

## TWO POEMS

The following two poems were written on the ship THORFINN, near the island of Dublon, in the Truk (now Chuuk) Lagoon, on August 12, 1991.

The first was written by Don Pettit, then of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, now an astronaut. The second, my response, written when I was also at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, now a retired has been.

Indeed, Don was “stranded” in space when the Columbia shredded, and on one occasion I sent to him while he was in space the poems we had written.

Don’s poem

I wonder why the sky is up.  
And why the stars abound.  
And why the sun comes up each morn  
And why the earth goes ‘round.

I wonder what the sun on Mars  
Would bring at dusk or dawn?  
I wonder what the moons would say,  
Earth lit, when sun is gone?

I wonder if Mar’s mountain crags  
Would be a sight to hold?  
I wonder if I’d dare to climb.  
How could I be so bold!

I wonder when man’s mind will grow,  
And cease to be so small.  
I wonder when we’ll venture forth.  
I hope before we fall.

I wonder if we’ll ever dare  
To reach and touch the sky,  
Forever doomed to live on earth?  
And this, I wonder why.

## RRB's response

No wonder that he wonders  
About the starry sky.  
Of what is up, and what is down,  
And if in space, there's pi.

Does light grow weak, or very tired?  
Is expansion illusion?  
Might it be so those in the know  
Are really in collusion?

Now Entropy is not that hard  
As a subject one must cover.  
And revolution and evolution  
We can explain to one another.

But look at man, and see him think.  
Now there's a scene to ponder!  
For surely that's the biggest thing  
About which man can wonder.

But really, if I do my best  
To figure it all out,  
Can I understand, and then explain  
Just what it's all about?

The chance of that is mighty small  
And growing even smaller.  
The grant required, though fun to size,  
Transcends the finite dollar.

Is what we see, reality,  
Or is it only fluff?  
Should I spend time to improve my mind?  
Perchance I've learned enough!!

P.S. I've sometimes wondered how many poems have been sent to men in space.