

At the 2006 Annual Convention of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) held in Nashville, Tennessee, the following poem received the 2nd place national award in the Adult Poetry category. The poem was originally published in *The Rostrum*, the newsletter of the Maryland Geological Society (V14, N3, May 2005).

*Astrodon johnstoni,
the Maryland State Dinosaur*

*We never looked into your eyes,
No fingers touched your skin,
All that we know is tooth and bone,
The remnants from within.*

*We were not witness to your life,
Nor saw your final breath,
The clues we have that tell your tale,
Have come long after death.*

*One hundred million years of time
Lay trapped within the clay,
Ancient secrets not yet revealed,
Until one fateful day.*

*For then by chance two teeth were found,
Within an iron mine,
Evidence of a long, lost world,
Before its great decline.*

*The teeth when cut revealed a star,
A sight not seen before,
Astrodon would become your name,
The star-toothed dinosaur.*

*As years passed by and bones were found,
Your form took shape and size,
Sauropods stretching sixty feet,
The sight would have filled our eyes.*

*Your world was of the forest realm,
Where tall sequoias grew,
And groves of ferns drew nourishment,
From rain and morning dew.*

*Small herds composed of young and old,
Once roamed among the trees,
In hopes of finding refuge from
Predation and disease.*

*With rows of teeth used much like rakes,
Fresh leaves were stripped from plants,
Your tree-like legs would shake the earth,
And signal your advance.*

*Animals built in symmetry,
With neck as long as tail,
Yet size could not prevent your fate,
Extinction would prevail.*

*So much remains a mystery
From time so long ago,
Our mind blends fact with fantasy,
And much we'll never know.*

*Dinosaurs of enormous bulk,
Ten tons or more by weight,
Large creatures once unknown, but now
A symbol of our state.*

Rick Smith