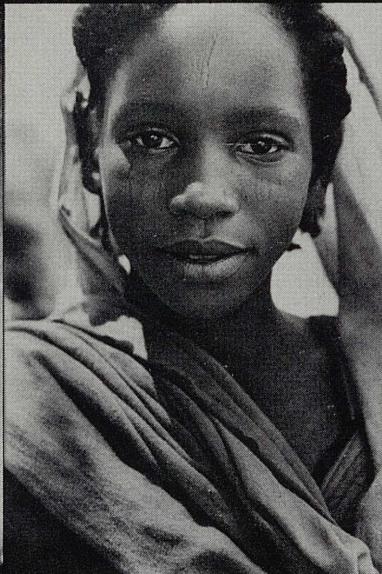




# SHOOTING STAR REVIEW

\$3

Black Cultural Quarterly  
ISSN 0892-1407  
Winter, 1991/92



*Star  
Child*

Photos: Trifid Nebula by U.S. Naval Observatory.  
Overlay: Maggie Murray-Lee for UNICEF



*Shooting Star Productions, Inc. is a non-profit corporation that uses the arts to build awareness and appreciation for the Black experience.*

*In each year, this organization plans to fulfill its mission by:*

*Publishing the Shooting St★r Review,*

*Convening a Pittsburgh Black Writers Conference,*

*Sponsoring a Juneteenth-Jubilee Celebration,*

*Hosting a Middle Passage Commemoration and*

*Collaborating with existing Kwanzaa celebrations to develop a literary component.*

For information on any of these activities, send a self-addressed, stamped, business envelope to:  
Shooting Star Productions, Inc., 7123 Race Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208-1424, USA

# Flavor

---

Vanilla,  
he says  
is the flavor  
of the underside  
of my tongue.

He knows butterscotch  
and vanilla  
yet his tongue,  
more sensitive  
to sweetness  
than to spice  
does not flick  
lizard-like  
and savor  
the saffron  
cinnamon,  
cardamom,  
ginger root  
liccorice  
flavor  
of my dreams

Susan Terris  
San Francisco, CA



# EARTH

Earth formed about 4.5 million years ago and is the fifth largest planet and the third from the sun. The Earth weighs six sextillion tons, is 7,926 miles in diameter. At nearly 25,000 miles around, Earth's equator spins at about 1,000 miles per hour. With a forward speed of 18.5 miles per second or 6,660 miles per hour, Earth travels around the sun in 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes and 9.5 seconds. The length of a day increases by 0.0001 second per year. Earth's atmosphere (sky) is 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen and 1% argon and extends 600 miles above the surface at a weight equalling 34 feet of water. Seventy percent of the earth's surface is water, and half of that is the Pacific Ocean and adjoining seas.

PHOTO: by NASA's Apollo 17, this image extends from the Mediterranean to the south polar cap with the entire coastline of Africa visible as well as the Arabian Peninsula and the Asian mainland on the horizon.

# *Star Child*

Winter, 1991 ★ Volume 5, Number 4

*Are we not all made of once and future stars? Are we not all  
children of the universe?*

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*Astrology forecasts provided by Peg Byers. Planetary  
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## COVER ART

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FRONT COVER: Photograph of Trifid Nebula H-20 by U.S.Naval Observatory. Overlay by Maggie Murray-Lee for UNICEF.  
Message: A mother's knowledge of nutrition, basic health care and hygiene greatly determines her child's survival.  
UNICEF therefore targets the special needs of women, and of the girl child, in the interests of all children.



**Sandra Gould Ford**  
Founder of  
Shooting Star  
Productions, Inc.  
Publisher of  
*Shooting Star Review*

Photo by Eugene B. Redmond

Winter, 1991 completes *Shooting Star Review's* fifth year, and some are asking why the size changed. 1)

To make the magazine easier to hold and carry. 2) After five years of the 8.5"x11" format, it was time for a new design.

Keep in mind that, although the page dimensions are about 80% smaller, the number of pages have doubled. Take advantage of the new size. Carry *Shooting Star Review* with you. It now fits easily into purses and some pockets. Let your friends and associates know about this exciting reading experience. But most important ... *ENJOY!!*

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## *Shooting Star Review*

Winter, 1991

Volume 5, Number 4

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### SUBMISSION POLICY

**FREE Submission Guidelines** with helpful information, including upcoming themes and maximum word counts are available with a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE). All submissions must include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient return postage and artist's name and address on each page.

*Shooting Star Review* is completely free-lance written and open for graphics, photography, illustrations, short fiction, folktales, essays, reviews and poetry.

Written work must be neatly typed, double-spaced and legible. Send poetry and fiction in separate envelopes. Artists submitting material for publication can come from any cultural background, but all work must relate to the Black experience.

Advertising accepted.  
Write or call for rates.

*Shooting Star Review*  
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# MISSION

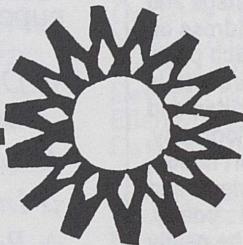
## STATEMENT

*Shooting Star Productions, Inc.* is a non-profit corporation that exists to use the arts to build awareness and appreciation for Black culture.

This Mission Statement is greatly assisted in its fulfillment by generous support from the following:

- ★ Duquesne Light Company
- ★ Equitable Gas Company
- ★ Integra Banks
- ★ Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Literature Program Strategies for Success
- ★ Personal Gifts Lauretta Robinson
- ★ The Pittsburgh Foundation
- ★ The Pittsburgh Foundation/Howard Heinz Endowment Multi-Cultural Arts Initiative

# Keys For Each Sun Shining



If we diagnose 1991 as having a collective case of the blues, the prognosis for 1992 is recovery with a few thrills to wake and shake us. Astrology helps us understand what is going on "out there."

There are two reasons for optimism. One was a solar eclipse on January 4, 1992, starting us off with a BANG! The other

**reason occurred 30 days later, on February 4, when we began the Chinese astrological Year of the Monkey. All Sun Signs will be affected by these two events.**

The solar eclipse in Capricorn on January 4 indicates an "about-face" for the world economy, governmental policies and the establishment generally. January through February promises to be a period of economic healing in many nations. In the United States confidence in the dollar and the future will make a comeback.

Ideas for new businesses, reorganization of corporate structures, government social welfare programs, debt management and humanitarian "conscience-raising" will abound. All this electricity in the air brings confusion as well, but expect an exciting time.

In February we begin the Chinese Year of the Monkey which bodes well for new business starts and positive growth. Known for creativity and cunning, the resourceful time of the Monkey means 1992 will be competitive, speculative and expansive. This is not a year for the faint hearted! Business deals and recovery plans will be shrewd and original. It is interesting to note that after every major recession throughout history, recovery occurs during lunar years of the Monkey or the Snake. Both are known for NEVER

giving up! The United States was born in the year of the Monkey, July 4, 1776. This promises to be a time of rebirth for the U.S. economy which should continue throughout 1992 into 1993.

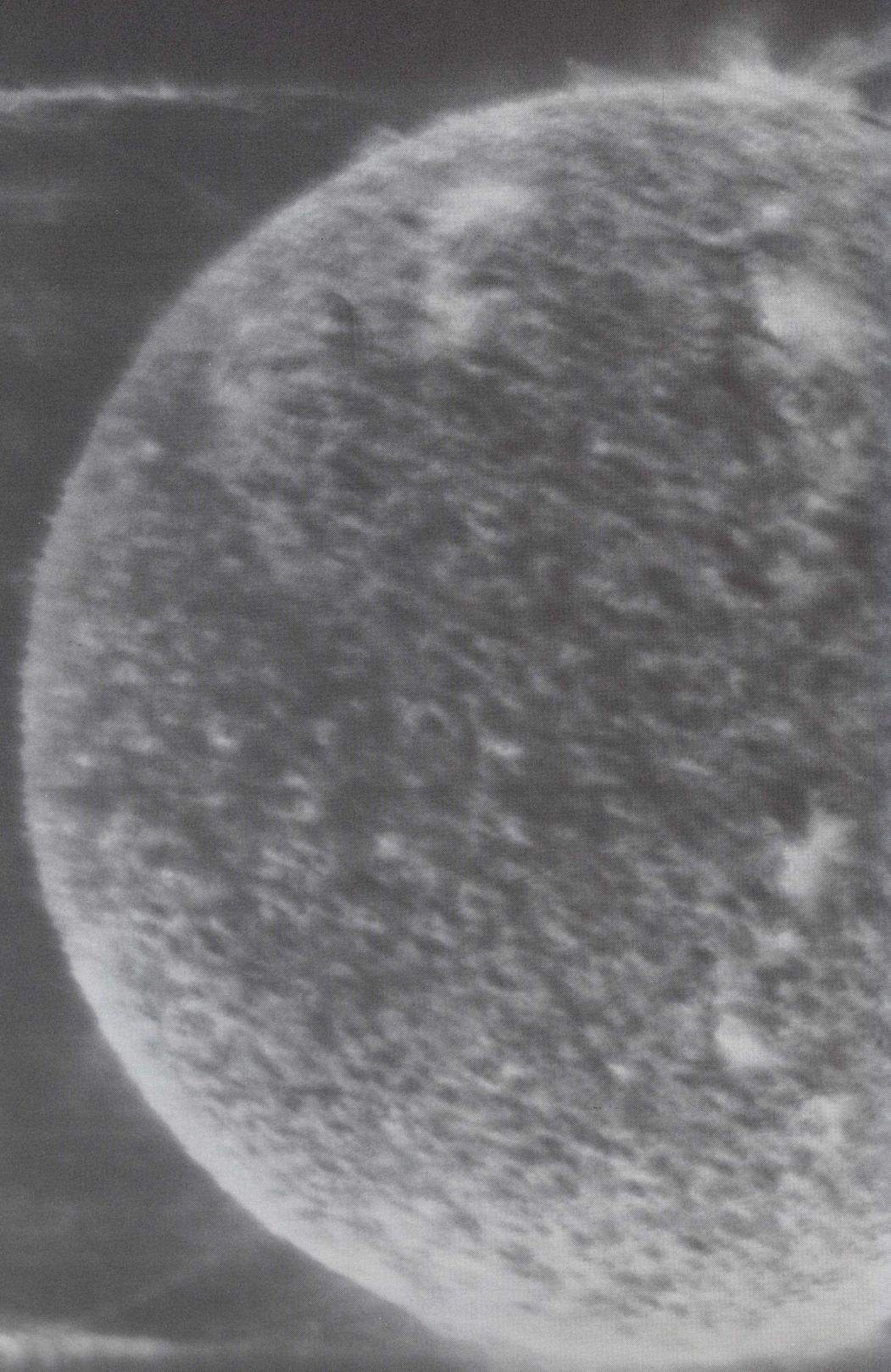
So, what does all this mean to each Sun Sign? While space prohibits in-depth study, the following pages provide each sign with "key words to live by in 1992." If not certain which zodiacal Sun sign you are, the dates and descriptions should help.

To all the children of the universe, best of everything in the new year, 1992!



Peg Byers' 1992 Sun Sign predictions are with the planetary descriptions.

Peg Byers lives in Pittsburgh, PA and is a card-carrying member of Mensa and is also a member of the American Federation of Astrologers, the National Council of Geocosmic Research and the AFAN, the National Astrologers Union. Currently, she is pursuing advanced degrees in computer-based education to compose computer software for teaching astrology to young people.



# THE SUN

By volume, our closest star, the Sun, is 1.3 million times bigger than the Earth. Just as the Earth is part of a planetary system, the Sun is one of millions of stars that orbits in the Milky Way. Our Sun sits two-thirds from the Milky Way's hub and takes 225 million years (travelling at 720,000 mph) for one revolution.

PHOTO: As described by NASA: "At the top of this image a great eruption is visible extending more than one-third of a solar radius from the Sun's surface. This eruption preceded the formation of an enormous coronal bubble which extended a distance of several radii from the Sun." June 10, 1973 by Skylab 2.

**LEO** (July 23 - August 23), The Lion., the fun-loving, creative, loyal child of the universe. Transformation and perhaps power struggles within the home colored 1991. Stress due to increased responsibility scattered forces and created anxiety. In 1992 personal and professional relationships require responsible decision-making. Major changes will occur in daily routines and health regimens. Protect your health by finding natural, positive outlets for stress. Your key words are "listen to your body" and "trust your instincts."

Leos: Magic Johnson, Alex Haley, Patrick Ewing, Geoffrey Holder, Isaac Hayes.

# Morning Star

---

Nia Caron Quarles  
Pittsburgh, PA



**he is at least 5 billion years old. Her diameter is 864,000 miles wide, which is 109 times that of earth's. Her surface temperature approaches 6000 degrees Centigrade with a core temperature of 10-16 million degrees Centigrade. She causes the wind to blow, the rain to fall, the seasons to change. She warms the summer days and lights the blue-black nights.**

At 93 million miles away, or a 20-year plane ride, the sun is our closest star. Her awesome presence and power have caused many ancient cultures to revere her as a deity. This is not surprising because, she literally makes our world turn. The nine planets of our solar system orbit

around her. The earth orbits the sun at a rate of 18.5 miles per second. Without sunlight we would not be able to identify any other planets in our solar system. As a child I used to think how beautifully the moon glowed. I now realize I was viewing the sun's light reflecting off the moon.

The heat and light our morning star produces sustain all of created life on earth. Sunlight not only wakes us, warms us and allows us to see, it is the essential agent photosynthesis, the process that makes plants grow and convert chemical energy into food. The sun also determines earth's climate. If we were 10 percent further away or 10 percent closer we would either freeze or scorch.

As the sun heats the air and the sea, currents of wind are created. The sea evaporates and forms vapor and rain.

The sun is, to say the least, awesome in size alone. If the sun were a giant gumball machine and the earth a giant gumball, 1,300,000 earth-size gumballs would fill the sun. If that doesn't set the stage for you, then imagine the sun's diameter being as wide as three times the distance from earth all the way to the moon. The power of the sun is equally astounding. The amount of energy radiated by the entire sun in a mere second is more than human civilization has ever generated in all of history! Still, the sun is an average star, not unlike millions in size, mass temperature and luminosity.

What exactly is a star? A star is a globe of hot gas with a nuclear furnace at its core. Energy in the form of heat, light and radiation flow out of stars. While stars shine, planets can only reflect sunlight. Planets are solid rock or cold gas. Stars may vary in color from white

or yellow to orange, red or blue depending upon their temperature.

The sun appears to be the biggest and brightest of stars because it is our closest, but a star named Rigel is 15,000 times brighter than the sun. The monstrous star Antares is so vast it could consume the space of 36 million suns!

The relative proximity of the sun to earth allows astronomers to study its features and make discoveries about the rest of the universe. They have discovered that billions of star galaxies exist within the universe. Well how large is the universe? Man has not discovered the limits of it yet. We do know that within our galaxy of the Milky Way there are at least 100 billion stars. As the earth takes 365 days to orbit the sun, our sun takes 240 million years (1,512,000,000,000,000 miles) to revolve around the Milky Way.

Not only does our morning star directly and indirectly sustain life, it also gives life a rhythm. The patterns of the stars and heavens were man's first timetable. As the elements moved in fixed patterns man was able to use the sun, moon and stars to tell time and develop calendars. The word moon comes from an earlier form of the word month.

In England around 2600 B.C., stones called Stonehenge were arranged by Neolithic man to track the course of the sun, moon, seasons, and eclipses. The ➤

Egyptians had several sun gods and believed that the perpetual rising and setting of the sun signified death, resurrection and eternity. The presence of light or darkness stimulates our hormones. Animals migrate and reproduce and plant life becomes dormant or awakens depending on the angle of the sun and the length of day.

*Our sun is halfway through its lifespan and is classified as a G2V star, or a dwarf star in the cooler range of the intermediate temperatures.*

Once thought to be a flawless globe, astronomers have discovered dark sunspots on the surface. Sunspots disappear and recur and allow observers to record the sun's variability. They signify areas thousands of degrees cooler. The sun's surface is not a smooth layer of gas but appears to be in the form of granules or bubblelike sections. Looking

through a telescope<sup>1</sup>, these granules may appear small but they average 500 miles across.

Ours would be one dark, frozen, lifeless globe without sunlight. Most people take the sun for granted but it is truly our most important and abundant natural energy resource. When natural sources such as coal and oil are depleted, man will have to look toward non-polluting solar energy to cook, heat or cool homes, etc.

Fortunately, our sun will continue to light its fire for five billion years. How little we know yet how much we owe our morning star.



#### SOURCES

*American Nature Guides: Astronomy* by Ian Ridpath

*Captives of the Sun* by James Pickering

*Daytime Star, The Story of Our Sun* by Simon Nitton

*Fire of Life- The Smithsonian Book of the Sun*

*In the Light of the Sun* by Mark Washburn

*Our Turbulent Sun* by Kendrick Frazier

*Red Land, Black Land, Daily Life In Ancient Egypt*

by Barbara Metz

*The Beginning and The End* by Issac Asimov

*The Sun and Amateur Astronomers* by W.M.

Baxter

<sup>1</sup> CAUTION: Never look directly through a telescope to view the sun, not even with the aid of a dark filter. This could cause permanent blindness. The sun's image should first be reflected onto a white piece of paper to be viewed.

# Frogs At Midnight

---

There is nothing  
so curious  
as midnight  
or its promise.

Secrets bulge  
from the edge  
of small waters,  
Slumbering frogs,

their webbed words  
dissolving  
to every bone,  
worry the wind.

How like rocks  
they seem,  
rocks with eyes  
and the habit of prayer.

Fredrick Zydek  
Omaha, Nebraska



## Winner

---

The winner of Shooting Star Productions' **Middle Passage Commemoration** Quilt Raffle was Mrs. Tammy Kabba of Pittsburgh, PA. Congratulations Tammy! Please watch the Summer issue of *Shooting Star Review* for details about this year's quilt raffle.



# MERCURY

Mercury is one of the fastest planets, scooting forward at 30 miles per second (nearly 11,000 mph), and circling the sun every 88 days. Mercury is only 40% larger than our moon, and on November 6, 1993, the Earth and sun will be aligned so that tiny Mercury can be seen crossing the sun's surface. (Gazing directly at the sun causes blindness. Consult astromony sources for safe methods and for timing because the transit will only take two minutes.) Sunrise to sunrise on Mercury is nearly 59 days long.

PHOTO: Taken by NASA's Mariner 10 on March 29, 1974.

## GEMINI (May 21 - June 22), The Twins.

Gemini is the clever, quick-witted, curious communicator. 1991 has been difficult personally, professionally, financially. 1992 offers new horizons, plans and goals for the future. Financially, life will stabilize as you continue to slowly build a new, more solid base. "Continued patience" and "renewed faith" are your key words.

Geminis: Phylicia Ayers-Allen Rashad, Nikki Giovanni, Miles Davis, Andre Watts, Leslie Uggams, Tom Feelings.

## VIRGO (August 23 - September 23), The Virgin.

The detail-oriented, quiet sign of hard workers among us. 1991 saw many positive changes in creative self-expression. 1992 will bring increased chances for gain and expansion of your world and self. Watch the waistline! Virgo, you will continue gaining new appreciation for depth and abilities, as will those around you. Virgo's key words are "enjoy your inner child," and "expand your dreams."

Virgos: Barry White, Valerie Simpson, Lola Falana, BB King, Michael Jackson.

## cracker jacks

"step on a line you break your mama's spine  
step on a crack you break your mama's..."  
what, tuff enough, engraved scowl,  
fine scar across your eyebrow?  
tight jeans, glazed eyes,  
piled curses, spent daydreams  
reeling in the sunlight  
barely thirteen,  
crack full  
little girl  
five dollar pebble in your pocket  
ten dollar trick down the block.

"lady bug lady why do you roam?  
your house is on fire and your children are  
home"

little girl,  
if you were my little girl,  
i would take your face between my hands;  
i would hold your eyes with mine;  
i would look for the drop the spark that was  
me,  
when i fed you at my breast.  
child, if you were my little girl,  
i would remember  
work my way down the cord to see  
where it began to tear  
so i could tie up each loose end,  
feed your hunger with my love.

if you were my little girl,  
if you were mine, child,  
the rage would know no end.  
and i would plead,  
"if i did not listen to you then  
let me listen to you now"  
i would hold you under  
one arm and running, carry you  
to the ocean of our knowing.

i would not let them take you away  
i would not let you become the blade  
of the smoke you embrace,  
reel, pull and puff,  
puff again and call it home  
and sunshine.  
"eeny meeny minny moe  
catch a "  
i would do all the wrong things  
and maybe some of the right.

little girl, little girl  
with your grown up habits  
which eat smiles  
and devour lifetimes;  
i would take you home.  
more than holding up a mirror  
i would make a door  
kicking, pulling, flying  
i would get you through

daughter if you saw what i see  
when i look at you



"I'm a little acorn brown  
laying on the cold cold ground  
everybody steps on me  
that is why I'm fractured, see..."

i see the benin bronze  
almond queen mother eyes  
braids sweeping the neck.  
i see nzinga curfsying to the  
portuguese before proclaiming  
there would be no slavery here;  
holding spear, shield, and musket  
to enforce her point.  
i see the old woman, la vieja,  
the first one who bled this land  
holding the spark as she held her breath  
determining she and hers  
i and i was gonna make it.  
i see the pyramids  
and i see cowrie shells  
laying open in pairs.

pick a star name it for yourself.  
child i would take you home  
and knead away the pain,  
knead away the yearning.  
i would bring you home  
and this time,  
this time

i would  
teach you,  
as i have begun to learn,  
how to remember  
what we felt like  
when we were  
truly free.

d.major  
San Francisco, CA

# A Tribute To Steve Biko<sup>1,2</sup>

Dennis Brutus

The dusty roads<sup>3</sup>  
from Peddie to King

the yellow river  
choking with silt<sup>4</sup>  
draining to i'Monti

the dust-filmed bluegums  
poised and dreaming  
in the arid air

the parching dust  
harsh in the throat  
and hurtful on the eyes

the crude teutonic towns  
-Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover-  
with their ominous echoes

-all these he knew  
their roads he traversed:

they fired him with resolve  
and smouldering anger

their racial hate seethed round him  
like the surge of shimmering heatwaves  
and laid a thousand lashes  
on his taut flesh

here he planned, dreamed  
waged his struggle  
and hardened his will  
to confront the butchers

to challenge their terror  
-even if they robbed him of his life.

1 Killed by South African Secret Police

2 First published in *Salutes and Censures*

3 Short for Kingwilliamstown.

4 African for East London



# VENUS

Venus is slightly smaller than Earth and closer to Earth than Mars. Venus has no moons and is 67 million miles from the sun. Interestingly, a day on Venus is longer than its year. It takes 225 Earth days for Venus to circuit the sun, and it takes 243 days for one turn at Venus' equator.

PHOTO: Taken by NASA Magellan explorer. This photo is 812 miles southwest of an area called Gula Mons, a volcano that is nearly two miles high.

## TAURUS (April 21 - May 21), The Bull.

Taurus is the productive, steady, artistic and comfort-loving sign. The last several years brought major upheaval in personal and/or professional relationships. 1992 continues this trend. Change is difficult for fixed Taurus, but new modes of creativity, fun and quick opportunities to improve your status will buoy your spirits. The key words for Taurus are "receptivity to change" and "reorganize the structures."

Taureans: Isaiah Thomas, Malcolm X, Janet Jackson, Betty Carter, James Brown, August Wilson, Judith Jamison.

## LIBRA (September 21 - October 21), The Scales.

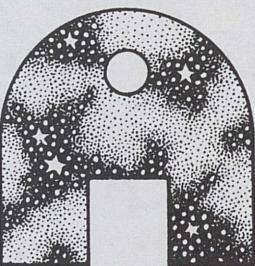
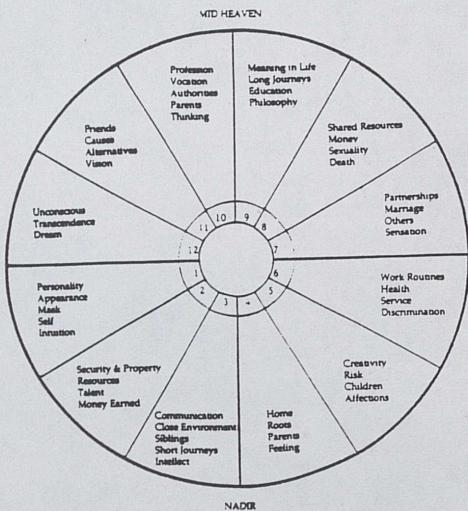
Libra is the outgoing, friendly diplomat of the zodiac needing harmony. You may still be on the rollercoaster with changes at home, but you are gaining better coping skills. In 1992 more creative ways of relating to children and loved ones will be put to use. Many will change residence this year. Relax! You have an angel on your shoulder in all the upheaval. Your key words are "patience on the homefront" and "secret friends to the rescue."

Libras: Jesse Jackson, Patti Labelle, Ray Charles, Clifton Davis, Ntozake Shange, Winnie Mandela.

# Astrology For The 21st Century

Christine Conrad  
Pittsburgh, PA

astrology



strology, the word encompasses so many different ideas - good and bad, right or wrong, from the Sun Signs columns we are tempted to read in the morning paper to its controversial use in politics, to its renaissance coupled with modern psychology - that we need to clarify what astrology is today.

Since people looked up and experienced a correlation between the repetition of earthly events and the repetition of planetary positions, astrology has been used to make sense of the seeming chaos down here. Astrology is a totally pragmatic study that has survived the test of time and the attacks of both religion and modern science.

### *What is Modern Astrology and how can it be of any help in the 21st century?*

I believe that modern astrology predicts questions, not answers. It is a universal language of energy that helps us find our answers. Everything in life is governed by cycles. The zodiac is a belt divided into 12 arcs of 30 degrees - the 12 signs of the zodiac - extending on either sides of the ecliptic which is the apparent path traced by the movement of the sun around the earth. The sun has a cycle of 365 days, Moon a cycle of 28 days, Jupiter a cycle of 12 years, Pluto a cycle of 248 years, etc. Astrology studies these planetary cycles and their interferences with each other. *Planets, Signs, Houses, Elements* are the main components of this symbolic language.

The 10 Planets represent the psychological functions, for instance: *Sun* represents our will, our creative energy, *Moon*

represents our unconscious, our emotions and instincts, *Jupiter* is our ability to trust life and ourselves and *Pluto* is our potential for transformation and so on.

The 12 Signs represent the individualized psychological process. For example, *Aries* will be assertive, pioneering, impatient, aggressive, *Cancer* will be nurturing to self and others, sympathetic, vulnerable, and *Sagittarius* will be optimistic, idealistic, extravagant.

The 4 Elements -- *Air, Fire, Water, and Earth* -- represent the energy quality of the psychological function. *Fire* represents the intuition function, the sense of sight and insight. When well balanced, it gives us optimism, spontaneity, inspiration, generosity, warmth. If it is in excess, it brings passion, anger, violence, recklessness. If deficient, there might be poor digestion, apprehension, despair.

The 12 Houses designed in the horoscope represent the different fields of experience in life (See Page 22).

It is important to understand that there are no "bad" signs or "good" signs, neither "good" planets nor "bad" planets. Each one can be used positively or negatively according to our conscious or unconscious efforts.

The birth chart drawn by the date, time and place of birth is like a map, a blueprint of the

*continued on page 26*

# THE MOON

The moon is, on average, 216,420 miles away and circles Earth in 27 days, 8 hours. Because the moon also rotates on its axis (a lunar day) in the same time, this movement keeps the same side facing Earth. Until spacecraft could go around the moon, the maximum amount of the moon ever seen was 60%. Although the sun has some effect, the moon is the main influence on Earth's tides ... raising and lowering the lakes, seas and oceans.

PHOTO: NASA, during the homeward journey of the manned Apollo 11 spacecraft from a distance of 10,000 nautical miles.

## CANCER (June 21 - July 21)

The nurturing, family loving, homebody of the zodiac. Confusion and rapid change within close relationships have plagued you during the last few years. These themes continue in 1992 but with improved family communications and support. While it is not time to form lasting unions, many new people will be drawn to you. This is a time of learning new ways to relate. Key words for you Cancer are "nurture the self" and "accept new feelings."

Lena Horne: Born June 30, 1917 in Brooklyn, NY; Singer-Actress; 1934 Cotton Club Dancer; Movies: "Cabin in the Sky," "Stormy Weather," "Ziegfeld Follies," "The Wiz," Broadway: "Jamaica," "Lena."

Other Cancers: Katherine Dunham, Arthur Ashe, Mike Tyson, Ernest Barnes Jr., Diahann Carroll.



individual's unique potential. By discovering this potential and increasing self awareness, we can increase our capacity for free will and for adequate responses in life, in a given environment.

*Practically, how can we benefit from this symbol system?*

By understanding the different energies at play in our life (the intermingling of planets, signs, elements...) which often reflect contradictory needs and desires. But we can *consciously* modify and redirect their "raw," unconscious expression toward a more positive outlet. Constructive (nonfatalistic!) modern astrology can put us in touch with cosmic order and help us harmonize our life.

Our real inner needs are symbolized by the planetary patterns in our chart. When we lose touch with them or when we never recognize them, we grow further away from the harmonious alignment of our body, mind and soul. We create a state of disease that may express itself in illness if carried too far. Illness is usually the physical and tangible symptom that something in our way of life is wrong and needs to be changed (diet, job, relationship...)

Astrology can point at the root of problems and help us walk half

the way toward the healing process through greater Awareness. The second half of the healing process is certainly the most difficult: *Empowerment*, making the needed life changes.

Illness should be regarded as a messenger: we should listen to it and not try to kill the messenger with drugs because we do not like the message! We now have a shift of paradigm in science from a mechanistic, reductionist view of human nature toward a holistic approach.

For example: if someone suffers recurrent headaches or gastric ulcers, wouldn't it be better to understand what causes the suffering and eradicate the root causes with conscious changes of life habits instead of negating the problem with pain killers or other drugs? Astrology is one of the quickest ways to decode the message (but not the only one): a repressed or blocked Mars could cause the headache, an unintegrated Uranus in Cancer could bring the ulcer.

This brief presentation can hopefully restore a more positive attitude toward the stars that guide us by showing us that "things" do not happen to us but we happen to them and that the Sun signs columns in the newspapers give only a very partial and over-generalized image of what real Astrology is.



# Negotiations

---

*(for my musician son, Gordon, a Jazz drummer)*

When I see this hand  
held before me  
stroking your forehead  
carrying the promise  
of a good life,

*Enfant of my choice,*

and as I watch you  
grow into the wilderness  
of youth's goods  
and promises strained  
through the broken air,

I see you move into  
manhood buffeting all  
that carries with it your  
stubborn watchfulness  
and eyes soft with love

*Child of my loins, son  
given to me from out of the Universe,*

I carry your weight of sorrow  
only for a little while, knowing  
that in the forest  
your power is in your strength

bequeathed to you  
from a womb of everlasting  
song bursting from this  
tired world, and beauty  
born of listening turning into

light.

Pinkie Gordon Lane  
Baton Rouge, LA



# MARS

Mars is about 4,200 miles in diameter and takes 687 days (1.8 earth years) to get around the sun, covering about 15 miles each second. Mars is 141,700,000 miles from the sun and has a day that is about 40 minutes longer than a day on Earth.

PHOTO: Taken December 13, 1990 with NASA's Hubble Space Telescope when Mars was 53 million miles from Earth. Thick bluish clouds cover the icy north pole during this Martian winter. The large, light area is called Arabia Planitia and is thought to be bright because of a layer of dust (perhaps about ten feet thick). This region is heavily cratered. The smaller light region is called Isidis Planitia and is a 620-mile wide basin created by impact more than two billion years ago. The dark sections are thought to be volcanic, basaltic rock that has been weathered into sand.

## ARIES (March 21 - April 21), The Ram

Aries is the forceful, independent, impulsive, often headstrong native of the zodiac. No doubt 1991 moved too slowly for you. Restrictions were fewer than the last few years, but growth was delayed. 1992 will be more your style. Great professional change is in store. A line up of planets in your sector of authorities and career will electrify the old order. New opportunities will come fast and furiously. Be ready. Key words for you are "stay positive" and "seize opportunities."

Billy Dee Williams: Born April 6, 1937; TV Shows and Movies: *Mahogany*, *Scott Joplin*, *Lady Sings the Blues*, *Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Dynasty*

Other Aries: Gil Scott-Heron, Ella Fitzgerald, Luther Vandross, Maya Angelou, Chaka Khan, George Benson

# For Richard Wright

---

Did you burn the broom,  
set the curtains on fire  
with a handful of straw?

Did you hide beneath the house,  
cling to the old chimney  
until your father dragged you,  
screaming through the dust?

Did you wish you were dead?

Those bags above your bed  
hung full and heavy.

Nightmare udders, they were  
always there, ready to burst open,  
drown you.

Does it matter if you killed  
the cat, hung her on a nail  
with a piece of string,  
watched her choke and blindly scratch?

Does it matter if your mother  
forced you to bury her,  
dig a cat's grave in the dark  
with a tiny spade?

---

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Richard Wright Circle* is an international association of scholars, teachers, students and other persons who are dedicated to promoting an understanding of this writer's life and work. Annual membership is \$10 and includes the biannual "Richard Wright Newsletter." Contact Maryemma Graham, 406 Holmes Hall, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115.

The truth lies somewhere  
between Natchez and Chicago,  
the streets of Paris  
and a Memphis slum.

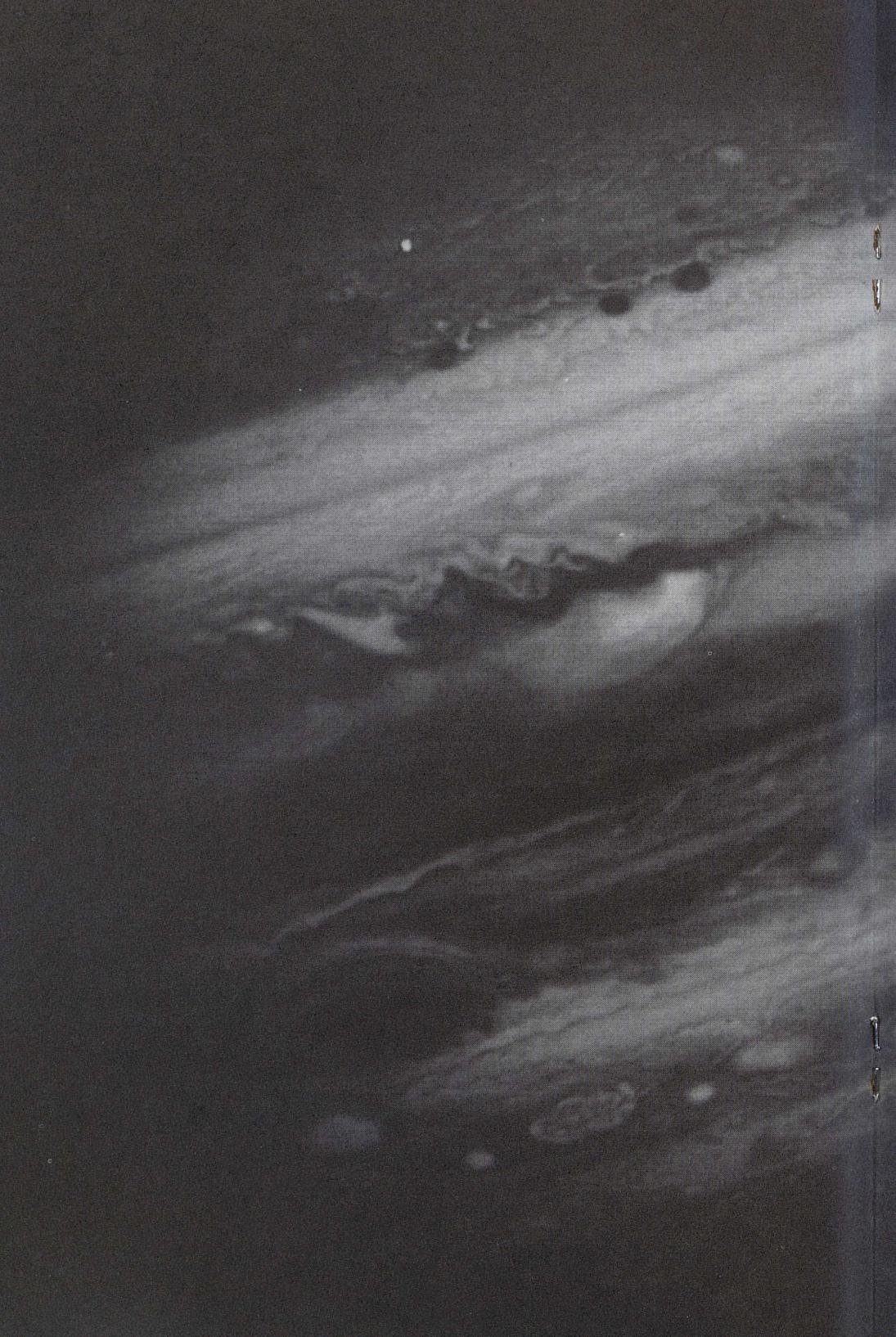
In your scared eyes, you were  
a drunkard at six, the child  
who ran from the orphan home  
into the arms of a white policeman.

But you waved a kitchen knife,  
threatened to cut, kill  
the beaten uncle who tried  
to teach you with a belt  
all he knew of humility.

You took the night train North,  
read the books and raised  
red flags.

You killed the white girl,  
burned her body in a furnace  
and went to the chair for us  
more than once, because  
the pain was always real  
and yours.

William Miller  
York, PA



# JUPITER

Jupiter is 88,000 miles in diameter, or the equivalent width of eleven earths lined side by side. It's equator spins at 22,000 miles per hour. Even though, by volume, Jupiter would equal 1,323 Earths (the Great Red Spot on Jupiter's surface is twice as wide as Earth), it can complete a rotation twice as fast. From one dawn to the next only takes ten hours on Jupiter. It is 480 million miles from the sun and requires 12 years to complete one circuit. At last count, Jupiter had 16 moons. Because of its high hydrogen composition, some scientists suspect that Jupiter may actually be a star that failed to ignite. Jupiter's mass is more than twice that of the other planets combined.

**PHOTO:** Taken Feb. 5, 1979 by NASA's Voyager 1 from 17.5 million miles away. Of the four moons in this photograph, only Europa (to Jupiter's far right) is free of Jupiter's background. Jupiter's moons rotate like our own, always showing the same side.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22), The Archer, the outspoken visionary, nature lover and world traveler. Finances and self-esteem have been confused and uncomfortably changeable. The unexpected continues in your earning ability in 1992, but now the quick-changes will be happy ones. Expect positive reviews from superiors and career expansion. Work on communication skills. Key words for you are "plan carefully," and "speak diplomatically."

Sagittarians: Lou Rawls, Redd Fox, Ossie Davis, Robin Givens, Shirley Chisholm, Dennis Brutus.

# In The Name Of The Father

---

John I. Lattany  
Magnolia, New Jersey



People are trying desperately to understand the sudden, rapid and cataclysmic changes in our world.

These changes started in 1603-1607, when Queen Bess died and England began to colonize the New World. The stage for this was set by the conjunctions of the planets Uranus and Neptune in Sagittarius, a fiery sign which is considered to be the sign of religion.

Uranus and Neptune are father and mother figures, the creative parents of the other planets. Neptune, the female principal, mother of Saturn and the other

# And Of The Mother

---

planets, governs music and all the arts, fluids, blood, oil, drugs, alcohol and other solvents, water and all water transportation. Uranus, a masculine planet, the father of Saturn, represents innovative thought, ideas, energy, electricity, and technology. What Neptune dreams, Uranus brings about. It is the "how-to" planet, and develops methods for making things happen. It is the Word that existed in the Beginning.

Saturn, the disobedient son, also known as Death, the Devil or Satan (and also Santa Claus or St. Nick), is the offspring of Uranus and Neptune. In all mythology as well as in the Bible, though the allegories change slightly, the figures remain the same. In the heavens, Saturn represents

jealousy, fear, and vices. On our earth it represents old age and death, government, other traditional structures, and control. It also represents revolt against God and parental authority.

In 1603, Saturn joined his parents in the sign of Sagittarius, which is associated with ➤

religion. Immediately, Queen Bess died, and a long, peaceful era of accommodation between England and the Church of Rome ended. By 1607, when Saturn left that sign, English religious dissidents (Protestants) had begun to break away from the Roman church and to rebel against their Catholic king, James I, and had established a church and a colony at Jamestown.

In the past three years (1989-1991) Saturn has moved through and out of the house of Capricorn, where its creative parents, Uranus and Neptune, are in residence and will continue to reside for the next seven years. Capricorn is the house of government, where Saturn was at home. But now the home belongs to the celestial parents, Uranus and Neptune, and Saturn has been evicted from power over the earth. His former kingdoms, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., were established in the names of the Father and the Mother, respectively--but in their names only.

The United States was founded with Uranus rising and in the name of Uranian ideals of freedom--but only in the name of the father, as its freedom was only for a few, and its prosperity was achieved only through black slavery.

The Soviet Union was founded with Neptune rising (in the name of the planetary Mother), but Neptune's abundance was not

really for all Soviet citizens--only for a privileged few members of the party elite.

*... those cruel  
rituals in  
honor of  
"Neptunus  
Rex" once  
mated green  
European  
mariners with  
helpless  
African child-  
women called  
"Neptune's  
babies"*

---

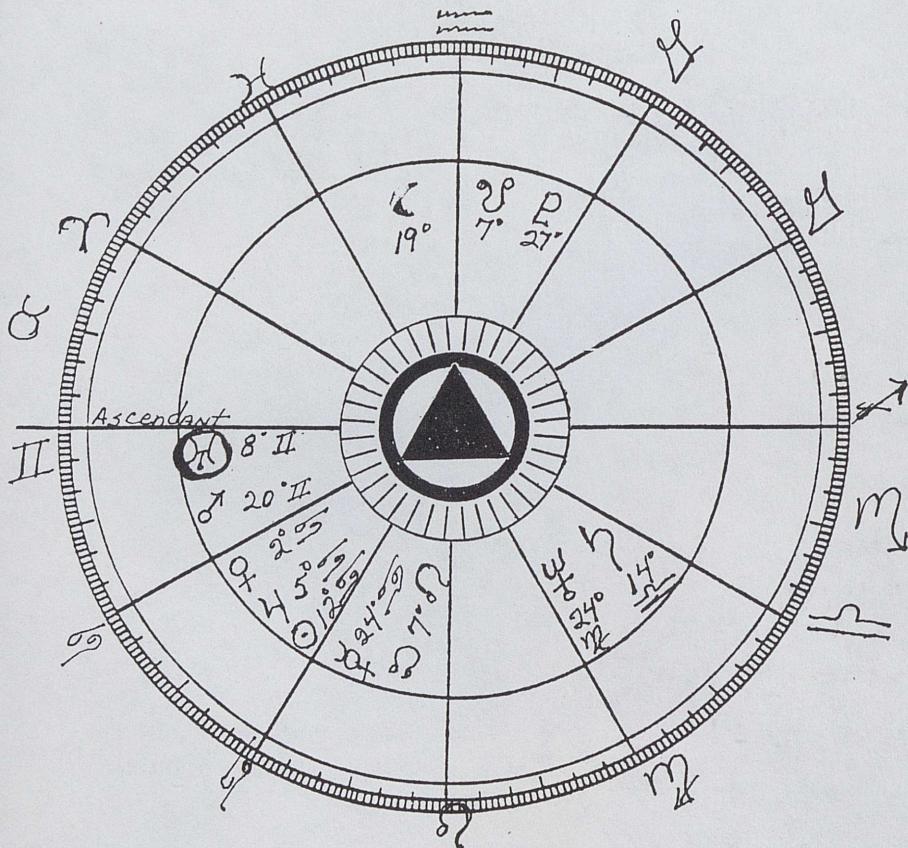
Now, as Saturn-Satan loses his hold on earth, these spuriously established governments are toppling.

As spiritual events occur in heaven, their material counterparts occur on earth. When Saturn last decided to break away from his parents in the religious sign Sagittarius, the earth saw the beginning of the revolt against the Catholic church and of England's Protestant Reformation.

Religious oppression in England precipitated the colonization of the New World, a rebellious empire led by the

This is the chart erected for the U.S.A.'s birthday. Uranus (circled) the first to rise on the ascendant, signifying the principle of freedom for all.

NAME United States of America BIRTHDATE July 4, 1776  
BIRTHPLACE Philadelphia, Pennsylvania BIRTHTIME 2:17 AM

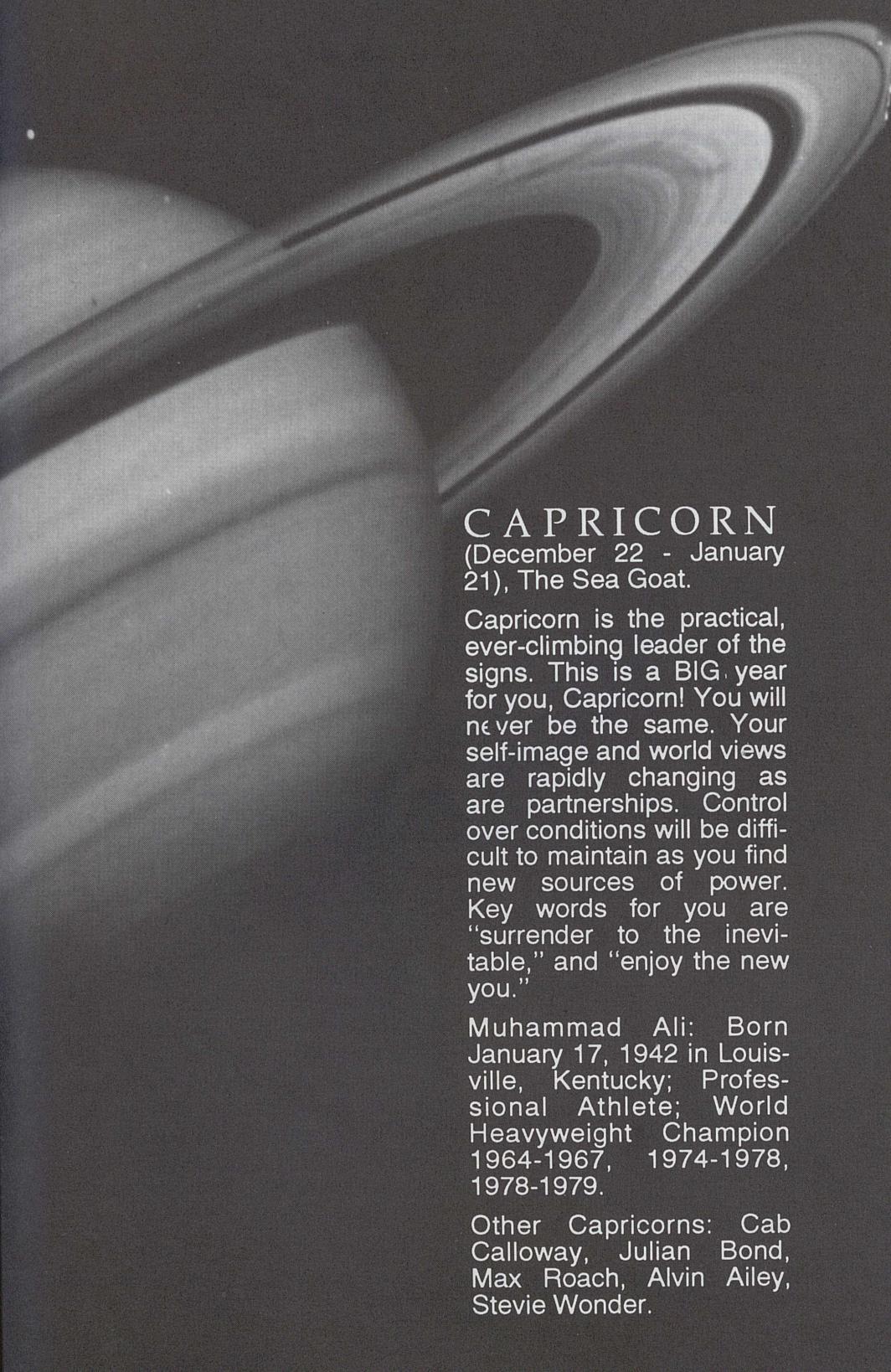


continued on page 40

# SATURN

Saturn is twice as far from the sun as Jupiter and is the last planet visible without binoculars or telescopes. A pale gold, Saturn's diameter is 71,000 miles and it completely spins in just over 10 hours. Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune also have rings, but Saturn's are the most spectacular. They start 7,000 miles from the planet's surface and extend 35,000 miles into space, with a 170,000-mile diameter and about ten miles thick, far larger than the planet. Saturn has more than 20 moons.

PHOTO: NASA Voyager 2 images obtained on Aug. 4, 1981 from 13 million miles away. Some moons are clearly visible. Those little white dots above the planet are Tethys (the farthest from Saturn), Dione and Thea (the closest).



## CAPRICORN

(December 22 - January 21), The Sea Goat.

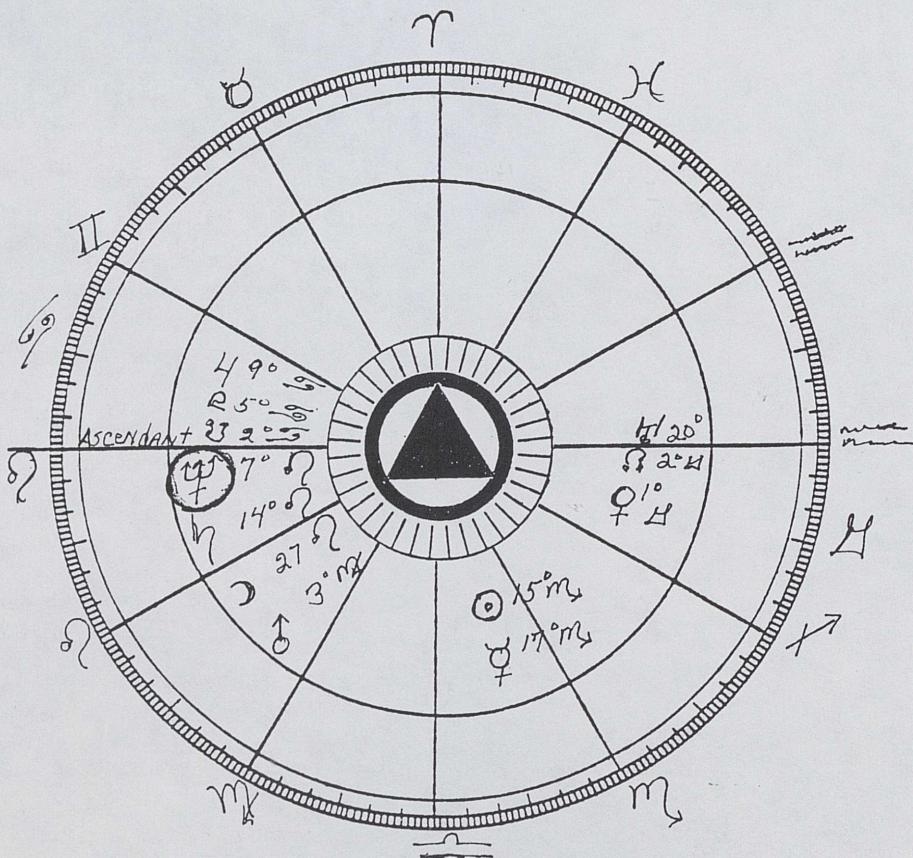
Capricorn is the practical, ever-climbing leader of the signs. This is a BIG year for you, Capricorn! You will never be the same. Your self-image and world views are rapidly changing as are partnerships. Control over conditions will be difficult to maintain as you find new sources of power. Key words for you are "surrender to the inevitable," and "enjoy the new you."

Muhammad Ali: Born January 17, 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky; Professional Athlete; World Heavyweight Champion 1964-1967, 1974-1978, 1978-1979.

Other Capricorns: Cab Calloway, Julian Bond, Max Roach, Alvin Ailey, Stevie Wonder.

This is the chart erected for the Soviet Union's birthday. Neptune (circled) is the first to rise on the ascendant, signifying material abundance for all.

NAME U.S.S.R. BIRTHDATE NOV. 7, 1917  
BIRTHPLACE LENINGRAD BIRTHTIME MID NIGHT



breakaway son, Saturn, who left his parents in Sagittarius and set up his own empire in the world. This, of course, parallels and repeats the rebellions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis and of Lucifer in heaven:

*"And war broke out in heaven. Micheal and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled, but did not prevail. Neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom for our God, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurtled down."*

Rev. 12: 7-9

The planetary parents, Mother Neptune and Father Uranus have now been in conjunction for three years in Capricorn, an earth sign which is also the sign of earthly governments.

Saturn is no longer regent in the earth, because he has left Capricorn, and his parents are there to set the earth straight.

This means that there will no longer be any earthly governments as we have known them in the last

240 years. We can already see this happening in the breakup of the Soviet Union. Saturn will not transit an earth sign, or even move to a position to challenge the collapse of his authority on earth, for another seven years. Now in the sign of the man, Aquarius, Saturn is merely a man, not a god, and has no more heavenly power, nor any ecclesiastical authority.

Saturn in our time represents white people and the West, whose growth began with the colonization of the New World and of Africa by Europe, and began to end in 1881 with the alignment of the major planets in syzygy and the height of the Industrial Revolution, spurred by its Uranian technologies of steam and electricity. The industrial West has not returned to that high point since, but has continued in decline, broken only by wars.

The world's economy will change for the benefit of the masses, now that Saturn, the planet of the old, the rich, and the powerful, has left its position of governmental power in the heavens and on earth. There is no shortage of wealth; it simply became concentrated in the hands of fewer people than ever under Saturn's rule. The 1980s were the age of billionaires like Robert Maxwell. Now, Neptune is washing away their fortunes, as she did in the case of Maxwell, who died a Neptunian death at sea. The Neptunian blood ➤

plague, AIDS, has destroyed other rich and powerful celebrities, while others are dying untimely Uranian deaths in air disasters or dying symbolically on the airwaves, at the hands of electronic media. Uranus and Neptune will complete their destruction and dissolution of selfish government and greed in America within the next two years, when Saturn reaches 19 degrees Aquarius, contacting the United States moon, whose placement made Aquarian president Ronald Reagan so eerily successful. The last time this happened, President Kennedy was assassinated and a period of civil disobedience set in. After a new period of civil unrest (Uranus), Neptune will cleanse the earth and disseminate wealth and power to the masses of people, where it belongs.

Neptune rules two-thirds of the earth: that part of the planet which is covered with water, and two-thirds of its population--the people of color. That is why most black Americans are Baptists, why Africans honor water deities, and why initiation ceremonies at sea are held in honor of Neptune when vessels cross the Equator and enter the regions inhabited by darker people. Many modern black astrologers have been ashamed of the Neptune rulership of black people, because those cruel rituals in honor of "Neptunus Rex" once mated green European mariners with helpless African child-women called "Neptune's

babies"-- and because our arrival in the New World was via the grim Neptunian route of the Middle Passage.

But now our ruler Neptune is washing away all of the injustice and self-hatred which have afflicted black people, and is signaling a new self-esteem among us, and a new level of spirituality in all the earth. It will "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5), and will inspire a new song, perhaps to be composed by someone like Stevie Wonder, certainly to be sung by Neptunian people, probably those of African descent. This song is spoken of in the book of Revelation, chapter 14, verse 3: "And they are singing, as it were, a new song, before the throne...." The world's ears, tormented by the noises of war and the cries of the afflicted, eagerly await the refreshment and enchantment of the new song.



John I. Lattany has made a lifelong study of astrology and other spiritual subjects -- and believes that everyone should. He has been a health care professional and a mariner, sailing to almost every country with a seaport. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, the novelist Kristin Hunter. His main interests -- besides astrology -- are optics, photography, politics and keeping track of his grandchildren. He also enjoys watchmaking and working with antique clocks.

# Shaking Rain Over the Desert for Etheridge Knight, March 1991

---

1

When we met,  
and that only for a brief space,  
I did not know

I could not tell the sun  
had added on the extra bright already  
for his decline into the west

I could not tell the sky  
was lowering toward a greying earth  
drawing down the curtain on the year:  
lacking were the secret eyes of the old black one  
and saw through stone

2

We met only for a brief space  
during which you said little  
but what you said was the essence I think:

it was black hard rock with the split purple lips;  
he did things we dreamt of doing but dared not do,  
before they bored a hole in his head;

it was pictures taped to the wall of your cell  
of 47 black faces staring across violent space,  
pictures you and a whole nation to be reduced to;

and it was the black boys who, unlike the white boys,  
do not attempt to run away  
'cause they ain't got nowheres to run to--



3

So what else is new Etheridge  
about the dark so ubiquitous so artificial?  
Does it not bore as much as it shocks?

For the oppressed everywhere  
the cell is the world,  
the world the cell for the lumpenproletariat:

as Malcolm X said  
we're all in prison  
everywhere numbers oppressed repressed

in the land where apartheid reigns  
along the ancestral flow  
of the Limpopo the Zambesi and the great Congo

east and west of the Mississippi  
in the Americas  
Central and South

along the sweet waters of the Euphrates  
and all over between Nazareth and Bethlehem  
Where I was born--

one vast waste  
waste of numberless cells  
vast cell of dry wastes!

4

When we met, the falling leaves  
which stirred your genes had turned yellow already  
and I was left in double dark

yet once I broke in on your privacy and heard you,  
heard you eat in the bliss at the end of a long day  
like a laborer who has plowed and probed the masses of his  
race;

heard you proclaim a laughter through the empty air  
boundless like the bounty of a virgin fall  
inexhaustible like the depth of black;

yes and I heard you cry with equal passion,  
a child in the sixth decade exercising  
his full rights to the primal springs of life

against seasons debased to creeping,  
against stale fires,  
and the absence of soft words;

I heard you reflect your brother Malcolm  
you whom the light of poetry brought out of the cell  
like the light of truth brought out Malcolm:

5

The west is declining, brother  
its cruelty is rising,  
the white west's kick of death,

decline  
fall  
sink into a dead-end cycle,

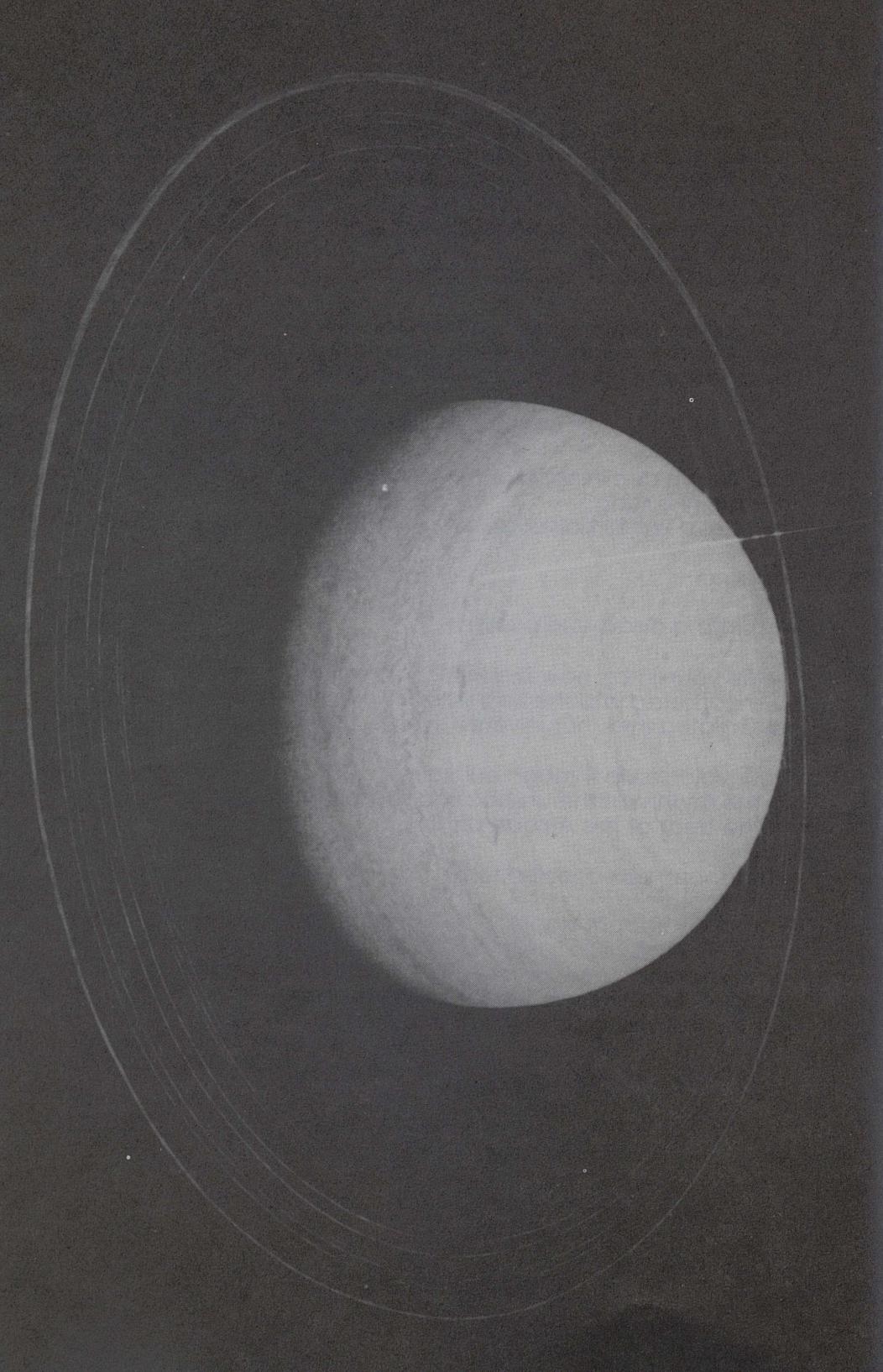
while your limbs, now like the fallen leaves,  
are gathered into the new year,  
assimilated into the universal river;

your voice talks through our veins  
in the rhythm of the unshackled seasons  
in the beat of the African drum

kah doom/kah doom-doom  
kah doom  
kah doom-doom-doom;

and your spirit, now all free like the birds you dreamt of,  
wings ever higher above the dying atoms:  
ruthlessly it shakes rain over the desert.

R. Busallah  
Kokomo, IN



# URANUS

Uranus is our solar system's seventh planet. At 1.8 billion miles from sun, Uranus takes 84 years for one solar revolution. Uranus spins much faster than the earth. It is 32,000 miles through the center and turns once at its equator every 16.8 hours. Uranus' north and south poles lie at opposite ends of its equator, thus making sunrise to sunset 42 earth years long at the alternating poles. Uranus' rings are arranged vertically, like a bull's eye, rather than horizontally, like a dish. Uranus has at least 15 moons and nine rings.

PICTURE: This painting projects the planet's appearance when Voyager 2 would arrive on January 24, 1986.

## AQUARIUS (January 21 - February 21), The Water Bearer.

Aquarius is the proud, humanitarian and reformer of the stars. Power struggles within the career have brought about the need to redefine success strategies and self-image. This is a time for working within the established system. Joint financial holdings and legacies show signs of expanding, however. Your key words are "deal with practicalities" and "expand your nest egg for the future."

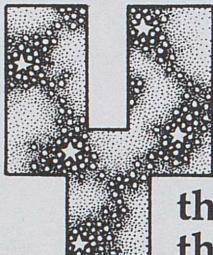
Rosa Parks: Born February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama; Civil Rights Leader; former clerk and insurance saleswoman, NAACP, SCLC member; triggered bus boycott by refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Boycott resulted in outlawing segregation on buses in Montgomery in 1955.

Others: Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, Roberta Flack, Eartha Kitt, Arsenio Hall, Bobby Brown.

# Crusader Rabbit

---

Jess Mowry  
Santa Cruz, California.



ou could be my dad."

Jeremy stood, waist-deep in the dumpster, arms slimed to the elbows from burrowing, and dropped three beer cans to the buckled asphalt.

Raglan lined them up, pop-tops down, and crushed them to crinkled discs under his tattered Nike, then added them to the half-full gunny sack. Finally, he straightened and studied the boy in the dumpster. It wasn't the first time.  
"Yeah. I could be."

Jeremy made no move to climb out, even though the stink of what he stood in seemed to surround him like a bronze-green

cloud, wavering upward like the heat-ghosts from other dumpster lids along the narrow alley. The boy wore only ragged jeans, the Airwalks on his bare feet buried somewhere below, and his wiry dusk-colored body glistened with sweat.

Not for the first time, Raglan thought that Jeremy was a beautiful kid; 13, small muscles standing out under tight skin, big hands and feet like puppy paws, and hair like an ebony dandelion puff. A ring glinted gold and fierce in his left ear, and a red bandana, sodden with sweat, hung loosely around his neck. His eyes were bright obsidian, but closed now, the bruise-like marks beneath them were fading, and his teeth flashed strong and white as he panted.

Raglan could have been a larger copy of the boy, twice his age but looking it only in size, and without the earring. There was an old knife slash on his chest; a deep one, with a high ridge of scar.

The Oakland morning fog had burned off hours ago, leaving the alley to bake in tar and rot-smell, yet Raglan neither panted nor sweated. There were three more dumpsters to check out, and the recycle place across town would be closing soon, but Raglan asked, "Want a smoke?"

Jeremy watched through lowered lashes as Raglan's eyes changed...not so much softening as going light-years away somewhere. Jeremy hesitated, long fingers clenching and unclenching on the dumpster's rusty rim. "Yeah...no. I think it's time."

Jeremy's movements were stiff and awkward as he tried to climb out. Garbage sucked wetly at his feet. Raglan took the boy, slippery as a seal, under the arms and lifted him over the edge. The boy stank, but that was mostly from a long day digging. Together, they walked back to the truck.

It was a '55 GMC one-ton, as rusted and battered as the dumpsters. There were splintery plywood sideboards on the bed. The cab was crammed with things, as self-contained as a Land Rover on safari. Even after two months, it still surprised Jeremy sometimes what Raglan could pull out from beneath the seat or the piled mess on the dash...toilet paper, comic books, or a .45 automatic.



Raglan emptied the gunny sack into an almost-full garbage can in the back of the truck, then leaned against the sideboard and started to roll a cigarette from Top tobacco while Jeremy opened the driver's door and slipped a scarred-up Sesame Street Band-Aids box from under the floormat. The boy's hands shook slightly. He tried not to hurry as he spread out his things on the seat: a little rock-bottle with gray-brown powder in the bottom instead of crack crystals; a puff of cotton; candle stub; flame-tarnished spoon, and needle, its point protected by a chunk of Styrofoam. On the cab floor by the shift lever was a gallon plastic jug from Pay-Less Drugs that used to hold "fresh spring water from clear mountain streams." Raglan filled it from gas station hoses, and the water always tasted like rubber. Jeremy got it out, too.

Raglan finished making his cigarette, fired it with a Bic, handed the lighter to the boy, then started making another as he smoked. His eyes were still far away.

Jeremy looked up as he worked. "Yo. I know your ole name. I seen it on your driver license. Why's your street name Raglan?"

Smoke drifted from Raglan's nostrils. He came close to smiling. "My dad started callin' me that. Spose to be from some old time cartoon, when he was just a little kid. *Crusader Rabbit*. But I never seen it. The rabbit's homey was a tiger. Raglan T. Tiger. Maybe they was somethin' like the Ninja Turtles. Had adventures an shit. It was a long time ago."

"Oh." Jeremy sat on the cab floor. He wrapped a strip of inner-tube around his arm. It was hard to get it right, one-handed. He looked up again. "Um...."

"Yeah." Raglan knelt and pulled the strip tighter. His eyes were distant again, neither watching nor looking away as the boy put the needle in. "You got good veins. Your muscles make 'em stand out."

The boy's eyes shifted from the needle, lowering, and his chest hardened a little. "I do got some muscles, huh?"

"Yeah. But don't let 'em go to your head."

Jeremy chewed his lip. "I used to miss 'em...my veins, I mean. A long time ago. An sometimes I poked right through."

"Yeah. I done that too. A long time ago."

The boy's slender body tensed a moment, then he relaxed with a sigh, his face almost peaceful and his eyes closed. But a few seconds later they opened again and searched out Raglan's. "It only makes me normal now."

Raglan nodded. "Yeah. On two a day, that's all." He handed Jeremy the other cigarette and fired the lighter.

The boy pulled in smoke, holding it a long time, then puffing out perfect rings and watching them hover in the hot, dead air. "Next week, it's only gonna be one." He held Raglan's eyes. It gonna hurt some more, huh?"

*Even after two months,  
it still surprised Jeremy  
sometimes what Raglan  
could pull out from  
beneath the seat or the  
piled mess on the  
dash...toilet paper,  
comic books, or a .45  
automatic.*

---

"Yeah."

"Um, when do you stop wanting it?"

Raglan stood, snagging the jug and taking a few swallows. Traffic rumbled past the alley. Exhaust fumes drifted in from the street. Flies buzzed in clouds over the dumpsters, and a rat scuttled past in no particular hurry. "When you decide there's somethin else you want more."

Jeremy began putting his things away. The little bottle was empty. It would take most of today's cans to score another for tomorrow. "Yo. You must be my dad, man. Why else would you give a shit?"

"I don't know. You figure it out." Raglan could have added that. When he'd first found Jeremy, the boy wouldn't have lived another week. But dudes Jeremy's age would think that was bad ... almost cool. Why? Who in hell

*continued on page 54*



# PLUTO

Pluto is smaller than our moon, yet its day is 6.4 Earth days long. Pluto has the most eccentric orbit. From 1979 until 1999, Pluto cruises inside of Neptune's orbit, making Neptune the most distant planet. Pluto's broad circle around the sun takes 248.5 earth years. In fact, Pluto has yet to complete a solar orbit since it was first discovered by modern scientists in 1930. Pluto has one known moon named Charon.

PICTURE: An artist's view of Pluto and it's moon Charon created for NASA.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 - November 23), The Scorpion.

The strong, intense, secretive powerhouse of the signs. For eight years now you have been under deep transformation, rediscovering your power. WE always knew it was there! In 1992 you will expand your future goals and friendships. At home there may be increased responsibilities or a move. Communications between relatives and siblings and your mode of transportation will require attention. Key words for Scorpio are "responsible communication" and "plan for the future."

Melba Moore: Born Oct. 29, 1945; Performing Artist; Montclair New Jersey State Teachers College BA, Performed in Cotton Comes To Harlem 1970, Hair 1979, Ed Sullivan Show, Johnny Carson Show; first Black to perform as a solo artist at Metropolitan Opera House in New York 1977; Tony Award for Purlie.

Other Scorpions: Ruby Dee, Lisa Bonet, Dwight Gooden.

knew. Raglan didn't remember a lot about being 13, but he remembered that.

*Jeremy joined him,  
glistening with sea  
spray, but solemn . . .  
Raglan said nothing,  
just taking the shovel in  
one hand and the little  
bundle in the crook of  
his arm.*

---

He dropped his cigarette on the pavement, slipped the sack off the sideboard, and started toward the other dumpsters. There really wasn't much use in checking these last dumpsters; this was the worst part of Oakland, and poor people's garbage was pitiful, everything already scraped bone-bare, rusted or rotted or beaten beyond redemption, and nothing left of any value at all. Jeremy followed, his moves flowing smooth like a black kid's once more.

A few paces ahead of the boy, Raglan flipped back a lid so that it clanged against the sooty brick wall. Flies scattered in swarms. For a second or two he just looked at what lay on top of the trash. He'd seen this before, too many times, but it was about the only thing he wouldn't accept as just what it was. His hand clamped on Jeremy's shoulder, holding the boy back. But Jeremy saw the baby anyhow.

"Oh...God." It came out of sigh. Jeremy pressed close to Raglan, and Raglan's arm went around him.

"I heard bout them," the boy whispered. "But I never figured it happened for real."

"Best take a good look, then."

But the boy's eyes lifted to Raglan's. "Why do people do that?"

But Raglan's gaze was distant once more, seeing but not seeing the little honey-brown body, the tiny and perfect fingers and toes. "I don't know."

Jeremy swallowed once. His lean chest expanded to pull in air. "What should we do?"

Raglan's eyes turned hard. He was thinking of cops and their questions, then of a call from some pay phone. There was one at the recycle place. Time was running short. The truck's tank was almost full, but there was food to buy after Jeremy's need, and the cans were the only money. Still he said, "What do you want to do?"

The boy looked back at the baby. Automatically he waved flies away. "What do they...do with 'em?" He turned to Raglan. "I mean...is there some little coffin...an flowers?"

Raglan took his arm off the boy. "They burn 'em."

"No!"

"The ones they find. Other times they just get hauled to the dump an the bulldozers bury 'em with the rest of the garbage. You been to the dump."

Almost, the boy clamped his hands to his ears, but then his fists clenched. "No! Goddamn you! Shut up, sucker!" Jeremy's fists clenched, then a hand darted to the pocket where he carried the blade.

The boy's chest heaved, muscles standing out stark. His hand poised. Raglan was quiet a minute. Finally he gripped Jeremy's shoulder once more. "Okay." Raglan walked back to the truck while Jeremy watched from beside the dumpster, waving away flies.

Raglan stopped around back. There was a ragged canvas tarp folded behind the cab. On foggy or rainy nights he spread it over the sideboards to make a roof. A piece of that would do. Salty sweat burned Raglan's eyes, and he blinked in the sunlight stabbing down between buildings. The canvas was oily, and stank. Going around to the cab, he pulled his black T-shirt from behind the seat.

The old GMC was a city truck, an inner-city truck, that measured its moves in blocks, not miles. It burned oil, the radiator leaked, and its tires were almost bald. There were two bullet holes in the right front fender. But it managed to maintain a grudging 55, rattling first across the Bay Bridge into San Francisco, and then over the Golden Gate, headed north. It had a radio / tape-deck, ancient and minus knobs, but Jeremy didn't turn on KSOL or play the old *Dangerous* tape he'd scored in a dumpster and patiently rewound with a pencil. He stayed silent, just rolling cigarettes for ➤

Raglan and himself, and looking once in awhile through the grimy back window at the little black bundle in the bed. Even when they turned off 101 near Navato onto a narrow two-lane road leading west Jeremy just stared through the windshield glass, his eyes a lot like Raglan's even though an open countryside of gentle green hills spread out around them.

It was early evening, with the sunlight slanting gold when Raglan slowed the truck and searched the roadside ahead. The air was fresh and clean, scented with things that lived and grew, and tasting of the ocean somewhere close at hand. There was a dirt road that Raglan almost missed, hardly more than twin tracks with a strip of yellow dandelions between. It led away toward more low hills, through fields of tall grass and wild mustard flowers of wild mustard. Raglan swung the truck off the pavement and they rolled slowly to the hills in third gear. Jeremy began to watch the flowered fields passing by, then turned to Raglan. "Yo. You ever been here before?"

"A long time ago."

"I never knew there was places like this, pretty an without no people an cars an shit. Not for real."

"It's real."

The road entered a cleft between the hills, and a little stream ran down to meet it, sparkling over rocks. For awhile the road followed the splashing water, then turned and wound upward. The truck took the grade growling in second. The road got fainter as it climbed, then finally just ended at the top of the hill. Raglan cut the engine. A hundred feet ahead a cliff dropped off shear to the sea. Big waves boomed and echoed on rocks below, sending up silver streamers of spray.

Jeremy seemed to forget why they'd come. He jumped from the truck and ran to the cliff's edge, stopping as close as possible like any boy might. Then he just stood gazing out over the water.

Raglan leaned on the fender and watched.

The boy spread his arms wide for a moment, his head thrown back. Then he looked down at his dirty jeans. Raglan watched a little while longer as the boy stripped to stand naked before the sea and the sun. Then Raglan went to the rear of the truck. There was an old square-nosed cement

The boy spread his arms wide for a moment, head thrown back, looked down at his dirty jeans and shoes. Raglan watched a moment more, as the boy stripped to stand naked before the sea and sun. Then, Raglan went to the tailgate. There was an old square-headed cement shovel and an Army trenching tool he used when he cleaned up yards.

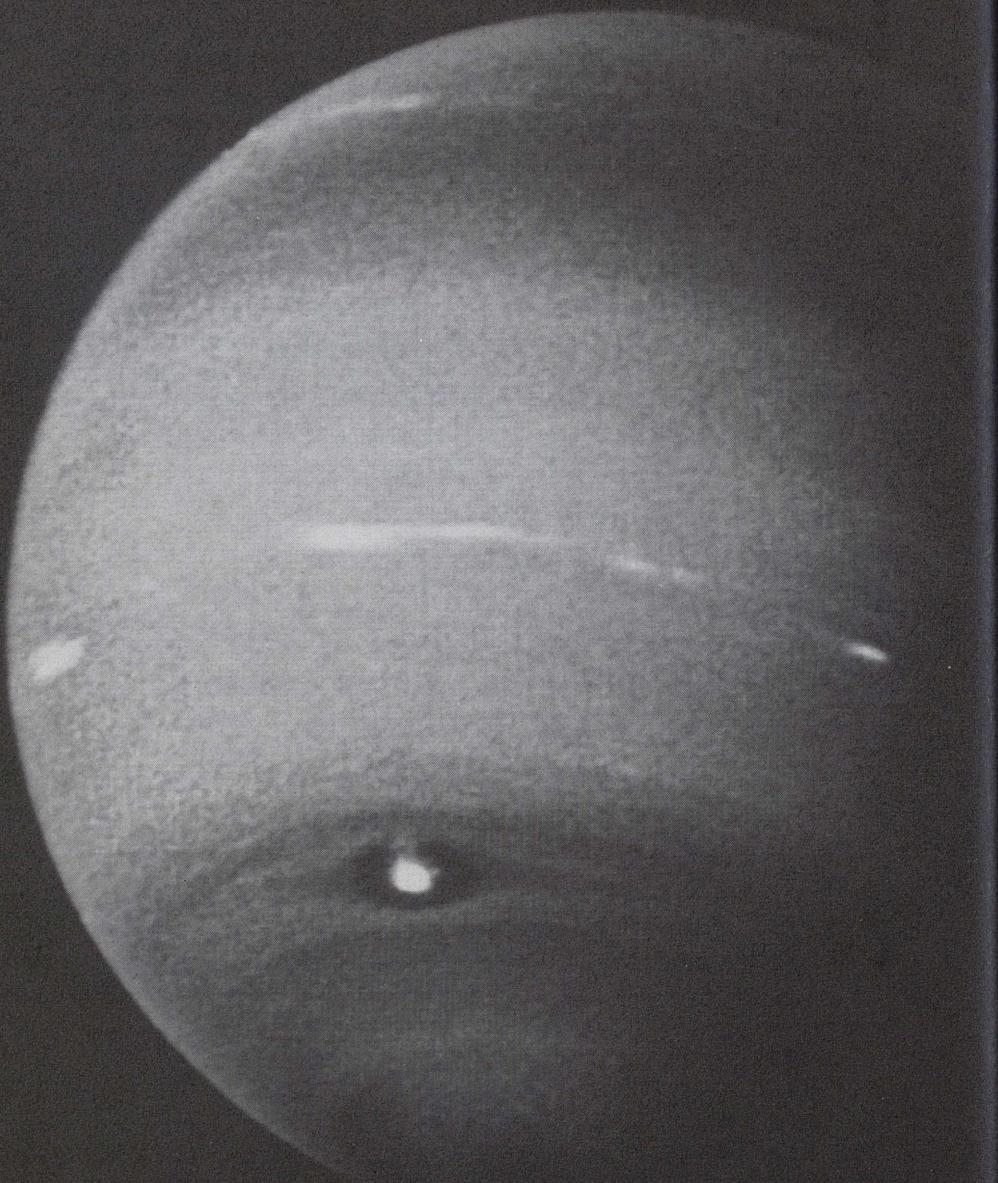
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---

Jeremy joined him, solemn, though his eyes sparkled. Raglan said nothing, though he smiled a moment, before taking up the shovel and the little bundle. Jeremy put his jeans back on and followed with the trenching tool.

The ground rose again, nearby, to a final hillock that looked out over the sea. They climbed to the top. Raglan cut the thick sweet-smelling sod into blocks with his shovel, then they both dug. The sun was almost gone when they finished, and though the air was cooling, Jeremy was

continued on page 60



# NEPTUNE

Neptune is a beautiful blue planet that -- until 1999 -- is the most distant in this solar system. Neptune takes 164 earth years to circle the sun. By volume, the Neptune is 17 times bigger than Earth and is 31,000 miles in diameter. Neptune completes one spin at the equator in about 16 Earth hours and has eight moons.

**PHOTO:** This is one of the last images shot by NASA's Voyager 2 before it headed out of contact with Earth and into interstellar space. If Voyager 2 avoids a catastrophic collision, it could outlast our sun.

## PISCES (February 21 - March 21), The Fishes.

Pisces represents the sensitive, compassionate gentle souls of the zodiac. Stress within groups, friendships and financial concerns continue through 1992. However, wonderful opportunities for relationships abound this year. These new partnerships eventually pay off for you Pisces. "Maintain your faith" and "express yourself" are your key words for this year.

Al Jarreau: Born March 12, 1940 in Milwaukee, WI; Recording Artist; B.S. Ripon College, MS Psychology from University of Iowa; 1978-1979 Grammy Best Jazz Vocalist; German Grammy Award for Best International Pop Vocalist; Italian Music Critics Award for Best Foreign Vocalist, 1977

Other Pisceans: Sidney Poitier, Jacqueline Joyner-Kersee, Marian Anderson, Fats Domino.

sheened in sweat once more. But he picked some of the wild mustard and dandelion flowers and laid them on the little mound.

Far out on the water, the sun grew huge and ruddy red as it sank. Raglan made a fire near the truck, and Jeremy got the blankets, surprised again when Raglan produced two dusty cans of Campbell soup and a pint of Jack Daniels from somewhere in the cab. A little later, when it was dark and still and the food was warm inside them, they sat side by side near the fire, smoking, and sipping the whiskey. The sea boomed softly below.

"Is this campin' out?" asked Jeremy.

"Yeah. I guess it is."

Jeremy passed the bottle back to Raglan, then glanced toward the truck. "We don't got enough gas to get back, huh?"

Raglan gazed into the flames. "Uh uh. But maybe there's a place somewhere around here that buys cans."

"Um, so you never seen that Crusader Rabbit...don't know what he looked like?"

"I think he carried a sword, an' fought dragons."

Jeremy stared at the fire too. It's gonna hurt a lot, huh?"

"Yeah."

"You are my dad, huh?"

Raglan put his arm around the boy and pulled him close.



Jess Mowry, 31, has four children and is a surrogate father to others in his neighborhood. Although his early years were much like the young character in this story, his second novel has been purchased by Farrar, Straus & Giroux and will be out in April, 1992. Rights to the novel titled *Way Past Cool* have also been sold to publishers in England, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden and are being optioned by Disney for a movie. According to *Publishers Weekly*, the deal is now over six figures. Still, according to *Entertainment Weekly*, Mowry is, "wary of his incipient fame. He did upgrade to a 30-year-old IBM electric typewriter, but one of his kids caught him picking cans from a dumpster the other day. 'So I don't get out of practice,' he says."

# SHOOTING STAR

## SPEAK

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In the Autumn '91 issue, *Shooting Star*, ran this excerpt from Shelby Steele's essay, "Being Black and Feeling Blue" from *The Content of Our Character*:

... "black" has been our most powerful name yet because it so frankly called out our shame and doubt and helped us (and others) to accept ourselves. In the name "African-American" there is too much false neutralization of doubt, too much looking away from the caldron of our own experience. It is a euphemistic name that hides us even from ourselves.

We asked whether readers preferred *Black* or *African-American* and here are the responses:

I am no more emotionally attached to historical Africa than a sixth generation Italian American is emotionally attached to Italy of the Renaissance. By calling ourselves African Americans, we are perpetuating a cycle of self-deception. No matter what name, way of thinking, or fashion that we choose to embrace, Black Americans can never reclaim the absolute identity of our pre-slavery ancestors.

The twentieth-century reality is that our genetic constitution is a dubious common denominator in an awkward relationship with present-day Africa. The name Black American -- regardless of the universal connotations associated with the color black itself -- confirms our unique and praiseworthy experience as Americans.

Trudy L. Coar  
Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan

I've always wondered where the name "black" originated since I have never seen a truly black person. The people designated by this term range in color from cream to dark chocolate, but cannot be accurately described as "black."

I personally prefer the term "African-American" because it recognizes my origin and my past as well as where I am presently. "Black" does none of these things. I can proudly point out Africa on a map, but where is Blackland?

I'm afraid that Shelby Steele is slightly confused. As a member of a culture that has been historically oppressed, he should welcome a name that allows us to finally develop a sense of pride in our heritage. In reference to physical characteristics and ethnic background, "blackness" is a non-descript term. It's about time for us as a culture to recognize that we came from the mother of *all* cultures - Africa.

Dele Lowman, Pittsburgh, PA



The topic we need to address is: when will we stop acting like chameleons, constantly changing color to fit the environment? Lately, we've changed names faster than hairstyles. In two years we'll have another name. My suggestions: Afri-Indi-Cau-Americans (and derivations for multiracials); Ethi-Americans (see "Ethiopian" in the Bible); Afrans (African-Americans; or Negroes (back full circle like our men's short hairstyles).

African-American? Okay. But it's time to discover ourselves in other ways, and leave the name, finally alone.

F. W. Alexander, Sandusky, Ohio

During the Summer of 1989, I visited Bunce Island near the Sierra Leone River and the Atlantic Ocean. This island served as a way station for captured Africans before they were brought to the Americas to be enslaved.

Entering this island, there is a well which is shaded by a huge cotton tree. Our tour guide told us that fettered Africans were permitted to stop and get a cool drink of water before being pushed into dark dank caves where they remained before making the Middle Passage.

This well reminded of how much Black History has been fractured--never again to be reclaimed. Africans possess three identities: African by continent, then country (Nigerian, Sierra Leonean, etc.), then tribal connections. I have been taught that the tribal connection is most important. If one cannot identify with a tribe--one is nothing. The popular stance which some Americans have taken, i.e., calling themselves African American doesn't make sense to me when the reality suggests that the scene at the well fractured the tribal identity forever. Therefore, for me it is illogical to call myself African American.

As a librarian, I'm concerned with information retrieval. Everytime a subject heading such as Black American or African American is changed due to some political pressure, the taxpayer picks up the tab to change all of the information in the card catalogs and databases in America. My vote is for Black American.

Bertha T. Rountree, Pittsburgh, PA



Once again we revolve around the issue of naming ourselves and each other, like we named the brother in junior high school, Watusi because he was holding up a wrinkle of a body with stilts and bringin a breeze to the tops of school yard trees. He was an African, born in America. We know that, even when we didn't know what that meant in positive terms, in that dumb-smart way kids know stuff. Only then, I think we were called negroes, as a transition from colored, which always sounded kind of pretty to my ear, liking the idea of bright reds and yellows as I did, and of course as a prelude to black and a piece of time before African-American.

My grandmother was purple black next to my honey brown. She was pure Africa, "Not a drop of white blood", that's what we always said, knowing blood was red like the reflection of the moon on her skin, when she glowed hot summer nights on the front porch. But, returning to the issue of names, what we should call each other, and ourselves, should spring fresh each time from the context; sometimes it be sister, sometimes it be brother, sometimes it be black, sometimes it be colored, sometimes it be African, sometimes it be Watusi.

I know myself to be African, born in America. I am also the politic of black, that thought that finds an irresistible beauty in the sheen of ebony, the shadow of mahogany, a black that loves the softness of the night skies, finds grandeur and power the aspect that is black, the place from which all colors swim. Still black is not a nation, it is not a continent, it has no history, it is hue, tone, shade. As for American, I am that and less and more. I am African, born in America. When I was a child I had a friend who was Korean, she was born

in America and another who was Filipino, born in America. And others who were not my friends but shared a school desk or a locker, they too were called by the nation of their ancestors, not the nation of their birthing. Where we're born, well sometimes it be Florida and sometimes it be California and sometimes it be Port-Au-Prince, but always it be home. I call myself African, born in America, carrying some traditions in my hips and tongue, leaving others forgotten in an ancestor's cracked bowl.

devorah major,  
San Francisco, CA



I really prefer Black. I take no pride in being called "American." It makes me sick!! I'm African, living in America.

Ms. JoNell Chaney  
Philadelphia, PA



The ignorance portrayed by Shelby Steele's questioning of the use of the name African-American is overwhelming. If it were not for the fact that African-American people have been deliberately alienated from themselves and then rewarded for staying that way, I would think that he was either intellectually dishonest or insane.

Since 1830, there has been and continues to be an organized, deliberate miseducation presented to all who will listen as to the true nature and history of African people world wide. Racism (white supremacy) has profited from day one from this lie. There is a proverb that says, "He who steals my purse takes mere trash; He who

takes my good name takes that which cannot enrich him, but truly diminishes me."

Everyone (i.e., group) on the planet identifies themselves by some national or continental reference point. This is not done out of some obscure force of habit. It is done be-

cause the history and culture associated with those places hold the keys to all things that sustain life. I pray for Shelby Steele's speedy recovery.

Bill Lowman, Pittsburgh, PA

*Shooting Star Review's Star Speak section is a vehicle for international dialogue on word usage and how it affects our sense of self and culture. What do you think?*

*Is there a person who has been a positive influence in your life? Do you know someone who has done something special to improve their community? We're especially interested in people who have not yet been recognized by the print and broadcast media. What one word best describes this person? Why?*

Please limit comments to 200 words maximum. Views must be neatly typewritten and must be received by March 30, 1992. Comments may be edited for length and clarity. Send responses to:

**Star Speak,**  
*Shooting Star Review,*  
7123 Race Street,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15208-1424

# Back issues *Shooting Star* Review



## ☆ Volume 1 - 1987

Spring - *Identities*

Summer - *Jazz!Jazz!Jazz!*

Autumn - *Magical & Spooky Things*

Winter - *Kwanzaa*

## ☆ Volume 2 - 1988

Spring - *African Literature \**

Summer - *Doing Ourselves Justice \**

Autumn - *Men & Women ... Getting Along*

Winter - *Romance \**

## ☆ Volume 3 - 1989

Spring - *Our Children ... Ourselves*

Summer - *Justice*

Autumn - *Salute to Black Women Writers*

Winter - *Resolutions & New Beginnings*

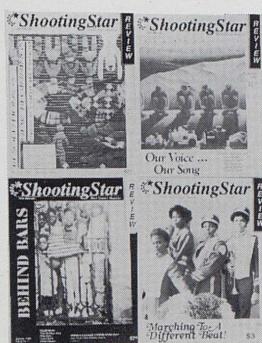
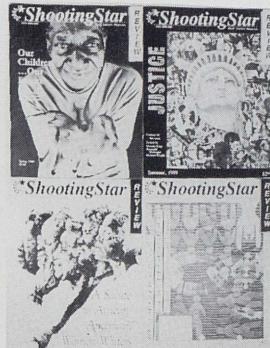
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Spring - *Resolutions & New Beginnings*

Summer - *Our Voice, Our Song*

Autumn - *Behind Bars*

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## How to Order:

1. Prices include cost of shipping and handling.
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NOTE: Issues (see \*) are selling out. Photocopies will be substituted. Also, Winter'89/Spring'90 were a combined issue.

# *Shooting Star Review*

7123 Race Street  
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**PHOTO:** NASA At 20,000 light years across (One light year is 9.5 trillion miles) Andromeda is 1/5 the size of our own Milky Way Galaxy. At 2 million light years away, Andromeda is also the closest spiral galaxy like our own.

**Overlay:** by Roger Lemoyne for UNICEF.

**Message:** The Organization of African Unity seeks to ensure that economic crisis, war, drought and the AIDS tragedy do not wipe out a hopeful future for the African child.



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