

Death In Large Numbers



STEPHEN J. ANDERSON

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Alan was dead. Otherwise, it'd been a good day.

Summer was fading fast, and he'd decided he wasn't going to miss the last few glorious days. He'd called in sick with a stomach bug, and then he'd called up his girlfriend and told her they were going to the beach. They had spent a windswept, happy day doing nothing in particular, but then the skies closed in. The air turned steel grey and the rain started to fall.

They had run for shelter, and he remembered the sight of Emma ahead of him, rain plastering her t-shirt to her thin back, the smell of hot pavement sizzling, the rivulets pouring over his skin and getting into his eyes. He could swear that he had felt the air start to tingle, and then everything went sharp for a moment of perfect clarity.

He was struck by a bolt of lightning.

His veins caught fire; he burned from the inside out. His vision went white, and he could smell his hair singe. He convulsed violently, his jaw muscles spasmed so intensely that his jawbone snapped in two, and then his heart stopped. For a moment everything went dark.



Alan woke up.

His eyelids lifted slowly and reluctantly. The influx of light drenched his optic nerves. He realised that he was lying on a bed, with blurred figures standing around him. As he blinked at them furiously, they resolved themselves into his mother, his father, and his brother and, sitting by the bedside, a woman he'd never seen before. He felt as if he'd been asleep for a month, and when he opened his mouth to speak, his tongue was thick and heavy.

“What was that?” he slurred.

His mother sighed and beamed. She came closer and took his hand. Alan barely felt it. It was like she was holding someone else's hand.

“You got hit by lightning, dear. Not directly, you were very lucky. You could've died.” Her eyes moist.

Alan frowned. He moved his jaw experimentally. It felt fine. His heart was beating; his skin was perhaps slightly pink, at worst. He was clearly alive, but he remembered the process of dying in complete detail.

“You were very lucky,” his mother repeated.

“If it weren't for Susan,” and here she indicated the woman who sat by the bed, “you'd have never made it to hospital.”

Alan looked at the woman. He recoiled from her intense stare. She touched his arm, gently, with affection, and tears began to roll down her cheeks. Slightly disturbed, he felt ought to say something.

“Thank you,” he mumbled, awkwardly. She smiled at him weakly.

At least the explanation made some sense of his memories. His heart probably did stop. The burning skin and cracked jawbone were probably just his memory being over-dramatic. Something nagged at him.

“Mum, where's Emma?” he asked.

His mother frowned, quizzically.

“Who's Emma?” she replied.

He stared at her.

“Emma. My girlfriend, Emma,” he said, slowly.

His mother's eyebrows raised in alarm. He heard the woman, Susan, inhale sharply.

His mother leant in towards him, holding his hand tighter. She opened and closed her mouth, apparently struggling for words.

“Alan,” she said, and hesitated again. “I don't know what you mean. Susan's your girlfriend, isn't she?”



Eventually, they had to sedate Alan to keep him calm. There'd been no rational debate. Alan knew that Emma was his girlfriend, and his mother knew that it was Susan. Eventually, Susan had fled the room in tears, and his father had hurried outside to have a hushed conversation with a doctor. One brief struggle later, and Alan was floating on a pink cloud of apathy.

Later, a neurologist came to see him, a Doctor Spring. “You can call me Jack,” he said, grinning.

Jack Spring added to the general weirdness of the day. He was over six feet tall, spindly and pale skinned. Almost albino, in fact. He wore glasses with small, dark, round lenses, and when he smiled, his incisors were unnervingly large.

As far as Alan was concerned, Spring was trying to convince him that he was crazy.

“Basically,” said Spring, “the brain is electrical. Run too much current through it, and it will short circuit, and if it does, bits of it can be damaged. If the bits of it that are damaged hold memories, then you may lose access to those memories. At least for a while.”

Alan shook his head, frustrated.

“It doesn't feel like that. It doesn't feel like I've forgotten anything. Emma's my girlfriend, always has been, since uni.”

Spring rubbed his cheek, nodding.

“A little unusual. Memory loss, yes, usually temporary, but it's less common for... other memories to take their place.”

He paced his lanky frame around the room, drumming spindly fingers on the bed frame as he passed.

“I had quite a long discussion with your mother. I apologise, but we went over your relationship history in some detail. You've never been involved with anyone called Emma, as far as she knows.”

Alan sighed, rubbing his eyes with the heels of his hands.

“Look,” he said, pointedly, “I've no idea what's going on here, but she has to know about her. I've been going out with her for seven years, she's met her dozens of times! They write to each other, for God's sake! Emma is my girlfriend, and I'm not fucking crazy!”

“Please, Mr. Winters,” said Spring soothingly, “No one's saying you're crazy, it's just...” He broke off, and stared at Alan, frowning deeply.

“What?” Alan demanded. No answer was immediately forthcoming. “What is it now?” he said, sitting up in bed.

Spring took a deep breath.

“Mr. Winters, did you say you met Emma at university? Seven years ago?”

“Yes! I met her at fucking university!”

Spring clasped his hands behind his back, smiling oddly.

“According to your mother, Mr. Winters, you left Sixth Form and never went to university. You went traveling around Europe, where you had a succession of short-term girlfriends. You only got together with Susan about two years ago.”

Alan stared at him, too confused and angry to even speak. Spring fished around in his pockets.

“What I'd like to do, Mr. Winters, is run some tests on you, if that's alright...”

Alan never got the chance to answer him, and Spring never found what he was looking for.

A whistling noise had begun, too faint to locate the origin. Alan looked around, searching in vain for the source. It rose in pitch and volume, unmistakably drawing closer, then turned into an unearthly shriek, and ended with the roof of the hospital suddenly collapsing in on them.

When Spring managed to emerge from the blanket of dust and plaster that covered him, he found his patient spread out on top of a broken bed. A steaming, hissing meteorite, radiating heat, sat on top of what was left of him.

Spring looked down at the remains, and then peered up through the hole in the ceiling. He looked down again.

“Well,” he said to himself, “you don't see that every day.”



“So,” said Alan despairingly, “I woke up and I was here. I don't even have a girlfriend anymore. I don't have a job and my friends are all different. And they all think I'm crazy.”

This time, when Alan had awoken, he'd decided to play along. He had no idea what was happening to him, but he was coming around to the idea that he might be crazy.

He'd attempted to adapt to his new life. He'd feigned memory loss to cover his lack of knowledge, which wasn't that far from the truth. He

wasn't sleeping much, and it was starting to show, starting to worry his family. He didn't want to tell them that he was having nightmares. He didn't want to tell them that he kept waking up from terrifyingly vivid dreams of being crushed under a meteorite, bones splintering, internal organs crushed and torn.

Of course, that hadn't happened. A meteorite had crashed into his house, but he'd just been struck by flying debris, knocking him unconscious.

Yet, he still remembered dying.

Twenty-three days after waking, he had seen an advert in a magazine for a therapist. The therapist's name was Jack Spring. Alan had taken it as a sign.

Spring sighed and adjusted the steel circles of his glasses on his nose. He paused in his tracks and stared at Alan through dark blue lenses. His pale, almost albino skin gleamed in the bright sunlight, even outshining his white linen suit.

“And is anything else different?” he asked.

Alan gave a short, helpless laugh.

Spring had insisted they go for a walk while they talked, explaining that his air conditioning had broken down, and the heat would be intolerable. They were walking along Camden High Street toward Inverness Street, through stalls selling bananas, pineapples, mangoes and melons, past brightly coloured stores and slightly dressed women. Bars that were mostly garden were scattered along the road. Rainbow parasols clustered like fungi around the bases of the gently creaking palm trees.

“Well, for one thing,” Alan said, “I don't remember Britain being so tropical.”

Spring raised an eyebrow and glanced around the street.

“It's actually quite mild this year. Anyway, your story makes a sort of sense, even if this doesn't.” He was waving an object about in his hand. Alan peered at it. It was about the size of a packet of cigarettes, and looked like it was made from solidified pink fog. Subtle lights danced around inside it.

“What's that?” he asked.

“This,” said Spring, “I do believe, is what the other Jack Spring was going to use on you, although I can hardly credit what it's telling me. It says that you aren't fully in this universe.”

“Oh.” He looked blankly at Spring. “What are you on about?” Spring sighed.

“Are you familiar with the concept of parallel universes? Multiple versions of reality, each different in some way, but all co-existing? Like multiple versions of your life, what it might have become if you'd made different decisions?”

“Sort of,” said Alan doubtfully. “Think I saw a programme on it once. Didn't pay much attention to it.”

“Well, if I read this right,” said Spring, waving his device vaguely at Alan, “you are not properly here. You're partially in this version of reality, and partially somewhere else—the universe that you came from originally, I think. Do you understand?”

Alan frowned.

“Sort of,” he said again. “But what does it mean?”

Spring walked again, clasping his hands behind his back.

“I can only hypothesize, you understand. I believe that, when you were struck by lightning, it unlocked within you a potential you never

knew you had. I believe that your experience, and your proximity to death, caused an alteration in your quantum state and connected you to other selves, other copies of you, scattered across parallel universes, each one different in some way from your own. You are experiencing the lives of these other selves as if they were yours.”

Spring suddenly turned and strode toward a fruit stall. Alan trudged after him, sweating.

“And each self,” Spring said, as if he'd merely paused for breath, “each other version of you—based on limited evidence—seems to be on the verge of an unlikely death.”

Alan leant against the wooden frame of the stall. He frowned, trying to bend his head around the concept.

“Well, I think I get what you mean. Sort of. But that doesn't make sense. It's not like I'm connected—I am them. I'm living their lives.”

He sagged and cradled his forehead in his palm.

“Fuck that, how do I get it to stop? How do I get my life back?”

Spring gazed off into the distance.

“Yes, I'm not really sure about that one...”

He smiled brightly, long incisors flashing in the sunlight.

“But *nil desperandum*, old chap. I'm sure I'll work it out. Pass me a banana, would you?”

Alan blinked and looked down. The side of the stall was stacked with ripe fruit, the sweet smell heavy in the air. He leant down to pick up a bunch. He barely saw the array of black eyes, glinting in the darkness, before the spider dashed out from its hiding place and sunk its fangs into the back of his hand.

“Fuck!” Alan yelled, shook the huge, hairy body away from him, and stared at Spring in disbelief. Realisation crept upon him.

“Oh, you've got to be kidding me...”



Alan gently rocked backwards and forwards on the *tatami* mat, shaking his head.

“A spider? I got bit by a spider on Camden High Street? Un-fucking-believable.”

Jack Spring looked up from his meditation. He adjusted his circular glasses and gazed at Winters through dark blue lenses. He pursed his lips.

“Indeed. You tell a strange tale, Winters-san, but not one completely outside my experience.”

Spring tapped an object to his right with two straightened fingers. It appeared to Alan to be the twin of the device he had seen before, misty pink and organic. Lights flashed mysteriously within it.

“If nothing else, the device confirms elements of your story. Although...” Spring's voice tailed off. He frowned deeply.

“No mind. From your description, the spider in question would appear to *Phoneutria fera*, the Brazilian Wandering Spider. It is one of the deadliest spiders in the world, and a very rare visitor to these shores. Your streak of poor luck continues.”

“You're fucking telling me,” said Alan, loudly. “So, you think that he... I mean you... the other you was right?”

Spring's frown almost cut his forehead in two.

“Perhaps. You see, Winters-san, I am, possibly, of a more spiritual inclination than my parallel self. I offer a subtly different interpretation. A guess, nothing more, it pains me to say.”

Alan waved his hands, despairing. “Whatever.”

Spring coughed.

“I believe that you are a roaming soul. I believe that you, in your true reality, hover on the brink of death. Some special circumstance—perhaps this lightning bolt you speak of—has cast your consciousness, your spirit, free to roam the parallel dimensions. But your spirit is drawn inexorably to other versions of yourself also on the brink of death, there to possess them, to become them, for that brief span before they must go to their fate. Perhaps you do this out of empathy, or perhaps your soul is attempting to come to terms with its own impending end.”

“Very New Age.” Alan laughed shortly. “You remind me of my girlfriend. Well, one of them, anyway,” he finished sourly.

He stood up, wincing at his cramped knees, and walked to the window, arms folded.

He watched the strange world hurry about its unfamiliar business. Spring continued.

“Your soul is on a journey, your possibilities are diminishing. I believe that you will suffer more and more likely forms of mortality, until finally you experience the most commonplace death of all. And then, your understanding of death complete, your journey done, you will return to your own reality and body, there to meet your own end.”

Alan pulled faces as he mulled the idea over.

“You mean that I'm stuck like this? That I'm just going to keep dying? That I'm going to have to keep doing this over and over?”

Spring bowed his head. "I believe this to be true."

Alan snorted, angrily. "Fantastic. That's my life, is it? Spending every day worrying about what's going to happen to me next, and all I've got to look forward to is death. And I've got no fucking idea how long I've got left."

Spring laughed, lightly. Alan glared at him. He could've sworn the investigator's eyes twinkled behind the dark lenses.

"I am sorry, Winters-san, but... perhaps that is all any of us can say."



Alan left the offices of Spring Spiritual Investigations in a foul mood, and died in a freak fireworks accident.

Unwilling to accept that this was going to be the rest of his life, he rebelled against fate or karma or whatever was doing this to him. He never found much out about his next life. He locked himself inside his house and refused to venture out or even answer the door. He spent a sleepless week pacing the floors, trying not to think about his diminishing food supplies. Eventually, exhausted, he lay on his bed and drifted off into a dreamless slumber, book cradled on his chest, bedside lamp still burning bright.

Around midnight, his lamp shorted out and the bulb blew. A tiny, red-hot grim reaper leapt from the shattered remains and landed on his pyjamas. He burnt to death.

Apparently, this was quite unlikely.

Passive resistance was not going to work. He became hyper-vigilant, examining every situation minutely for its lethal possibilities.

He found himself living in an England still ruled by the Royal Stuarts. He decided he would keep a mental journal of the strange places

where he found himself living and, more importantly, dying. His method of death had never repeated itself, but maybe there was some subtle pattern. Maybe there was a clue, or a way out, hidden in the designs of his demise. Maybe he could even learn to see Death before it saw him.

In Royal Stuart England, he avoided a possibly embarrassing duel of honour, but died of syphilis.

On a world suffering from unceasing war, the ground collapsed beneath his feet and he plummeted into the sewers. He drowned.

In a purely matriarchal society, he was savaged by dogs. Five lifetimes later, on a parallel world entirely covered by rainforest, he was deeply surprised when he was crushed by another meteorite. He made a point of tracking down the next Jack Spring and complaining. This incarnation turned out to be a Catholic priest.

“I thought you... I mean he... you said I was going to get more likely deaths?”

“Perhaps I'm not as smart as I think I am,” Spring replied. Then he grinned like a hyena.

The lives and deaths continued, some less likely, some more, but with no discernible pattern. On a version of Earth with a single, unbroken landmass, ruled by children, where the national language consisted of fragments of torch songs, he was killed in a tragic collision between a streetcar and an elephant.

He gave up.



He began to live with abandon. He was unable to take pleasure in lives that he knew would be snatched away from him, and unable to face another agonising death. Each of his fates so far had been

uniquely painful, and he experienced them all in excruciating detail. He sought to dull his senses and waste away his time in a hedonistic haze.

He also spent a lot of time with the various Jack Springs he encountered. Despite the bizarre variety of lives and unfamiliar worlds, he was the one constant. In every reality, there would always be a Jack Spring, and he was always roughly the same person. He became the closest thing Alan had to a friend.

During one kaleidoscopically pharmaceutical binge, he staggered into the hotel room he was sharing with Spring and wagged a multi-coloured finger at him.

“Now, listen,” he said, “You really have to tell me who you are. Why are you always here?”

Spring knocked back a purple pill with a swig of beer and giggled. “If I told you, you wouldn't believe me.”

Alan shook his head determinedly. “No, really, tell me,” he slurred.

Spring shrugged, and told him. Alan didn't believe him.

“I envy you, you know,” said Spring. Alan stared at him perplexedly.

“No, really, really I do. I always figured that people were afraid of death because they don't understand it. Well, you probably understand death better than anyone.”

Alan shook his head.

“You mean,” he said sourly, “I know more about stupid ways of dying than anyone.”

“No,” replied Spring, “it's all just a matter of degree, right? I mean, you've had a heart attack, right?”

Alan conceded this was true. He had fallen into a vat of electric eels.

“So, lots of people have heart attacks. Not the way you did, but still. You've got a very special perspective. You know more about death and how it happens than anyone. People would give a lot to know what you know.”



Over the next few lifetimes, Alan thought about what Spring had said. He was dimly aware that he had lost control many worlds ago. The worlds he awoke to became irrelevant, and friends and family were insubstantial ciphers. Always, his first act would be to seek oblivion in some bar or drug den. Wonders jostled past the windows, and he ignored them all.

But.

He was bored. He'd exhausted every short-term thrill. There were things he'd always wanted to do, but they took precious time. He'd never managed to learn to play the saxophone; he'd tried, but he'd blown too hard and ruptured his lung. He tried to catch up on his reading but, always assuming he could find the book again on the next alternate world, he had trouble remembering where he'd left off. He felt as if he were trapped in a hamster wheel.

He began to see something. Spring was right: he really had become familiar with death, in all its forms. He knew its character and shape, knew its moods like a lover's.

Although he could never predict how it would come for him, he could see it waiting for others. He began to see people's fates before they happened. This person would die in a car crash, that one would succumb to cancer, this man would commit suicide.

Out of curiosity, he tried intervening. He didn't do it for altruistic reasons, or for gratitude, which was just as well. He was just trying to keep himself occupied.

He began to take perverse pleasure in his Good Samaritan performances. Snatching people from the jaws of Death was a powerful thrill. It became a game, a race, a battle of wits against an imaginary enemy. Alan began to take each life he failed to save personally, as if it were a point he'd lost in a cosmic game. He would linger near the scenes of his failures, staring unhappily at the corpse, ignoring the odd looks he gathered.

The difference between a live and dead human was stark, and the peaceful deaths were most disturbing of all. Their bodies looked as if they had merely paused, as if they would at any moment get up, walk, talk, smile, eat lunch. At the same time, something vital had clearly fled the body, and he began to understand why people believed in souls. He wondered what it was that moved flesh.

Wards occupied by the terminally ill began to fascinate him. As soon as he awoke from each new death, he would quit his job and apply for menial work in any hospital that would take him. He spent as long as he could with the dying without arousing suspicion.

He saw the myriad, trivial, undignified ways in which people usually pass from the world. Alan had been shot, poisoned, bit, struck by flying objects and, worst, demolished from within by a flesh-eating bug. They, on the other hand, were wracked by cancer, had their dignity removed by bowel disease, or their bodies crushed by speeding vehicles. Some had their limbs removed, piece by piece, in a futile struggle against decay. Alan began to think that, in a certain light, he was lucky. His deaths tended to be sharp and brutal, but almost...well...glamorous? He was sure every one of his obituaries had been blackly funny. No one grinned as these poor sods faded away.

Every day he would be there with flowers and gifts and a happy word. For the brief time, before his own fate caught up with him, he would become a minor celebrity, his appearance at the ward always welcome. He hovered over the beds of the doomed, desperate to be there at their passing.

Worlds flickered past like television channels.



In the end, his quest proved fruitless. The hospital staff would—quite rightly—remove him from the rooms of the dying. He had no business being there, and they had lives to save. There was one exception, an old man being devoured by a vicious cancer. He had asked not to be resuscitated.

They had spent hours talking, the man's voice an unceasing whisper, his story spooling from his lips. Alan was fascinated. He thought, jaded as he was, that there was nothing he hadn't experienced, but this man had done things and been places that Alan didn't even know existed. He had used every second. When he was done, his life rewound, he paused and parted his lips. Air rattled into his lungs. His eyes widened suddenly. His back arched and his hand grabbed for Alan's, anchoring them together.

Alan jolted in terror, his mind frozen. He knew he should do something, but couldn't bring himself to move, or even speak. This was what he'd been waiting for, wasn't it? Torn between fear and fascination, he clamped his free hand over the old man's.

The dying man's mouth opened wide, his eyes staring beyond the room, and he gasped as if surprised. His jaw never closed again, but slackened as his head tilted back. His arched back slowly relaxed, and his eyes lost focus. His chest stopped its irregular motion.

And that was that.



Alan spent the evening wandering in a morose and aimless way around a nearby park, and by coincidence, bumped into another Jack Spring.

He hadn't met one for several lifetimes now, and was genuinely pleased to see something like a friendly face. Of course, this Jack Spring didn't know him, so Alan told him his story. He'd become so practised at telling it, he barely thought about it. The words just tumbled from his lips in a gentle sing-song way. Spring listened quietly whilst they walked by the lake, raising his eyebrows here and there. Halfway through he fished another version of the cloudy pink device from his pocket, scrutinised it briefly and then, apparently satisfied, waved at Alan to continue.

It was twilight by the time Alan had finished. Spring stood silently for a moment, gazing out over the dim waters.

"That's a strange story," he said, "but I think I believe you." He smiled oddly. "I think I'm very lucky to have met you."

Alan frowned. "The problem is, I'm still no closer to understanding what's happening to me. I didn't see anything, the old man just died. He just stopped. I mean, is that it? Is that all? We live for no reason, there's no sense in the way we die, and when we die we just stop? There's nothing left but a body, and nothing happens afterwards. No soul, no afterlife, no purpose."

He knelt by the lakeside, rooting for a stone. He found a small, flat one and flung it out over the lake. It skipped bitterly over the water, then sank in despair.

Spring murmured to himself, his hands behind his back. He was dressed oddly, even when compared to his alter-egos. It was a warm day, but he was in a heavy, hairy brown coat, with matching fedora. His eyes were covered by square, reflective lenses. He took a deep breath.

“Not at all. Our purposes are given to us by fate. You may believe that you have no purpose, but I know that I have a destiny.”

Alan looked at him cynically. “Which is?” he asked.

Spring smiled mysteriously. “A man's destiny is a personal thing. Perhaps your destiny was to meet me, here, on this night.”

Alan raised an eyebrow, then snorted. He turned back to look at the fading light on the water.

“So, what do you do? As a job, I mean?” he asked.

Spring smiled again.

“Well, I'm not Jack Spring the Neurologist or Jack Spring the Psychologist, that's for certain. Jack Spring the Counselor, perhaps, depending on your point of view.”

He beamed widely. He shifted his position. Out of the corner of his eye, Alan thought he saw a brief flash of something metallic and sharp lurking in Spring's palm.

“I wouldn't so much call it a job, more of a calling.”

Alan stared at him blankly. He began to giggle. Spring frowned at him, and Alan started to laugh. His laugh became huge, roaring, the laugh of someone who'd finally got the punchline. He bent over, holding his stomach, hardly able to breathe. Spring stepped forwards, a sharp shard of metal slipping out of his voluminous sleeve into his hand.

Alan felt the knife slip into his neck, but couldn't stop laughing. He saw his blood gush out onto the pebbles and fan out into the water,

and thought it was the funniest thing he'd ever seen. He sank to his knees and laughed until he was spitting blood. A wave of dizziness swept over him, and he fell into oblivion.



Alan woke up.

He woke up in a room exactly like his bedroom, in a house exactly like his house, on a street exactly like his street. He wandered down stairs, exactly like his stairs, and into a kitchen, exactly like his kitchen. A man called George kissed him good morning. He shrugged and thought, close enough.

They went to the beach.

Author's Notes

Death in Large Numbers was my first completed short story, and by a stroke of luck was also my first published story. Not long after I finished it, [Another Sky Press](#)¹ began looking for submissions for their anthology, [Falling From The Sky](#)².

Another Sky were one of the earlier publishers to experiment with new publishing business models. They call their model “neo-patronage”, which is pretty similar to the [Humble Bundle's](#)³ “pay-what-you-want” approach. All of their publications are downloadable for a optional contribution. If you want, you can download them for free. If you enjoyed what you read, you can always go back later to contribute or buy a bound copy. You, the reader, get to say what the book is worth⁴.

I'd been wearing my friends' patience thin with tirades about the media industries losing the trust of their customers, and about technology making a mockery of the legal and social frameworks for copyright⁵. It was an irresistible opportunity, and I was very happy when they decided to accept **Death In Large Numbers**⁶ for publication. I think the anthology turned out well, it's full of wonderfully odd pieces and fully worthy of your time.

The original idea for the story came from the cognitive bias we have towards scary-sounding but unlikely causes of death, but it went through years of false starts before I could make any headway. It was mostly completed on the long train-ride to and from my first software contracting job.

While I was researching it, I spent a long time thinking about death, and what's really likely to kill you. The figures from the [Office of National Statistics Causes of Death](#)⁷ were good for context. There's a lot of anecdotes about what it's like to get struck by lightning on the Web; [this piece on Asylum](#)⁸ is pretty interesting. [Lightning strikes have a surprisingly high survival rate](#)⁹.

For this version, I've used a three open-source fonts: [Chivo from Omnibus Type](#)¹⁰ for the main body text, [Pirata One by Rodrigo Fuenzalida and Nicolas Massi](#)¹¹ for the main title and [Cabin by Pablo Impalari](#)¹² for the author's name and other titles.

If you enjoyed this story, please let me know. I can be found in the following places:

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1. <http://www.anothersky.org/>
2. <http://anothersky.org/asp/in-print/falling-from-the-sky-anthology/>
3. <https://www.humblebundle.com/>
4. If you want, you can also get it for a flat fee from Amazon, Powells or The Book Depository.
5. For examples, check out [Techdirt](http://www.techdirt.com/blog/?tag=copyright) (<http://www.techdirt.com/blog/?tag=copyright>); it's a libertarian-leaning blog that spends most of its time documenting collisions between technology and the law, and a lot of the stories are about copyright law.
6. That's weird. Every time I write "Death In Large Numbers", the font changes. Hmmm...
7. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Causes+of+Death>
8. <http://www.asylum.com/2010/04/07/what-is-it-really-like-to-be-struck-by-lightning-we-asked-survi/>
9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightning_strike%23Lightning.27s_interaction_with_the_body
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