

## **Stars**

by Hannah Bryan

On the cool, dark evenings my family would get home late from church, I remember stepping out of our red Dodge caravan and looking up into the mesmerizing darkness of the sky. In that little New England town, I could faintly see the outline of the Milky Way. The fuzzy stream of stars flowed across the night sky above our yellow house in the woods. I would gaze at the pinpricks of light in wonder. There were so many of them, and only one of me. I loved to look at them and feel the magnitude of their presence.

When I was older, my family lived near Washington, DC. For a little while I worked in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. One day my mom brought my brother and his friend to see the museum. I led the eight-year-old boys around, pointing at the cool rockets and the moon rock on display.

“Landon,” I said to my brother’s friend, “I want to show you one of my favorite displays.” I walked him over to a six- or seven-foot-tall monitor near the entrance to the space displays. On the monitor, a flaming orange and red orb swirled and turned against a black background. “That’s a video of the sun,” I explained. Landon looked in awe at the massive display. His short eight-year-old self was dwarfed by the screen.

“Now look.” I pointed to the bottom corner of the screen. A miniature green and blue sphere was tucked into the corner, barely noticeable. “Is that Earth?” Landon asked incredulously. “Yup. Now, think for a minute—do you see how small Earth is compared to the sun? Now think about how small you are compared to Earth.” Landon’s mouth hung open as he gazed at the image of Earth’s favorite star again.

When we moved to Virginia, I missed seeing the stars. The stars in Pensacola weren’t much better. However, two summers ago, my family went with some of our cousins to a lake

house on Lake Huron. After running and playing in the sun all day, most of the household had gone to bed. My mom called me out onto the back porch. “Look at the sky,” she said. I looked up and saw the Milky Way, more clearly than I had ever seen it before.

I was blinded by a sudden, bright light. My younger cousin had heard us talking and come to investigate with a flashlight. “Turn it off!” I instructed. “Come and look.” She waited while her eyes adjusted to the dark and then looked at the sky. “What’s the fuzzy part?” she asked. “It’s the Milky Way. An arm of our galaxy,” I told her.

Every time I look to the stars, I feel small. When I saw the display of the sun in the museum, I was reminded how small I really am. When I look at the Milky Way with its spiraling arms spilling out across the sky, I feel swallowed by the vastness of creation. Yet, when the Bible mentions the stars, there seems to always be a connection to God’s love for us, as well as His glory. This immense expanse of space is immeasurable, yet God knows the stars and He knows us.

Even though I feel tiny and insignificant compared to the zillions of stars above me, I’m not insignificant to God. He knows my struggles and difficulties—the monumental ones and the small ones. And even though I feel lost on this green and blue orb spinning amongst innumerable burning stars, God still knows right where I am.