

## A Stitch in Time

"A stitch in time?" young Alfie said.  
"That don't make sense." He scratched his head.  
"You can't sew time; it's not like cloth.  
"The saying's daft; it's tosh – it's froth."  
"Well, yes," he heard a voice reply  
"For time and space, we can't deny,  
"Do form but one continuum."  
Young Alfie scowled; he looked so glum.  
"Good grief," he moaned, "This is confusing.  
"I fear my marbles I am losing."

"Oh come," the voice said, "Cheer up lad.  
"You're fine; don't worry. You ain't mad.  
"Remember what your teacher said  
"That spacetime 's like a fabric spread  
"Which gravity may pull and bend."  
"I do," said Alf, "I'll not pretend  
"I followed all 'cause it was weird.  
"For space and time, so it appeared,  
"Can be distorted, can be bent."  
"And even," the voice added, "rent."

"You mean get torn?" said Alf alarmed.  
"That's dangerous; we'll all be harmed."  
"Oh yes," the voiced replied "it's scary  
"When such a tear greets the unwary.  
"But those who know just what to do,  
"Just like my able space-ship crew,  
"Will stitch the spacetime fabric's tear  
"And thus their universe repair."  
"Oh wow!" cried Alf, "they sound so brave.  
"But what's the nine the stitch does save?"

"The nine were me and colleagues eight  
"Whose job it is to investigate  
"Irregularities reported  
"When spacetime fabric is distorted.  
"On that occasion when we stitched  
"The dang'rous tear and were not pitched  
"Into another universe  
"Wherein our atoms might disperse,  
"The news was given this headline:  
"A stitch in time has saved the nine!"

"I guess," said Alf, "my teacher did  
"Misquote it slightly, or amid  
"Distracting murm'ring I misheard  
"And did not catch quite every word."  
"No matter," said the voice, "for it's  
"Uncommon that something transmits  
"From universe to universe.  
"And Chinese whispers intersperse  
"To change the wording here and there  
"Which may the message thus impair."

"But tell me, please," young Alfie said,  
"Just where you are; from overhead  
"Your voice does seem to come, and yet  
"There's no one there; and I'm beset  
"With fear and doubt and dread confusion.  
"For are you real or just illusion?"  
"I'm real enough," the voice replied,  
"But can't be seen for I abide  
"Within another universe  
"And can't from mine to yours traverse."

"Oh wow!" said Alf, "that's great – that's cool!  
"Just wait till I tell them at school  
"A real live alien's spoken to me  
"And talked as if he really knew me."  
But when next day he told the class,  
They laughed and cried: "You silly ass!  
"You've told too many lies before,  
"We do not believe you any more.  
"Your story's daft, far-fetched and tosh!  
"Stop telling us such awful bosh!"

The moral of this story's plain:  
If you tell yarns time and again  
To trick your mates, you'll be a pain.  
And if one day you should obtain  
Some startling truth, 'twill be in vain  
You tell your tale. So please refrain  
From telling lies, and you will gain  
Respect and your good name retain.