



Stellar Spire in the Eagle Nebula

Location: Constellation Serpens

Distance from Earth: 6,500 light years

Size: 9.5 light years

Deep within the Eagle Nebula, stars are forged in a tower of gas and dust 91 trillion km high.

Hydrogen and oxygen gas are heated by massive stars beyond the top of the image. The hydrogen glows red, and the oxygen glows blue.

Gas streams away as radiation from massive, nearby stars beams down on this region, eroding away the top of the tower.

Nearby, massive stars heat gas and dust and form a shock wave that crashes into the colder, dark gas below. The shock wave compresses the gas, forming stars.

A dark dust lane, made of carbon and silicon compounds, absorbs light. The dust grains are slightly smaller than the dust floating around your home.

Image and text from NASA.