

Did you ask a good question today?

Sheindel Rabi, Isidor Isaac Rabi's mother (circa 1910)

Isidor Isaac Rabi won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1944 for his discovery of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). The medical MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) is based on Rabi's discovery. At least 19 Nobel Prizes can be traced back to Rabi's work.

My mother made me a scientist without ever intending to. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: So? Did you learn anything today? But not my mother. "Izzy," she would say, "did you ask a good question today?" That difference — asking good questions — made me become a scientist.

Eppur si muove. (translation from Italian: *And yet it moves.*)

Attributed to Galileo Galilei (1633) after the Catholic Church forced him to recant his claim that the Earth moves around the Sun.

It is great physics poetry even if he didn't actually say it.

Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.

Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620)

angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night

"Howl" by Allen Ginsberg (1955)

*Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific – and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise –
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.*

John Keats, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, 1816

In honor of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics to James Peebles.

We are stardust.

Billion year old carbon.

We are golden.

Caught in the devil's bargain

And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.

Joni Mitchell, *Woodstock* (1969)