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Artificial Life: A Report from the Frontier Where Computers Meet Biology — Steven Levy. One of the most complex and hotly debated questions of all time has become even more difficult: What constitutes life? The creation of artificial life in computers by a group of scientists has caused discussion and controversy among philosophers and scientists, particularly biologists. Artificial life has the potential of being many things to a variety of researchers. Biologists could test new drugs on a-life and physicists may be able to use a-life to finally understand complex nonlinear systems. Levy explores the ramifications and implications of this technology, which may one day leave humankind in an evolutionary backwater. Originally published in hardcover in 1992. Vin, 1993, 390 p., b&w illus. and color plates, paperback, $13.00.

Birds of the World — Colin Harrison and Alan Greensmith. A handy guidebook for quickly looking up general information such as habitat, plumage, migration, family, species, size, distribution, and nest. Divided into two sections — nonpasserines and passerines — hundreds of species are described and indexed. Each entry contains a full-color photograph for easy identification. Dorling Kindersley, 1993, 416 p., color photos and illus., paperback, $19.95.

Earth Shock: Hurricanes, Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Tornadoes, and Other Forces of Nature — Andrew Robinson. A look at the causes and effects of natural disasters on Earth and its inhabitants from the beginning of time through the ages. Each chapter dissects a particular force of nature and examines what is known scientifically; how these disasters will continue over time in spite of humans; and what we may be doing to instigate them. Thames Hudson, 1993, 304 p., color and b&w photos, paperback, $19.95.

Everyday Wonders: Encounters with the Astonishing World Around Us — Barry Evans. An assortment of scenarios from the natural world with accounts for why things are the way they are and how they might be. If, for example, clocks had arisen in the southern hemisphere, would they move counterclockwise? These essays are accompanied by puzzles and interviews with several scientists, including Linus Pauling and Edward Teller. Contemporary Bks, 1993, 363 p., b&w illus. & photos, paperback, $14.95.

Mathemagics: How to Look Like a Genius Without Really Trying — Arthur Benjamin and Michael Brant Shermer. Most magicians will not reveal how they perform tricks, but mathemagician Art Benjamin now discloses the secrets of his trade. In many instances, such as squaring a two-digit number, Benjamin can compute the answer faster than someone with a calculator. He thoroughly explains his methods, from the easier calculations outlined in early chapters to the more difficult ones, such as how to multiply two different five-digit numbers in your head. Lowell Hse, 1993, 218 p., b&w illus., hardcover, $22.95.

Metaman: The Merging of Humans and Machines into a Global Superorganism — Gregory Stock. The author's prognosis for the future is unusually bright: He contends that because of our technological advances in areas such as genetic engineering, communications, and computer science, we have the knowledge to overcome any threats that face our existence. Stock bases his theories on a Gaia-like concept he calls Metaman. His theory differs from Gaia in that it focuses on the "human enterprise" rather than on the harmony of all living things. Stock uses extensive research to back his Metaman theory and the prophecy of a promising future through the use of our interconnectedness with our technological knowledge. S&S, 1993, 365 p., b&w photos and illus., hardcover, $24.00.

On the Nature of Things: The Scientific Photography of Fritz Goro — Fritz Goro. This stunning collection features some of the finest photographs of Goro, LIFE's science photographer from 1936 to 1986. Highlights include photos taken at ground zero while the area was still radioactive, the first laser beams, a cancerous tumor, and the making of plutonium. Essays by 18 scientists accompany these innovative photographs, further explaining the significance of the images and singing the praises of Goro. Introduction by Stephen Jay Gould. Aperture, 1993, 132 p., color and b&w photos, hardcover, $40.00.

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