

## A Gathering of Physicists

by [Janice Freytag](#) in the [July 2025](#) issue

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It was 1979, and our freshman class  
of physics majors had cosmic aspirations.  
We wanted to be an irresistible force.  
We wanted to be waves rippling across space,  
undiminished by friction or wind resistance.  
We wanted to be beams of light,  
traveling straight and true through the universe.

We were superior to other scientists.  
Biologists could not reassemble the life they dissected.  
Chemists only made plastics and adhesives and poisonous gas.  
But we had light, and light was immortal.  
We could split her, filter her,  
bounce her forever through a gauntlet of mirrors.  
Light would never die. And we would be light.

But even light bends to gravity, and here we were,  
decades later, pulled back to the labs where we first met.  
We had been dimmed by dust.  
Dark matter was real. Black holes had claimed some of us.  
Life had run us through its spectrometer  
to show us what we were made of.  
We were found wanting.

We should have heard the cosmic microwave  
background playing like Muzak in our ears.  
We should have foreseen the accelerating  
expansion of all we didn't know.  
We should have searched sooner and harder  
for the God-particle. Here at the end,  
we tell each other we should have believed.