



Congratulations, Staschek, to your 60th birthday!

You were my first postdoc. We had so much energy then! You first introduced me to physics discussions “Russian-style”: they never end, and the strength of arguments is judged by volume (in dB, not m³!).

We did wonderful work together, and you helped me guide my first batch of graduate students. You adopted “Regensburg style”: work hard, laugh a lot & live well!



As I learned more about you, I realized that hidden behind the cover of a brilliant and meticulous physicist was an outstanding connoisseur of great music and literature. While I can't sing for you I hope you will enjoy the following little gem by Rainer Maria Rilke (1899) – it reminds me of our struggles as scientists:

“Ich liebe dich, du sanftestes Gesetz,
an dem wir reiften, da wir mit ihm rangen;
du großes Heimweh, das wir nicht bezwangen,
du Wald, aus dem wir nie hinausgegangen,
du Lied, das wir mit jedem Schweigen sangen,
du dunkles Netz,
darin sich flüchtend die Gefühle fangen.

Du hast dich so unendlich groß begonnen
an jenem Tage, da du uns begannst, -
und wir sind so gereift in deinen Sonnen,
so breit geworden und so tief gepflanzt,
dass du in Menschen, Engeln und Madonnen
dich ruhend jetzt vollenden kannst.

Lass deine Hand am Hang der Himmel ruhn
und dulde stumm, was wir dir dunkel tun.”



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“I love you, you the gentlest law,
through which we ripen as we fight with it;
you homesickness we cannot quite curtail,
you forest within which we lose our trail,
you song we've sung with every silence kept,
you darkened net,
where every feeling apt to flee is caught.

(Translated by Annemarie S. Kidder)

You started out so infinitely great
when you began the day by making us ---
and we became so ripened by your light
and grew so wide with roots that dug so deep,
so that in leisure now you can perfect yourself,
in virgins, angels, and in human selves.

Oh let your hand find rest on heaven's span
enduring patiently when we again offend.”