

# ODE TO THE LASER

The laser turns fifty this week,  
An important event in history!  
But who developed this amazing technique?  
That's still kind of a mystery...



Was it Ted Maiman  
who built the first laser?  
Or was it Townes and Schawlow  
who wrote the seminal paper?



Was it Basov and Prokhorov  
who toiled in academic obscurity?  
or was it Gordon Gould  
who won the patents (eventually)?



Perhaps we should credit Einstein  
who had the key precognition  
"A splendid light has dawned on me" he wrote  
when he discovered stimulated emission.

Beautiful beams of light  
coherent in frequency and phase.  
The public expected your biggest impact  
to be Star Wars-like Death Rays.



Instead you're in our everyday lives  
from bar codes to pointers to DVD drives  
They say in Science is your biggest contribution  
shining a light on stars and molecular distributions.



But as all things cyber  
connect through optical fibers  
Let us not forget:  
Without the laser, there'd be no Internet!



FOR CREDIBLE  
LASERS SEE  
INSIDE