

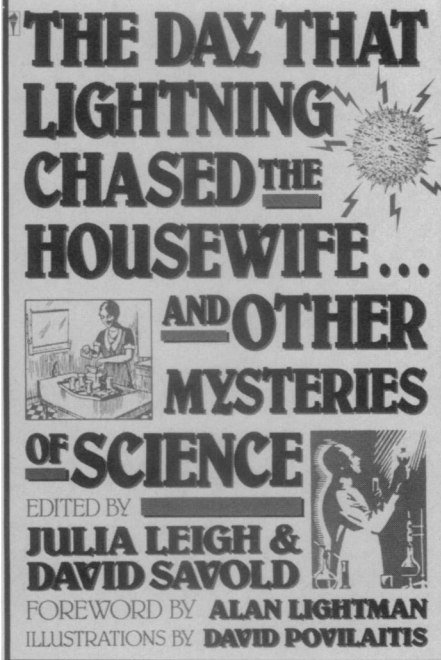
The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

SCIENCE NEWS

March 3, 1990
Vol. 137, No. 9
Pages 129-144



Japan Reaches for the Moon



Harper & Row, 1989, 227 pages, 8" x 5", paperback, \$7.95

"During a thunderstorm in the English town of Smethwick, a housewife noticed a ball of violet light hovering over the kitchen stove. Rattling faintly, the light floated across the room and touched her. Instinctively, she brushed it away. An explosion shook the room, and the ball vanished. . . ."

This account of a scientific phenomenon known as ball lightning is just one of more than fifty essays in this book that invites readers to explore the mysteries of nature. Written in a literate and narrative style, these short essays consider the leading scientific theories on questions that continue to elude modern science, such as:

- Why Do People Stutter?
- How Does Fluoride Fight Decay?
- How Does Smoke Kill?
- How Does Anesthesia Shut Out Pain?
- How Do Animals Hibernate?
- How Do Birds Find Where They're Going?
- How Do Whales Catch Their Dinner?
- Why Is The Earth Neither Too Hot Nor Too Cold?
- Why Is The Sea Constant?

— from the publisher

Science News Books 1719 N Street, NW Washington, DC 20036	DayLight
Please send me _____ copy(ies) <i>The Day That Lightning Chased the Housewife and Other Mysteries of Science</i> . I include a check payable to Science News Books for \$7.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling (total \$9.95) for each copy. Domestic orders only.	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City _____	
State _____ Zip _____	
Daytime Phone # (_____) _____	
<small>(used only for problems with order)</small>	
	RB1197

POISONS of the Past: Molds, Epidemics and History

By Mary Kilbourne Matossian

Science News Books
1719 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

PoisonsPast

Please send me _____ copy(ies) of *Poisons of the Past*. I include a check payable to Science News Books for \$22.50 plus \$2.00 postage and handling (total \$24.50) for each copy. Domestic orders only.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone # (_____) _____

(used only for problems with order)

1196

"I am convinced that Matossian is on to a real and significant factor in history that has been missed — or almost entirely missed — until now. This is an important book."

— William H. McNeill
professor of history
University of Chicago

Matossian analyzes statistics on fertility and mortality kept in Russia between 1865 and 1914, and presents evidence that the consumption of rye bread correlated with epidemics of food poisoning that often resulted in mental illness, a decline in fertility or death. Matossian then explores western health history. She discusses the Black Plague in fourteenth-century Europe, the continuing demographic depressions that lasted until about 1490, and the varied manias that reached epidemic proportions during that cold and wet (mold-producing) age. She presents an interpretation of witch persecution in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, showing that witch trials were concentrated in areas where rye was the main cereal and the climate was cold and damp. Finally she explores the unprecedented population growth in Europe from 1750 to 1850, linking it to a change in diet away from rye bread. Matossian then moves to colonial America, examining the throat distemper epidemic of 1735-36, the Salem witchcraft persecution of 1692, and the Great Awakening of 1741, and relating all of these to mold poisoning. This unusual book argues persuasively that microfungi have had a major influence on human destiny.

— from the publisher

Yale Univ. Pr., 1989, 190 pages, 9 1/2" x 6", hardcover, \$22.50

