

# Between Fiction and Reality

OK. I'm almost done with space shuttle posts. I've stayed up late to watch the launch, and then the docking. I've delivered tired rants about the end of an era to anyone unfortunate enough to stay still in my vicinity for more than five minutes. But I thought I might quote CmdrTaco from slashdot, who got to see the launch firsthand, and who says what I mean:

*Everyone cheered. Yelled. Whooped. The excitement was unbelievable. I actually teared up, but I'm pretty sure nobody noticed me wiping my eyes with my shirt. The folks closest to me know that this isn't exactly an uncommon event for me, but I felt it all come back: A little kid alone in his basement building a puzzle of the shuttle, dreaming of space. Watching my dad play a silly Apollo moon lander simulation game on a monochrome Compaq 8086 PC luggable. Seeing Challenger through the library window on a day when I was too young to understand what it meant for 7 people to die in the name of science exploration. I learned about computers because of all this stuff. The Space Shuttle was an honest to god spaceship. It filled the gap between science fiction and science reality.*

*I don't know what's next for NASA. For manned spaceflight. For the Kennedy Space Center itself. Times are changing: with the rise of Space-X and the constant budget concerns, it's unclear which of our hopes and dreams will actually come to fruition. But I was a little kid who dreamt of the shuttle. I have a 3 year old now, and I told him before I left that I was going to go see a Spaceship, and I think he thought I was lying. He knows the Millennium Falcon is a spaceship, but that it's also pretend. Atlantis was real. I saw it with my own eyes with a tower of fire underneath it. It shook my body and I hope my sons have something to inspire them the same way.*

*We're going to pay the Russians to put our guys in space now. And when we do finally get back up there on our own, it won't be the same it'll be just a capsule...*

Oh, and one last link. Go [here](#), thanks to Josh, one of those who stayed still for more than five minutes.