

A full-page background image showing a person standing on a rocky ridge at night. The sky is filled with stars, and the Milky Way galaxy is visible as a bright, cloudy band of light stretching across the upper half of the frame. The person is silhouetted against the bright horizon. The foreground is a dark, rocky landscape.

# Seven Secular Sermons

Parts 1 to 3



These are the first three parts of a series of poetic meditations.

They are best enjoyed when read aloud among friends.

Each of them will typically take about 15 minutes to read aloud.

As meditations, they benefit greatly from an absence of distractions.

A very relaxed, dreamy mindset is conducive to a deep experience.

The best settings to do this are quiet, safe, undisturbed places.



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# Sermon One: Adrift in Space and Time

Now this is going to be fun!  
It truly does feel great  
to realize we all are one.  
So we shall meditate.

This meditation's rhyming verse  
describes a paradigm  
of us inside this universe,  
adrift in space and time.

It's nice that we can simply start  
by recognizing how  
a check of every body part  
can help us be here now.

We feel our bellies and our heads  
and just become aware  
how arms and hands and feet and legs  
are feeling everywhere.

Between and through them circulate  
our blood-streams to refresh  
the oxygen that activates  
awareness in our flesh.

And as we slowly breathe we find  
that doing so can draw  
us into a more present mind  
to feel the moment raw.

With every breath we take and leave,  
we clear our inner eyes  
and fully, lucidly perceive  
each second passing by.

Our mindful meditative selves  
grow out of living meat  
and help our bodies stay in health  
by finding what we need.

So let's do that now. Let's explore  
and see what's to be found.  
Outside our bodies, there is more.  
Let's take a look around!

Unless we're blind we're free to see,  
unless we're deaf, to hear  
and realize we're utterly  
surrounded by what's here.

This place surrounding us here now  
where we consider this,  
is just as present, anyhow,  
as our breathing is.

Our breaths connect within the air,  
within the atmosphere.  
The envelope of sky we share  
is also part of here.

We also share what rests beneath:  
Our bodies' place of birth  
from which came all who now here breathe  
as children of the Earth.

Of course there's more than senses show  
around us near and far.  
The sky above, the Earth below;  
there's more to where we are.

To North and South, to West and East,  
the world goes on and on,  
the planet every plant and beast  
and we now breathe upon.

Of all the Earth, we barely know  
the surface we begrime,  
upon the spinning rock below,  
adrift in space and time.


Our calm and meditating minds  
can feel this easily.  
Imagination goes behind  
all things our eyes can see.

To find, as further out we go,  
whichever way we face,  
to left, to right, above, below,  
the solar system. Space.

It's blacker than the night of course  
and bigger than the sky  
and it is hard to see because  
it was not made for eyes.

It effortlessly overwhelms  
imagination. Still  
and everywhere around this realm  
extends and always will.





Around us all and everyone  
we've met or ever can,  
extends the system of the Sun  
that dwarfs all realms of man.

Out there, all human joy and strife  
and knowledge matter not.  
Out there, this fragile ball of life  
is just a pale blue dot.

And there are other, bigger dots  
and countless asteroids.  
This Earth is one among a lot  
around us in the void.

Yet all of them combined appear  
like specks of dust compared  
to one enormous blazing sphere,  
the center that they share.

A thousand times as ponderous  
as all that circles it,  
it radiates splendiferous  
and indiscriminate.

It weighs three-hundred-thirty-three  
times thousand times as much  
as Earth, which seems like mere debris,  
a tiny circling smudge.

There's hydrogen inside the Sun  
that lets it shine so bright  
by burning up: Four million tons  
per second fuse to light.

This fusion forges helium  
and other specks of dust  
that constitute the medium  
from which grows life like us.

But near the Sun, its gamma rays  
and heat do not allow  
life smart enough to be amazed  
at what is true here now.

And further out, it stays too cold  
for molecules to toy  
with games of entropy that mold  
the life that we enjoy.

While outermost, in blackest night,  
drift frozen rocks so far,  
to them our splendid sphere of light  
looks like another star.

We're lucky Earth is temperate  
or life could not have spawned.  
This planet would stay desolate  
and all of us unborn.

As fully as we do depend  
on Earth that we live on,  
we also clearly understand  
we're children of the Sun.

And yet the Sun, though all must spin  
around it, merely is  
a rare domain of light within  
a yawning black abyss.

In outer space surrounding us  
lie distances too great  
for us to easily discuss  
or even contemplate.

For space is mostly nothingness  
around us everywhere,  
the freezing dark is limitless  
in empty space out there.

Of course there is some gravity  
that massive things impart  
and maybe some dark energy  
that pushes them apart.

But nothing's there to hear or see  
or smell or taste or touch  
and trying to imagine, we  
can think of nothing much.

And still we feel, for what that's worth,  
beyond the seen and near  
the vastness outside planet Earth  
that's real now and here.

In meditation, we somehow  
expand our minds to try  
to feel the system we are now  
and here surrounded by.



The moons and planets we can see,  
as far as we have found,  
are lifeless. Earth now seems to be  
the only game in town.

Yet all these places we could go  
and cultivate and fill,  
are merely specks in what we know  
remains much bigger still.

The stars, these many tiny lights,  
each are a blazing sun  
and circling them, caught in their might,  
are planets being spun.

Yet humans cannot see that far.  
The pixels of our eyes  
are just too few, which is why stars  
look like they're equal-sized.

Through telescopes, we understood.  
The stars all shine so bright  
that only monstrous distance could  
dilute them into night.

These distances define the space  
that all stars occupy  
and make a single, real place  
that we're surrounded by.

The stars that shine all night and day  
within or out of sight  
are what our home, the Milky Way,  
appears like from inside.

Our Milky Way contains at least  
one hundred billion suns.  
Through gravity, they all are pieced  
together into one.

Around this place, where we now feel  
what we are breathing in,  
these suns form one tremendous wheel  
with one tremendous spin.

And all these suns are shining clear,  
enormous and sublime.  
They all are real here where we're  
adrift in space and time.

Unmoved by beings such as we  
on Earth, our small enclave,  
the stars around us now will be  
the stars around our graves.

Except for those which have gone through  
their hydrogen supply  
and end as all things someday do,  
for even stars must die.

And some, much bigger than our Sun,  
burn brighter still and must  
explode one day, when they are done  
with making light and dust.

These supernovas, as we call  
them, burst stupendously.  
Some can outshine the sum of all  
stars in the galaxy.

With their magnetic fields unfurled,  
their yields annihilate  
or sterilize abundant worlds  
that life might populate.

Yet all we breathe and eat and drink  
comes from these massive bombs.  
We're supernova-dust that thinks  
about where it came from.

And since the stars have made the clay  
that led to our birth,  
we're children of the Milky Way,  
as are the Sun and Earth.

But supernovas are quite rare.  
Three times per century  
does one of them explode somewhere  
within our galaxy.

Yet many supernovas do  
each second detonate  
in all the galaxies whereto  
we now shall escalate!

A million times much further out  
than all the Milky Way,  
more galaxies are shining proud  
around us here today.

These galaxies, each huge and wide,  
much like the one we're in,  
outnumber all the stars inside  
our home and origin.

Around where we consider this,  
whichever way we face,  
drift billions of these galaxies  
right now, right here, in space.

We realize with utter awe  
and know beyond all doubt:  
Beyond this world are trillions more  
that we could learn about.

And almost all of them must be  
absurdly far away  
in ultimate reality  
beyond the Milky Way.

From here where our bodies stay,  
imagination climbs  
through further outer Milky Ways  
adrift in space and time.

And through the emptiness between  
in almost all of space,  
where not a single star is seen  
in almost every place.

And meditation does allow  
our minds to feel it all.  
To feel the Universe that now  
surrounds us as a whole.

Despite all suns that intersperse  
this dark continuum,  
most places in this Universe  
are total vacuum.

And therefore, atoms are quite rare.  
Yet trillions of them have  
condensed into the flesh we wear  
that draws this very breath.

Two thirds of atoms in us are  
still hydrogen which sprang  
into existence not in stars  
but back in the Big Bang.

For all the time since time began,  
as entropy made space,  
each travelled an enormous span  
to meet here face to face.

Through vacuum and solar flame,  
they found their way somehow.  
And we as that which they became,  
thus came to meet here now.

Through all we breathe and drink and eat,  
they travel and endow  
with nutrients the living meat  
in which we meet here now.

The atoms that we are traverse  
all space and time, which means  
we're children of the Universe  
and we have always been.

The atoms in us met before  
and they will meet again,  
compelled by universal law  
out in the there and then.

One endless cosmic maelstrom,  
age-old and ever new,  
is where we all are coming from  
and where we're going to.

The knowledge we are made of dust  
compels us to admit  
the Universe is in us just  
as we are within it.

From here we may arise to see  
and claim as our own  
the secrets of reality  
just waiting to be known.

And so we know the infinite  
is absolutely real.  
It's here, it's now, it's intimate,  
this vastness that we feel.

Whatever else is true for us,  
we'll always know this rhyme.  
We'll always know we're made of dust  
adrift in space and time.



## Sermon Two: The Games of Entropy

So, being dust, what lets us live?  
What raises us above  
the countless, mindless, primitive,  
raw atoms we're made of?

There is no life within this dust:  
Most specks remain unchanged  
from back in ancient stars. It must  
be how they are arranged.

Each human we have ever seen,  
each beast, each bird, each tree:  
We all are atoms that have been  
arranged amazingly.

All these arrangements big and small  
might well inspire mirth  
in us surrounded by them all,  
the greatest show on Earth.

There's more to learn in nature than  
is found in any book  
and it appears more alien  
the closer that we look.

Below the surfaces we see,  
the skin and scales and bark,  
the cycles of biology  
are working in the dark.

Right now our lungs take oxygen  
out of the air we share,  
our hearts and bloodstreams take it then  
and pump it everywhere.

If we zoom closer we can see  
our lungs to be a place  
where in a dance of chemistry  
our breath and blood embrace.

We're built from many works of art,  
from organs that combine  
small tissues, each a special part  
with intricate design.

Now each such tissue then contains  
innumerable cells  
and here, inside each cell again,  
are tiny organelles.

Within all forms of life we see  
there's hidden vastly more  
bewildering complexity  
that must inspire awe.

The stars we see through telescopes  
are big and bright and far,  
but we find life, through microscopes,  
yet more spectacular.

In fact, there's more complexity  
in one small butterfly  
than we see in the galaxy  
out there beyond the sky.

All living things we've ever seen  
are built from living cells;  
each cell is like a small machine  
comprised of chemicals.

In all our cells, there's utterly  
infinitesimal  
molecular machinery.  
They're nanotechnical.

Still zooming closer, we just find  
a multiplicity  
of ancient atoms that are kind  
of bouncing randomly.

The static things we think we know  
are maps. The territory  
has constant and chaotic flow  
beneath the shapes we see.

It's here right now, as close to us  
as anything can be.  
The movements of the specks of dust  
shape our reality.

The randomness in what they do  
we call their entropy  
and its domain is whereinto  
our lives have come to be.

It disassembles ordered things  
unless they can outgrow  
its ceaseless, blind disordering  
and spread within its flow.



It moves the dust and lets it start  
to join the game or dance  
of molecules that fall apart  
or last a while, by chance.

So hydrogen and oxygen  
join water which can gain  
entropic warmth that makes it then  
play games of cloud and rain.

Where entropy is less intense,  
these drops will crystallize  
and dance the longer, slower dance  
of snowflakes and of ice.

Inside ourselves we feel right now  
our living, breathing form  
to be and to remain somehow  
comparatively warm.

Our atoms lost the stellar heat  
and left behind the cold  
of empty space. In warmth we meet,  
in warmth does life unfold.

For heat destroys all forms and flows  
that chance may introduce,  
while cold does not select for those  
that work and reproduce.

In warmth the growing randomness  
of entropy can be  
just right for the profound finesse  
of biochemistry.

Warmth such as ours makes atoms stay  
a little restless so  
they bump into each other's way,  
react and change and grow.

With carbon in particular,  
reactions are not rare,  
but the majority by far  
do not lead anywhere.

Yet chemical reactions need  
mere moments to be done  
and let the dust join games that lead  
to others further on.

So given lots of time, mere chance  
must sometimes foreordain  
that specks of dust will start to dance  
along reaction chains.

Around 4 billion years ago,  
on Earth, a warm wet sphere,  
reaction chains began to grow  
the paths that led us here.

In chains of random chemistry,  
the molecules that they  
unite can in their unity  
join bigger games to play.

In some, the flow of molecules  
could circle and arrive  
in lasting cycles that grew tools  
to multiply and thrive.

In them, the games that entropy  
forever plays have come  
to let emerge biology  
that all of us grew from.

We're built from this, from cyclical  
and still ongoing games  
of atoms and of chemicals  
that do not know our names.


These games take place in everything.  
In every breath we take  
are trillions of them happening.  
All cells in us partake.

A cell is what we call games far  
too numerous to count  
sustaining one shared reservoir  
that holds their whole amount.

Here games that build each other spin  
a membrane to engulf  
them all. A greater game begins:  
A game that builds itself.

Though molecules can't learn or feel,  
the cells they joined into  
have learned to sense and eat and heal  
as in us now they do.





The games inside them match and fit each other. They create each other's necessary bits and thus self-replicate.

The largest, DNA, has space like memory to hold stored information – that's a place for new games to unfold.

From codes that cells store in there stem large hosts of proteins that build us here to carry them. We call these codes our genes.

Cells need to harvest energy to fight their slow decay by ever-present entropy and thus keep death at bay.

Some games can help the cells with this. Hence some cells now include microbial photosynthesis that harvests light as food.

Cells work so well that everywhere we look now, they are found: On every surface, in the air and deep within the ground.

They are the winners that remain; the losers are all dead. Life born to entropy's domain must die if it can't spread.

These cells, competing, growing rife for countless years on end, turned Earth into this ball of life to which we now attend.

Once single cells were all there was, but some of them became much bigger forms of life because they joined still greater games.

In unity they found new ways to gain more energy and grow within the fertile space we humans call the sea.

With size, forestalling entropy becomes much more complex but life invented, brilliantly, a game that does it: sex.

Sex tests and recombines the genes that parents contribute, makes novel progeny and screens resulting attributes.

And genes that happen to succeed in making progeny will travel in them and proceed through time and entropy.

In each of us now breathing here are genes that long have gone through many generations – we're built just to pass them on.

And entropy remains at play. All life that it has bred, however complex, must obey its rule that things must spread.

To do this, cells must organize and function as a whole, so they have nerves which harmonize their work on common goals.

One common goal is to explore new places which is why some sea-born creatures left for more, for land and for the sky.

And thus arose the multitude of Earth's whole biosphere that fills us with this gratitude we feel for living here.

Yet now the human species shapes this world – and that transpires because a recent bunch of apes played cooking food on fires.

This gave them much more energy and they could use these gains to breed descendants such as we with big and playful brains.



With playful brains, we understand  
the games of entropy  
that played us into being and  
can play them consciously.

With growing knowledge we can trace  
all aspects of our lives  
to games that built the mental space  
wherein this knowledge thrives.

At every scale we see again  
so many things that draw  
upon each other. We might then  
think that's design or law.

And yet, no law or plan exists.  
Mere chaos has let on  
each scale some lucky games persist  
that others built upon.

Now we join into greater games  
that may outlast us all,  
including laws and wealth and claims  
of states that rise and fall.

Great games like science or the arts  
or cities or machines  
we hope will help their human parts  
like bodies help their genes.

And in a sense, we all are one  
gigantic global game  
of interplaying games begun  
without a plan or aim.

That's true and yet one brain can't grasp  
it all: It's too immense.  
One can but try and fail and gasp  
at life's magnificence.

So human brains invented speech  
and writing to transport  
what brains would want to share and teach  
each other: useful thoughts.

By sharing thoughts, we operate  
like large connected minds  
that ponder and accumulate  
the knowledge that we find.

The thoughts we share help harmonize  
our work on common goals  
and join in ways to organize  
the knowledge we control.

This knowledge helps us build new games  
that let us dive and fly  
and even let us ride on flames  
to pierce the waiting sky.

We humans know there's so much more  
surrounding Earth: the stars!  
We're curious and can't ignore  
how unexplored they are.

The games of entropy coerce  
us still. We must diffuse  
to roam this playground universe  
and put it all to use.

One day, self-replicating ships  
will from this Earth be hurled  
to leave on interstellar trips  
and spread from world to world.

In but a short few million years  
such ships can easily  
spread many daughter biospheres  
throughout the galaxy.

And yet, no other life comes here.  
The sky we watch looks still.  
No life is spreading – maybe we're  
the only life that will.

But probably, out there we'll meet  
life stranger than our own,  
life made of something else than meat  
by games as yet unknown.

And all we'll find and understand  
can join in what will be  
still greater, cosmic, truly grand  
new games of entropy.

One day, all worlds our ships can reach  
shall learn to live and care,  
for we have many games to teach  
to all the dust out there.





## Sermon Three : One of Us

We're rare among the stars that drift  
around us, we who live.  
We hold this strange and special gift  
this planet has to give.

Let's now unveil this gift and see  
it unify somehow  
the many games of entropy  
and make them one here now.

The gift of life is incarnate  
in every one of us  
who now here breathe and meditate  
between those worlds of dust.

The deepening tranquillity  
of meditative rest  
lets us behold the mystery  
with which we all are blessed.

In all of us, a unity,  
sustained by games that run  
in all their multiplicity,  
makes out of many one.

Within us now, the interplay  
of games in us gives rise  
to one uniting process they  
are part of and comprise.

It's present simultaneously  
in both our hands and feet  
and every cell within the three  
dimensions of our meat.

This process keeps proceeding forth  
through all the time it thrives,  
in every moment in the fourth  
dimension of our lives.

This process, ever-happening  
until the day we die,  
propels us onward, travelling  
through moments passing by.

The Now we now experience  
is one ephemeral  
brief point in lives that, in a sense,  
are four-dimensional.

Let's feel our lives stretch out upon  
our lifespans as they stream  
past moments we remember on  
to future ones we dream.

As simply as we breathe, we know  
this life we now here feel  
has travelled, some short while ago,  
through moments just as real.

There was a moment we arrived  
at this place here somehow.  
Since we were there and we survived,  
our lives include that now.

The lives we lead have streamed right through  
this day and so we can  
now trace along them backwards to  
the time today began.

Our lives extend beyond today,  
beyond what's now and here.  
We feel them stretch through yesterday,  
last week, last month, last year.

Where have we been five years ago?  
What did we feel and do  
in all the moments we still know  
and all the others, too?

Our lives include these moments and  
yet we are not confined  
to single moments – we extend  
and grow through time entwined.

Through every moment we have seen,  
a single process thrusts.  
The momentary selves we've been  
are all just one, just us.

Relaxed, with mindfulness and ease,  
we effortlessly can  
go past our oldest memories  
to where our lives began.

Still tracing back, our lives escape  
through many days and rooms  
to when and where we first took shape  
within our mothers' wombs.



Before we could live separately,  
our lives have all begun  
protected in a pregnancy  
when two lives lived as one.

Now even though these months may seem  
like where we came about,  
they're only where our mothers' streams  
of life were branching out.

The life we're feeling presently,  
our mothers felt themselves.  
Life flows in continuity.  
It's older than ourselves.

Now those of us with siblings know  
them too as branches where  
the gift of life that lets us grow  
branched out and grew from there.

Though siblings must grow separately,  
we also understand  
they're branches of a single tree,  
like fingers on a hand.

And here the journey need not end.  
We might as well bring in  
our mothers' mothers, cousins and  
our somewhat further kin.

And they in turn had parents too  
and families, so they  
give us more distant cousins who  
live out there now today.

To know someone is family,  
that someone's one of us,  
may stir a sense of loyalty,  
connectedness or trust.

But families reach deep and wide.  
The ones we each are in  
have branches spreading far outside  
their ancient origin.

Like us, they're branches, other tracks  
life grows across this Earth  
since ancestors of us had sex  
and gifted them with birth.

We all have relatives out there  
that we have never known,  
who breathe and live their lives somewhere,  
as real as our own.

In four dimensions, we connect  
through lines of ancestry.  
The life within us streams in fact  
through branches of a tree.

We each have lines of ancestry  
that reach back far and they  
include both slaves and royalty,  
both predators and prey.

Each human ancestry extends  
through many centuries,  
through long-forgotten, distant lands  
on strange and ancient seas.

In tracing back, each separate course  
eventually must  
converge in common ancestors  
of every one of us.

The ancestors all humans share  
are why humanity  
is all related – we are their  
extended family.

These ancient ties of kinship mean  
that everyone who lives,  
all humans we have ever seen  
have been our relatives.

Descended from the same old apes  
who learned to cook and sing  
and worked towards the cityscapes  
we're now inhabiting.

The primates we're descended from  
were not so erudite,  
but they are why we all have come  
to live and walk upright.

And they had other children, too.  
We've grown apart and thus  
they're different apes and primates who  
are relatives of us.



Age of Man	
Fishes	Reptiles
Diluv.	Mammals
<p>We share with them a lineage to which we owe our use of tools and one shared heritage with monkeys and with shrews.</p>	<p>Life branched and found a wealth of ways to spread throughout this world that now our meditative gaze reveals to us unfurled.</p>
<p>All that's within the family of four-legged creatures who despite their huge diversity are all our cousins too.</p>	<p>All life is one big family comprised of everyone, four billion years of history of species come and gone.</p>
<p>That's still not all: We're free to go still deeper if we wish. Four hundred million years ago, our ancestors were fish.</p>	<p>So when we meet, we're pretty much just parts of one big form, like branches of a tree that touch each other in a storm.</p>
<p>It truly is astonishing how one unbroken line of life links us with everything out there that has a spine.</p>	<p>In four dimensions, life is one forever-branching force, small parts of which have now begun to understand its course.</p>
<p>Still older ancestors, like worms and squishy things in shells connect us with life's oldest forms, confined to single cells.</p>	<p>The present seems to separate life's branches like a knife. Beyond it, we who meditate here now are all one life.</p>
<p>We breathe, as all of them have breathed since ancient cells back then invented, savored and bequeathed the use of oxygen.</p>	<p>This life that breathes in us just leads far beyond the small lives led by every one of us. Let's try and feel it all.</p>
<p>Our common DNA confirms the common ancestries of all of life on Earth, from germs to mushrooms, bugs and trees.</p>	<p>Life's countless branches can be found within the boundless seas, upon and deep within the ground and flying on the breeze.</p>
<p>Our tree of life finds root in when, at some primordial spot, the first thing that did live began from something that did not.</p>	<p>What lives in them is life itself. All plants, all beasts, all swarms of bugs are part of life's great wealth of evanescent forms.</p>
<p>That's where reaction chains once curled themselves in cycles so the root of life could grace this world four billion years ago.</p>	<p>Whatever living things may do, they all need life to lend its ancient, massive strength unto each talon, claw and hand.</p>
<p>Since then, its offshoots never ceased to spread and branch. They won this planet every plant and beast and we now breathe upon.</p>	<p>Whatever mouths and snouts and beaks of living things discuss, it's all the same old life that speaks through every one of us.</p>
Vertebrates.	



From all our eyes, one life looks out  
at all the games it plays.  
On all our feet, life walks about  
on paths through time and space.

With all our leaves, life drinks the sun,  
producing nutrients,  
with all our mouths, it moves them on  
to their recipients.

So what it means to be alive  
is being part of this,  
of life itself that will survive  
ourselves and live no less.

This meditation may reveal  
to us now breathing here  
a sense of awe in which we feel  
we are this biosphere.

Our selves and all the lives we meet,  
in friendship or in strife,  
are parts of something more complete  
that's us as one as life.

Since we are life, all lives we've known  
are parts of us and thus  
if we are one, we're all alone.  
There's only one of us.

To ever meet another one,  
we'll need to journey long.  
This planet Earth where we've begun  
is not where we belong.

Earth gave all life its place of birth,  
but it's not built to last.  
Of all the time life gets on Earth,  
most has already passed.

In just another billion years,  
the sun that rules our sky  
grows bright, Earth's water disappears  
and all life here will die.

And that means us. We're not distinct  
from what our growing star  
will boil to death and force extinct  
unless life spreads out far.

In having felt the family  
through which we all connect,  
we know that life is certainly  
a thing we must protect.

As each of us is one more face  
of life behind us all,  
its need to travel out through space  
is truly personal.

Life must keep sprouting interlinked  
new branches and disperse  
from world to world, or go extinct  
from all this universe.

Just like our ancestors who built  
the world we know today,  
we'll have the glory or the guilt  
of what we leave to stay.

We may destroy ourselves and doom  
the Earth where we were born  
to merely be a dreadful tomb  
with no one left to mourn.

Or rise to meet infinity,  
as lifeforms that succeed  
ourselves pervade the galaxy  
with Earth as their first seed.

And if we help life spread and last,  
its many future forms  
will know us as their distant past,  
like apes and fish and worms.

So many future aeons hence,  
beneath an alien sun,  
they might remember Earth as lands  
of legend long since gone.

How will they see their ancestry?  
What shall it mean to stem  
from us and hold the legacy  
and gifts we give to them?

Whichever paths they choose to go,  
if ever they discuss  
the gift of life in them, they'll know  
they each are one of us.



# About this project

My name is Daniel Böttger. I'm a young scientist who lives in Leipzig, Germany.

I began the Seven Secular Sermons project in 2012, in an attempt to share the intense gratitude I feel towards this marvelous universe we are happening in.



The sermons are (to be) a series of seven guided meditations on aspects of the universe. In verse and rhyme, they invite us into inner journeys towards a more profoundly satisfying appreciation of reality at large.

Due to the complexities of summarizing numerous complex ideas into meditative poetry, and the restrictions of their form, these meditations are being written very slowly. These first three took 4 years, and it seems sensible to assume the following ones will take about the same amount of time.

If you would like to be notified about new sermons, you can follow @7SecularSermons on Twitter or subscribe to the Seven Secular Sermons YouTube channel.

Each sermon gives a poetic introduction to a field of knowledge that has something to say about what we are, in the following order.

1. **Adrift in Space and Time** – Astrophysics
2. **The Games of Entropy** – Molecular Biology
3. **One of Us** – Evolutionary Biology
4. *(no title yet)* – Anthropology
5. *(no title yet)* – Memetics
6. *(no title yet)* – Brain Sciences
7. **United in the Quest for Truth** *(working title)* – Philosophy

They are connected in an arrangement loosely inspired by the Open Systems Interaction model of communication systems:

1. Physical layer – The physical atoms that everything runs on.
2. Data link layer – The self-replicating patterns of links between atoms.
3. Network layer – The network of relations between all life on Earth.
4. Transport layer – The relationships and exchanges between us.
5. Session layer – The dialogues between individuals that give rise to culture.
6. Presentation layer – The mental representations that give rise to the mind.
7. Application layer – The relationship of reason and reality.

Each follows logically from the previous one and each of them has to be present in order for the whole to come together as it does.

[www.sevensecularsermons.org](http://www.sevensecularsermons.org)





*These sermons are to celebrate  
in meditative verse  
the joy of living in our great  
resplendent universe.*