

Mesostic Laboratorium

Alec Finlay

an anthology of poems composed on the names of scientists

platform projects, morning star
science learning centre north east (2007)

after Gustave Flaubert, *Dictionary of Received Ideas*

SCIENCE:
a little science takes you away from poetry; a lot brings you back to it.

poeMs
arE
compoSed
Of
wordS &
synTax
formIng
Compounds

poeMs
arrangE
wordS
tO
fuSe
Thoughts
Into
multivalenCy

whAt
aRises
In
Scientific
Thought
fOllows
Thorough
Logical
rEasoning

somE
nUmbers
aCt
irrationalLy —
It's
unDerstandable

Copernican
theOry
exPands
grEek
astRonomy —
New
Instruments
perfeCt
star-stUdded
mapS

Change
yOur
Position —
thE
faR
suN's
axIs
anChors
yoUr
univerSe

Maps
are
projections
which
shape
The
world's
journey

abjure
Apriority —
Credit
your
senses

Galilean
Astronomy
outLasted
hIs
papaLly
ordainEd
inquisitiOn

espousinG
A
hereticaL
bellef —
enLightening
thE
wOrld

siNce
applEs
 Weigh
 They
alsO
pluNge

didN't
nEwton
Want
The
Orange's
kNowledge?

fLower
speclmens
wiNk
opeN
dAily —
linnaEus
constrUcted
flower-clockS

earth's
sUrface
Textures
Trace
geOlogical
aeoNs

By
thE
wAy
dUst
Flows
Or
bRanches
Twist

Forging
mAgnets
aRound
glAss
anD
spArking
electricitY

taxiDermist
And
histoRic
reWriter
dlsregarding
coNformism

transmuteD
Animal
chaRacteristics
folloW
hereditary
chaiNs

hoMozygous
gEne
partNers
breeD
truE
cuLtivators

sMooth
pEas —
wriNkly
poDs —
inhEritEd
fLaws

hosPital
cleAnliness
enSures
The
patiEnt's
qUick
Recovery

Pasteur's
swAn-neck
glasS
experiment
producEd
invalUable
Results

While
dArwin
Lay
iLI
wallAce
co-disCovered
Evolution

Wandering
distAnt
jungLes —
deveLoping
rAdical
eCological
thEories

eleCtron
cloUds —
x-Rays
In
fiElds

Chemistry
compoUnds
ouR
materlal
knowlEdge

telescopes
aren't
necessary —
Leavitt
did
without
them

blinking
cepheids
are
observed
without
astronomical
telescopes

steLlar
Explorer —
unchArted
adVentures
In
pulsatIng
sTars

Henrietta Leavitt (1868–1921)

Exiled
In
eveNings —
Struggling
To
answEr
inflnite
questioNs

Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

einstEin
compIlcates
 Newton's
theorieS —
 setTing
 mattEr
 In
motioN

univErsal
relatlVity
 uNifies
physicS —
 Theory
 progrEesses
 inventIvely
 oNwards

hiS

Cat's

sHut —

bReathing

Or

Dead —

In

quaNtum

purGatory

mEwing

indeteRminately

somethinG

incOmplete

could

rEmain

truthfuL

whaT's
conscioUsness? —
aRtificial
intellgence? —
orgaNic
thouGht?

Finds
winE
tastY
aNd
coMposes
theoreticAl
phenomeNa

Frozen
extremEs —
explanatorY
aNd
Methodical
wAve
aNalogies

forceFul
elEctrons
sashaY
iN
hoMely
memorAble
combiNations

lovinG
Obscure
dinosaur
baseball &
Debates

Gould
now
doubted
Charles
Darwin

inheriteD

behAviour —

Winners

maKe

wInners

Not

loSers

He

hAs

knoWn

black

tlmes

iNner

strenGth

Discovering
mOons
occUpy
maGnetic
spHeres
shE
tuRned
saTurn's
eYe

meDal
mOons —
satUrn's
rinGs —
tHe
Endless
solaR
sysTem's
storY

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The epigraph is adapted from Flaubert's *Dictionary of Received Ideas*:

'SCIENCE: a little science takes you away from religion; a lot brings you back to it.'

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The composite poems are selected from poetic workshops with students at six secondary schools in the North East of England. These were mentored by Alec Finlay, Tom Shakespeare, Ira Lightman, Eeve Garner and individual scientist mentors.

Copernicus

Dr Paula Martin (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Marden High School: Angella Bownay, Helen Cavanagh, Rory Colthart, Calum Denham, Thomas Dexter, Sophie Donnan, Robyn Dudley, James Dunce, Jasmine Ferguson, Martin Jackson, Sophie Lagan, Hollie Lees, James Manzies, Daniel Maunder, Alex Pollock, Katie Rutter, Jared Simson, Tatyana, Rebecca Varley, Ross Wallace, Christina Whitehead, Carrie Woodall.

Curie

Tom Shakespeare (scientist-mentor); Alec Finlay (poet); students of Framwellgate School Durham: Ellen Bradshaw, Gabi Clark, Luke Elton, Pippa Franklin, Tom Fenwick, Lewis Harrison, Daniel Laverick, Gavin Marshall, Kate Quigley, Rebecca Simpson, Rachel Stockport, Eda Tajuuddin, Emma Tate, Michael Van Der Gusha.

Darwin

Tom Shakespeare (scientist-mentor); Alec Finlay (poet); students of Framwellgate School Durham: Peter Chivers, Peter Dawson, Samantha Drane, Jack Hodgkiss, Zoe Kennedy, Jenny Lee, Laura Milbourne, Rachel Mole, Jo Pullan, Moira Quinn, Stephen Smith, Jonathan Stanhope, Nathan Suave, Omar Sunley.

Dougherty

Dr Paula Martin (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Marden High School: Angella Bownay, Helen Cavanagh, Rory Colthart, Calum Denham, Thomas Dexter, Sophie Donnan, Robyn Dudley, James Dunce, Jasmine Ferguson, Martin Jackson, Sophie Lagan, Hollie Lees, James Manzies, Daniel Maunder, Alex Pollock, Katie Rutter, Jared Simson, Tatyana, Rebecca Varley, Ross Wallace, Christina Whitehead, Carrie Woodall.

Einstein

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Faraday

Tom Shakespeare (scientist-mentor); Alec Finlay (poet); students of Framwellgate School Durham: Alisdair Baird, Daniel Baston, Edward Bradshaw, Natalie Carroll, Samantha Fryer, Amy Hemmingway, Katherine Ions, Ashley Joyce, Madeline King, Toni Lowerson, Daniel Lunn, Christopher Mitchell, Nathan Moore, Daniel Smith.

Feynman

Dr Pete Edwards (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Whitley Bay High School: Rochelle Anderson, Nuraha Begum, Alice Best, Hannah Cadawallader, Rik Coldwell, Catherine Collings, Jenny Corlton, Catherine Doxford, Peter Fawcett, Sarah Harris, Kate Hopkins, Steph Houston, Ieuan Lewis, Stephen Jones, Tim Lowdon, Chris Mecrow, Charlotte Moor, Ellen Moran, Alice Noble, Abi Oats, Amy Pargeter, Hannah Proctor, Kathryn Ratcliffe, David Shaw, Jack Taylor, Faye Telfer, Becky Walker, Claire Walker.

Galileo

Tom Shakespeare (scientist-mentor); Alec Finlay (poet); students of Framwellgate School Durham: Tanya Bell, Catherine Brown, Charles Brown, Aaron Burn, Phillip Carr, Cameron Diver, Matthew Elgy, Rochelle Gow, Jack Hughes, Amy Jones, Kate Lister, Jason Stephenson, Sarah Wadge, Kyle Wilson.

Gould (I)

Dr Mike Jeffries (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Churchill Community College: Karra Allen, Sophie Campbell, Adrian Cheng, Paul Cherry, Daniella Falcus, Paul Jefferson, Louise Kirby, Ornela Krazniqi, Ross Noble, Sam Palmer, Sam Palms, Karla Sanon, Toni Shears, Karen White.

Gould (II)

Dr Mike Jeffries (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Heaton Manor School: Liam Darth, Raphaella Davies-Breman, Nicole Dixon, Kavitha Elanganathan, Abe Farmer, Anya Kirkby, Sam Mellish, Samantha Morris, Carl Plane, Sairah Shemeem, Callum Swan, Linta Toor, Dan Wallace, Rachel Whetstone, Lucy Whitehall, Sam Wood.

Hawking

Tom Shakespeare (scientist-mentor); Alec Finlay (poet); students of Framwellgate School Durham: Melvin Bell, Emma Cruddas, David De Bie, Lorna Fallon, Fen Felton-Pier, Richard Parrington, Sophie Paterson, Tom Pattinson, Lauren Potts, Jordon Ritchie, Michael Sloane, Jonathon Taylor, Ruth Trigger.

Helmholtz

Dr Paula Martin (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Marden High School: Angella Bownay, Helen Cavanagh, Rory Colthart, Calum Denham, Thomas Dexter, Sophie Donnan, Robyn Dudley, James Dunce, Jasmine Ferguson, Martin Jackson, Sophie Lagan, Hollie Lees, James Manzies, Daniel Maunder, Alex Pollock, Katie Rutter, Jared Simpson, Tatyana, Rebecca Varley, Ross Wallace, Christina Whitehead, Carrie Woodall.

Mendel

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Leavitt (I)

Dr Pete Edwards (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Tanfield School: Christopher Alexander, Charlie Bailers, Tori Beat, Peter Bevan, Tony Brown, Anna Burnett, Amy Coxon, Sean Ellis, Kelly Foster, Hannah Gibson, Sam Gill, Kirsty Gordon, Gemma Louise Green, Michael Hall, Laura Henderson, Steph Lund, Aaron Mackay, Emma Marshall, Daniel McCall, Grant Parker, Holly Robson, Emily Scott, Peter Sennett, Rebecca Sloan, Laura Taskas, Jon Paul Telford, Natasha Wilson.

Leavitt (II)

Dr Pete Edwards (scientist-mentor); Ira Lightman (poet); students of Whitley Bay High School: Rochelle Anderson, Nuraha Begum, Alice Best, Hannah Cadawallader, Rik Coldwell, Catherine Collings, Jenny Corlton, Catherine Doxford, Peter Fawcett, Sarah Harris, Kate Hopkins, Steph Houston, Ieuan Lewis, Stephen Jones, Tim Lowdon, Chris Mecrow, Charlotte Moor, Ellen Moran, Alice Noble, Abi Oats, Amy Pargeter, Hannah Proctor, Kathryn Ratcliffe, David Shaw, Jack Taylor, Faye Telfer, Becky Walker, Claire Walker.

Pasteur

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Mesostic Laboratorium

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Designed by Alec Finlay and StudioLR

Mesostic Laboratorium (Notebook) is available from bookshops,
or by ordering in the *bookshop* section of www.alecfinlay.com

An animated version of selected poems from *Mesostic Laboratorium*
can be viewed on the *You Are Invited* section of www.alecfinlay.com

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