



The Unnatural World: The Race to Remake Civilization in Earth's Newest Age

David Biello

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A Science Friday and *Smithsonian Magazine* Best Science Book of the Year

With the historical perspective of *The Song of the Dodo* and the urgency of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, a brilliant young environmental journalist argues that we must innovate and adapt to save planet Earth.

Civilization is in crisis, facing disasters of our own making on the only planet known to bear life in the vast void of the universe. We have become unwitting gardeners of the Earth, not in control, but setting the conditions under which all of life flourishes—or not. Truly, it's survival of the innovators.

The Unnatural World chronicles a disparate band of unlikely heroes: an effervescent mad scientist who would fertilize the seas; a pigeon obsessive bent on bringing back the extinct; a low-level government functionary in China doing his best to clean up his city, and more. These scientists, billionaires, and ordinary people are all working toward saving the best home humanity is ever likely to have.

What is the threat? It is us. In a time when a species dies out every ten minutes, when summers are getting hotter, winters colder, and oceans higher, some people still deny mankind's effect on the Earth. But all of our impacts on the planet have ushered in what qualifies as a new geologic epoch, thanks to global warming, mass extinction, and such technologies as nuclear weapons or plastics. *The Unnatural World* examines the world we have created and analyzes the glimmers of hope emerging from the efforts of incredible individuals seeking to change our future. Instead of a world without us, this history of the future shows how to become good gardeners, helping people thrive along with an abundance of plants, animals, all the exuberant profusion of life on Earth—a better world with us. The current era of humans need not be the end of the world—it's just the end of the world as we know it.

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