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Abstract for an Invited Paper for the APR06 Meeting of the American Physical Society

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Early Universe

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The new standard picture of the early, expanding and accelerating Universe is reviewed at an accessible level. The Hubble expansion, the Robertson-Walker metric, and the cosmological constant are discussed. Special emphasis is placed on the thermal history of the early Universe, with the goal of appreciating the relevance of the QCD phase transition.