size?

Boson: Space the field is taking up. In three dimensions.

Higgs: Do we even know if the field can be measured in three dimensions?

Boson: Of course it can, it's a 10-dimensional object.

Higgs: But then what do our three dimensions even mean, in regard to the field?

Boson: My point exactly. The shape is far longer than anticipated, four-dimensionally. So its size may be greater in every dimension.

Higgs: It's holding at... a radius of 97 meters.

Boson: Are you sure?

Higgs: Yes. 97 meters.

Boson: That's impossible.

Higgs: That's what I'm reading.

Boson: If that were happening we'd be inside the field.

Higgs: I'm just telling you what it says.

Boson: This is not good. We can't be inside the field.

Higgs: What would that do to us?

Boson: We'd be dead if we were inside the field.

Higgs: We're not dead. The field will collapse eventually, what will happen to us?

Boson: Being inside a collapsing ten-dimensional field?

Higgs: That's far larger than we anticipated.

Boson: That's impossible to say until we get more data. Now we've become the experiment.

Higgs: We're not equipped to take bio readings.

Boson: We'll worry about that later. As long as its holding we need to focus and--

(light flash)

Boson: --get an accurate measurement of the field.

Higgs: System is giving us the data now.

Boson: How long did it hold?

Higgs: Just a moment.

Boson: Karofsky's group supposedly hit 50 picoseconds last month.

Higgs: I'm sure we beat them.

Boson: So am I. Tell me.

Higgs: I'm not getting a collapse time.

Boson: What?

Higgs: Look! The field is fully formed, and no collapse time. It's stable.

Boson: That's impossible. The field's integrity is--

Higgs: -- quantum-tied to the half-life of the sample, God, I know.

Boson: Right. Give me a reading on its size in three dimensions.

Higgs: But--

Boson: Yes, it's a 10-dimensional object, and the shape is far longer than anticipated, four-dimensionally. So its size should be greater in every dimension.

Higgs: It's holding at... a radius of 74 meters.

Boson: That can't be right.

Higgs: I'm telling you, it's holding at...

Boson: I know, 97 meters.

Higgs: 74.

Boson: You said it was 97 meters and that would mean we're in it and... oh sweet Jesus it's a collapsing time loop.

Higgs: A what?

Boson: The field exists ten dimensionally, and it's wide enough to encompass us.

Higgs: And when it collapses everything snaps inward. Back to the moment it was created.

Boson: And we snap back and don't remember.

Higgs: How many times have we done it? How many times have I said this right now?

Boson: A dozen? A thousand? A million?

Higgs: There's no way to know. And if we can't remember, then we can't do anything about it. Unless we act right now.

Boson: It's getting smaller. That means we don't have much time before it collapses and--

(light flash)

Boson: --get an accurate measurement of the field.

Higgs: System is giving us the data now.

Boson: How long did it hold?

Higgs: Just a moment.

Boson: Karofsky's group... never made a field this goddamn big or long.

Higgs: What?

Boson: Look here. No collapse, and it's 45 meters wide. We are in the field and it keeps bouncing us back to the beginning when it collapses.

Higgs: Like Finnegan's Wake.

Boson: What?

Higgs: The end loops back to the beginning. Sentence fragments on both sides. "A way a lone a last a loved a long the riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve--

Boson: I don't care. Look, we're in a collapsing ten-dimensional field that snaps back time everytime it collapses. If we're stuck repeating ourselves...

Higgs: But we wouldn't. Would we?

Boson: Yes, I know, inside the field are untold quantum events which will unspin differently every time. Each iteration is getting smaller and more different because we're also collapsing seven-dimensionally.

Higgs: So what does that mean for us?

Boson: It means... that we are only noticing now when the shifts are getting more and more extreme.

Higgs: So we could have had untold iterations.

Boson: There's no way to check unless we get a reading outside the field.

Higgs: Or wait until the field shrinks past us.

Boson: Which may not be too much longer.

Higgs: Will we survive it?

Boson: We don't even know how much time has passed outside the field.

Higgs: Outside time is passing?

Boson: Exactly. The four-dimensional bounce-back only occurs within the field. Out there it may be days, or weeks. Even years. Maybe we'll be able to chart the number of iterations if we get an ac--

(light flash)

Boson: --curate measurement of the field.

Higgs: System is giving it... now...

Boson: How big is it?

Higgs: Just a moment, I--

Boson: Shut up, we're running out of time. Look! It's 19 meters wide. It ends just outside that door.

Higgs: We're inside the field. Time loops. Finnegan begin again.

Boson: Shave them off and they grow in again.

Higgs: We could walk out. Be outside the field before it collapses.

Boson: I don't think that's wise.

Higgs: And staying in here is?

Boson: We have no idea how much time has passed out there. It could be years!

Higgs: It could be. But either we walk out of the field while it stands, or it collapses on us.

Boson: Both these options sound bad.

Higgs: I'm doing it.

Boson: Don't--

Higgs: We have to try.

Boson: I can't.

Higgs: I'm going.

(HIZEN goes out the door.)

Boson: But I-- what will--

(light flash-- lights stay down, just the barest blue.)

Boson: --curate measurement of the... where did...

Higgs: *(offstage)* No stars.

Boson: How, but...

Higgs: No life.

Boson: But what happened to the... lab, the...

Higgs: *(Enters, shivering)* Time looped and collapsed. Over and over. All the time left in the world... vanishing away... A way a lone a last a loved a long the riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve--

Boson: Adam and Eve?

Higgs: Beginning to the end. Time moved on without us. All alone. Even you aren't mine.

Boze: All gone.

Higgs: Days. Maybe months. How foolish.

Boson: Not years. Not even Millennia. Celestial ages.

(They both collapse, shivering and grasping for each other.)

Boson: No stars. Heat death.

Higgs: Just the barest hints of warmth that we brought from the distant past. That will fade.

Boson: The end of time?

Higgs: And we're here to witness it.

Boson: We definitely...

Higgs: The final...

(Almost no light now. Almost no movement.)

Boson: We beat... Karof...

LIGHTS OUT.
END OF PLAY