

Re-Entry

TWRP

Weightlessness is such a joy. Floating around effortlessly, like a superpower, for almost half a year. But it was also really joyful to know that I was coming back home

People think about spaceflight, they think about launch- and- and maybe they think about weightlessness, and floating up in space. But most people don't think about coming back down, to Earth

My name's Chris Hadfield, I've flown in space three times

My third spaceflight, I was the pilot of a Russian spaceship: the Soyuz. After six months in space, uh, climbed into my pressure suit, and climbed into the Soyuz and strapped back into my chair, and got ready to undock from the space station

It's a really melancholy moment; I knew it was my last spaceflight. I was thinking how to fly the ship home, but I was also thinking about the amazing adventure that I'd just been on

But we did all of our checks, and we drove the hooks. That released us from the space station. Then we could fire the big engine to get our vehicle turned around the right way, so it would slow down our orbit so we could fall away from the space station

And as the engine fired and slowed down our orbit, that was fine. And then, now you're going slow enough that you don't even have enough fuel that you could get back into orbit again
You're committed

And the vehicle is in three pieces. And when the air starts to get thicker, just way at the top of the atmosphere: an explosion happens

And it breaks those three pieces into individual parts, so the engine piece flies off, and the living quarters, it flies off, and they tumble away, and they burn up in the atmosphere

Our vehicle, in the middle of that explosion, turns itself so that, as we start to enter the thickest atmosphere, it can take the heat, and, it burns around you so bizarrely. To look out the window, and see flame licking around your ship

And suddenly I heard a 'bang!'

I was thinking, 'Oh, so this is how I'm gonna die'

And then there was another, 'bang!'

And more sparks went by the window

But as the air slows you down and gets heavier, you get crushed

down into your seat, and then... 'bang!'

Suddenly, after weightlessness, and then all of that force and banging and all of those explosions, out pops the great big parachute. And you equalize with the air of the world; the vehicle opens a hole, basically. And, for the first time in five or six months, I could smell the world. I could smell life, I could smell grass, and Earth. It was lovely. It was so reminiscent. I felt proud, but mostly I just felt, joyful. That I was back home