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letters

Berkeley."

With due respect to my good friend Bob Park, I would like to point out that the Marylander traditions of implication of guilt by association and of propagation of half-truths in fancy language may seem to be quite old to those who recall the speeches of Spiro Agnew in the early 1970s.

LEO M. FALICOV
10/86 University of California, Berkeley

Light verse

The photon (after Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The cloud")

*I bring fresh light to the ailing sight,
From all the stars and the sun;
Through the dark I race on the wings
of space,
Its curves turn straight as I run.
Should a massy being, my swiftness
seeing,
Strain to follow my track,
I hold my lead with unlesened speed,
Nor ever my pace shall slack.*

*Toward airless spheres my spirit
steers,
To ricochet again;
Like motes in the eye, like gems in the
sky,
They flash in the sight of men.
I may be as large as the Earth's wide
marge,
Or slim as an atom's hair;
I slip as I may on a glancing ray
Through the windows of the air,
Then spread my hues in the misty
dews,
While rain-drenched travelers stare.*

*Those bits of ore that far from shore
The mariners call lode
Can feel my weight in a tranquil state
To show them a starless road.
And men of old, upon that gold
Their children now call amber,
At the sound of my inaudible cry
Saw dead things quickly clamber.*

*I bend to my task in the chemist's
flask,
And Principles join as I please;
Through virtual being, reality fleeing,
I rule their affinities.
The electric points that fill the joints
Of matter's inner grain,
Singing aloud in their uncertain
cloud,
May flee my lure in vain;
I free them from cares, I create them in
pairs,
Only to bind them again.*

*Though single I strike, yet I steer alike
With others of my kind;
Like birds of a feathers we cluster
together,*

*Blown by the selfsame wind.
And one of my sides through crystal
slides*

While the other is left behind.

*Unlike poor man, who lays a plan
And then is fettered forever,
No freedom I lose when a path I
choose,
Though my soul I seem to sever.
For when I and my brother each far
from the other
Have found our way to the goal,
Like a pair of twin elves, my separate
selves
Cohere in a single whole.*

*In the awful blaze of that day of days
When the universe was born,
Like a hammer I sprang from a forge
that rang
With the blast of God's own horn.
And ever since I have left my prints
Where space is stretching under;
My color is bled from blue to red
As the galaxies rush asunder.
With failing strength and tenuous
length,
Across unnumbered years,
From here, from there, from
everywhere,
I whisper to metal ears.*

*When my sisters came to be weak and
lame,
By heaviness defiled,
Alone I spread my wings and fled,
To be known as an only child.
But under the mast of the timeless
past,
When the broken bell rang true,
My sisters three they come to me
In the love that once we knew.
And then we dance to the music of
chance,
While Symmetry strokes his lyre;
The short and the long, the weak and
the strong,
All one in the ancient fire.*

RICHARD FRIEDBERG
Columbia University
New York, New York

7/86

Corrections

May, pages S10 and S11—The photograph on page S10 shows a section of the Paladin wiggler at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, not Los Alamos National Laboratory. The last half of the last sentence of the caption on page S11 should read, "the Los Alamos FEL uses an rf accelerator."

June, page 50—The honorary degree recipients at the 20th anniversary of Clark University shown in the photo included R. W. Wood, Albert A. Michelson, Ernest Rutherford, Vito Volterra and Carl Barus. Arthur Gordon Webster was the host; he did not receive an honorary degree from Clark. □