

In one version, the room is mostly empty. The insectoidal skeleton of the dome, if it was ever really there, is gone. In its place is a chain, running from grey floor to white ceiling, glinting in the daylight that feels harsher than it appears.

It seems taut, as if holding the room together. As if, as the Earth spins, it might just be keeping the building in place, keeping the top of the structure from crumbling and drifting off and out into the sky, like some wayward balloon.

The chain's imaginary anchoring links back, coupled to other attempts to tether the world: in the early 1960s, an Italian artist is on holiday on the estate of a shirt manufacturer in the mainland of Denmark. He designs an outdoor sculpture for the grounds: a low cube in bronze. One façade of the cube is lettered upside down: 'SOCLE DU MONDE, socle magic No 3 de Piero Manzoni – 1961 – homage a Galileo'. A mathematician and telescope-maker who had been observing the moon's craters and Jupiter's moons, Galileo subscribed to the hypothetical notion that the Earth was a body in rotation around the sun, not, as was commonly held then, the reverse; as a result, he was sentenced to house arrest as a heretic. Manzoni's cube, humbly proposing itself as the base of the world, offered another further reorientation – the Earth itself as a sculpture, shifting the sense of galactic attention. We might be orbiting the sun; but it's looking at us.

The small bronze cube becomes a quiet focal point of the universe. Though why the title was etched out in French, from an Italian artist for a Danish collector, was never really explained; or, which version of the piece might even be the real epicenter of such a focus. One sits permanently outdoors in a patch of grass in the town of Henning; at least one other version makes regular appearances on the occasions of Manzoni's museum retrospectives; countless others sit blankly in wooden crates in anonymous warehouses. Mona Hatoum, thirty years later, made an oversized homage to Manzoni, her own metal *Socle du Monde* covered in magnetic filaments that make it appear writhing, intestinal. A cube made of opaque glass appears in

Iceland; another of gold appears in Central Park. Where, now, do we find the base of the world?

There is another version of the chain, in slight close up, as it sways gently back and forth. The thick, mirrored links reflect glimpsed shards of the railing that lines the window, an angular moment of what might be an adjacent rooftop.

Yet another parallel version of this moment is cached on your phone's browser, there for a week and a half; and another version in a server somewhere just on the outskirts of Amsterdam for a few months. These versions, it seems, adhere to a consensus of gravity: the chain hangs downwards, in a straight line, one link resting on the next. Time, here, passes somewhat habitually, if only marked by the lolling back and forth of the reflective chain.

Though, of course, there is another version still: here, the chain extends ever upwards, through the ceiling and up into the hard spring sky, shimmering in slices as it goes up into the stratosphere and beyond.

Somewhere past the exosphere, the Earth's pull on the chain relaxes. It might look a bit more meandering, but, away from the sludge of gravity, time ticks along a little bit faster. Winding its way past the debris of old spacecraft and decommissioned satellites out towards the asteroid belt, the chain's loosened chronology provides a link to the long future. At its other end, somewhere adrift some three odd billion miles down the line, is a version of yourself, years from now. They know that advice is useless, so instead they send messages of obscure consolation: *grow islands, stain and flex; not air, not sky; always other orbits; never the wrong veneer; there's nothing you could have done about that molar.*

Of course, at the other end of the chain, back on this Earth, all these just register as vague vibrations, a fey turn to the left or right. And bound in the clumsy chains of a quantum-linked landscape, all these versions exist at once, unevenly overlapping, awaiting an ambivalent shake to rouse and collapse.