

Space frog

9/13/2013

I was looking through the “Week’s Best Pictures” on the Reuters site and one of them just cracked me up. It’s a picture of the liftoff of NASA’s latest rocket, replete with the usual clouds of smoke and steam and the foreshortened perspective achieved by shooting obliquely from below. The gantry has been pulled back and a mechanical arm of some sort is falling away, almost off screen to the lower right.

All in all, this picture is just like any of the thousands of photos we’ve seen since Project Mercury first caught our imaginations.

Except for the frog.

You read that right. In the middle distance we see a frog silhouetted against the clouds of space machine effluvium. The frog’s limbs are splayed in skydiver-in-freefall style and it’s clear it leaped from somewhere. Perhaps it was sunning on the gantry and is now in mid escape from the roiling clouds of exhaust. Perhaps it just happened to jump from an off-camera platform at the perfect moment. Or perhaps it fell from space.

Doesn’t matter to me from whence it came. I just really love this picture. The frog leaping just as the rocket lifts off. We make cool machines. But we can’t make a frog.