Asimov As He Was

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Isaac Asimov, Whose Thoughts and Books Traveled the Universe, Is Dead at 72," headlined the *New York Times* obituary on April 7, 1992. A list of 25 of his 477 titles, many of them sci-fi classics, accompanied the news. All that was missing was the true cause of death: AIDS. But as Asimov's second wife, Janet, wrote in the epilogue to his just-out autobiography, *It's Been a Good Life* (Prometheus), "The doctors advised against going public..., and Isaac went along with them." Oddly, only three days later, a reluctant Arthur Ashe beat *USA Today* to the punch by outing himself as HIV positive. More oddly, both men were likely infected in 1983 by blood transfusions after heart surgery. Most oddly, Mrs. Asimov asserts that the "shock and publicity [surrounding Ashe] made it difficult to reveal that Isaac had also died of consequences of HIV." *Hmmm.* Well, coincidences and tricks of time were the cat's cradle of this cosmic thinker-*cum*-humanist's narratives, so his coming out from the grave has a certain, uh, artistic integrity.

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