

DOBSONIAN REFLECTION
A Tribute to John Dobson in a Mosaic of Prose and Poetry with Free Rhyme

By John C. Mannone

Who is this John Dobson?
Seeker of knowledge; philosopher, scientist
Reconciler of science and religion
Star watcher and brave cosmologist
Telescope maker, teacher of celestial regions
Sharer of visions
Humble astronomer, but nonetheless famous
Who made more accessible the universe to all of us.

Thank you John Dobson for contagious enthusiasm.

Our imaginations infected as we explore the cosmic chasm
To see smiles explode on wondering faces
And marveled by all His wondrous places
Above the earth;
The heavens revealed
Layers upon layers of discovery peeled
Thank you for helping the everyman find this joy.

You have gone before us and trekked among the stars; and beamed them down to us with
such an enterprising design. At speeds of light exponentiated, the mirror-equipped tube
becomes a timeless time machine.

Continue to live long and prosper, John Dobson.

Now a bit of levity is in order, but what shall I choose?
The name, the name of course, it renders much to muse.

Indeed your home is among the stars, as if by fate to blame
There is a curious coincidence in the etymology of your name,
For Dobson is akin to Dob, but sounded with long "O", say Dobe
Which means *The Bear*, a circumpolar constellation on the northern globe
But a star therein, its Hebraic roots betray, is somewhat closer to the posterioris
It's the brightest one called *Duhbe* or simply *alpha-Ursa majoris*

Returning now to more careful thought
Reflect we will on what you brought.

This telescope, a mobile time machine
Which captures glimpses from the past
Those lightning fast;

And luminous sheens
Teleport us there through the ocular sight
In which we witness the starry lights:
Spirals, ellipticals, globular clusters
Nebulas, quasars, and gamma ray bursters
Planetaries, asteroids, and cometary dusters
Parades of luminaries; an endless muster.

Now, how curious this device, all its pieces so contrived
From such unlikely sources; its vital parts derived
From salvage made resourceful
When funding was deprived.

The tubular fuselage of plastic pipe formed
Or perhaps of shapened cardboard worn
And lumber cores
That once were schoolhouse doors
Now fashioned wagon wheels to make its movement sure
To the launch pad; poised and ready sworn
To azimuth and elevation count
By swivel and dip with Dobsonian mount
Now ready, for the sky with stars adorned.

The time capsule's heart, an unusual part
Is a glass cut from the base of a jar
Or perhaps from a window of an old ocean barge
Its legacy of time, foreshadowed by hourglass sand.

With a patient hand of a timekeeper's care
A jeweler's rouge applied to make the glass so fair
Sulfate of iron and crystals oxalate
Conspire with the silicates to polish a glare
Under curtains of water to quiet the grate
'Till mirror smooth; then silvered bright
And shaped just right to catch the light
Those ancient rays, which traveled from so far away
Will now betray the secrets of the night.

But first, the mirror must be well supported
In the base of this time-traveling rocket
With a Zeiss eyepiece affixed, it's reported
Your eyes can peer deep inside this light bucket
No matter to where it may be exported
Like sandy Pawtucket or seaward Nantucket.

Thank you John Dobson for sidewalk astronomy.

Your skill-crafted cosmic jewel magnifier
Often wheeled to Broderick and Jackson Streets
Have lit in many, a lasting passionate fire
Who take a peak at Saturn's rings or Jupiter's colored streaks
Such visual treats when in the night sky higher.

You brought to many a timeless awe, which requires
Nothing more of one than
 To desire, to learn
 To aspire, to yearn
 To acquire, to earn
 To inspire, to discern
Like a tidal flood, these passions rise and thoughts submerge
And in the eddies of our mind, pensive questions spawn- perplexed emerge:
 Philosophical or Spiritual
 Tangible or Illusionary
 Spatial or Temporal
 Visionary
 Dimensional
 Inspirational
 Purpose
 Creator

Thank you John Dobson.

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The author and John Dobson 1/17/04
(Picture courtesy of Mary Watson TAO/ORION)