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free Will astrology BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): For many Aries, independence is a virtue that flows in abundance – so much so that it's sometimes on the verge of becoming excessive and turning into a vice. That's why I'm thrilled to inform you that the mysteries of dependence could be especially intriguing and useful to you in the coming days. They might also lead, paradoxically, to a form of interdependence that would in the long run nourish your independence. So how about it? Without compromising your free-wheeling spirit, can you blend yourself more thoroughly with trustworthy souls who care about you?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Alison Covarrubias is a mentor for female entrepreneurs. Her "Ladies Who Launch" program inspires women to be brave and brazen as they develop their own businesses. One of Covarrubias's prime pieces of advice: "If you don't feel like you're going to throw up, you're not taking enough risks." That's also my message for you, Taurus. In the name of smart gambles and tricky success, I dare you to push yourself way out of the comfort zone.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): According to a survey, one out of every 10 people says the Internet makes them feel closer to God. I predict that you will be part of that group in the coming days, Gemini. But it's not just surfing the web that will bring you into more intimate communion with the Divine Wow. Washing dishes will do it, too, as will buttering toast, brushing your teeth, and skipping down the street. For that matter, throwing imaginary rocks at the sky, blowing your nose on your sleeve, and pretending you're a rock star will put you into a more fluid alignment with the Primal Root. Pretty much everything! What if you're an atheist? You're free to ignore the evidence of Spirit's presence pressing in on you from all sides. But even if you do that, I bet you'll still enjoy a profoundly enhanced sense that life is wildly meaningful.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): According to physicist Paul Steinhardt, "Good science creates two challenging puzzles for each puzzle it resolves." I propose that we expand that formula to make it apply to life in general: Good decision-making about anything at all creates two challenging puzzles for each puzzle it resolves. That should be your guiding meditation, Cancerian. You are currently at the height of your ability to wrestle long-standing dilemmas into more satisfying configurations. I expect that whenever you capitalize on this potential, you will conjure up fresh ridles that will energize you for weeks.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Are you fully prepared for your showdown with The Machine? Are you as confident as you need to be in order to fight for the rights of soulful beauty? Of course not. None of us is ever perfectly prepared as we go up against the Big Lies of the mechanical thinkers. But I do have great faith in your ability to pre-

vail – especially if you strengthen yourself with this meditation from the book *Less Than One*, by Joseph Brodsky: "The surest defense against evil is extreme individualism, originality of thinking, whimsicality – even if you will, eccentricity ... Evil is a sucker for sol-idarity. It always goes for big numbers, for confident granite, for ideological purity, for drilled armies and balance sheets."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): My songwriter friend Darius has created some fine music, but he periodically goes through phases when everything he produces sounds contrived. It's not writer's block he suffers from. During his bouts with bad composing, he's often teeming with ideas. The problem is that he gets caught up in a vortex of too much thinking. He can't stop his mind from tinkering endlessly with every raw impulse that wells up. Recently he joined the Immersion Composition Society, an organization that helps "talented basket cases" and "tortured geniuses" cut through their tendency to over-analyze and thereby reconnect to their pure inspiration. One technique: Musicians agree to take on firm deadlines that compel them to create songs wicked fast. I hope you find the equivalent assistance for your own field of expression, Virgo. The time is ripe for you to dissect less and build more.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "What makes a river so restful to people is that it doesn't have any doubt," wrote columnist Hal Boyle. "It is sure to get where it is going, and it doesn't want to go anywhere else." Your assignment for the rest of 2008, Libra, is to do whatever's necessary to make yourself fit this description. The next eight months will provide unprecedented opportunities to turn yourself into a river flowing toward your destiny with surprisingly sublime freedom.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You're not any more narcissistic and egotistical than the rest of us, but this week happens to be your special time to make amends for being that way. Therefore, I recommend that you try the following corrective measures: 1. Every day, do three things motivated by compassion that are helpful to people you know. 2. For a few minutes each day, use your imagination to get inside the mind of someone you care about and see the world through his or her eyes. 3. Every day, take at least one action that will in some way beautify your environment, contribute to the well-being of strangers, or help save the world.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Traditional astrologers say that Sagittarians are the master travelers of the zodiac; no other sign roams as far and as wide as yours. But if that's true, how do you explain William Blake and Emily Dickenson, two of history's greatest Sagittarian poets? They barely left their neighborhoods, content to explore a narrow sampling of the planet's wonders. The answer is that they covered vast distances in the inner realms, seeking out adventures in exotic territories of the imagination. I'm thinking their approach would work really well for you in the coming weeks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It's an excellent time to make yourself more magnetic to blessings. You might want to experiment, therefore, with good luck charms or magic invocations – anything that you imagine might attract benevolence into your life. How about the potion that is popular in South Africa right now? It's a concoction cooked up from ground-up vulture bones. Or maybe the kind of mystic jewelry I saw advertised in one of the tabloids, a necklace made of meteorite chunks? Both of those would pale in comparison, however, to the thing I consider the very best attractor of blessings. It's the sacred metaphorical talisman that Tom Waits recommends in his song "Get Behind the Mule": Always keep a diamond in your mind.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): When the spell is broken, Aquarius, you will be able to tap into resources that you've been cut off from. When the spell is broken, you will finally notice three big, beautiful secrets that have been staring you in the face. When the spell is broken, you will slip down off a clean, lofty perch where it has been hard to relax and arrive at a low, funky spot where you'll be free to feel things you haven't felt in a long time. When the spell is broken, it will be because you have decided to break it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "Don't eat any food that's incapable of rotting," says Michael Pollan in his book *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. In other words, highly processed foods with a long shelf life don't contribute to your optimum vitality. I'd like to expand this rule to make it an all-purpose guideline for life. Try out this hypothesis: If you're involved with any person or situation that never decays, or if there is some part of you that never decays, that's highly suspicious and may be a problem. Like growth, rot is a natural phenomenon. Indeed, every advancement requires or brings the disintegration of whatever it replaces. You can't grow if you don't rot! The "perfection" of stasis can be hazardous to your health! So let me ask you, Pisces: What's due to rot in your world?

HOMEWORK: Name something you feel like begging for. Then visualize in great detail that this something is already yours. Report results to FreeWillAstrology.com.

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