

Song of Two Worlds
An Illustrated Verse Narrative
by Alan Lightman
ISBN 978-1-59709-032-2
Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 160
Price: US \$17.95
Pub Date: February 10, 2017



Alan Lightman



For more information contact:
Rebecca Baumann
Publicist
publicity@redhen.org

Red Hen titles are distributed by:
Ingram Publisher Services
Tel: 800-252-7012
ips@ingramcontent.com
ipage.ingramcontent.com

Song of Two Worlds

AN ILLUSTRATED VERSE NARRATIVE

Alan Lightman

From the author of the international bestseller *Einstein's Dreams* comes a profound and visually stunning scientific and philosophical adventure.

After decades of living “hung like a dried fly,” emptied and haunted by his past, the narrator, a man who has lost his faith in all things following a mysterious personal tragedy, awakens one morning revitalized and begins a Dante-like journey to find something to believe in, first turning to the world of science and then to the world of philosophy, religion, and human life. As his personal story is slowly revealed, little by little, we confront the great questions of the cosmos and of the human heart, some questions with answers and others without.

Praise for *Song of Two Worlds*

“Created by a man of science and art, Alan Lightman’s work is a unique thing to behold. *Song of Two Worlds* is a collection of poetry from the physicist, as he blends his two disciplines well for a truly fascinating insight into the world around us. With fine verse, *Song of Two Worlds* is a top pick.”

—*The Midwest Book Review*

“This slim volume of narrative verse by the author of the bestselling book *Einstein's Dreams* is a bold move. The point, says arts/science polymath Alan Lightman, is to explore meaning and truth in science, but in the highly concentrated form only possible in verse. It pays off: “There’s no completion in mind / With its unending halls / Or electronic minds that have no belief.”

—NewScientist’s CultureLab Science News Blog

“In taking on several more layers than the usual two-cultures debate-featuring works, and quite successfully dealing with them, *Song of Two Worlds* is a nice addition to the scientific-poetic library.”

—M. A. Orthofer, *The Complete Review*

Biographical Note

Alan Lightman, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences since 1996, is adjunct professor of humanities at MIT. He is the author of several books on science, including *Ancient Light: Our Changing View of the Universe* (1991) and *Origins: The Lives and Worlds of Modern Cosmologists* (with R. Brawer, 1990). His works of fiction include *Einstein's Dreams* (1993), a national bestseller, *The Diagnosis* (2000), finalist for the National Book Award, and *Reunion* (2003).

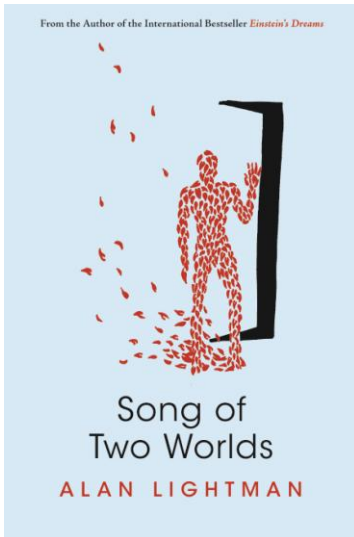


From *Song of Two Worlds*

40

Abbas and I shovel sheep dung,
My olive trees hunched
Like a throng of old men—
Sun overhead, I look up
And I gaze at the clouds—

This is the way that I see:
Ten trillion photons of light make their way
Through my pupils each second of time,
Through the oval-shaped lens, through
The jelly-like fill to the retina, hundreds
Of millions of cells, where each photon
Of light meets a molecule, retinene, coaxing
It straight from its twisty vine,
Curled bougainvillea-like. Neurons
Respond to the dance. Protein molecules shift
In their shape, so that sodium cannot find
Passage, electrical charge unrelieved,
Shudder of current moves through
The neurons and flies to the folds of my brain.
Here the fourth layer is sentry, receives
The first tingle, computes a sensation,
And passes its tremblings to five other sheets.
In shards of a second, some hundreds
Of millions of neurons start quivering,
Each being shocked by one thousand others
And doing the same to one thousand more.
Click-click-click sound the firings,
Some punctured and scattered, some synchronized.
Click-click the pulsings in waves—
And my brain tells me “cloud.”
I believe in the knowledge of sight.



Song of Two Worlds
An Illustrated Verse Narrative
by Alan Lightman
ISBN 978-1-59709-032-2
Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 160
Price: US \$17.95
Pub Date: February 10, 2017



Alan Lightman

 **REDHEN PRESS**

For more information contact:

Rebecca Baumann
Publicity
publicity@redhen.org

Red Hen titles are distributed by:

Ingram Publisher Services
Tel: 800-252-7012
ips@ingramcontent.com
ipage.ingramcontent.com

