



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 the name of every tree they passed on their walk to day care in San Francisco. This project turned into a quest to discover the secrets of the neighborhood's flora and fauna, and yielded more than names and trivia: Johnson developed a relationship with his nonhuman neighbors.

Johnson argues that learning to see the world afresh, like a child, shifts the way we think about nature: Instead of something distant and abstract, nature becomes real—all at once comical, annoying, and beautiful. This shift can add tremendous value to our lives, and it might just be the first step in saving the world.

No matter where we live—city, country, oceanside, or mountains—there are wonders that we walk past every day. *Unseen City* widens the pinhole of our perspective by allowing us to view the world from the high-altitude eyes of a turkey vulture and the distinctly low-altitude eyes of a snail. The narrative allows us to eavesdrop on the comically frenetic life of a squirrel and peer deep into the past with a ginkgo biloba tree. Each of these organisms has something unique to tell us about our neighborhoods and, chapter by chapter, *Unseen City* takes us on a journey that is part nature lesson and part love letter to the world's urban jungles. With the right perspective, a walk to the subway can be every bit as entrancing as a walk through a national park.

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