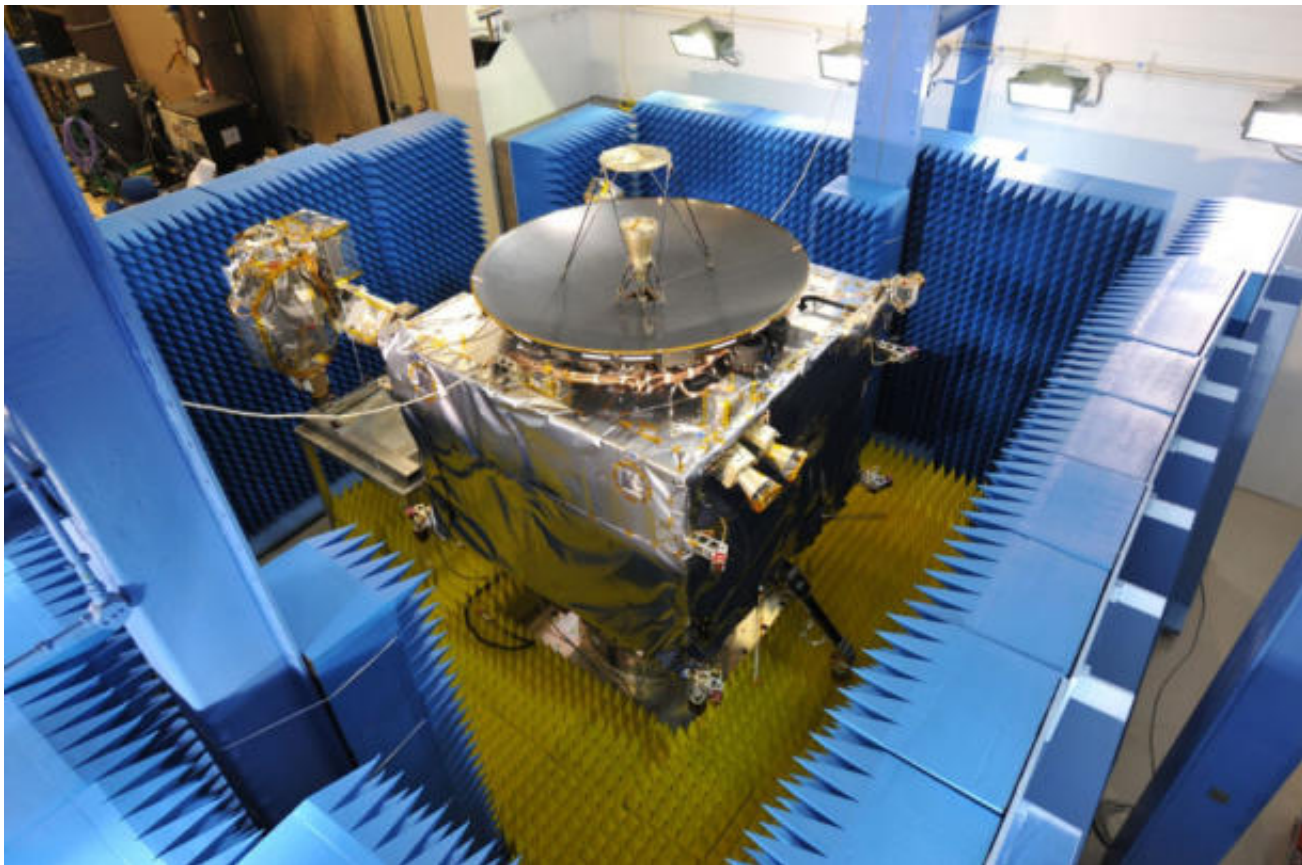


Martians about to get a lesson in haiku

A poetry contest open to "anybody on planet Earth" yields a surplus of Mars-loving haiku set to head to the Red Planet aboard a NASA spacecraft later this year.

by **Leslie Katz** | August 8, 2013 5:17 PM PDT



The MAVEN spacecraft, during electromagnetic interference/electromagnetic compatibility testing.

(Credit: Lockheed Martin)

Unless the Mars Curiosity rover has, unbeknownst to us, been writing poetry in addition to **singing "Happy Birthday" to itself** [http://www.cnet.com/8301-17938_105-57597122-1/mars-curiosity-rover-sings-happy-birthday-to-itself/], haiku has yet to reach the fourth rock from the sun.

That's about to change.

More than a thousand three-line poems will travel to the Red Planet aboard the Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (**MAVEN** [<http://lasp.colorado.edu/home/maven/>]) spacecraft later this year, the University of Colorado Boulder announced on Thursday. MAVEN's mission -- coordinated by NASA and led by CU-Boulder's Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics -- will explore the planet's upper atmosphere, ionosphere, and interactions with the sun and solar wind. And, of course, collect data on Mars' reaction to poetry from its adoring public.

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The poems evolved from "Going to Mars," a public campaign to collect names and haiku for a DVD that will hitch a ride aboard MAVEN. As my colleague Eric Mack pointed out when **announcing the contest** [http://www.cnet.com/8301-17938_105-57582781-1/nasa-wants-to-send-your-best-haiku..to-mars/], it's unclear why martians would have a DVD player over a USB port or SD card reader, but Going to Mars has still provided a fun creative outlet for poetry-loving Mars fans.

Children and adults from around the world submitted some 12,530 valid haiku entries between May 1 and July 1, with a public vote determining five winners, posted below. (See more entries, including a couple that fall into the humor category, **here** [<http://lasp.colorado.edu/maven/goingtomars/send-your-name/contest-winners/>]. Calling Mars "rusty"? Ouch.)

The spacecraft for the MAVEN mission arrived in Florida last week to prepare for its scheduled November launch and study poetry with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern. And if you missed the chance to be the Elizabeth Barrett Browning of Mars and count the ways you love the planet, you still **have until September 10** [<http://lasp.colorado.edu/maven/goingtomars/send-your-name/>] to get

your name and message on the space-bound DVD.

It's funny, they named
Mars after the God of War
Have a look at Earth

--Benedict Smith, United Kingdom

Thirty-six million
miles of whispering welcome.
Mars, you called us home.

--Vanna Bonta, U.S.

Stars in the blue sky
cheerfully observe the Earth
while we long for them.

--Luisa Santoro, Italy

distant red planet
the dreams of earth beings flow
we will someday roam

--Greg Pruett, U.S.

Mars, your secret is
unknown for humanity
we want to know you.

--Fanni Redenczki, Hungary

[A look at Curiosity's first year on Mars \(pictures\)](http://www.cnet.com/2300-17938_105-10017765.html)
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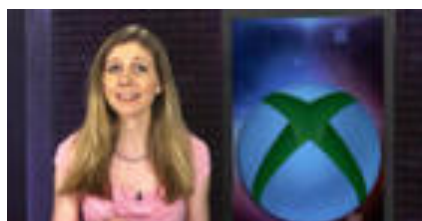
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Billions of dollars down the drain
 to send and write haiku poems
 a pain

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