

Pauline Aspel

LUSTRAL WATERS

*In the new era prophesied by Isaiah,
"waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert."*

Isaiah 35:6

In Senegalese folklore, two characters, Water and the Doum Palm, argue.

"I am essential," the Palm says, "I provide sturdy roofing over your head and mats for all purposes under your bare feet."

*My instructions are that "wrestling take place on the mat."
(Jesse "The Body")*

"I am life," Water says.

"I contain the desert sands," Palm replies.

"I am life," Water repeats. "See this riant oasis? Every leaf spells water and miracle. No spring in the whole world (except perhaps Delphian) is better at dispensing health and youth."

The Palm seems on the verge of being convinced, but presents a last objection: "What about grief? What does Water offer when pain has made us lifeless?"

"Simple," is Water's answer: "Lay down your sorrow on the bottom of the wadis, rivers, and falls. Currents will glide above. Sorrow's no concern of theirs. Sorrow will become a pebble, silent and polished."

For a new era (1999):

*A \$4 million NASA contract has been won by a UI space
Physicist (in collaboration with the Jet Propulsion Lab in
Pasadena, Calif.) to develop and use radar in search for
underground Water on Mars.*