

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Nitrogen comprises 80 percent of the Earth's atmosphere, but plants can't access it in its gaseous form. That's a problem, because plants need nitrogen to live. Luckily, there are five million lightning strikes on our planet every day. The fierce heat they generate compels nitrogen to blend with oxygen, thereby forming nitrous oxides, which are soluble in water and carried into the ground with the rain. There the plants drink up the nitrogen with ease. The moral of the story, Aries, is that without lightning, there'd be no plants, which means that you are utterly dependent on the lightning for your sustenance. In the coming weeks, you will receive abundant evidence of how much you need metaphorical kinds of lightning as well.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "People who do not break things first will never learn to create anything," says a Tagalog proverb. I'd like you to remember that in the coming days, Taurus. It may be quite important for you to make mistakes. Your path to the next stage of mastery might even require you to take some detours into mediocrity. In fact, I bet that one of the keys you stumble on while you're off-track will eventually allow you to unlock a higher expression of your unique genius.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In his commencement address to Stanford's graduating class, Apple CEO Steve Jobs reminisced about the time, many years ago, when he was sacked by the company he started. "It turned out that getting fired was the best thing that could have happened to me," he said. "The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life." In telling you this, Gemini, I am definitely *not* predicting that you will lose your job. My purpose is to encourage you to cultivate the frame of mind Jobs described. Here's another angle on the perspective I hope you'll make into your permanent modus operandi: "In times of change, learners inherit the earth," wrote Eric Hoffer, "while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Every now and then I go down to the booth at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk where you can find out how fast you throw a baseball. You hurl the ball as hard as you can, and a speed gun tells you your score. In all the years I've tested myself, I have never topped 65 miles per hour—until this week, when I posted an astounding 74 mph, which is 14 percent higher than ever before. I've been feeling lately that my strength and physical energy have been exceptional, and this was hard proof. The astrological omens suggest it's because those of us born under the sign of Cancer, like me, are currently enjoying a time of maximum vitality and rapid growth. Take advantage, my fellow Crabs.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The odds against getting a royal flush in poker are 649,739 to 1. The odds that Elvis Presley is still alive are 1,000 to 1. The odds that the Loch Ness monster exists are 150 to 1. And the odds that Elvis will someday crash a UFO into the Loch Ness monster are 14 million to 1. If you would have asked me a month ago, Leo, I'd have given you similar odds, 14 million to 1, that you would ever walk on water while closing a big deal on your cell phone and seeing a double rainbow appear over a cloud that resembles your face. But as of today, the odds of that happening have dropped to a mere 10 to 1. Magic time begins now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): In the 1933 movie *King Kong,* the starring gorilla appeared to be 25 feet tall—so humongous that airplanes had to shoot him down from the top of the Empire State Building. But the model used to depict Kong in that era of primitive special effects was just 18 inches high. This discrepancy is similar to the gap between your perceptions of your personal monster and the truth about it, Virgo. It may seem to be a giant, but in reality you could hold it in the palm of your hand.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Thousands of years ago, inhabitants of India thought the Earth was carried by giant elephants, which in turn were balancing on the back of a huge turtle, which itself was perched on top of a stupendous snake. We laugh at this belief now, but many of us have equally preposterous ideas about the way reality is constructed. I mention this, Libra, because it's the best time in many moons for you to revisit your own versions of the elephant-turtle-snake theory. I promise you it will be liberating. So examine any unwieldy delusions that are at the foundation of your personal worldview. Look for evidence that supports your theories about the nature of life, and if you can't find any evidence, abandon the theories.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Mountains are not always as static as they seem. Due to the collision of two tectonic plates, for example, the Himalayas are growing at the rate of about a half-inch per year. And in 1972, the flooding of an underground river moved a mountain in the Caucasus range over a mile in eight days. Likewise, Scorpio, a situation you have always believed to be fixed and inert is now susceptible to change.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Bureaucrats at an agency in Belfast have banned the word "brainstorming" from official usage. They say it's insulting to people with epilepsy. In the future, they'll use the phrase "thought-showers" to describe meetings that are designed to stimulate fresh ideas. I don't care what term you employ, Sagittarius, as long as you just do it. You're overdue for prolonged encounters with mind volcanoes, imagination avalanches, and creativity hurricanes.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I am crossing years tonight to light an answer," writes Keith Althus in his poem called "Poem." That should be your theme in the coming week, Capricorn. Take a deep journey into your past, armed with good will. Before you go, inscribe in your mind's eye a vision of something that symbolizes the power to illuminate, like a torch, lantern, or star. As you wander through your memories, becoming reacquainted with all the turning points that helped make you what you are today, pay special attention to lingering questions from the old days that never got properly resolved. With the help of your torch, lantern, or star, light some new answers.

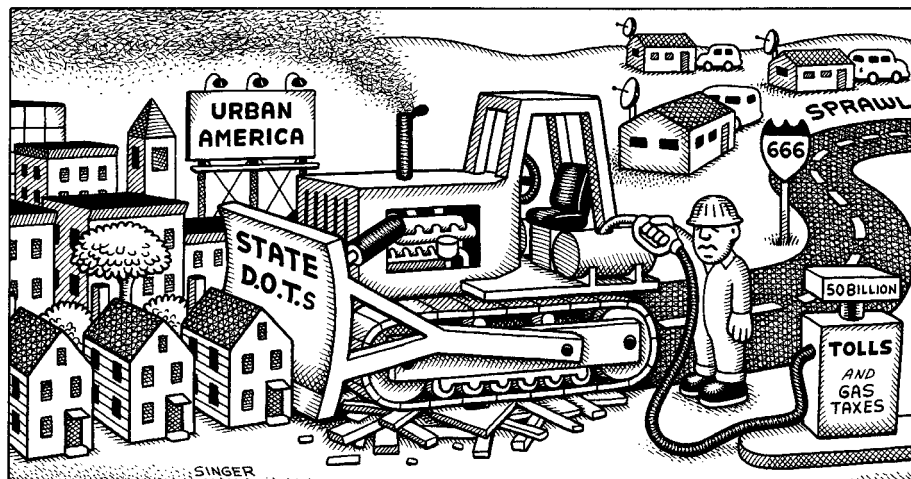
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Lip Venom is a gloss you apply to your lips to make them look pouty and bee-stung. The secret ingredients that provide the swollen effect seem to be cinnamon and ginger. While it would definitely be fun to see how people would react to you if you had the look of an icy supermodel, I don't recommend you try the product anytime soon. For one thing, it's not a good time, astrologically speaking, for you to try cosmetic augmentation or any other form of masking your true essence. For another thing, it's essential that you give off warm, engaging, intimate vibes in the coming weeks. There's a lot of help available to you out there, and the best way to draw it all the way in is to be inviting, not icy.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "When truth is buried underground it grows," wrote French novelist Emile Zola. "it chokes, it gathers such explosive force that on the day it bursts out, it blows up everything with it." I'm delivering this as a warning, Pisces, not as a prediction. In fact, if you act quickly, you have an excellent chance of ensuring that Zola's scenario doesn't unfold in your own life. There are important truths that are buried, but if you dig them up and expose them to the fresh air now, they won't explode in a few weeks.

Homework: Where's the place you're half-afraid to travel to even though you know it would change your life for the better? Write www.freewillastrology.com.

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