

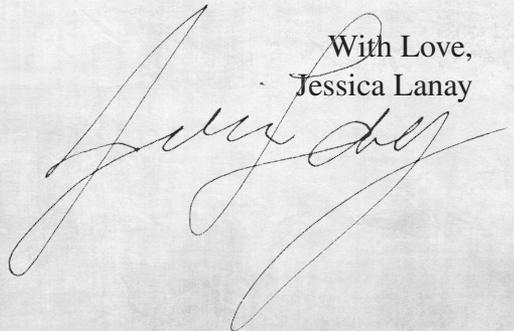
Dear Reader:

The following poems are the product of a roughly four month relationship with astronomical data, theory, and philosophy. This relationship consisted mostly of me, the poet, being incredibly humbled by skilled physicians of light and matter folding metaphor over and over again into mathematical quantity, the highest abstraction. It was surprising, and difficult; luckily the curiosity, and wonder of Dr. Wood-Vasey is inspiring. The poet and the astronomer have in common the question of why we keep searching. Although on the surface it seems that we may answer this question in wildly different ways, it is tricky to maintain those differences over time.

My method for participation in research groups was simple; I did not want to interfere through repeating novice questions or interrogating ideas in abstract ways that interrupted projects. Instead, I made it clear that I was there to listen to the diction, syntax and metaphors these developing astronomers and physicists used in discussion. To accompany my notations from the research group I also read texts on my own, some suggested to me by Dr. Wood-Vasey. A list follows this introduction.

The most overwhelmingly, audaciously beautiful experience I take from this artist-in-residence experience with the Astronomy and Physics Department at the University of Pittsburgh is the struggle with language, how the poet and the scientist are never really satisfied with how elusive the communication of existence is to the tongue. This dilemma is ecstasy. I am pleasantly surprised by the shared obsessive drive, and desire to know things, however briefly the machinations of the universe allows that knowing.

With Love,  
Jessica Lanay

A large, fluid, handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jessica Lanay', is written over the typed name.