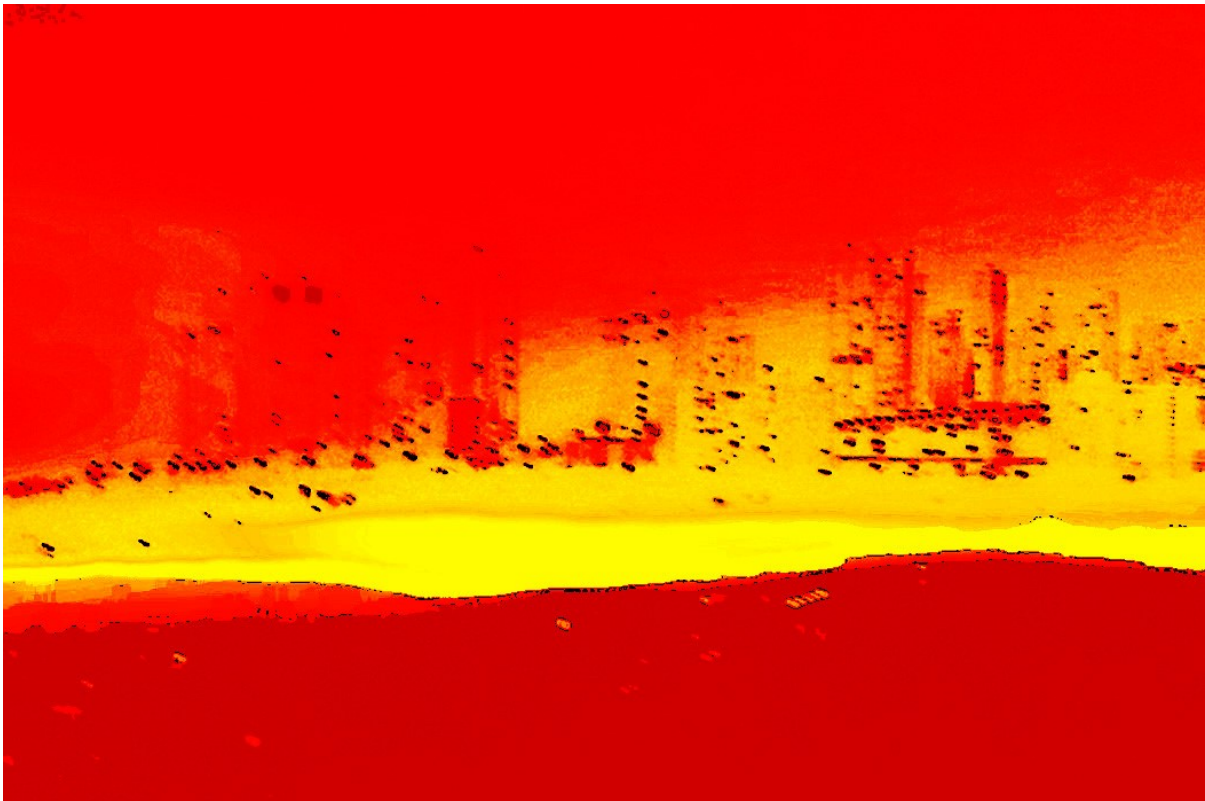


Zone Seven

by James LePore (December 2016)



Martian Dreams by James LePore

The sun rises every day on our planet, just as it does on yours. What we do, however, is project an image in the atmosphere at the horizon so that our people, if they are inclined to wake early, can start their day with something nice to look at. Today it's the skyline of the city you call New York. We have access to all of the great art ever created throughout the known universe. Our technology is such that we can set our image list to random and just let it happen. No one knows what will come up, or what to expect. We set a timer so that the image dissolves as soon as the sun slips above the rim of our planet. We have recently had to remove some images from the rotation, images that provoke strong feelings or counterproductive thoughts. We have a team of experts working on coming up with a group of acceptable images. There are so many images available, however, that we believe we can continue our "Sunrise Image" project for quite a long time.

We do not track time the way you do, but I can tell you this in terms you will understand: our technology is at what you would call the sub-atomic level, so

much so that energy and matter are indistinguishable. We are close to having all of our "technology" in a small field of pure energy accessed by thought. In terms of your time, we are perhaps a billion of your years ahead of you.

You are wondering if we have borders. The answer is we do. Our planet is divided into zones. Travel between them is not allowed. This helps prevent the spread of bad ideas. We thought we could end this problem (bad ideas) with an implant in the brain, but there is some process that we do not understand by which the implant is spontaneously disabled and sometimes perverted to anti-social uses. Some attribute this to the "soul," an ephemeral thing that some say lives on after we die. This would be laughable, except that it causes so much trouble. We have found that we cannot kill all of our citizens who think they have a soul. There are too many of them who are too productive in many ways beneficial to our planet as a whole. We are in the process of placing them all in a special zone, which we're calling Zone Seven. They can work from anywhere so will still be productive. We are going to let them breed, but take their offspring at an early age to study them. We are of course concerned that when we start taking their offspring they will stop reproducing, but we have ways to compel breeding. They can be quite painful, so we are hoping that people in Zone Seven will continue to breed the normal way for fear of the alternative.

I can tell by your brain activity that you are agitated, that you would like to ask questions. Questions are not allowed. It is at this point that I usually end these sessions, and so it has to be with you. You won't remember any of this when you wake up, but in your next dream I'll tell you how things are working out in Zone Seven. If you can control your emotions, we will have numerous sessions. It may turn out that you will be one of the lucky ones, who we will allow to remember all that we have discussed, one of those who will lead your planet into the future.

James LePore practiced law for twenty-plus years, then turned to writing fiction and taking pictures full time in 1999. In 2009 his first novel, *A World I Never Made*, was published by The Story Plant. Four others, in what LePore calls *The*

Invictus Cycle, followed. He has written a book of short stories called *Anyone Can Die*, a volume of flash fiction (*Blood, Light and Time*) that evolved from a series of blog posts, and three historical novels, with the screenwriter Carlos Davis, featuring J.R.R. Tolkien and Ian Fleming in WW2 espionage adventures. His latest release is a novella entitled *Breathe in Grace*. His website is [here](#).

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