

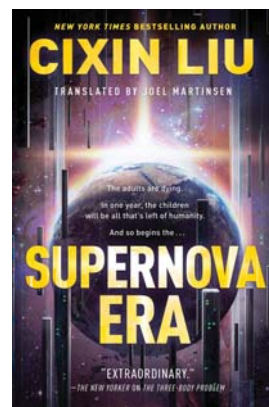
NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

Supernova Era

Cixin Liu, trans. Joel Martinsen

Tor, 2019. \$27.99

Science fiction author Cixin Liu won the 2015 Hugo Award for Best Novel for *The Three-Body Problem*, which combined a gripping science-fiction mystery with a haunting meditation on the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. A similar eerie melancholy winds its way through his new novel *Supernova Era*, which imagines a world in which a supernova causes irreparable damage to the cells of anyone over 13, meaning that within a year only the world's children will be left alive. The novel critiques existing national and international political systems, but Liu's post-adult world is no "children are the future" utopia; conflict and violence endure even with the grown-ups gone. It's not soothing bedtime reading, but fans of *The Three-Body Problem* will be eager to get their hands on Liu's latest. —MB



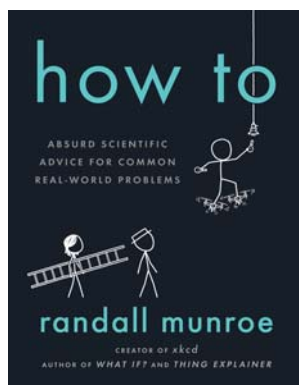
How To

Absurd Scientific Advice for Common Real-World Problems

Randall Munroe

Riverhead Books, 2019. \$28.00

Former NASA roboticist Randall Munroe is the mind behind xkcd.com, arguably the internet's most popular science-related comic strip. Munroe brings his distinctive stick-figure art into the delightful *How To*. Each chapter considers the physics-related obstacles associated with an unlikely undertaking—say, returning an online order from outer space or flying your house to a new location by quadcopter. Munroe even puts some of his scenarios to the test—for example, he recruits tennis legend Serena Williams to determine how effective a tennis serve would be at hitting a small drone out of the air. The book is a great coffee-table read, and Munroe's use of physics calculations also makes it a potential source of teaching material for introductory physics classes. —MB



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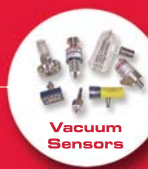
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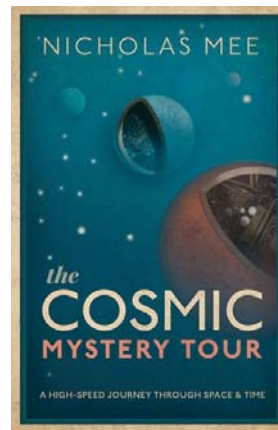
The Cosmic Mystery Tour

A High-Speed Journey through Space and Time

Nicholas Mee

Oxford U. Press, 2019. \$24.95

"Mystery tour"—a short trip that people take for pleasure without knowing where they are going—aptly describes this brief introduction to the universe by theoretical physicist Nicholas Mee. In fewer than 200 pages, Mee covers a lot of ground: He discusses the history of the cosmos and the laws governing it, recent cutting-edge research and instrumentation, and the giants of science who have worked to make sense of it all. The information is delivered in sections of just a few paragraphs each and illustrated by more than 100 photos, diagrams, and images. Rather than study it cover to cover, readers can open it up anywhere and plunge in. —CC



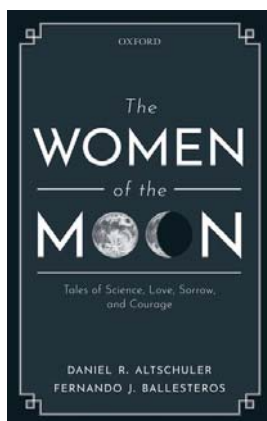
The Women of the Moon

Tales of Science, Love, Sorrow, and Courage

Daniel R. Altschuler and Fernando J. Ballesteros

Oxford U. Press, 2019. \$26.95

Of the 1586 lunar craters named after philosophers and scientists, just 28 are named for women, write physics professor Daniel Altschuler and astronomer Fernando Ballesteros. *The Women of the Moon* centers on those 28, their lives, and scientific contributions. Beginning with a history of the Moon, the authors dedicate each of the subsequent chapters to a different woman, starting with Hypatia, a mathematician and astronomer born circa 355 CE, and continuing chronologically to modern-day Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space. Although many of the subjects are well known, such as astronomer Caroline Herschel, others are more obscure, like Anne Sheepshanks, an astronomical philanthropist. The biographical sketches include black-and-white images of the women and their namesake craters. —CC PT



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