

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through the deepest snow," wrote naturalist Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*, "to keep an appointment with a beech-tree, or a yellow birch or an old acquaintance among the pines." I'd love to see you summon that level of commitment to your important rendezvous in the coming weeks, Aries. Please keep in mind, though, that your "most important rendezvous" are more likely to be with wild things, unruly wisdom, or primal breakthroughs than with pillars of stability, committee meetings, and business-as-usual.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): For you Tauruses, December is "I Accept and Love and Celebrate Myself Exactly How I Am Right Now" Month. To galvanize yourself, play around with this declaration by Oscar-winning Taurus actress Audrey Hepburn: "I'm a long way from the human being I'd like to be, but I've decided I'm not so bad after all." Here are other thoughts to draw on during the festivities: 1. "If you aren't good at loving yourself, you will have a difficult time loving anyone." — Barbara De Angelis. 2. "The hardest challenge is to be yourself in a world where everyone is trying to make you be somebody else." — E. E. Cummings. 3. "To accept ourselves as we are means to value our imperfections as much as our perfections." — Sandra Bierig. 4. "We cannot change anything until we accept it." — Carl Jung.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Are your collaborative projects [including the romantic kind] evolving at a slower pace than you expected? Have they not grown as deep and strong as you've wished they would? If so, I hope you're perturbed about it. Maybe that will motivate you to stop tolerating the stagnation. Here's my recommendation: Don't adopt a more serious and intense attitude. Instead, get loose and frisky. Inject a dose of blithe spirits into your togetherness, maybe even some high jinks and rowdy experimentation. The cosmos has authorized you to initiate ingenious surprises.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): I don't recommend that you buy a cat-o'-nine-tails and whip yourself in a misguided effort to exorcise your demons. The truth is, those insidious troublemakers exult when you abuse yourself. They draw perverse sustenance from it. In fact, their strategy is to fool you into treating yourself badly. So, no. If you hope to drive away the saboteurs huddled in the sacred temple of your psyche, your best bet is to shower yourself with tender care, even luxurious blessings. The pests won't like that, and — if you commit to this crusade for an extended time -- they will eventually flee.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Nobel Prize-winning novelist Gabriel García Márquez loved yellow roses. He often had a fresh bloom on his writing desk as he worked, placed there every morning by his wife Mercedes Barcha. In accordance with the astrological omens, I invite you to consider initiating a comparable ritual. Is there a touch of beauty you would like to inspire you on a regular basis? Is there a poetic gesture you could faithfully perform for a person you love?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "For a year I watched as something entered and then left my body," testified Jane Hirshfield in her poem "The Envoy." What was that mysterious *something*? Terror or happiness? She didn't know. Nor could she decipher "how it came in" or "how it went out." It hovered "where words could not reach it. It slept where light could not go." Her experience led her to conclude, "There are openings in our lives of which we know nothing." I bring this meditation to your attention, Virgo, because I suspect you are about to tune in to a mysterious opening. But unlike Hirshfield, I think you'll figure out what it is. And then you will respond to it with verve and intelligence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A reporter at the magazine *Vanity Fair* asked David Bowie, "What do you consider your greatest achievement?" Bowie didn't name any of his albums, videos or performances. Rather, he answered, "Discovering morning." I suspect that you Libras will attract and generate marvels if you experiment with accomplishments like that in the coming weeks. So yes, try to discover or rediscover morning. Delve into the thrills of beginnings. Magnify your appreciation for natural wonders that you usually take for granted. Be seduced by sources that emanate light and heat. Gravitate toward what's fresh, blossoming, just-in-its-early-stages.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): According to traditional astrology, you Scorpios are not prone to optimism. You're more often portrayed as connoisseurs of smoldering enigmas and shadowy intrigue and deep questions. But one of the most creative and successful Scorpios of the 20th century did not completely fit this description. French artist Claude Monet was renowned for his delightful paintings of sensuous outdoor landscapes. "Every day I discover even more beautiful things," he testified. "It is intoxicating me, and I want to paint it all. My head is bursting." Monet is your patron saint in the coming weeks. You will have more potential to see as he did than you've had in a long time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A journalist dared composer John Cage to "summarize himself in a nutshell." Cage said, "Get yourself out of whatever cage you find yourself in." He might have added, "Avoid the nutshells that anyone tries to put you in." This is always fun work to attend to, of course, but I especially recommend it to you Sagittarians right now. You're in the time of year that's close to the moment when you first barged out of your mom's womb, where you had been housed for months. The coming weeks will be an excellent phase to attempt a similar if somewhat less extravagant trick.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Hundreds of years ago, the Catholic Church's observance of Lent imposed a heavy burden. During this six-week period, extending from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, believers were expected to cleanse their sins through acts of self-denial. For example, they weren't supposed to eat meat on Fridays. Their menus could include fish, however. And this loophole was expanded even further in the 17th century when the church redefined beavers as being fish. [They swim well, after all.] I'm in favor of you contemplating a new loophole in regard to your own self-limiting behaviors, Capricorn. Is there a taboo you observe that no longer makes perfect sense? Out of habit, do you deny yourself a pleasure or indulgence that might actually be good for you? Wriggle free of the constraints.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "The Pacific Ocean was overflowing the borders of the map," wrote Pablo Neruda in his poem "The Sea." "There was no place to put it," he continued. "It was so large, wild and blue that it didn't fit anywhere. That's why it was left in front of my window." This passage is a lyrical approximation of what your life could be like in 2017. In other words, lavish, elemental, expansive experiences will be steadily available to you. Adventures that may have seemed impossibly big and unwieldy in the past will be just the right size. And it all begins soon.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "I have a deep fear of being too much," writes poet Michelle K. "That one day I will find my someone, and they will realize that I am a hurricane. That they will step back and be intimidated by my muchness." Given the recent astrological omens, Pisces, I wouldn't be shocked if you've been having similar feelings. But now here's the good news: Given the astrological omens of the next nine months, I suspect the odds will be higher than usual that you'll encounter brave souls who'll be able to handle your muchness. They may or may not be soulmates or your one-and-only. I suggest you welcome them as they are, with all of their muchness.

HOMEWORK: If you had a baby clone of yourself to take care of, what would be your child-rearing strategy? Tell me at Freewillastrology.com.

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I SAW YOU

BUFFALO EXCHANGE DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

I was 2 people behind you in line last and we made a eye contact the entire time. You had a red flannel shirt on and a beanie. What color was your beanie and how do you like your tea?

FIVE GUYS BLACK FRIDAY

Beautiful blonde waiting on you to go order. We exchanged smiles. You went to look at signs on the wall to catch my eye again. Tell me what I was wearing and what was going through your head when you were looking my way. I would love to spend some time with you!

PLANE SUNDAY FROM OAKLAND

We sat next to each other, you were in the middle seat. I glanced over once in a while, trying hard to keep my eyes off of you. You are gorgeous!

RETICENT

Oh to touch you tender as a sigh to draw from my cage a net laced with wings of firefly cast in ripples electric a gossamer of warm milky way spread over you palm pressed stars picked from midnight I stream luminous your face rivulets salt sweet elixir trail of tears to your shoulder there stillness solitude Dreams whispered meant just for you.

SWEET

tea's ready. Lunch today?
W's coming home
Em I

THE SPRING

Surrounded with every form and sort of discard. We drew our water there, walking the minefield of debris. Repeatedly crossing the bounds of necessity and refuse. Even then, as a child, I recognized the affront. Now, by intimation, I know it was a place of beauty. But in capable hands. With every form and source of care.

VOWELS

(sum total)

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

I was going to a movie and stopped for drinks at Max's. Was immediately attracted to you. We talked a bit. You're from AK and went to school in VT. You waved as I was leaving. If single and interested, let me take you out.

EXPOSURE

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