

GREENACHE

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Waking in the ashgrey hours of the morning he heard his dead wife sing. Dimitri eyes tightly closed and felt his muscles grow rigid with dismay.

Footsteps. A shadow fell across his eyelids, turning the pulsing red a darker shade. The shadow seemed to hesitate.

No, don't kiss me!

The shadow vanished and her voice drifted to the tiny kitchen. She still sang, her voice soft and glad.

"Starman, o starman,

whatever you do,

don't shift

my red eyes blue!"

A surge of the house current must have nudged the sensurround recorder in the kitchen mode, resurrecting a ghost almost seven years old.

He still remembered spraying the recorder on the wall. Thin filaments, invisible to the human eye. It had a ten billion byte memory and it would keep recording their contact forever.

"When we're old," Jocelyn had said. "Real ancient, you know, old and gnarled, we'll visit our younger selves."

The recorder was flexible, that was the most horrible thing. It could interact, making old recordings talk with their latterday versions.

He rolled from the sleep pallet and found the jutting control panel by touch.

"Dimitri? You're awake?"

He shuddered. She sounded so alive!

He touched the switch in the upper left corner and her voice faded. Dimitri opened his eyes. He was alone.

A successful exorcism. But his wife would be back. Short of tearing down the walls there was no way to stop the recorder permanently.

We wanted it to last, he thought. Only the very best was good enough for us. And we couldn't afford it.

He walked to the kitchen and drew a glass of bitter coffee. The house was very silent.

Like a tomb. And all the ghosts want to talk to me.

His computer chimed, the screen flashing an urgent blue. Government override. He

