

## **Brother Encounters**

**David F. Freschi**

**The ritual the same**

**Older now, much older**

**70 not really the new 40, not close**

**Dialects different but understood**

**Eyes touch a badge, a cap, recognition**

**They meet only to dart away**

**Returning searching out the signal**

**Not a mine here, no booby trap**

**A nod, "When were you there?" or "What years?"**

**First exchange done, next**

**"Who were you with or where?"**

**Ceremony done, sniffing over**

**Maybe a conversation or not**

**Brief touch or long, feeling shell lifting, settling**

**Tiny exchanges parceled out with care**

**Cross a profound abyss**

**An eye might shine with a tear**

**Desperately fought back**

**A face might light, pure joy**

**Or covered pain, hard to tell**

**Maybe the bitterness of a damaged soul**

**Unforgiving, still searching**

**An icy wave rolls sadness through your heart**

**Last steps of the ritual pass on**

**A nod, a touch a "Welcome home."**

**Move on- this one meant something**