



Vera's Questions

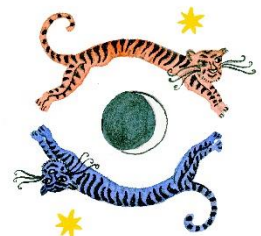
by Ann Malaspina

Through the telescope
in her bedroom window,
ten-year-old Vera
looks at the night sky.

She sees the bright stars,
but also, the darkness.

What does it do?
The darkness.
Why is it there?
The darkness.
How does it work?
Vera's questions
multiply.

When she gets older,
the men want to take
away Vera's telescope.
Women can't be
astronomers, they say.



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Vera keeps
looking at the night sky.
She keeps
wondering what and why.

Using the world's largest
telescope, she begins
to find answers.

The darkness is matter.
The darkness is energy.
Pulling stars into galaxies.
Building the universe.

But how, and why?

Amidst the bright stars
and the darkness,
Vera's questions
multiply.

Vera Rubin (1928-2016) was an American astronomer who studied spiral galaxies and whose pioneering research confirmed the existence of dark matter. Rubin refused to be deterred by the prejudice against women in science.