

## Song of Two Worlds

**Alan Lightman**

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The universe's most elusive truths and mysteries are primarily pursued by scientists—a dogged contingent of highly educated, inquisitive minds dead set on understanding how things work. (More than a few poets share these traits.) Alan Lightman, physicist, novelist (*Einstein's Dreams*), Professor of the Practice of the Humanities at MIT, puts to use all of his knowledge base in this impactful collection. Terms like dipolar force, galactic clock, rectilinear, covalent bonds, codons, cortex, and catalysis find him at ease and brand his poetry rare and earthy.

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Abbas brings me an orange from the grove,  
Peels it and peppers it,  
Swallows a piece and give me another.  
I flinch at the bitter and raw,  
Spit out the pulp.

"I'm out for the pruning," he says,  
Sweeps up the peel in his pocket.  
"You spend too much time alone."

"See if a letter has come," I ask,  
As I ask every morning,  
My futile and vain prayer for the day.

He nods his head delicately,  
Touches my arm  
With his veined, mottled hand.  
"Orange pudding I'll make later this week."

"What day is it?"

"Tuesday."

MATT SUTHERLAND (March/April 2017)

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