

# STAR POETRY OF JOHN MANNONE



The reference to God is something that Mannone makes in all things he does as his expression of faith and belief. That is why he asked in prayer what he should do, and why he put pen to envelop to start scribing a poem.

The first poem, "My Sol," closed his second community lecture.

"Usually when I exalt the Lord at the end of a lecture, there's a mental disconnect—a long period of silence." In this case, that period of silence was closed by what Mannone says was "thundering applause."

Since taking up a new discipline, Mannone has worked at learning poetry, studying the science and the art so he can better use this new way of making astronomy interesting to his students.

"One of my operating dictums has become *rediscovering history and literature through astronomy*," Mannone says. "I try to see where astronomy had a profound effect on history and find astronomy in literature."

One of his favorite sources: The poet Longfellow.

Longfellow's "use of lavish language, coupled with his interest in science, particularly astronomy," gave Mannone great inspiration.

"Finding that brought a new dimension to what astronomy can provide to the audience, it links with other liberal arts, it makes it real for them, makes it easy to assimilate the information," he says.

He picks a target of interest, then starts writing. While it is "almost spontaneous," he finds that he can't sit and write. "My best work—my strongest, most powerful pieces, have been

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## Poetry of the Stars

The stars sing a symphony of a mystery, alas!  
While Astronomers magic'ly unlock  
With eyes upon a looking glass  
Physicists marvel the star's spectral frock  
With equations of light, size, mass  
But Poets see the stellar bright awestruck  
With words, your lonely heart he'll bless  
The stars ring a harmony of a  
beauty unsurpassed.

—John C. Mannone, October 1, 2002

*A renaissance poem created for a presentation given at numerous clubs entitled "The Poetry of the Universe: Examples of Astronomy in Historical Literature" and the more focused "Poetry of the Stars: A Literary Interlude."*

**John Mannone**—who writes poetry to convey his passion of astronomy—has no trouble merging his faith in God and the six-day creation outlined in the first book of the Bible with the science of a 13 billion-year-old universe.

He finds scriptural evidence in throughout the Bible, particularly in Job Chapter 38. Verses from Job he cites as examples include:

- "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding."
- Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?"
- "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Maz'zaroth (Zodiac) in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?"

"God is saying 'Where were you when I created the universe.' He goes through this whole series of natural things. He has a discourse in astronomical stuff—and He asks, 'who do you think established the ordinances of heaven and applied them to have dominion over Earth?' God is referring to the laws of physics."

Mannone says that "to his simple way of thinking," because God established the laws of physics, science cannot stand in contradiction to the Biblical account of creation.

"So how do I match Genesis with what I know to be good science?" Mannone asks. "In science, I apply a series of tests to see if it's credible. In literature, I determine what it's really saying: In Job, God is telling us there are rules, rules we may not understand.

"I believe there is too much detail in Genesis to be dismissed as allegory. Yet there is an overwhelming body of evidence to say the universe is about 13.7 billion years old. I dismiss the standard old Earth/young Earth arguments because it's as if you have to embrace one and dismiss the other."

The General Theory of Relativity allows Mannone to believe both in the six-day creation and the 13-billion-year-old universe. "One consequence of that theory is that clocks run slower in the presence of a lot of matter, and speed up when matter is less dense.... Thus, the 24-hour clock we know ran very slowly in the moments after the Big Bang.... As the universe expanded, time sped up to what we know today."

Mannone agrees that certainly he can't prove the pairing of both Bible and Relativity. But that really doesn't matter, at least not to him.

"That's how I reconcile it," Mannone says. "It may not be theologically correct or scientifically provable, but I can live with it. I'll learn the truth when I meet my Father."

—Kent Marts

