



An Artsy Raven Newsletter



Feb 2026, Issue #48

Happy Lunar New Year! The year started both with happy and sad moments this year.

Recently I was invited to the [Gung Haggis](#) party in Vancouver, a Scottish (Robbie Burns) slash Chinese New Year festival. There were bagpipes, haggis dumplings, haggis lettuce wraps mixed with water chestnuts and the usual ten course Chinese meal of assorted meat and vegetarians dishes.

The next day I went to a funeral of a friend's mother who had Alzheimer's for a long time. She had been a head nurse and despite getting this disease, her family rallied with her and they set up a foundation for future nursing students in Vancouver in her name, then created many videos and campaigns to raise money for Alzheimer's research. With the right intention and energy, they made the best of their situation which is amazing. Every May there is a walk for Alzheimer's, [more info here](#).

I've been told that the year of the Fire Horse can also be good and bad, will write more about that below!

- JF Garrard

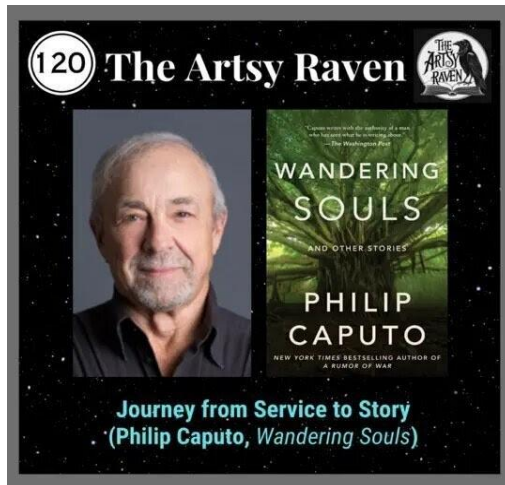
President, Dark Helix Press
Podcast Host, *The Artsy Raven* Literary
Podcast

Latest Artsy Raven Podcast Episodes

JF Garrard (writer, editor and publisher) has frank conversations with writers, editors, publishers, artists, actors, directors and other art professionals about what inspires them to create and what led to their success. Writers on the podcast will showcase their work by reading from their book.

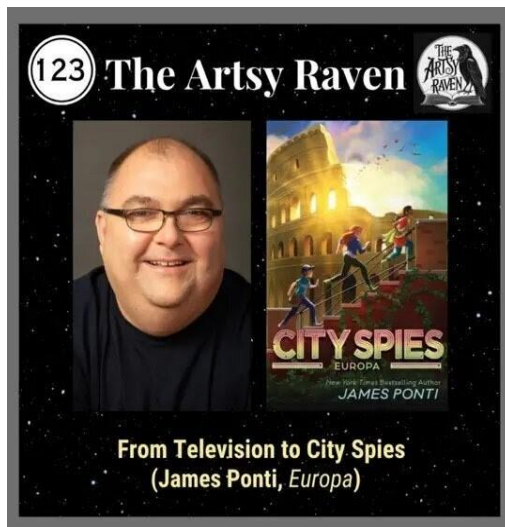
Lately we've released way too many episodes at once, please visit our new website for the latest episodes: <https://artsyraven.com/>.

We've lowered the Patreon tiers so it's easier to gain access to the 100+ bonus episodes. Just pay what you can (\$5-30USD) and individual bonus episodes available for \$3USD
<https://www.patreon.com/c/jfgarrard/membership>



Ep120 Journey from Service to Story with Philip Caputo

Philip Caputo reflects on why writing is a calling, shares the life experiences that shaped his path from Marine Corps veteran to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and discusses his latest book, *Wandering Souls*.



Ep123 From Television to City Spies with James Ponti

James Ponti shares how his career in television led him to writing multiple bestselling middle grade series of books, the real-life inspirations behind the City Spies books, and why writing for yourself matters most.

The Artsy Raven Podcast Channels

To listen to all 100+ episodes of The Artsy Raven podcast, please click the Spotify or Youtube links below. Happy listening!



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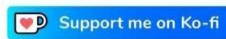
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Artsy Fun - Fire Horse Year Zodiac Predictions



Every time I talk to my husband about Chinese zodiacs or astrology, all he says is "you have two science degrees, please stop!"

The year 2026 is Year of the Fire Horse. Although many horses have been born throughout the years, every time the cycle comes around, the element associated with the animal is different. The element can be metal, wood, water, fire or earth which may balance or clash with the element in the year you were born in. Since there are five elements and 12 zodiac signs, any given combination occurs every 60 years. If you would like to read more about the Chinese lunisolar calendar, check out [this article here](#).

The Fire Horse years are associated with amazing feats and not so great things. The last one happened in 1966, coinciding with the Soviet Union landing its uncrewed spacecraft Luna 9 on the moon, *Star Trek's* ("The Man Trap") premiere, and the Cultural Revolution which plunged China into a decade of chaos and violence.

Anyhow, part of the fun of Lunar New Year is looking up your own horoscope and seeing how your year is supposed to turn out. It's all part of the fun of the start of a new year! [Visit this site](#) to look up your own sign and see what the future holds for you!

Story Origin Group Book Promos



Dark Themes in Fantasy & Science Fiction (February). Get these books fast! This promotion ends Mar 3, 2026! ([click to download](#))

Fellow Indie Author Promos



The Bet in Nocturne Alley by Lisa A. Moore ([click for preview](#)). Deep in the fogchoked depths of Nocturne Alley, Amara Nocturne's undead existence is bound by an unbreakable curse. But when whispers of a fatealtering ring emerge from the alchemical distillery, a dangerous bet offers a glimmer of hope—at a deadly price.



The Volcan Knights: Origins by Laurie Bowler ([click for preview](#)). Marcus was a Roman centurion. Gabriel, a plague doctor. Sean, a Celtic warrior. Kamal, an Egyptian scholar. James, a medieval strategist. Separated by centuries, united by a singular purpose: they have been transformed by divine beings called Nephilim into the Volcan Knights—supernatural guardians wielding blessed steel against an ancient evil that devours human souls.



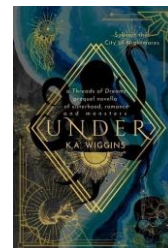
Alive at Sunset (Rituals of the Night Book 2) by Kayla Frederick ([click for preview](#)). Three years have passed since the nightmare in the woods, and Luna Ketz has buried her past beneath layers of time and distance. Although he plays the part of the charming gentleman, Luna knows the truth: Chance isn't here for a normal life. He's here for revenge.



The Wolves That Stalk The Flock by Richie Billing ([click to download](#)). Kymas has a task to complete. Not one he's keen to do, but one he must. Or else face the wrath of his sadistic master, Stevan. With the help of his canine companion, Smudge, Kymas must uncover the reason behind the sudden emergence of a flock of frantic sheep at the farm—they ought to be up in the hills grazing, under the watchful eye of shepherd, Parso. Kymas finds things along the way that tests his resolve. And then he arrives at Parso's hut...



Scorched Scars by Dax Murray ([click to download](#)). Years later, living happily in the city and a member of the resistance organization, Kegan has found their purpose as a spymaster and cryptographer. But the poachers are back, and Kegan is convinced they are looking for that one calla that got away—Kegan. Kegan must find the missing rebel before the king's guard does or the rebellion might be over before they can achieve their revolution. But can Kegan do so when poachers are hot on their heels?



Under: Subvert the City of Nightmares by K.A. Wiggins ([click to download](#)). When Ange fakes her own death in a rash attempt to protect her twin, she loses both her home and her livelihood. Dutiful Ange is determined to do whatever it takes to rescue her flighty "little" sister from a lawless life of dancing and debauchery...But the secrets—and the dangerously distracting strangers—the girls encounter below the waterline could sever their bond for good.



The O Club by Angela Knight ([click to download](#)). Amina Patel is a genetically engineered superpowered warrior who serves Mothership, an ancient starship sworn to protect humanity against would-be alien invaders. On the eve of a potentially deadly mission, Amina decides to seduce the leader of her four-Ranger team. Can Amina persuade the man she's always loved that he wants more from her than just kinky fun and games at The O Club?



Out For Blood by K. E. Beale ([click to download](#)). After losing his familiar in a gruesome accident, vampire Leonard Madigan is forced to leave the Vampires' Nest and venture into the human world in search of a new one. Leonard can't help but be distracted by a coven of vampires whose reckless feeding habits have attracted a merciless group of vampire hunters. He must make a choice: let the vampire hunters get away with their atrocities, or join the coven and seek vengeance.



Darkest Light: A Ravaged Skies Novel: An EMP PostApocalyptic Survival Thriller (Fire in the Sky Book 1) by A.M. GEEVER ([click for preview](#)). *Darkest Light* delivers gritty realism and brutal choices in this character-driven novel with heroes who bleed for every inch. Perfect for fans of William Stone (*Surviving the Fall*), and Kyla Stone (*Edge of Collapse*), *Darkest Light* plunges readers into a world where ordinary people, stripped of everything familiar, must rebuild their world—and themselves.



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