

Some Astronomical and Cosmological Poems (by Robert Bee)

Even hardened amateur astronomers, heads buried in telescopes, physics and maths, can sometimes be inspired to write poetry to express the awe the universe imposes on them. You cannot stand beneath the canopy of space with all its dazzling sights and not be affected somehow.

Yours truly has suffered (or enjoyed) that experience from time to time. Below is a collection of poems I have written (in relation to astronomy etc) over the years.

Make of it as you will but, hopefully, you will share the inspiration I received from gazing to the heavens above.

Robert Bee

Ad Infinitum

(On the immensity of space)

Beyond our Solar System's sway
Beyond the sparkling clusters
Beyond the diffuse nebulae
With blazing stars to light 'em,
Beyond our local Milky Way
Where matter darkly musters,
Past galaxy on galaxy,
And on, ad infinitum.

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Singularity

(On Black Holes)

Sucking, sucking, hole so black
Perhaps it's not just light you lack.
Lost dimensions one, two, three
Curse that singularity.

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Dark Matter said the Mad Hatter

The Universe is full of stuff,
Quoteth the Mad Hatter.
What we see is part of it,
But most is just Dark Matter.

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All is Dark

All is dark, said the Universe,
Energy and Matter.
Not quite, there's still light
Said the Mad Hatter,
Amid all the dust and the stars
Which are rife
With planets all bursting
With hope and with life.

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Ballad of Belanglo

(An account of a Society night at our dark site in Belanglo Forest, back in 2002.)

There were murmurs in the forest
Belanglo was braced
The astronomers from MAS were on their way.
They had driven for an hour
Brought their sleeping bags and food,
The stars were out and MAS was bent to stay.

The wind whipped up the tree tops
As MAS set up their scopes
John and Pete and Ian, Daniel too.
Dick and Lloyd and Bruce
Plus Ned with kids in tow
And Richard and Caylarny (they were new.)

Bob arrived eventually
And set up in the wind
For want of spots protected by the hall.
Then Noel arrived and managed
To squeeze in with the crowd
Rank doth have its privileges, after all.

The cabin lights were reddened
The urn put on to boil
And bunks were 'bagsed' and made up for the night
Then eyes were turned to heaven
The stars were out in force
And all agreed it was marvellous sight.

The night was filled with wonders
Too numerous to name
Though some stick in the memories of those there,
But all agreed Belanglo,
That sinister forest deep
Provides a sky that's dark beyond compare.

Andromeda flaunted vainly
Flitting 'tween the trees
The Magellanics proved a glorious pair.
Cameras gobbled photons
And mirrors smoothly dobbed
And 'go-tos' – well, like 'go-tos,' just went there.

It was getting two or three-ish
When most retired to their beds
But some true stalwarts said they'd hold their ground.
And so it proved most fateful
When the sky burst into red
That someone with eyes open was around.

The shouts and yells and yahoos
Would have raised the dead,
It surely woke the sleeping and the snorer.
The word was spread quite loudly
"Get up and out of bed,
If you want to see a sight, a southern aurora."

Those who did were gob-struck,
Did someone somewhere start a war?
The southern sky was blazing, as if on fire
And beams of white, like searchlights
Did probe the glow and soar
Oh, it truly was a sight fit to inspire.

Finally they staggered
Their way back into bed
To snatch what sleep they could before the dawn,

But the sleepless Pete, elated
Held his ground, he hadn't fled,
So was rewarded when the aurora was reborn.

The sleeping crew, at sunrise
Were awoken by a din.
The sleepless one had come to break his fast
His adrenalin was pumping
Despite his lack of sleep,
And he banged and talked in stereo simulcast.

"Shaddup!" the call came rudely
"Have mercy" said the rest
Their hope for sleep was slipping fast away
Then another joined the talker,
Oblivious at best,
And so began another glorious day.

There were murmurs in the forest,
Belanglo was sad.
The astronomers from MAS has slipped away.
But they'd left a store of memories
Of a sky that made them glad,
And promised they'd be back another day.

(© R Bee 2002)

Shooting Star

Last night I saw a shooting star,
It travelled fast and bright.
Do you think it really was a star,
Or just a meteorite?

(© R Bee 2004)

Twinkling

Though we can see you from afar,
You twinkle twinkle little star,
But planets don't, it's just not fair.
So, simply blame it on the air.

(R Bee 2000)

Lost

(Inspired by a brilliant Cosmology lecture)

The other night I was lost in the Universe
Not lost like a little boy at the Easter Show
But totally absorbed lost,
Submerged in awe
Struggling in a racing tide of realization
Of the immensity yet the tinyness
Of this incomprehensible thing
We glibly call "the Universe".
One lecture, one mind opening presentation
By a man who knows the bigger picture
Was all it took
For my mind, my tiny non-PHD'd mind
To be reeling, recoiling, then rallying
With horror and delight,
A dichotomy of states, like a light photon in a quantum world.
Is our immense, untraversable universe

Really that big, and yet
At the same time
So insignificant?
What would God say about it?
Or did he write the script and
Is sitting back watching the play unfold?

The Universe,
Our Universe,
The observable Universe
A few tens of billions light years across,
The mind boggles, tries, but fails, to grasp
Such insurmountable distances.
One vainly claims it can be imagined,
But can it? Really?
Like an ant trying to imagine a continent
Or a grain of sand imagining a planet?
But then, with one sentence from the man who knew,
I was lost, absorbed in previously unconsidered possibilities,
Bewildered, then comforted by understanding,
Comprehension,
Then awed by the implications.
Our Universe, the sum of all things
So unimaginably huge,
Is but a small observable part of the real universe
Born in the fiery tumult of the Big Bang,
Flung far and wide at impossible hyper-relativistic speed
For an infinitesimal instant
Exponentially expanding
Taking our tiny part of existence with it,
Like a speck of flour in
An elephant sized lump of expanding dough.

So here we sit,
Billions of light years to our horizons,
But beyond that,
In all directions,
Immensity.
Mind boggling immensity,
Making googols seem puny,
There are not enough noughts to describe it.
What does it all mean?
Do the other 'me's out there,
All oblivious of each other as I to them,
Feel the same as I feel now?
In wondrous awe
Lost?

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Comet McNaught

(Inspired by that brilliant 2007 comet)

“In the fading gold of sunset
As the velvet evening falls,
The stars appear with Venus all a' glow.
Then a hand-span to the south
O'er the rusty clouds a'sprall,
The name-sake of McNaught puts on a show.
The comet head is plunging
T'wards the horizon, blazing white,
While its tail plumes like a fountain in a blow
Sending ribbons streaming northwards,
Like a curtain in the night
As we stood in quiet awe at Belanglo.”

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Let the poetry of the Universe continue...
