

Books

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Darwin: A Life in Science—Michael White and John Gribbin. Alternating chapters between Darwin's personal and professional life, White and Gribbin waste little time getting to his voyage on the *Beagle* and focus mostly on the years surrounding the publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* and the implications of this work. Gribbin focuses on how Darwin's theory of evolution evolved from Linnaeus to Darwin's grandfather Erasmus and how this famous theory has been interpreted and expanded. White details Darwin's personal life, which was plagued with illness and family turmoil, made worse by the backlash against Darwin's controversial ideas. Dutton, 1995, 322 p., hardcover, \$24.95.

The Fire Inside: Extinguishing Heartburn and Related Symptoms—M. Michael Wolfe and Thomas Nesi. Acid reflux disease—in which stomach acid mixed with food flows backward from the digestive tract into the esophagus—can cause a variety of ailments ranging from mild heartburn to lung disease. Although a widespread problem, this condition was long misunderstood. Wolfe and Nesi explain its causes, symptoms, and effects. They show how asthma, hoarseness, and chest pain are related to reflux disease and how some medications may make the problem worse. They also chart a path to recovery. Norton, 1996, 192 p., hardcover, \$23.00.

Making the Alphabet Dance: Recreational Wordplay—Ross Eckler. A linguistics virtuoso and mathematician explains the concepts underlying virtually every common puzzle, game, and mind-bender in wordplay, including acrostics, palindromes, anagrams, lipograms, word squares, homonyms, and isograms. Eckler examines the impact of computers on the study of complex word problems and presents new and uncharted, alphabet-oriented conundrums. St Martin, 1996, 277 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$23.95.

A Natural History of Amphibians—Robert C. Stebbins and Nathan W. Cohen. Two professors experienced in the study of amphibians present an overview of amphibian groups, as well as their populations, taxonomic relationships, how and where they live and reproduce, how they interact with one another and their environment, and the evolutionary processes likely to shape the future of these toads, frogs, salamanders, and caecilians. Princeton U Pr, 1995, 316 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$29.95.

Rain of Iron and Ice: The Very Real Threat of Comet and Asteroid Bombardment—John S. Lewis. In retrospect, it seems that people have written about comet collision for hundreds of years; however, only since the advent of space travel and the atomic bomb have these occurrences been widely accepted. Lewis tracks the history of these events and takes readers to sites such as Siberia, Meteor Crater in Arizona, and the surfaces of Mars and Mercury to show the impact and consequences of these collisions. Methods of tracking comets and asteroids and preventive measures for diverting them from Earth round out Lewis' treatise. Addison-Wesley, 1996, 236 p., b&w plates, hardcover, \$25.00.

Twenty-First Century Jet: The Making and Marketing of the Boeing 777—Karl Sabbagh. For those who have ever wondered about the inner workings of an airplane or the creation of a whole new kind of airplane, Sabbagh tracks the production of the Boeing 777 twin-engine jumbo passenger jet. Because of the great expense involved in creating a new airplane, Boeing had to sell the 777 before it was built or even fully conceived. Sabbagh shows how Boeing was able to do that, then escorts the reader through every aspect of planning, testing, manufacturing, and marketing the first airplane designed completely on computer. Scribner, 1996, 366 p., b&w plates and illus., hardcover, \$25.00.

What If You Could Unscramble an Egg?—Robert Ehrlich. In the spirit of Galileo's *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*, two fictional characters converse in a question-and-answer format about the fundamental laws of nature and physics. The tone is lighthearted, but even when the questions seem preposterous, the author is showing why things are the way they are and what would happen if things were different. Examples of questions are, What if there were three sexes? What if water didn't boil? and What if you fell into a black hole? Rutgers U Pr, 1996, 222 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$25.95.

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