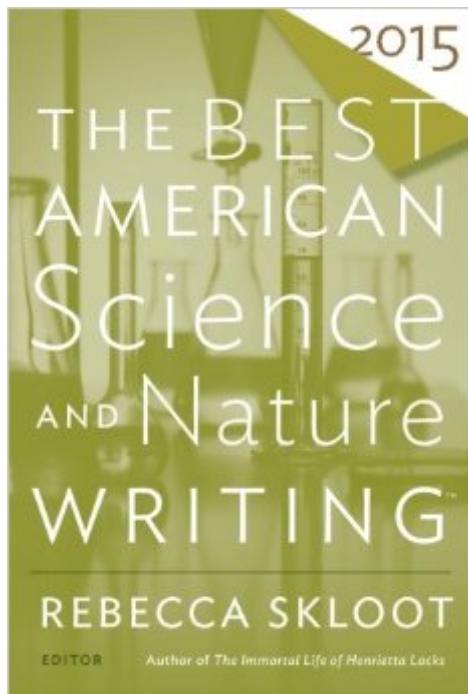


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# The Best American Science And Nature Writing 2015



## Synopsis

The Best American Series • The next edition in a series praised as “undeniably exquisite” • (Maria Popova), The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2015 includes work from both award-winning writers and up-and-coming voices in the field. From Brooke Jarvis on deep-ocean mining to Elizabeth Kolbert on New Zealand’s unconventional conservation strategies, this is a group that celebrates the growing diversity in science and nature writing alike. Altogether, the writers honored in this year’s volume challenge us to consider the strains facing our planet and its many species, while never losing sight of the wonders we’re working to preserve for generations to come. The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2015 includes Sheri Fink, Atul Gawande, Leslie Jamison, Sam Kean, Seth Mnookin, Matthew Power, Michael Specter and others. REBECCA SKLOOT’s award-winning science writing has appeared in the New York Times Magazine and elsewhere. Her book, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, was an instant New York Times bestseller. It was named a best book of 2010 by more than sixty media outlets, including Entertainment Weekly and NPR, and by the National Academies of Science and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, among others. Skloot is currently writing a book about humans, animals, science, and ethics. TIM FOLGER, series editor, is a contributing editor at Discover and writes about science for several magazines.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've long had an uneasy relationship with anthologies. More often than not, I find a few stories I hate,

a few I love, and the rest fall somewhere in between, all of which leaves me with a vague feeling of dissatisfaction. But, when I saw this collection, *The Best American Science and Nature Writing*, I figured I couldn't go wrong. After all, I'm a scientist and I spend about half of my work hours on issues related to fish and wildlife. An anthology of stories about science and nature had to be right up my alley. And yet, here I am, again, disappointed. It turns out that this collection isn't really so much about science or nature as it is about people. For example, the story "Down by the River" is about the restoration of the landscape along the Colorado River in Yuma, AZ. However, there is almost nothing about the biology and ecology of the process. The story is almost entirely about the people involved and the impact on the community. Similarly, the story that follows, "The Empathy Exams," starts off as the story of a medical actor but quickly veers off into a very personal essay about the author's previous abortion, heart surgery, relationships, and emotional state. In addition, I seem to define "science and nature" somewhat differently than the series and guest editors do. For example, I would describe "Waiting for Light," a story about a company that rents rechargeable LED lanterns to residents of villages in India that electricity has not yet reached, as a story about the impact of technology on people in developing nations, not really a story about science or nature. And, consistent with the theme, the story is much more about the people than it is about the technology.

For fifteen years the Best American Science and Nature writing series has enthralled readers like me with an annual anthology of articles chosen from magazines like *The Atlantic*, *New Yorker*, *Slate*, *Discover*, *Audubon*, and *Sierra Club*, with an occasional article that would be accessible to a general reader from more technical publications like *Science*. Series editor Tim Folger provides continuity and does the initial canvassing to find possible candidates, but each year a prominent scientist or science writer serves as guest editor to make the final selections. Past editors have included people like E. O. Wilson, Steven Pinker, Dan Ariely, and Elizabeth Kolbert, and this year's guest editor is Rebecca Skloot, author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Although each anthology attempts to publish articles spanning a broad range of science and nature, it is natural (and intended) that each should also reflect the special interests of the guest editor. As a result, it is not surprising that the 2015 edition contains many articles on the intersection of science and society and the resulting technological and ethical challenges facing the world in the twenty-first century. Many of these articles are intended to make the reader act as well as think, such as "Desegregating Wilderness," which probes how and why access to nature is too often segregated along class and racial lines. Very thought-provoking was David Wolman's article

â œThe Aftershocksâ •, which tells about seven Italian scientists who went to jail for failing to warn the public adequately about an impending earthquake.

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