

SUPERCHARGE YOUR BABY?
The truth about child-enhancing toys
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SHRINKING ANIMALS
Climate and a worrisome trend
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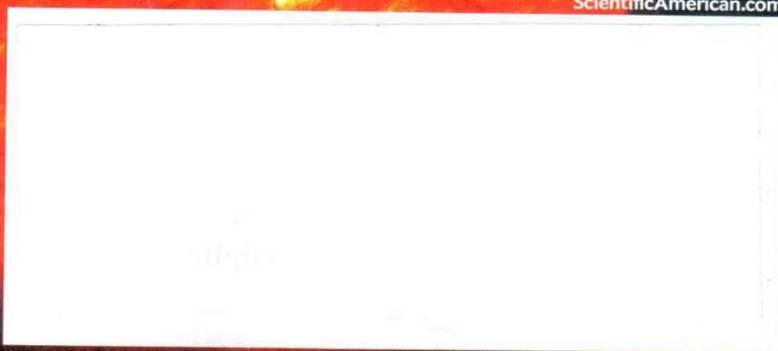
MYSTERIOUS PAIN
Afflicting millions of women
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SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

SECRET LIFE OF THE SUN

A new stellar backstory reveals its
lost family—and may predict its ultimate fate

SPECIAL REPORT
**BIGGEST
QUESTIONS
IN SCIENCE**
What is spacetime?
Consciousness? The origin
of life? And how much can
we ever know?
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New research is revealing our home star's complicated family history and clarifying our understanding of its potential future. *By Rebecca Boyle*

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Hundreds of toys promise to help babies read, learn, do math and walk earlier than expected—many without scientific backing. *By Erik Vance*

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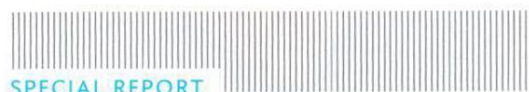
Endometriosis spreads like a vine through the bodies of roughly 176 million women worldwide, causing agony and infertility. Hope for stemming the disorder is on the horizon.

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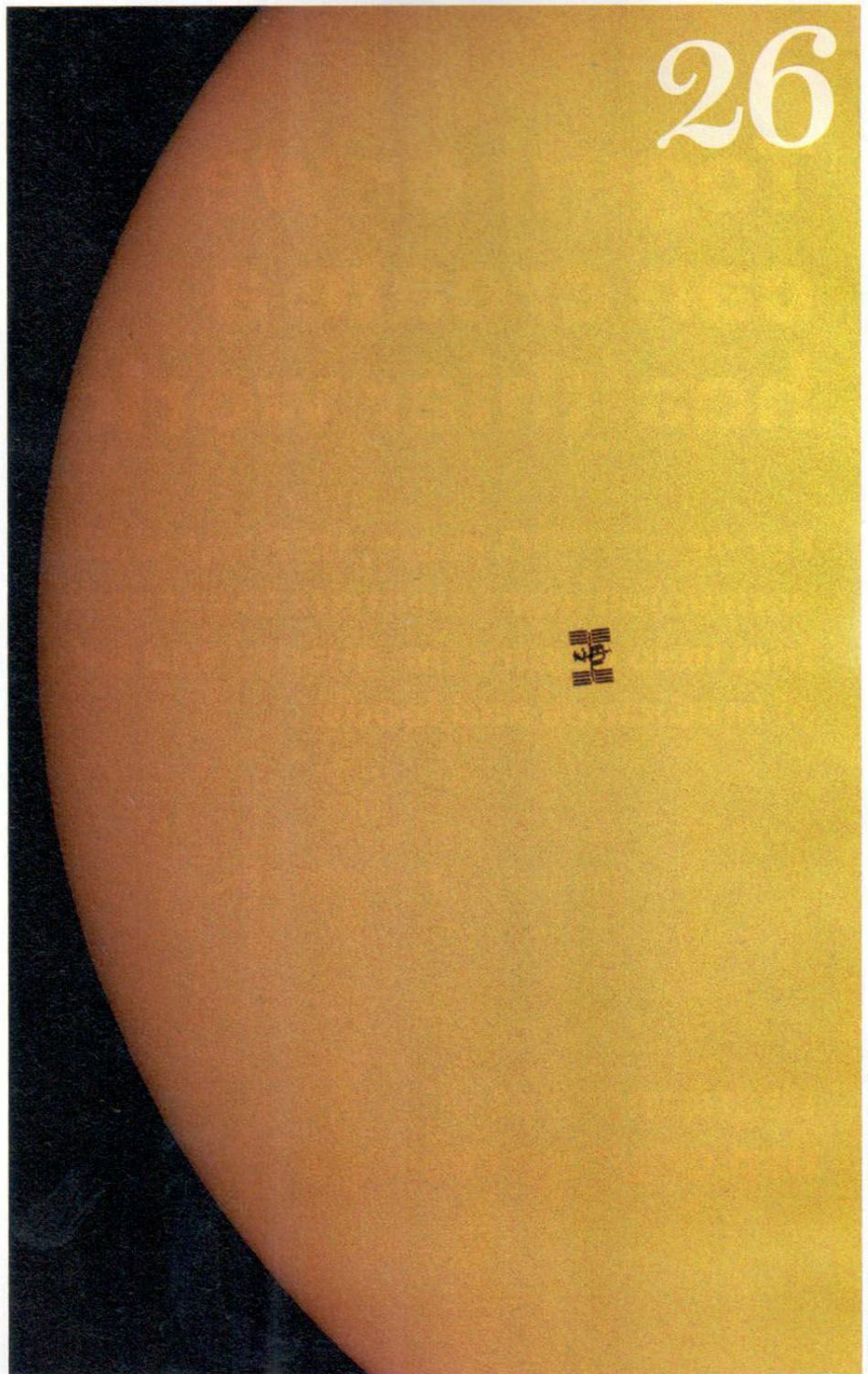
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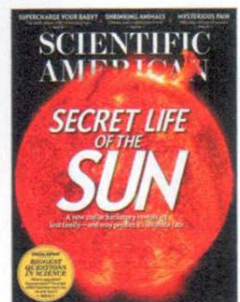


THERRY LEGAULT (solar transit of International Space Station)

ON THE COVER

The sun, shown in this 2014 image from NASA's orbiting Solar Dynamics Observatory, has had a tumultuous life. Recent research has revealed details about its stellar ancestors and siblings, its natal environment and evolution, and its eventual demise.

Photograph by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory and AIA, EVE and HMI science teams.



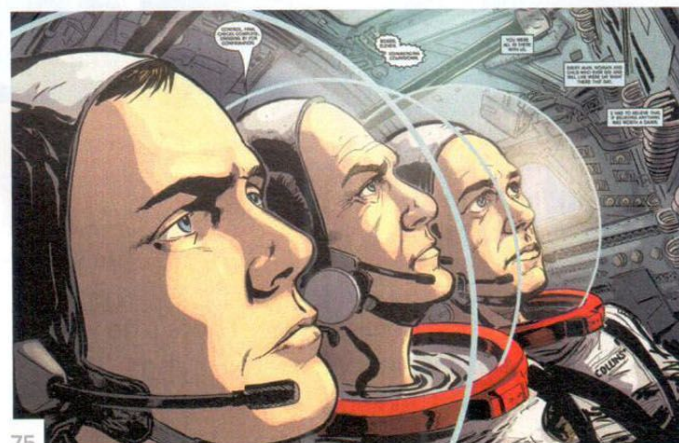
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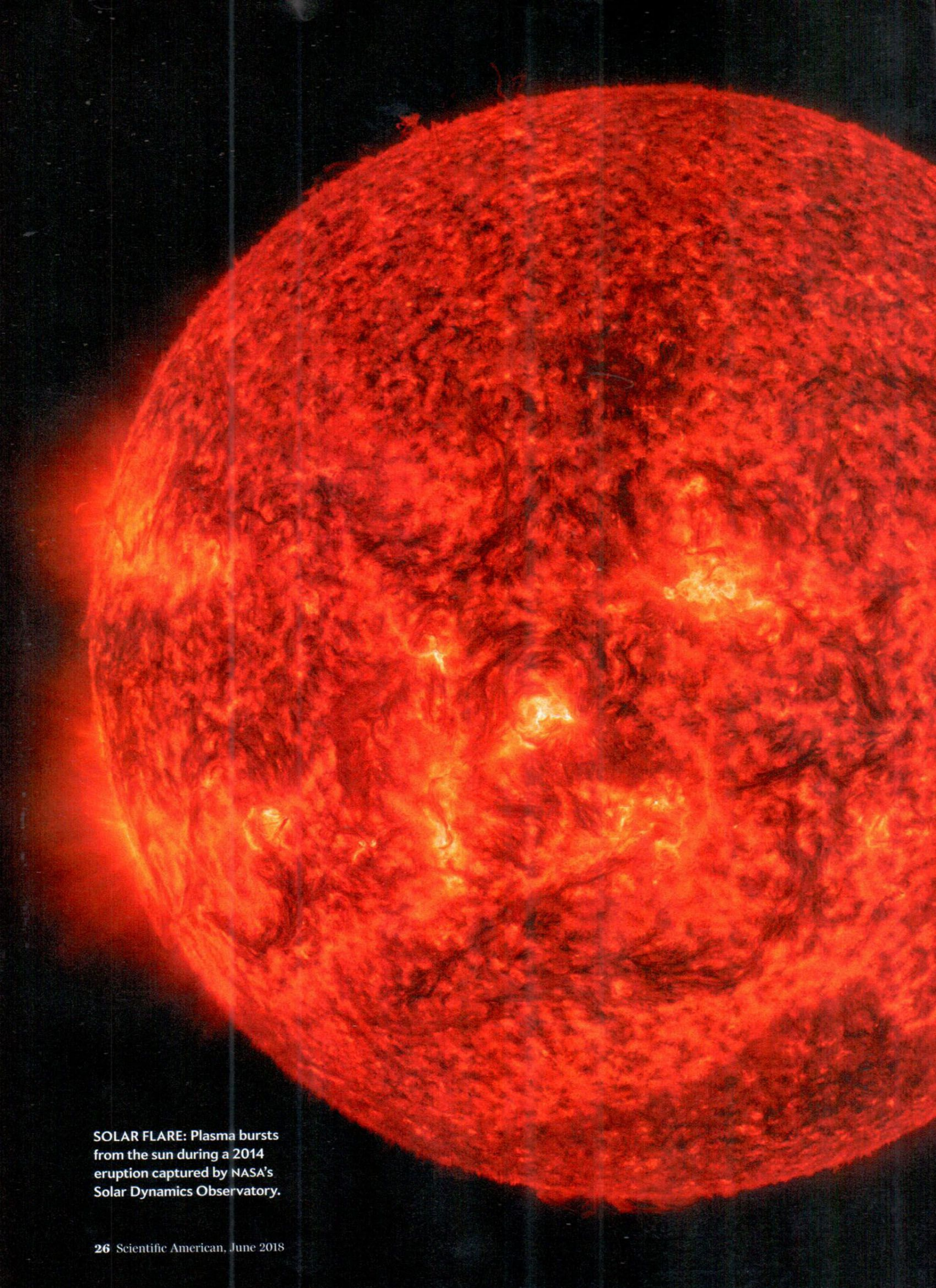


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ADVANCES




A fire in Ventura County, California, in 2017. A growing number of homes are at risk from such conflagrations.



SOLAR FLARE: Plasma bursts from the sun during a 2014 eruption captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.

ASTRONOMY



THE SECRET LIFE OF THE SUN

Our closest star has a much more exciting biography than scientists once assumed. New research illuminates the sun's past and potential future

By Rebecca Boyle



NEUROSCIENCE

CAN YOU SUPER- CHARGE YOUR BABY?

Hundreds of toys promise to help babies read, learn, do math and walk earlier than expected—many without scientific backing

By Erik Vance

PAINFUL WOMEN SUFFER FROM

HEALTH

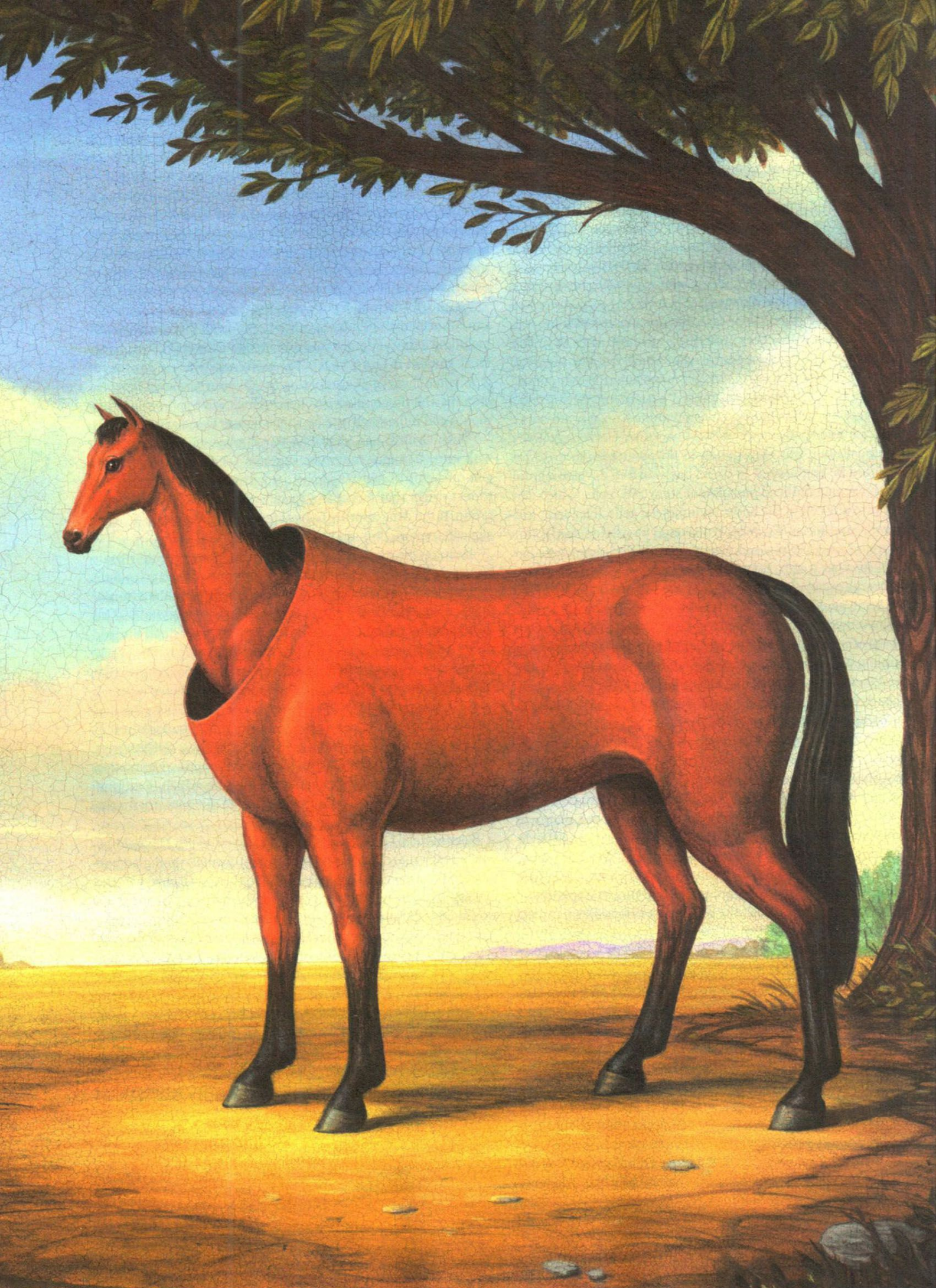
Endometriosis spreads like a vine through the bodies of roughly 176 million women worldwide, causing agony and infertility. Science has struggled to understand the condition, but new research is sparking hope for improved treatments soon

By Jena Pincott

*Illustration by
Katherine Streeter*







ECOLOGY

SHRINKING

A rise in global temperatures may be making all kinds of creatures smaller—a trend with worrisome implications

ANIMALS

By Marta Zaraska

Illustration by Marc Burckhardt