

Rob Brezsny's Astrology Newsletter

August 7, 2019

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See a pretty version of this newsletter:
<https://tinyurl.com/YouLoveBeauty>

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Often a sweetness comes
as if on loan, stays just long enough

to make sense of what it means to be alive,
then returns to its dark
source. As for me, I don't care

where it's been, or what bitter road
it's traveled
to come so far, to taste so good.

—Stephen Dunn

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My old teacher Norman O. Brown used to say, "The proper response to poetry is poetry." In that spirit, I reply to Stephen Dunn's poem with one of my own:

a honeyed tang arrives
a consoling gusto
a dreamy grace

as if consigned to our care
for a brief embrace
not to be cradled or hoarded

only redeemed for a glimpse
of how much fun it is
to be alive

and then released
so it might rejoin
the shadows
from which it sprung

I'm not mad
it can't stay forever
not sad it may have
roosted in desolate welcome
or marinated in wild grief
on its way to me

am only grateful
it chose me
for a while

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A DANGEROUS TABOO

The 19th-century poet John Keats said that if something is not beautiful, it is probably not true. But the vast majority of modern storytellers—journalists, filmmakers, novelists, talk-show hosts, and poets—assert the opposite: If something is not ugly, it is probably not true.

In a world that equates pessimism with acumen and regards stories about things falling apart as having the highest entertainment value, pronoia is deviant. It is a taboo so taboo that it's not even recognized as a taboo.

The average American child sees 20,000 simulated murders before reaching age 18. This is considered normal. There are thousands of films, television shows, and electronic games that depict people doing terrible things to each other. Netflix alone is the most potent and inexhaustible source of violent imagery in the history of the world

If you read the news, you have every right to believe that Bad Nasty Things compose 90 percent of the human experience.

The authors of thousands of books published this year will hope to lure you in through the glamour of killing, addiction, self-hatred, sexual pathology, shame, betrayal, extortion, robbery, cancer, arson, and torture.

But you will be hard-pressed to find more than a few novels, films, news stories, and TV shows that dare to depict life as a gift whose purpose is to enrich the human soul.

If you cultivate an affinity for pronia, people you respect may wonder if you have lost your way. You might appear to them as naive, eccentric, unrealistic, misguided, or even stupid. Your reputation could suffer and your social status could decline.

But that may be relatively easy to deal with compared to your struggle to create a new relationship with yourself. For starters, you will have to acknowledge that what you previously considered a strong-willed faculty—the ability to discern the weakness in everything—might actually be a mark of cowardice and laziness.

Far from being evidence of your power and uniqueness, your drive to produce hard-edged opinions stoked by hostility and cynicism may be a sign that you've been brainwashed by the pedestrian influences of pop nihilism.

Before the onset of pronia, you may feel fine about the fact that you generate much of your dynamic energy through anger, agitation, discomfort, and judgmental scorn. But once the pronia kicks in, you may naturally want more positive feelings to be your high-octane fuel. That will require extensive retraining. The work could be arduous, delicate, and time-consuming.

Are you truly ready to shed the values and self-images that keep you locked into alignment with the dying civilization?

Will you have the stamina and inspiration necessary to dream up bigger, better, more original sins and wilder, wetter, more interesting problems?

Do you realize how demanding it will be to turn yourself into a wildly disciplined, radically curious, fiercely tender, ironically sincere, ingeniously loving, aggressively sensitive, blasphemously reverent, lustfully compassionate master of rowdy bliss?

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What might you need to kill off in yourself in order to tune in to the beauty that's hidden from you? What worn-out shticks are blinding you to the blessings that life is conspiring to give you? Which of your acerbic theories may have been useful and even brilliant in the past but are now keeping you from becoming aware of the ever-fresh creation that unfolds before you?

It's not enough to terminate your stale mental habits just once. The price of admission into pronia is a commitment to continual dying. You'll have to ask yourself rude questions and kick your own ass again and again.

Today's versions of beauty, truth, love, goodness, justice, and liberation will pass away. To keep abreast of the latest developments—to cultivate tomorrow's versions of pronia—you will have to immerse yourself regularly in the waters of chaos. Your relationship with pronia will have to be a never-ending improvisation.

The dream of a steady-state utopia is anathema to Beauty and Truth Lab researchers. We're allergic to any paradise that resembles a spotless shopping mall within the walls of a gated community in heaven.

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Pronia is fueled by a drive to cultivate happiness and a determination to practice an aggressive form of gratitude that systematically identifies the

things that are working well.

But it is not a soothing diversion meant for timid Pollyannas strung out on optimistic delusions.

It's not a feel-good New Age fantasy used to deny the harsh facts about existence. Those of us who perceive the world pronoiacally refuse to be polite shells for sentimental hopefulness.

On the contrary, we build our optimism not through a repression of difficulty, but rather a vigorous engagement with it. We understand that the best way to attract blessings is to grapple with the knottiest enigmas.

Each fresh puzzle is a potential source of future bliss—an exciting teaching that may usher us to our next breakthrough.

Do you want to be a pronoiac player? Blend anarchistic rebelliousness with open-hearted exuberance. Root your insurrectionary fervor in expansive joy instead of withering hatred. Enjoy saying "no!" but don't make it the wellspring of your vitality. Be fueled by blood-red yeses that rip against the grain of comfortable ugliness.

—the above is excerpted from my book **Pronoia Is the Antidote for Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You with Blessings**

available at Powells: <https://tinyurl.com/PowellsPronoia>
available at Amazon: <https://bit.ly/Pronoia>

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SHADOW BLESSINGS

Listen to my spoken-word piece "Shadow Blessings":
<https://tinyurl.com/ShadowBlessings>

Here are the lyrics:

Life is a vast and intricate conspiracy that's guaranteed to keep you well supplied with blessings.

What kind of blessings? Ten million dollars, a gorgeous physique, a perfect marriage, a luxurious home, and high status?

Maybe. But it's just as likely that the blessings will be interesting surprises, dizzying adventures, gifts you hardly know what to do with, and conundrums that dare you to get smarter.

Novelist William Vollman referred to these types of blessings when he said that "the most important and enjoyable thing in life is grappling with a complicated, tricky problem that you don't know how to solve."

Sculptor Henry Moore had a similar idea. He said, "The secret of life is to have a task, something you devote your entire life to, something you bring everything to, every minute of the day for your whole life. And the most important thing is -- it must be something you cannot possibly do."

So in other words, pronoia does not guarantee that you will forevermore be free of all difficult experiences.

It doesn't ask you to pretend that everything is sweet and harmonious all the time.

On the contrary, when you embody the spirit of pronoia, you build your optimism by loving your challenges, not repressing them.

You know that your problems are gifts from the Goddess that are designed to make you smarter and wilder and kinder and trickier.

You welcome each fresh puzzle as a potential source of your future bliss, as an exciting teaching that will usher you to your next breakthrough.

Now here's a spell to commit pronoia, written by psychotherapist Jennifer Welwood. I invite you to say it:

Willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere;

Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within me;

Opening to my loss and pain and ignorance,
I remember who I am and what I'm here for.

Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.

Each condition I flee from pursues me,
Each condition I welcome transforms me

and becomes itself transformed
into the blessing it always was.

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MY FREE MUSIC

Listen for free to two hours' worth of my music and spoken-word stuff at
my Soundcloud site: <https://soundcloud.com/sacreduproar>

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THOUSANDS OF OPINIONS

I have thousands of opinions still—but that is down from millions—and, as
always, I know nothing.

—Harold Brodkey

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INFINITE DEBT

Every man or woman who is sane, every man or woman who has the
feeling of being a person in the world, and for whom the world means
something, every happy person, is in infinite debt to a woman.

—Donald Winnicott

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BEING MISUNDERSTOOD

"It is impossible to speak in such a way that you cannot be
misunderstood."

—Karl Popper

"Nothing worse could happen to one than to be completely understood."

—Carl Jung

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MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

Oglala Sioux Tribe legalizes same-sex marriage.
<https://tinyurl.com/y4ftzlh>

A dog in Mexico named Frida saved the lives of 12 people who were
trapped under rubble due to earthquakes. She identified a total of 52
bodies during her career and is considered a national heroine in Mexico.
<https://tinyurl.com/y6hdn7g7>

Scotland Is Now Generating So Much Wind Energy, It Could Power Two
Scotlands.
<https://tinyurl.com/y42pzoo>

(Note: I endorse these because I like them. They aren't advertisements,

and I get no kickbacks.)

Please tell me your own nominations for PRONOIA RESOURCES:
Truthrooster@gmail.com.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY
Week beginning August 8
Copyright 2019 by Rob Brezsny
<https://FreeWillAstrology.com/horoscopes/>
Grammar key: Asterisks equal *italics*

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): I am overjoyed that you're not competing for easy rewards or comparing yourself to the mediocre crowd. Some people in your sphere may not be overjoyed, though. To those whose sense of self isn't strong, you may be like an itchy allergen; they may accuse you of showing off or acting puffed up. But freaks like me appreciate creative egotists like you when you treat your personality as a work of art. In my view, you're a stirring example of how to be true to one's smartest passions. Keep up the good work! Continue to have too much fun! I'm guessing that for now you can get away with doing just about anything you want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Let's enjoy a moment of poignant silence in honor of your expired illusions. They were soulful mirages: full of misplaced idealism and sweet ignorance and innocent misunderstandings. Generous in ways you may not yet realize, they exuded an agitated beauty that aroused both courage and resourcefulness. Now, as those illusions dissolve, they will begin to serve you anew, turning into fertile compost for your next big production.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Old rules and traditions about how best to conduct intimate relationship are breaking down. New rules are still incubating. Right now, the details about how people express their needs to give and receive love seem to be riddles for which there are no correct answers. So what do you do? How do you proceed with the necessary blend of confidence and receptivity? Can you figure out flexible strategies for being true both to your need for independence and your need for interdependence? I bring these ruminations to your attention, Libra, just in time for the "Transforming Togetherness" phase of your cycle.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It's time for your once-a-year shout-out to your most audacious possibilities. Ready? Go ahead and say, "Hallelujah! Hosanna! Happiness! Hooray for my brilliant future!" Next, go ahead and say, "I have more than enough power to create my world in the image of my wisest dreams." Now do a dance of triumph and whisper to yourself, "I'm going to make very sure I always know exactly what my wisest dreams are."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): During the next three weeks, I advise you to load up on copious amounts of caffeine from Monday at 8 a.m. until Friday at 6 p.m. Then drastically cut back on the coffee and consume large amounts of alcohol and/or marijuana from 6:01 p.m. on Friday through 6 p.m. on Sunday. This is the ideal recipe for success. JUST KIDDING! I lied. Here's the truth, Sagittarius: Astrological indicators suggest you would benefit from making the coming weeks be the most undrugged, alcohol-free time ever. Your potential for achieving natural highs will be extraordinary, as will your potential to generate crucial breakthroughs while enjoying those natural highs. Take advantage!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I don't presume you should or will gleefully embrace the assignment I'll propose. The task may indeed be too daunting for you to manage right now. If that's the case, don't worry. You'll get another chance in a few months. But if you are indeed ready for a breathtaking challenge, here it is: Be a benevolent force of wild nature; be a tender dispenser of creative destruction; be a bold servant of your soulful dreams—as you demolish outmoded beliefs and structures that have been keeping a crucial part of your vitality shackled and latent.

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WHY IS IT CALLED "FREE WILL" ASTROLOGY?

It's called Free Will Astrology because my goal is to create horoscopes that nurture your free will!

Contrary to what some horoscope fans believe, there's no such thing as predestination. Fate is a tricky phenomenon that keeps changing its mind about where it wants to go. The stars may impel, as the astrological saying goes, but they don't compel.

That's why I've never really considered myself a fortuneteller. I prefer to think that my greatest service is as a psychic intelligence agent, helping you expose the hidden patterns and unconscious forces that may be affecting your life without your knowledge.

If I "predict" anything, it's not so much the future as the unknown part of the present.

And if you ever want more than the 'scopes you're reading here, keep in mind that I also create EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES for you. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

To listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to <https://freewillastrology.sparkns.com>

Register and/or log in through the main page.

You can also listen over the phone by calling 1-877-873-4888.

The cost is \$6 per sign on the On the Web. (Discounts are available for bulk purchases.) You can also access them for \$1.99 per minute by phone.

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"I don't much believe in astrology. But that doesn't seem to get in the way of me deriving a whole lot of benefits from your expanded audio horoscopes."

- A. Arrosto, Indianapolis

"You have an amazing aptitude for cutting through the lies I tell myself. Thanks for the gentle shocks."

- T. Preneris, Toronto

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AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): I have cast a feisty love spell that will be triggered in anyone who reads the first line of this horoscope. And since you have done that, you are now becoming even smarter than you already were about getting the most out of your intimate alliances. You're primed to experiment with the delights of feeling with your head and thinking with your heart. Soon you'll be visited by revelations about any unconscious glitches that might be subtly undermining your togetherness, and you'll get good ideas about how to correct those glitches. Astrological rhythms will be flowing in your relationships' favor for the next seven weeks!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): I estimate that about 25 percent of your fear results from your hesitation to love as deeply and openly and bravely as you could. Another 13 percent originates in an inclination to mistake some of your teachers for adversaries, and 21 percent from your reluctance to negotiate with the misunderstood monsters in your closet. But I suspect that fully 37 percent of your fear comes from the free-floating angst that you telepathically absorb from the other 7.69 billion humans on our planet. So what about the remaining four percent? Is that based on real risks and worth paying attention to? Yes! And the coming weeks will be an excellent time to make progress in diminishing its hold on you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): When it came time to write your horoscope, I was feeling unusually lazy. I could barely summon enough energy to draw up the planetary charts. I said a weak prayer to the astrological muses, pleading, "Please don't make me work too hard to discover the message that Aries people need to hear; just make the message appear in my mind." As if in response, a voice in my head said, "Try bibliomancy." So I strolled to my bookcase, shut my eyes, pulled out the first book I felt, and went to a random page. Here's what I saw when I opened my eyes: "The Taoist concept of *wu-wei* is the notion that our creative active forces are dependent on and nourished by inactivity; and that doing absolutely nothing may be a good way to get something done."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): There's an old Rosicrucian vow you might have fun trying out: "I pledge to interpret every experience that comes my

way as a communication of God with my soul." If you carry out this intention with relaxed playfulness, every bird song you hear is an emblem of Divine thought; every eavesdropped conversation provides hints of the Creator's current mood; the shape that spilled milk takes on your tabletop is an intimation of eternity breaking into our time-gripped realm. In my years of offering you advice, I have never before suggested you try this exercise because I didn't think you were receptive. But I do now. (If you're an atheist, you can replace "God," "Divine," and "Creator" with "Life.")

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Below are unheralded gifts possessed by many Geminis but not commonly identified by traditional astrologers: 1. a skill for deprogramming yourself: for unlearning defunct teachings that might otherwise interfere with your ability to develop your highest potentials; 2. a sixth sense about recognizing artificial motivations, then shedding them; 3. a tendency to attract epiphanies that show you why and how to break taboos that may once have been necessary but aren't any longer; 4. an ability to avoid becoming overwhelmed and controlled by situations you manage or supervise.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): In 1993, I began writing a book titled *The Televisory Oracle*. By 1995, I had generated over 2,000 pages of material that I didn't like. Although I was driven by a yearning to express insights that had been welling up in me for a long time, nothing about the work felt right. I was stuck. But finally I discovered an approach that broke me free: I started to articulate difficult truths about aspects of my life about which I was embarrassed, puzzled, and ashamed. Then everything fell into place. The process that had been agonizing and fruitless became fluidic and joyful. I recommend that you try this strategy to dissolve any mental blocks you may be suffering from: dive into and explore what makes you feel ashamed, puzzling, or embarrassed. I bet it will lead to triumph and fulfillment, as happened for me.

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Homework: Make a playful effort to change something you've always assumed you could never change. FreeWillAstrology.com

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NEED TO CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

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<https://FreeWillAstrology.com/newsletter/>

Once you join, check these points to ensure you'll actually receive the newsletter:

1. Add my address, televisory@comcast.net, to your address book so that the newsletter won't be treated as spam and filtered out.
2. Adjust your spam filter so it doesn't treat my address as spam.
3. Tell your company's IT group to let my address pass through any filtering software they have set up.
4. If my newsletters don't reach your inbox, look in your "Bulk Mail" or "Junk Mail" folder.
5. Problems could originate with your email provider. It may be using a "content filter" that prevents my newsletter from reaching you. If you suspect that's true, complain. Tell your email provider to stop blocking my newsletter.

P.S. I totally respect your privacy. I'll never sell or give away your address to anyone.

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