



Unseen City: The Majesty of Pigeons, the Discreet Charm of Snails & Other Wonders of the Urban Wilderness

Nathanael Johnson

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It all started with Nathanael Johnson's decision to teach his daughter, Josephine, the names of every tree they passed as they walked up the hill to daycare in San Francisco, CA. It was a ridiculous project, not just because she couldn't even say the word "tree" yet, but also because he couldn't name a single one of them. When confronted with the futility of his mission, his instinctive response was to expand it, Don Quixote-style, until its audacity obscured its stupidity. And so the project expanded to include an expertise in city-dwelling birds (the raptors, the shockingly shrewd crows, the gulls, the misunderstood pigeons), rodents (raccoons, rats, squirrels), and tiny crawling things (the superpowers of snails, the vast intercontinental warfare of ants).

There's an unseen world all around us. There are wonders that we walk past every day without noticing. Johnson has written a book that will widen the pinhole through which we see the world. What does the world look like through the eyes of a turkey vulture, or a squirrel, or an ant? What does a sidewalk Ginkgo biloba "see?" What would you learn each morning if you understood how to speak pigeon? If we look closely enough, Johnson believes that the walk to the subway can be just as entrancing as a walk through the forest. Follow along as the author and his family search for the beauty and meaning of nature in an urban jungle.

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