

Mopsy

Serendipitous shopping:
Our unfettered
correspondent seeks
out the salubrious
and the cerebral.

BY MOPSY STRANGE KENNEDY



A MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE OF ANOMALIES

PEER is the organization and newsletter of the Program for Extraordinary Experiences Research, which explores alien contact and much more. For information: 497-2667, or www.peermack.org.

Psychiatrist John Mack, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of Lawrence of Arabia, has received attention both derisive and laudatory for his most recent subject: people who claim to have had contact with aliens. For those who have been beckoned by the skinny green finger of those apparently supernatural beings, Mack's willingness to listen, appreciate and understand—rather than to diagnose and marginalize—has been a boon. He's written two books about this, most recently *Passport to the Cosmos* (released in paperback earlier this month). Like another Cambridge dweller before him, William James, Mack takes a wide and attentive look at the whole variety of experiences that are extraordinary, anomalous, uncanny, spiritual, religious, shamanistic and ecological. Hearing about alien contact ("It was like air going through air; my cells were wide open") is fascinating and thought provoking. But even for people who might be skeptical about abduction per se, PEER offers a pathway back to certain notions held dear in the 1960s. Such as the idea held by Castaneda, and many indigenous people, that certain "alternate realities" truly and honorably exist; that in trance states we can receive exotic wisdom; and that the planet, supersensitive to our cruel treatment, requires extreme respect. The Program for Extraordinary Experiences Research is weaving a relationship between science, philosophy, healing and art.



THE SHELTERING SKY, CAMBRIDGE

The Moroccan Bazaar at 2302 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, evokes spicy warmth through furniture and other Moroccan fixings. 661-0644.

Those things that conglomerate, in shades of earthy red and camel yellow, to make up that rich feeling of Morocco (see *The Sheltering Sky* for a full dose) are here in North Cambridge. Foremost, it's an atmospheric furniture store with exotic objects—such as round or rectangular ceramic tables with colored mosaic bits embedded in them—that you could happily fit into your non-desert condo. And unlike most kitchen or dining-room tables, these can also withstand porch weather. A much lower table with wooden balustered fretwork can be sat around upon fat little pillows. The



walls are covered with colorfully ornamental bowls, pretty as pictures, in which food can be served. Moroccan musicians might be found plucking here on the beautiful stringed instruments (say, a *rebab*) or the ancient-looking drumlike ones. Moroccan Bazaar has enormous tea sets made of a silver-colored nickel, with trays, teapots and bowls for mint. There are ruglike blankets and blanket rugs, including rough-hewn brown-and-white sheepskins. Try on a flowing, silky caftan or jellabah for a lounging around in regal queen's fashion, or use one to dress up for a very fancy ceremonial occasion.

WEDDING TOAST

Split Verse, Poems to Heal Your Heart, edited by Meg Campbell and William Duke, is about divorce.

The cleated footprints that walk across the hearts of the divorced are beautifully, bitterly, painfully, defensively—sometimes bracingly—recorded in this collection of poems written from the ravaging front lines of divorce. Sherman Pearl describes the "simple surgery" that cuts the couple in two: "My portion has/half a house in the background/yours the other half and look! on the lawn, midway/where we'd stood together,/half a child." A father, lamenting his divorce from the mother of his grown-up son recalls the child's conception in a hotel that is now burned out: "Loved your

mother then," he says, in tight-lipped pain. And he adds, redeemingly: "You are the best thing I have done." Breathtaking loneliness aches off these pages, love gone sour, but never erased. Children leave bravely sad messages to Daddy on the answering machine. Longing, lingering attachments are so prevalent, it's almost a relief to read Peter Wade's cynical "Rant." "I'm really pissed that you're unfazed...you smiled at me with the condescending sympathy of an outplacement counselor." And there's an edgily sexy end-of-intimacy poem by William Duke. Meg Campbell recommends people take these poems "preventively," considering the abyss before they take a leap into commitment.

