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The Alchemy of the Heavens: Searching for Meaning in the Milky Way—Ken Crosswell. From the ancient belief that the Milky Way is a river in the sky to current scientific theories about its role in the formation of the universe, science writer Crosswell details developments in our knowledge about our galaxy and how these ideas came to be. He reports that the Milky Way probably formed as other, earlier galaxies smashed together and that most likely our galaxy has at its center a black hole with a million times the mass of the sun. Originally published in hardcover in 1995. Anch Bks, 1996, 340 p., b&w plates and illus., paperback, \$14.95.

The Clock of Ages: Why We Age—How We Age—Winding Back the Clock—John J. Medina. Inspired by the death of his mother, molecular biologist Medina seeks to answer common questions ranging from why hair grays to why organisms die at all. Beginning with a historical and wide-ranging look at death, he moves on to explore the biology of various systems, including those for sight, digestion, and cardiovascular health. He then examines how these come together to make a living, dying human being. The attitudes and exits of many prominent people, including Francisco Goya and Napoleon Bonaparte, preface chapters devoted to what took their lives. Cambridge U Pr, 1996, 332 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$24.95.

Coming of Age with Elephants: A Memoir—Joyce Poole. A field researcher chronicles her achievements in the quest to understand the social and sexual behavior of African elephants. In Poole's 15-year partnership with Cynthia Moss, the duo tracked the life and death of more than 800 animals. They documented the mating behavior known as musth (previously believed not to occur in African elephants) the emotions of these highly perceptive and intelligent creatures, and the threat posed by poaching. Throughout, Poole touches on some of the obstacles she faced in the past, both professionally and personally, and more recently in her role as director of elephant management for the Kenya Wildlife Service. Hyperion, 1996, 287 p., b&w plates, hardcover, \$24.95.

Egyptian Mummies: Unraveling the Secrets of an Ancient Art—Bob Brier. Egyptologist Brier shares some of the research he did as a precursor to his attempt at replicating the practice of mummification. He provides a large amount of historical data about how and why Egyptians performed this kind of burial, as well as the intricacies of the mummification process. Using many case studies of exhumed mummies, Brier delves into the meanings of the hieroglyphs associated with these bodies, the mummification of royalty and animals, and the items entombed with the bodies. Originally published in hardcover in 1994. Quill, 1996, 352 p., b&w photos and illus., paperback, \$14.00.

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The Introspective Engineer—Samuel C. Florman. The author of *The Existential Pleasures of Engineering* and a contributor to *TECHNOLOGY REVIEW*, from which some of the material here is gleaned, reflects on the role of engineers in this technological age. An engineer himself, Florman is troubled by the constant barrage of criticism that comes engineers' way. He outlines the goals that must be met in the immediate future, such as the provision of affordable energy sources and a safer environment, and the role of engineers in realizing those objectives. He notes that although some people blame engineers for problems such as environmental degradation, engineers may be the only ones who can cure such ills. In the process, he polishes the image of engineers and points out that recent engineering icons, such as the computer, though not as striking as the Eiffel Tower, are far more influential. St Martin, 1996, 244 p., hardcover, \$22.95.

The Science of Desire: The Search for the Gay Gene and the Biology of Behavior—Dean Hamer and Peter Copeland. After an arduous search for funding for his extensive research effort, Hamer concluded in a report in the journal *SCIENCE* in 1993 that he had linked homosexuality to a gene marker. With the help of Copeland, a journalist, Hamer makes a solid argument for the importance of this kind of research. In simple language, he details his methods of showing this genetic link, looks at how a gay gene might work, and discusses some of the scientific, social, and ethical implications of his finding. Originally published in hardcover in 1994. Touchstone, 272 p., b&w illus., paperback, \$13.00.

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