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This reader contains the first collaborative article of Robert C. Gallo and Luc Montagnier — the discoverers of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) — who survey key areas of current research and tell the story of how HIV was isolated and linked to AIDS. Here are reports from scientists as they chronicle the effort being made to answer some of the most crucial questions of our time: How does AIDS cause its devastation? What are the chances that AIDS will spread rapidly outside the known high-risk groups? What therapies are most effective? What are the prospects for a vaccine? And, how can the epidemic most effectively be fought?

Particle Physics in the Cosmos,
Edited by Richard A. Carrigan, Jr. and W. Peter Trower.

The collection opens by examining the central problem of dark matter and its role in the universe, and then covers, among other topics, the latest findings about the first seconds of the universe, the search for a theory to unify the four forces of nature, and the various experimental proposals to find the elusive unstable protons and magnetic monopoles. Discussion then turns to elementary particles and how they foretell the cosmic structure, and then moves to the concept of matter versus antimatter; it closes with startling predictions about how our universe may end.

The Biology of the Brain: From Neurons to Networks,
Edited by Rodolfo R. Llinás.

The Biology of the Brain opens with a fascinating introduction by one of the world's leading neurobiologists, Rodolfo Llinás, who summarizes the major developments and discoveries in brain research in the last 100 years. Following this is an article which explains the form and function of the neuron — the brain's cellular workhorse. Cell communication is examined next; this report outlines the recently discovered similarities between the messenger molecules in neurotransmitters and hormones and explores the implications of this discovery for future research. The next article focuses on "second messengers" and their possible role in long term changes in the nervous system.

Life at the Edge, *Edited by James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould.*

Life at the Edge is an exciting collection of articles that shows us how life manages to eke out an existence where, by all rights, it shouldn't and helps us to appreciate the roles of energy and the building-block elements in the cycles of life. Here we'll discover how some fish flourish in the dark and icy waters of Antarctica; how life thrives in deep-sea volcanic vents amid deadly concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, where photosynthesis is impossible for lack of light. Finally, we'll tour the grisly but fascinating world of the obligate parasite, totally dependent on its unwilling host for sustenance, avoiding or even exploiting defenses created to guard against parasitism.

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