Collision Course

1.
So they thought it would be the ultimate.
And for a change they were right.
It took six decades to build
and required the joint efforts
of thirty seven planets,
costing 420 quadrillion Murgordian zenos.
The physics was straight-forward enough,
based on the theory of megatron particles
as developed by Dr. Vrsmogrodrios of Kunak.
The megatron, as you know,
had first been postulated some years before
to explain the ever-so-subtle discrepancies
that still remained in Archcadian field theory
(which otherwise worked so beautifully).
But no one had been able to prove
that they really existed until
Dr. Vrsmogrodrios came along.
And the practical consequence of his
discoveries could not be denied:
Build an accelerator powerful enough
to smash megatron particles into
a target of terterium foil
at a velocity approaching the speed of light,
and all the remaining secrets of the universe
would be revealed once and for all.

2.
And so it had to be done.
But it took a Capavarian century
of interplanetary negotiations
and political lobbying
before there was sufficient agreement.
In whose solar system would the machine be built?
Should it be constructed in a circle or a straight line?
Would the source of megatron particles
use a mystonic or fragmentacious isolation beam?
How narrowly should the bandwidth be focused?
What planet would gain the franchise
for producing the terterium target?
On and on the scientists and politicans argued.
And it took eight referenda on
Verma before a popular mandate
of fifty one point five percent was gained at last.
But finally the treaty was ratified, and work begun.

3.
And so, after innumerable construction delays
and cost overruns the thing was turned on.
(President Nana Ifok of the prestigious Nargian Institute
for Advanced Physics received the honor.)
But by the time the first megatron particle
had burrowed only microns into the terterium,
an ever so subtle discrepancy that still remained
in Vrsmogrodrian megatron theory
(which otherwise worked so beautifully)
caused a chain reaction to begin
which, in less than a microsecond, sucked
all the matter on this side of time into itself,
leaving nothing behind—though,
on the other side of time,
a new big bang might have been observed.

Steve Bloom
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