



Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology

By David Abram

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David Abram's first book, *The Spell of the Sensuous* has become a classic of environmental literature. Now he returns with a startling exploration of our human entanglement with the rest of nature.

As the climate veers toward catastrophe, the innumerable losses cascading through the biosphere make vividly evident the need for a metamorphosis in our relation to the living land. For too long we've ignored the wild intelligence of our bodies, taking our primary truths from technologies that hold the living world at a distance. Abram's writing subverts this distance, drawing readers ever closer to their animal senses in order to explore, from within, the elemental kinship between the human body and the breathing Earth. The shape-shifting of ravens, the erotic nature of gravity, the eloquence of thunder, the pleasures of being edible: all have their place in this book.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Richard Louv Reviews *Becoming Animal*

Richard Louv is the author of seven books, including *Last Child in the Woods*. He is the chairman of the Children & Nature Network, and has served as adviser to the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World award program and the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Read his review of *Becoming Animal*:



David Abram is unique among interpreters of the wild voice within us. His first book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, has become a touchstone for a needed shift in our thinking about the place of humans in the world. As the poet Gary Snyder remarked, that book helped map us back into the world. In his new book, *Becoming Animal*, Abram offers a startling new exploration of our entanglement with the rest of nature. This time, his focus is the intimate but sadly forgotten relationship between our bodies and the earth. By excavating the most ordinary and familiar of our experiences--the perception of shadow, the recognition of depth, the transience of mood--he re-opens for us the knowing that our bodies are intertwined with the flesh of the earth. I cannot imagine another book that so gently and so persuasively alters how we look at ourselves, and reminds us that sentience was never our private possession, that our very awareness is a means of participating in a more than human world. At no other time in Western history have we needed to listen to the wild voice within us, and to Dave Abram's, as much as we do today.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review How did our curious, inventive species go from worshiping nature to destroying it? A creative and visionary ecologist and philosopher, Abram addressed this complex and urgent question in his influential first book, *Spell of the Sensuous* (1996). In his second provocative, boldly recalibrating blend of stories, reflections, and discoveries, he offers perception-heightening insights into the causes of our disparagement of “sensuous reality,” or “bodied existence,” and the disastrous consequences of our increasing detachment from the living world as we funnel our attention to the cyber realm. As Abram identifies underappreciated aspects of our minds and bodies that evolved to enable us to respond with exquisite sensitivity to our surroundings, he tells extraordinary tales of his encounters with wildlife from whales to ravens, illuminates the planet’s myriad forms of sentient life, and elucidates the significance of oral culture. In addition to writing with poetic precision about sensory experience—his analysis of shadows and life’s reciprocity are phenomenal feats of observation and eloquence—he also draws on his adventures as an itinerant sleight-of-hand magician and apprentice to indigenous shamans to forge an inspired physics of being. We can’t “restore” nature, Abram writes, without “restoring” life, hence his prodigious, transfixing, and rectifying “earthly cosmology.” --Donna Seaman

Review

“A wild book in every sense of the word, full of stories that will leave you trembling, but even fuller of ideas that will send you out into the world with new eyes.” —Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth*

“This book is like a prehistoric cave. If you have the nerve to enter it and you get used to the dark, you’ll discover things about storytelling which are startling, urgent and deeply true. Things each of us once knew, but forgot when we were born into the 19th and 20th centuries. Extraordinary rediscoveries!” —John Berger, author of *Ways of Seeing and Why Look at Animals*

“I cannot imagine another book that so gently and so persuasively alters how we look at ourselves.”
—Richard Louv, author of *The Nature Principle*

“One of the most compelling and important ecology books in decades.” —Rex Weyler, co-founder of Greenpeace International

“A truly alchemical book. . . . Those of us who still hope for a revolutionary change in our thinking toward animals, the living land and the climate will welcome this book. Abram is an audacious thinker, a true visionary, and, really, just a damn good nature writer.” —*San Francisco Book Review*

“An intricately textured, deep breath of a book that blurs the boundaries between human and animal, mind and earth. Prose as lush as a moss-draped rain forest and as luminous as a high desert night. . . . Deeply resonant with indigenous ways of knowing, Abram lets us listen in on wordless conversations with ancient boulders, walruses, birds, and roof beams. His profound recognition of intelligences other than our own enables us to enter into reciprocal symbioses that can, in turn, sustain the world. *Becoming Animal* illuminates a way forward in restoring relationship with the earth, led by our vibrant animal bodies to re-inhabit the glittering world.”
—*Orion*

“A stunning, compelling journey into embodied, earthly intelligence, *Becoming Animal* is philosophy at its engaging best. Prepare for a wild, profound ride into the essence of the human animal—an essence embedded in communion with the Earth. A must read for anyone concerned about the future of the planet and ourselves.” —Kierán Suckling, co-founder and Executive Director, Center for Biological Diversity

“In *Becoming Animal*, David Abram has crafted the rarest of literary gems: a sublime effort combining transcendent prose, lucid insight, and lasting consequence.” —*Shambhala Sun*

“If we are to survive—indeed, if we are to stop the dominant culture from killing the planet—it will be in great measure because of brave and brilliant beings like David Abram. This is a beautifully written, deeply moving, and important book.” —Derrick Jensen, author of *A Language Older Than Words* and *Endgame*

Becoming Animal brings us home to ourselves as living organs of this wild planet. Its teachings leap off the page and translate immediately into lived experience. —Joanna Macy, Buddhist scholar and activist

“Without doubt one of America’s greatest nature writers, one who ably follows in the footsteps of Muir, Thoreau and Leopold. . . . [A] book of such transformative potential that it needs to be read twice in quick succession to get the full benefit. . . . The language is luminous, the style hypnotic. Abram weaves a spell that brings the world alive.”
—*Resurgence*

“Pure enthusiasm drives Abram to explore the yearning of our body for the larger body of Earth. . . . [Abram] brings the magician’s sense of mystery and playful surprise. . . . His celebratory embrace of all that surrounds him is refreshing in the extreme.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

“As with many deeply original—and radical—books, this work may startle, even provoke the reader in its electric reversal of conventional thought. . . . [T]his is a portrait of the artist as a young raven, arguing, with all the subtlety of his mind, for the mindedness of the body. An exercise of uncanny imagination.” —Jay Griffiths, author of *Wild*

“This brave and magical book summons wild wonder to remind us who we are.”

—Amory B. Lovins, Chief Scientist, Rocky Mountain Institute

“Speculative, learned, and always ‘lucid and precise’ as the eye of the vulture that confronted him once on a cliff ledge, Abram has one of those rare minds which, like the mind of a musician or a great mathematician, fuses dreaminess with smarts.” —*The Village Voice*

“Refreshing. [Abram] allows himself to be expansive, sentimental, and more than a little mad. . . . His book is transformative, animated by piercing observations and hallucinatory intensity.” —*Bookforum*

“This startling, sparkling book challenges the technological temper of our times by returning us to the animal body in ourselves. Abram shows brilliantly how this body brings us back to Earth in a series of acutely moving descriptions of its polysensory genius. An original work of primary philosophy, it is written with verve, passion, and poetry.” —Edward S. Casey, author of *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Cooke:

The book *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Why must we leave a good thing like a book *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*? Wide variety you have a different opinion about book. But one aim this book can give many data for us. It is absolutely proper. Right now, try to closer along with your book. Knowledge or data that you take for that, you could give for each other; it is possible to share all of these. Book *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* has simple shape but the truth is know: it has great and massive function for you. You can appear the enormous world by start and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

Anthony Laflamme:

Precisely why? Because this *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret this inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who write the book in such awesome way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book possess such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I had been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

Maria Hernandez:

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Gertrude Hoskins:

With this era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple method to have that. What you must do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to have a look at some books. On the list of books in the top list in your reading list is actually Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking right up and review this book you can get many advantages.

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