

Ode to Madame Curie

The electron said to the molecule:
"Of course you can go and set a rule
Declaring the norm for a fixed atom,
But suppose I do not accept the datum?
It might fit gold or palladium,
But how about thorium, and radium?
The Edenic Atom had its courses fixed,
But somewhere, somehow I got mixed—
Poor Atom, he had seen better days
Before he got tangled with my beta-rays."

Old Dalton once announced a rule:
"This, this my friends, is a molecule,
Formed by atoms joined in union,
And usually having a happy communion.
And this atomic family tree
Is of eternal ancestry;
Atoms may wed, and then divorce,
And atoms obey the laws of force,
But each atom has its special place,
With habits peculiar to its own race,
And though they behave as sister and brother,
You can't change one atom into another"

So Dalton established a noble tradition,
And no one doubted his high position,
Holding with faith and fixed reliance,
That women could have no place in true science.
Laboratories appeared in every land,
Investigations were made on every hand,
Philosophers hailed the recent knowledge
Which soon was taught in every college:
That men may come and men may go, but like the flowing river,
The atom, infinitesimal thought it be, lived on, and lived forever.

And then there came the feminists,
Who wagged their tongues and shook their fists,
Sacrificing dull frivolity,
Demanding a sex equality,
Insisting it was a crime and shame
That they could not enter the hall of fame.

But the bearded loons in the name of science,
Stood rigidly fixed in their reliance
On Dalton, that old misogynist,
Who held there could be no she-scientist.

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Then one woman spoke as she set down her broom,
"I'll send this old atom down to its doom,
I'll show you these men have no common-sense,
That their stubbornness is not true science."
So she used her own female intuition,
Knocked out the old atom and all tradition,
Found great loopholes in so-called laws,
Revealed that male reason was full of flaws,
And proved that men were hardly human,
And never should argue with a woman.