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Cover picture: This mosaic shows images of Earth and the moon acquired by the multispectral imager on the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous Spacecraft (NEAR) on January 23, 1998, 19 hours after the spacecraft swung by Earth on its way to the asteroid 433 Eros. The images of both were taken from a range of 250,000 miles (400,000 km), approximately the same as the distance between the two bodies. This unique perspective, never seen before, shows both our planet and its moon at the relative size that each appears when viewed from the other. Also, both Earth and the Moon are viewed from above their south poles, a perspective not attainable from either body because the moon orbits high above Earth's equator. In the Earth image, the south pole is at the center and the continent of Antarctica is surrounded by sea ice and storm fronts. The image mosaic is constructed from blue, green, and infrared filters. These colors highlight differences between rock types, water, and vegetation. On Earth, the red area at the upper right side is desert and vegetation in Australia. Snow, ice, and clouds appear as subtly different shades of white and light blue. The moon's blandness, compared to Earth, arises from its lack of an atmosphere, oceans, and vegetation. For viewing purposes, the moon is shown five times brighter than in reality, and ten times closer to Earth than it actually is. Built and managed by The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Laurel, MD, NEAR was the first spacecraft launched in NASA's Discovery Program of low-cost, small-scale planetary missions.

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