
Wilderness House Literary Review 1/4

Nuclear Fishin'

Observe nuclei undergoing fission—
A multi-dimensional
Potential-energy surface
Guiding the nuclear shape evolution—
From the ground state,
Through intermediate saddle points
To the configurations
Of separated fragments of fission.
Calculate and analyze five-dimensional
Potential-energy landscapes
Based on a grid of 2,610,885 deformation
Points, and find that observed fission
Features—the distributions of fission-
Fragment mass and kinetic energy
And the different energy
Thresholds for symmetric
And asymmetric fission—
Are very closely related
To topological features
In the calculated five-dimensional
Energy landscapes.

* Adapted from "Nuclear fission modes and fragment mass asymmetries in a five-dimensional deformation space," *Nature*, 15 February 2001.

To Sun

O Sun, you're so hot! I love to just bask
In your rays in my bow window on dank
Winter days, the solarium effect
Warming my body and healing my woes.
O Sun, you ravager: you threaten my
Pink skin with cancer, the way it ate my
Father's ear away like a ripe fungus
And dug a pit in my mother's nose. Why
Do you give and take away, an emblem
Of the Creator? O Sun, you're growing
Too hot for poor Earth to handle, melting
Polar caps like candle wax, overloading
Ecosystems till we burn up or drown, crowning
Your reign over us. Sun, you're not so hot.