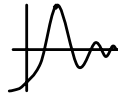


## 2 - You Can't Grow Apples on the Moon



**North Queensland, Australia – late 1979 to 1982**

Professor Reid was a figure to engage and inspire trust in even the most fractious of his students. At the front of the class, in his white shirt with sleeves precisely rolled up, in his well pressed grey pants and his complementary tie, he looked solid, trustworthy. His eyes could draw the secrets from saints and sinners alike, by the promise they held of unbreakable confidence. They were dark and they sparkled, and like his ears they missed little. He had a broad heavy mouth as quick to open in laughter as to close in reflection, and through this portal he exercised his great authoritative voice, forging enduring fusions of dry subjects hard to grasp with young minds easily distracted.

He was nearing the end of a scientific discourse; in full flight. 'Of course, ultimately it isn't possible to bring all of the elements in a natural system into complete balance,' his voice filled the classroom and forty pairs of ears, among them the young Adam Strong's.

'The forces of the universe don't allow it. Change is perhaps the universe's one true constant. It brooks no idle repose and comes in a multitude of guises, especially in our biosphere. Mountains crumble, providing a constant source of nutrients for forests that continuously develop. Species evolve, individuals age. Forest giants grow old and die and gravity lays them as a banquet on the forest floor. The organisms of decay proliferate as a result and subside as the feast is consumed. No. Truly complete balance is not possible, because change is ever present. Although you may observe instances where natural systems manage to approach balance quite closely, these are temporary states, and the only time the system is 'in the middle of the road' is when it is crossing it. That being said, while nature may never