



## Conversations with Carl Sagan (Literary Conversations)

By Tom Head

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Though a well-regarded physicist Carl Sagan (1934-1996) is best-known as a writer of popular nonfiction and science fiction and as the host of the PBS series *Cosmos*. Through his writings and spoken commentary, he worked to popularize interests in astronomy, the universe, and the possibility of extraterrestrial life. From the beginning of his public career, when he co-wrote *Intelligent Life in the Universe* to the very end as he worked on the 1997 film adaptation of his novel *Contact*, these subjects absorbed him.

This interest in space was rooted in his understanding of the smallness and vulnerability of humanity measured against the immense size and power of the universe. This profound philosophical humility, mixed with personal exuberance, comes through in *Conversations with Carl Sagan*. In interviews and profiles, Sagan discusses with verve a wide variety of topics--the environment, nuclear disarmament, religion, politics, extraterrestrial life, astronomy, physics, robotics. Whether he is discussing his science fiction or his well-researched nonfiction works, his voice embraces reason and skepticism.

This volume shows how Sagan, a lifelong skeptic, refined his views and expressed amazement that Earth, for all his belief in extraterrestrial life, encompasses everything about which he cared.

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### Editorial Review

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It's rare for a scientist to have enough cultural cachet to become the subject of comedy spoofs, one of Carl Sagan's many unusual accomplishments thanks to his zeal for bringing science to the public square in his best-selling books and his seminal television series, *Cosmos*. Mr. "Billions and Billions" was a brilliant, erudite astronomer and astrophysicist with a strong interest in extraterrestrial life and a deep concern for life on Earth. He was also charismatic, energetic, warm, and eloquent, as the editor of this lively and valuable interview collection notes in his crisp introduction. Head uses the words *love*, *passion*, and *wonder* often in his profile, and they are keys to Sagan's success. An advocate for science education, space exploration, environmental protection, and nuclear disarmament, Sagan was controversial and a great favorite with journalists. Head has selected 16 engaging conversations from such popular venues as *Rolling Stone*, *Psychology Today*, *The Charlie Rose Show*, and NPR, and it's a boon to connect with Sagan's knowledge, wisdom, and generosity a decade after his early death at 62. *Donna Seaman*  
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From the Publisher

---Offers the first collection of interviews with Carl Sagan

---Shows the breadth of Sagan's concerns for the environment, for education, for mankind

---Contains many controversial moments

About the Author

Tom Head of Jackson, Mississippi, is a writer and poet whose work includes *Women and Families* (Voices from the Civil War), *Possessions and Exorcisms* (Fact or Fiction?), and *1966* (The Turbulent 60s)

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**Patsy Locke:**

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