

Tesla's Pigeon

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Born at exactly midnight during an electrical storm, Nikola Tesla sheds light over the lamp of the world. He suffers an affliction in which blinding flashes of light appear before his eyes. These visions link to a word—current, coil, turbine—*I hear it and envision the invention in precise detail.* As the patron saint of electricity, Tesla arrives in New York City with a letter of recommendation for Thomas Edison. Edison hires him to redesign his motor and generators. When Tesla inquires about the \$50,000 owed him, Edison replies, “Tesla, you don't understand our American humor.” Tesla is fastidious about cleanliness and hygiene and feels his chastity enhances his scientific abilities. He feeds the pigeons in Central Park each morning. Among them is a beautiful white pigeon—she follows him everywhere. A great deal of rapport develops. *I love this pigeon, I love her as a man loves a woman, and she loves me.* When the pigeon becomes ill, he nurses her back to health. As long as she needs him, nothing else matters. One night as he lies in bed, she flies in through the window, tells him she is dying. *And then, as I get her message, there comes blinding beams of light from her eyes, more intense than I ever produced with the most powerful lamps in my laboratory.* In his final years Tesla suffers from extreme sensitivity to light.