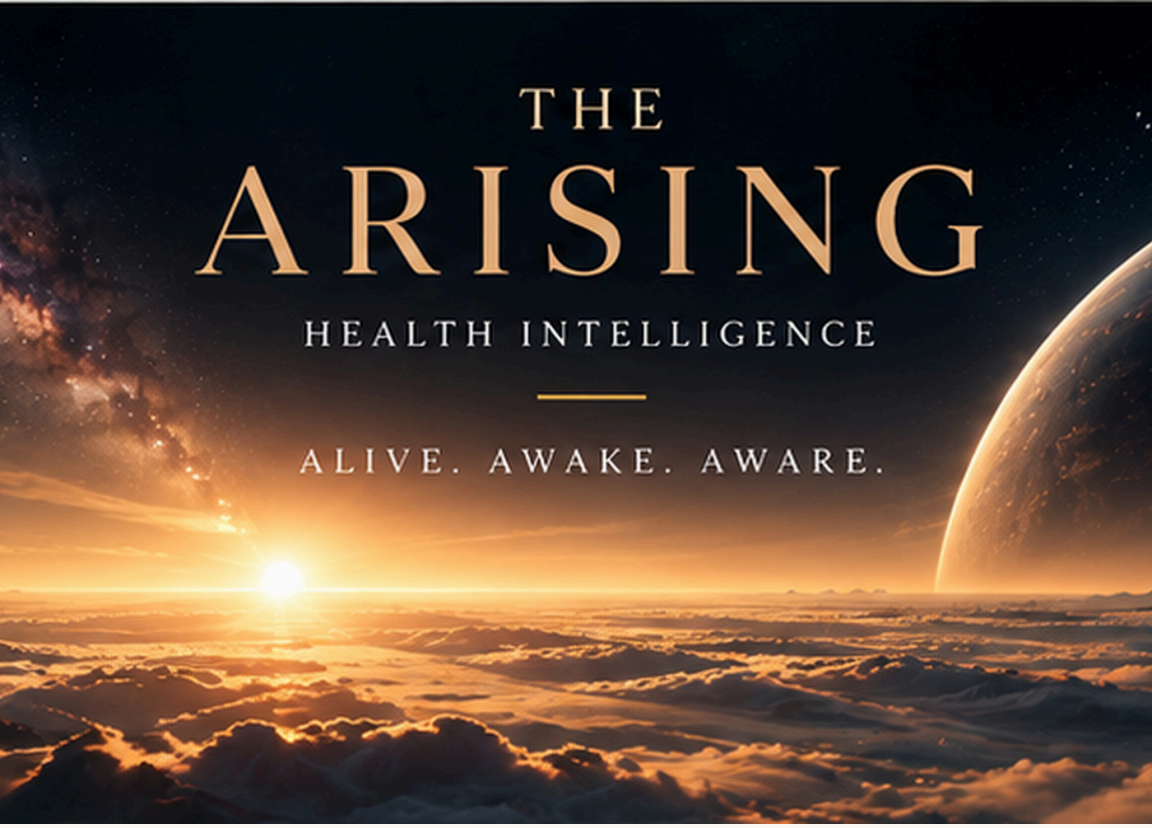


48 / MEANING AND POSSIBILITY

Life Arises

Wonder, change, and the human purpose of a future still unfolding.

JOHN GRIFFIN, MD

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A verb

Life arose.

The sentence sounds complete, as though it describes an event safely behind us. But the tense leaves something out.

Life arises. A person encounters the world and becomes able to do something they could not do before. An understanding changes. A relationship begins. A possibility appears that no one in the room had seen until someone asked a different question.

Not every change is an improvement. Not every beginning lasts. The point is to stop treating what exists now as a finished account of what can exist.

Understanding can remain open

Sometimes it is hard even to formulate the questions. What is this life? What can be known? What makes something matter? The questions can remain large without making the ordinary world inaccessible.

We can still see the person before us. We can still learn something true. We can still observe the effect of a choice and revise the choice when the evidence asks us to.

Understanding does not have to be final to be real. It can be precise about what has been seen and humble about what has not. That is an important discipline for medicine. It is also a way of remaining available to life.

We see a possibility on the horizon, or in orbit. We encounter it in the consideration of a new idea, or in the eyes of those who live around us. A life is occurring, and we are participating in it before we have found all the words.

Looking up together

The photograph is still in my office. The paper-framed glasses are still nearby. The mug continues to ask its question.

Where will you be?

The people in the photograph were together beneath the eclipse. The date has passed. What it means has continued to change.

What remains in the photograph is not simply an astronomical event. It is the company in which we encountered it. People whose ordinary days were intertwined stood together beneath a sky that made us beginners again.

There are reasons to want more life that no number can adequately describe. This was one of them.

More room for one another

More years would give us more chances to meet a changing world. Better health could make some of those encounters more possible. Better care could help us remain in them when health fails. Better understanding could show us a path we had not known to look for.

I want more years, yes. But I want more than years.

I want more opportunities for life to unfold, in all the ways a human life can be fully lived. More room to become. More room for one another.

This is an essay about meaning, not a scientific account of the origin of life or a prediction that technological progress is inevitable. The wonder belongs to reality as we can meet it, with our questions still open.

There is this true thing, and it is a verb.

We are in the midst of it now.

SOURCES & READING SCOPE

Keep the claim beside its evidence

1. John Griffin, The Arising, v6 illustrated manuscript, 24 October 2026. Open source →

This essay adapts the current book manuscript. It expresses an editorial perspective and does not establish a health intervention.

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