
BETH MARZONI

***After Viewing Cold, Dark Matter: An Exploded View
(1991) by Cornelia Parker***

Splintered wood makes the halo around this moment, lit from within by a single bulb. Scientists don't agree about the Big Bang or God, or whether the universe is expanding or contracting. There were no witnesses, and they've not yet invented a measure. But Cornelia Parker knows how much dynamite it takes. She packed the old garden shed with all the knick-knacks of a quiet country life, then called in the National Guard to do the dirty work. In the museum she strung destruction up on fishing wire. No photograph could do the trick of capturing the moment everything changed. Children excitedly point out what's recognizable: a bicycle wheel, a roller skate, a doll without a head, a horseshoe, an oil can. Some of their parents call it art. Others, at least the ones standing next to me, say it is a shame she gets off on blowing stuff up. In an interview, the National Guardsmen said they thought it a strange request, but all the paperwork was filled out properly. The scientists did not have an opinion, but announced their latest discovery. Even black holes, they say, sing.