

Solar Systems Lecture Q&A

Her long white hair is braided down her back
like a lightning rod and when the microphone
is placed into her hand she speaks and her voice is the low
gentle growl of a pack-a-day smoker.

She looks at the professor in his wrinkled pinstripe suit
and compliments him on the merit of his lecture
but disagrees with his theory of the universe.
The earth, she tells the professor, rests on

the back of a sea turtle who rests on
the back of a larger sea turtle who rests on
the back of a larger sea turtle who rests on—
well, you get the picture.
And the professor pauses

unsure of how to respond to the sea turtle
theory of everything.
So what does the largest sea turtle of all rest upon—
he finally replies. Ah but that's the trick—
she shakes her head the white static on her back whips—
the sea turtles are forever
each on another's back.

He counters—there is no scientific evidence to suggest
that turtles hold up the universe.
The thin woman just smiles and holds the microphone tightly
her veins ripple under the skin. But neither do you—

her voice a chuckle—have any proof.
And the professor is silent, then mumbles something
about logic, and commands *next question*.
She sits down, the tip of her braid tucked
beneath her faded jeans
and twirls the ring—a faded turquoise—on her left hand
around and around and around and around and