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Randall, Lisa. **Warped Passages:** Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe's Hidden Dimensions. Sept. 2005. 512p. illus, index. Ecco, \$27.95 (0-06-053108-8). 530.

A theoretical physicist who specializes in the so-called standard model of particle physics, Randall explains the particles and forces depicted in that model, and where the model fails as a picture of the subatomic world. (For example, it does not explain gravity's weakness compared with electromagnetism and the weak and strong nuclear forces.) Randall's renown among physicists derives from her proposed solutions to deficiencies in the standard model, which, unlike some of the outlandish propositions of string theory, can be experimentally tested. That she borrows from string theory the concept of "branes" will be of high interest to science readers, for if vindicated by results from particle accelerators, she will have discovered evidence that extra dimensions are real places that gravity leaks into, an achievement that would seem to be Nobel Prize territory. Randall writes as clearly as possible, but in order to follow her text, readers will need to persevere; those who attentively do can consider themselves inducted into the fifth dimension. --Gilbert Taylor

YA/S: Surprisingly accessible, this may have some appeal beyond budding scientists. IC.

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