

# Musing in Space

*By Dennis Knight*

I remarked to a good friend about the daunting task of writing on the subject of space, and that it could mean anything from outer space to the space between your teeth. She laughed and recalled how her grandmother in Germany would tell her the space between her teeth meant she would see the world.

Space to live, grow and function is as necessary to a bee in a hive as it is to a pronghorn on the Wyoming plains. It is the canvas on which an eagle will soar and a rose will bloom.

Space is art. To an advertising designer, white space is magic to capture the eye. Artists brush positive and negative spaces into their masterpieces. Architects build with the same aesthetic. Photographers use space to frame their subjects. Poets punctuate with space and form.

Space is tempo. Composers imbue space into their music and call it rhythm. Who could ask for anything more? Frank Sinatra was known for his phrasing, which means he had command of space. "How deep is the ocean?" he sang, "How high the moon?" Both are matters of space.

Space is place and sequence. Envision a silent Charlie Chaplin creating a story without props in the space of an empty back lot. Alfred Hitchcock could employ the simple space of a bloody shower floor, or deftly space characters in a scene to tell us how one relates to the other. Think of Jack Benny provoking extra laughs by inserting a drawn out space of silence in his delivery.

Space is mathematical. The farmer spaces seeds with exactness to thrive in the rows he has aligned to allow space for tractor wheels cultivating fields he has plotted to make the greatest use of his space and the tool of gravity. A geometry student uses pi to calculate the space in a circle. In industry, without space calculated into the progression, Fords would crash on the assembly line.

Space is safety. Controllers in towers monitor and keep spaces between airplanes, and on the ground, the space you keep between yourself and the car ahead may be the space between life and death.

Space is motion. A basketball team uses space to create offense and frustrate defense. In baseball, the fortunes of pitcher and batter rest on one creating and the other closing space between bat and ball. Football players close space or separate it. Cyclists, runners and swimmers manage their own relationships to space. Space to a boxer may be the difference between a knockout and a glove held high in triumph. A jockey maneuvers for space on the outside to ride her colt to victory.

Space is personal. We make space in our home for company and find a private space for solitude. We have space in our heart for loved ones and save some of it for ourselves. We keep our space from strangers but let it be a space for friendship to grow.

Space is serenity. A Japanese gardener uses space to show balance in nature, and in the same vein the Chinese have given us Feng Shui, using space to create harmony in our homes and offices. A quiet space in the forest gives way to a waterfall. A sunbeam and a tabby find each other in a space by the window.

The beauty of space lies in its discovery. I shall keep exploring the crannies, and occupy as for as long as I may, and as respectfully as I may, my own little place in this amazing continuum.