

# Astronomy?

## ASTRONOMY ?

*"We are star stuff harvesting star light. Our lives, our past and our future are tied to the sun, the moon and the stars. Our ancestors knew that their survival depended on understanding the heavens. They built observatories and computers to predict the changing of the seasons by the motions in the skies. We are all of us descended from astronomers."*

--Carl Sagan, "Cosmos", 1980

? This entry is titled Astronomy, and will be a good place for quotations on the stars, the phenomena of the sky, and the size of the sun.

**Emerson**, Ralph Waldo; Nature; 1836; "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile."

**Lucretius**, Titus Carus; De Rerum Natura, Bk. II;

"Direct your mind

To a true system. Here is something new

For ear and eye. Nothing is ever so easy

But what, at first, it is difficult to trust.

Nothing is great and marvelous, but what

All men, a little at a time, begin

To mitigate their sense of awe. Look up,

Look up at the pure bright color of the sky,

The wheeling stars, the moon, the shining sun!

If all these, all of a sudden, should arise

For the first time before our mortal sight,

What could be called more wonderful, more beyond

The heights to which aspiring mind might dare?

Nothing, I think. And yet, a sight like this,

Marvelous as it is, now draws no man

To lift his gaze to heaven's bright areas.

We are a jaded lot. But even so

Don't be too shocked by something new, too scared

To use your reasoning sense, to weigh and balance,  
So that if in the end a thing seems true,  
You welcome it with open arms; if false,  
You do your very best to strike it down."

Transl. Rolfe Humphries

**Ptolemy**, Claudius; *Almagest*; 2nd Century: "I know that I am mortal by nature and ephemeral, but when I trace at my pleasure the windings to and fro of the heavenly bodies, I no longer touch earth with my feet. I stand in the presence of Zeus himself and take my fill of ambrosia." (In some of the manuscripts, the book begins with this epigram (Owen Gingerich, *The Eye of Heaven: Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler*, American Institute of Physics, 1993, p. 55)).