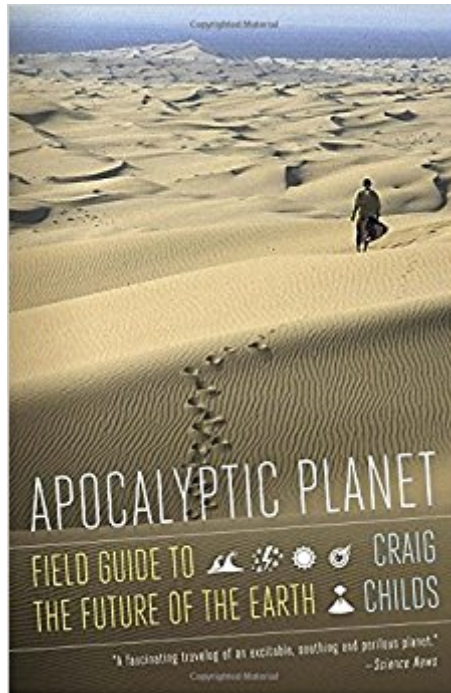




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Apocalyptic Planet: Field Guide To The Future Of The Earth



Synopsis

2013 Orion Book Award Winner
2013 Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award Winner
Ours is not a stable planet. It is prone to sudden, violent natural disasters and extremes of climate. In this exhilarating exploration of our globe, Craig Childs goes to where the apocalypse can be seen now. From the driest deserts of Chile, through the genetic wasteland of central Iowa, to the site of the drowned land bridge of the Bering Sea, he uncovers cataclysms that tell us what could be next: forthcoming ice ages, super volcanoes, and the conclusion of planetary life cycles. Childs delivers a sensual feast in his descriptions of the natural world, and undeniable science that reveals both the earth's strengths and frailties. Bearing witness to the planet's sweeping and perilous changes, he shows how we can alter the future, and how the world will live on, though humans may not survive to see it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Guest Review for *Apocalyptic Planet* from Neil Shubin
Neil Shubin is author of *Your Inner Fish* and the upcoming *The Universe Within*. He is provost of The Field Museum as well as professor of anatomy at the University of Chicago, where he also serves as an associate dean. Educated at Columbia, Harvard, and the University of California at Berkeley, he lives in Chicago. Part field guide, part love letter, and part biography of Earth, *Apocalyptic Planet* looks at our ever-changing world to find refreshing and eye-popping insights in the most unlikely places. In glacial ice, rocky mountains, and dusty outcroppings on the desert floor, Craig Childs uses cutting-edge science to reveal the dazzling changes our planet has experienced. Seas have come and gone; mountains have risen

only to fall; while whole continents have moved, split, and crashed into one another. The 4.67-billion-year-history of Earth has seen whole worlds collapse, with others born in their remains. Planetary apocalypse is the way of the world; our very presence on the planet has been shaped by cataclysm. Craig Childs walking on the desert or climbing a mountain is like a gourmand at a sumptuous feast: the sensual delight with which he relishes the world around him gives the rest of us a vicarious thrill, even hunger. You just want to turn over that rock he sees, move dust to expose an ancient artifact, or scale the cave wall in front of him. Childs delights in the details of the rock, sand, and ice, and in them he finds stories as large as the planet itself. In his hands, the main casualty of apocalypse is our familiar view of Earth: it is impossible to read Craig Childs and see the world in the same way again. *A Look Inside Apocalyptic Planet* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Childs traveled the world to destinations both exceptional and mundane seeking clues to what life will be like in the future on our increasingly unstable planet. Ruminating on our distant past and present changes, he blends climate science, natural history, literary references, and personal reflections to create an immensely evocative sense of time and place. From Greenland's glaciers to a blistering hot Iowa cornfield (a place Childs characterizes as suffering from "genetic exhaustion"), he immerses himself in parts of our world that scientists endlessly study but we willfully ignore. He consults great minds, cajoles friends into sharing his adventures (with often hilarious results), and brings his mother along in an attempt to gather clues and form conclusions about the end of the world as we know it. Surprisingly, this is not a work of darkest sorrow but rather an engaging exploration of the land beneath us and the sixth mass extinction that scientists agree is underway. Always curious, Childs went out in the world to learn "in the presence of apocalypse," taking readers along for the intriguing ride. --Colleen Mondor --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Mr. Child's books just get better and better. His research is a beautiful combination of academia and total physical immersion. Not being a specialist, like so many of the real life characters in the book, he is able to connect the dots of many different disciplines and lay it out in layman's terms. I found the book to be highly entertaining and highly educational.

Craig Childs turns science into a literary and visceral adventure. My intellect as well as my nervous system are always engaged through his writing. I feel like I'm there with him in the desert, the

Antarctic...where ever he roams to tell about it. Apocalyptic Planet is a slight turn for Childs, venturing into territory that may be considered political. Climate change. Yet he is able to pull it off well by painting a tangible picture of lands that could be lost, and by putting them in the context of a much longer timetable. Thousands and millions of years than the decades we experience and can grasp in our simple lives. This book doesn't judge or pronounce, and it certainly inspires reflection, as well as awe of the incredible planet we call home.

Craig has written an excellent, non preachy piece on the environment. Rather than being overbearing, he paints a journey exploring our world and its wonders and distinct beauty in regions most would never go. I found the language to be very smooth and not overbearing with scientific language. I have read "Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold and am currently reading "The Living Great Lakes" and find this to be very comparable to both of these works. Craig also brings forth the human element of these vignettes of his travels with very real moments of our frailties and our silliness as people.

Amazing book. Craig Childs is one of my favorite writers. His mind works the way mine does (in that he loves the beauty of the Nature, and has a deep curiosity about it) but his body works much better. He gets out and experiences the world in an intimate and intense way, which he shares with the reader in clear, honest and yet poetic language. Frightening and true, this book is one I wish everyone would read. It is easy to set aside thoughts of how our comforts come at the expense of the natural systems that sustain life while we sit buffered from reality in our comfortable homes. People need to know this, to feel this. We are lucky he is able to help us do so.

In Apocalyptic Planet, Author, Craig Childs finds something interesting to say about life and life forms in every marginal landscape he visits. Half adventure stories, half tome to nature, this book is satisfying and engaging. Each chapter focuses on a different ecosystem and the challenges the author faces exploring them. Few except adventurers like Craig Childs would deign to visit the places he explores. Highly enjoyable and definitely recommended.

This may be my single favorite piece of nonfiction to date. I found it in a tiny bookstore in Durango where the staff leaves bookmarks bearing their signatures in books they recommend. This one caught my attention because the bookmark in it was overflowing with signatures. It is the most

beautifully written analysis of natural and unnatural cycles; of the effects of global climate change and overpopulation; of optimism, pessimism, alarmism and realism. This book reads like a fairy tale founded in scientific research, dripping with despair and yet brimming with hope. If I could gift it to each and every inhabitant of Earth I would.

Childs is an inspired writer with an enormous talent for a stunning turn of phrase. High adventure and novel perspectives abound. A few scientific misstatements (e.g., bolides do not create nuclear reactions) that should have been caught by a science editor, but these only somewhat mar an otherwise highly interesting and thought-provoking collection of epic journeys and explorations.

This is an excellent book whether you consider yourself an environmentalist or not! Your understanding of just how "in flux" our planet is, and has always been, will never be the same. Childs does a great job of 'humanizing' the people with whom he traveled the globe too, especially the videographer in chapter 2; Denise Stilley. She sounds like a woman I would LOVE to know! Great read that will spin your head HARD!

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