



Rain: A Natural and Cultural History

By Cynthia Barnett



Download



Read Online

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett

Rain is elemental, mysterious, precious, destructive.

It is the subject of countless poems and paintings; the top of the weather report; the source of the world's water. Yet this is the first book to tell the story of rain.

Cynthia Barnett's *Rain* begins four billion years ago with the torrents that filled the oceans, and builds to the storms of climate change. It weaves together science—the true shape of a raindrop, the mysteries of frog and fish rains—with the human story of our ambition to control rain, from ancient rain dances to the 2,203 miles of levees that attempt to straitjacket the Mississippi River. It offers a glimpse of our "founding forecaster," Thomas Jefferson, who measured every drizzle long before modern meteorology. Two centuries later, rainy skies would help inspire Morrissey's mopes and Kurt Cobain's grunge. *Rain* is also a travelogue, taking readers to Scotland to tell the surprising story of the mackintosh raincoat, and to India, where villagers extract the scent of rain from the monsoon-drenched earth and turn it into perfume.

Now, after thousands of years spent praying for rain or worshipping it; burning witches at the stake to stop rain or sacrificing small children to bring it; mocking rain with irrigated agriculture and cities built in floodplains; even trying to blast rain out of the sky with mortars meant for war, humanity has finally managed to change the rain. Only not in ways we intended. As climate change upends rainfall patterns and unleashes increasingly severe storms and drought, Barnett shows rain to be a unifying force in a fractured world. Too much and not nearly enough, rain is a conversation we share, and this is a book for everyone who has ever experienced it.



[Download Rain: A Natural and Cultural History ...pdf](#)



[Read Online Rain: A Natural and Cultural History ...pdf](#)

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History

By Cynthia Barnett

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett

Rain is elemental, mysterious, precious, destructive.

It is the subject of countless poems and paintings; the top of the weather report; the source of the world's water. Yet this is the first book to tell the story of rain.

Cynthia Barnett's *Rain* begins four billion years ago with the torrents that filled the oceans, and builds to the storms of climate change. It weaves together science—the true shape of a raindrop, the mysteries of frog and fish rains—with the human story of our ambition to control rain, from ancient rain dances to the 2,203 miles of levees that attempt to straitjacket the Mississippi River. It offers a glimpse of our "founding forecaster," Thomas Jefferson, who measured every drizzle long before modern meteorology. Two centuries later, rainy skies would help inspire Morrissey's mopes and Kurt Cobain's grunge. *Rain* is also a travelogue, taking readers to Scotland to tell the surprising story of the mackintosh raincoat, and to India, where villagers extract the scent of rain from the monsoon-drenched earth and turn it into perfume.

Now, after thousands of years spent praying for rain or worshipping it; burning witches at the stake to stop rain or sacrificing small children to bring it; mocking rain with irrigated agriculture and cities built in floodplains; even trying to blast rain out of the sky with mortars meant for war, humanity has finally managed to change the rain. Only not in ways we intended. As climate change upends rainfall patterns and unleashes increasingly severe storms and drought, Barnett shows rain to be a unifying force in a fractured world. Too much and not nearly enough, rain is a conversation we share, and this is a book for everyone who has ever experienced it.

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #73507 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2015-04-21
- Released on: 2015-04-21
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.36" h x 1.26" w x 6.40" l, 1.25 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 368 pages

 [Download Rain: A Natural and Cultural History ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Rain: A Natural and Cultural History ...pdf](#)



Download and Read Free Online Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett

Editorial Review

Review

Longlisted for the National Book Award

Shortlisted for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award

Winner of the Florida Book Award in General Non-Fiction

An NPR *Science Friday* Best Book of 2015

A Boston Globe Best Book of 2015

A Tampa Bay Times Favorite Book of 2015

A Miami Herald Favorite Book of 2015

A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of 2015

"Mesmerizing and powerful history. Barnett is a passionate, intrepid journalist whose research has taken her everywhere from a Mackintosh factory in Glasgow to a rickety suspension bridge, made of steel-wire rope, 30 feet above India's Simtung River during monsoon season. Her cultural references are equally far-reaching... Abundant details, spiced with irreverence and humor, are what make this book so delicious. What elevates it and makes it important is Barnett's exploration of humanity's attempts throughout history to prevail over the elements... Reading this book, we are witness to the profoundly flawed, hubristic core of human nature itself."

—**DANI SHAPIRO, *MORE***

"Transporting...An elemental biography, *Rain* wanders widely through time and space, packed with intriguing stories...At times playful and at times grand, Barnett discusses the planetary genesis of rain and its influence on agriculture, religion and the arts. She is especially good at making the large and distant close and personal...Throughout, Barnett beats a steady tattoo: whether abundant or scarce, rain has shaped humans."

—**ELIZABETH ROYTE, *ELLE***

"Fascinating...Celebrates the beauty of rain...As delicious as all this cultural history is, Barnett is not just sprinkling her pages with trivia. All of the various streams of her research come together in the present in rain as the manifestation of global climate change."

—**TAMPA BAY TIMES**

"Barnett sets an ambitious goal, making something so everyday interesting, even fascinating, and she accomplishes that with far-reaching research and lyrical prose, tracing rain through literature and myth, science and history....In a state where the governor has prohibited the discussion of climate change, *Rain* is as welcome as a summer afternoon shower on a hot day."

—**THE MIAMI HERALD**

"With *Rain*, Cynthia Barnett will make a rain fanatic out of anyone, not just self-described weather aficionados...Through her approachable and engaging writing, Barnett tells this eclectic story by combining science and history with humor, anecdotes, poetry, and personal travel adventures...Barnett captivates the reader through her unique way of finding a human face to describe historical climate and weather events...In a particularly memorable chapter, 'Writers on the Storm,' Barnett explores the role that rain has played in the creation of art, including the works of Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson, Frédéric Chopin, The Smiths, Nirvana, and Woody Allen."

—**SCIENCE**

"Cynthia Barnett's eye-opening book is enough to make even the most fervent rain-hater experience a change of heart. From the storms of biblical proportions that lashed the Earth when it was newly formed to why Woody Allen prefers to shoot against a rainy backdrop, Barnett addresses rain's role in science, culture and history with a forensic eye for detail and a good sense of humour."

—*FINANCIAL TIMES*

"Barnett approaches her subject with full recognition of [rain's] mystery, bringing to it a cogent understanding of rain's complex part in the hydrologic cycle....She excels at explaining the complexities of that cycle and the consequences of our modern compulsion to manipulate it...Barnett, often wittily, packs her book not only with essential finding, but also small, strange facts: that raindrops, for instance, don't resemble water dripping from a faucet; rather they fall from the clouds in the shape of tiny parachutes, their tops rounded because of air pressure from below."

—*ORION*

"Lively, wide-ranging, and sensitive...Entertaining as well as wise...Barnett uses rain as a prism through which to gaze at a much larger picture—one in which the human desire to control the world often rebounds in unfortunate ways, and the equally strong desires to understand and appreciate sometimes compensate for the effort to strong-arm nature into submission."

—*COLUMBUS DISPATCH*

"A perfectly balanced book of general-interest science and boots-on-the-ground journalism, the ominous threat of what we have done to our weather hangs over the pages like dark summer thunderheads."

—*MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE*

"Everyone thinks about rain, but few have done so more than environmental journalist Cynthia Barnett. In her new book, *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*, she explores every possible aspect of rain you can think of, and probably many you didn't consider. We learn about the origin of rain jackets, the aroma of rain, how Daniel Defoe helped popularize umbrellas, why it occasionally rains frogs, whether rain actually did follow the plow, and why we need to worry about climate change...One of her most fascinating sections is on the language of rain."

—*SEATTLE TIMES*

"Barnett weaves together a compelling set of human tales that carry [her readers] through millennia and around the world, often in vivid and lyrical prose that is leavened with humor."

—*DALLAS MORNING NEWS*

"Maybe because it's as refreshing as its title, or maybe because it reminded me of spring, but *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History* made me very happy. That stuff that falls from the sky isn't strictly what this book is all about, though. Author Cynthia Barnett also touches upon history, biology, Earth science, global warming and all kinds of tiny facets of culture. We're sprinkled with delightful surprises, as well as terrifying tales of droughts and floods, then introduced to majesty on one page and destruction two pages later....This book practically screams for weather fans to own it."

—*SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS*

"Rain, as Barnett lovingly portrays it, is one of our most profound shared human experiences, a source not just of life, but of art and religion, and a reminder, in modern times, of our connection to nature. But it's not, as she demonstrates over and over again, something we always approach with strict rationality."

—*SALON*

"A multifaceted examination of the science, the art, the technology and even the smell of rain throughout history... Highlights the severity of some of our environmental problems with knowledge, humor, urgency and hope." ' "

—*KIRKUS REVIEWS*, starred

"A seamless blending of personal narrative with scientific and cultural explanations...Fans of Mary Roach will recognize a similar ease of style and interjection of wit...Accessible to every reader, from the environmental scientist to the parent choosing whether their child needs to wear a raincoat that day."

—*LIBRARY JOURNAL*, starred

"A spectacularly vivid, all-encompassing history of rain... Like John McPhee, Jared Diamond, and Elizabeth Kolbert, Barnett illuminates a crucial subject with knowledge, energy, conviction, and a passion for mind-expanding facts and true stories."

—*BOOKLIST*, starred

"Barnett beautifully evokes universal themes of connecting cycles of water, air, wind, and earth to humankind across time and culture, leaving readers contemplating their deeper ties with the natural world."

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

"*Rain* is a lovely, lyrical, deeply informative book. It will change the way you look at gray skies, and sunny ones, too."

—*ELIZABETH KOLBERT*, author of *The Sixth Extinction*

"In *Rain*, Cynthia Barnett has given us a landmark work of environmental history. She brilliantly illuminates the essential weather conditions that allow our blue-marble earth to exist. From now on I'll think about raindrops differently. *Rain* is a triumph."

—*DOUGLAS BRINKLEY*, author of *The Wilderness Warrior*; professor of history, Rice University

"Rain—the thing the weatherman frowns about—is one of the planet's great pulses, as this marvelous book makes clear. Read it now, recalling the rainstorms we grew up with, and anticipating the harsh new rainfall that's coming our way on a warming globe."

—*BILL MCKIBBEN*, author of *Eaarth*

"Brilliant, insightful, and beautifully written. Raindrops are prisms through which we see the surprising and profound connections among water, human history, and our uncertain future."

—*DAVID GEORGE HASKELL*, author of *The Forest Unseen*; professor of biology, University of the South

"Some of the most lyrical and surprising nature writing that I have ever read. This book is filled with wonder, as mysterious as the shape of a falling raindrop, which is not the drop we imagine, but a concave little parachute drifting to the earth below. After reading this, you will never look up the same way again."

—*RICHARD LOUV*, author of *Last Child in the Woods*

"*Rain* is one of the most elegant and absorbing books ever written about the natural world. Writing

with grace and imagination, Cynthia Barnett takes you on a journey into the heart of the most elemental force in our lives. An important, revelatory, and thoroughly wondrous book."

—WILLIAM SOUDER, author of *On a Farther Shore: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*

"Captivating and compelling, a delightful celebration of precipitation that is brimming with insight. Whether you're desperate for more of it or you just wish it would stop, you'll never think of rain in the same way again."

—GAVIN PRETOR-PINNEY, author of *The Cloud Collector's Handbook*

"Cynthia Barnett looks at the human relationship to rain—from Noah, to Thomas Jefferson, to our own conflicted attitudes. The result is a book of unexpected connections and wonderful surprises. It will give you more respect for every rainstorm you experience, and more joy in the raindrops."

—CHARLES FISHMAN, author of *The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water*

"Barnett's beautifully written book envelops the reader in warm shower of intriguing history and fascinating science. Anyone who looks longingly at rain clouds, rejoices in a spring downpour, or frets about drought, will love *Rain*."

—DANIEL CHAMOVITZ, author of *What a Plant Knows*; Director, Manna Center for Plant Biosciences, Tel Aviv University

"Like the weather, there's no predicting the delightful and sometimes disturbing surprises waiting on every page of *Rain*. Whether she's writing about Mesopotamia or the Met Office, Cynthia Barnett illuminates the hidden connections that tie our fate to a precious resource we neglect at our peril."

—DAN FAGIN, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation*

"*Rain* is one of those uncommonly wonderful books that are both highly significant and deeply pleasurable to read. As we face the coming time of storms, of flood and drought, nothing will be more important than rain. So all gratitude to Cynthia Barnett for writing a book that is clear, surprising, and filled with fascination."

—KATHLEEN DEAN MOORE, co-editor of *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*

"If you care about this planet, you're lucky that Cynthia Barnett writes so elegantly and intelligently about the stuff that falls on it. It's kind of ironic--like rain on your wedding day?--that the folly of mankind's relentless efforts to control the earth's water has inspired Barnett's best work yet."

—MICHAEL GRUNWALD, author of *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*

About the Author

Cynthia Barnett is an award-winning environmental journalist who has reported on water from the Suwannee River to Singapore. She is the author of two previous books, *Mirage* and *Blue Revolution*, a *Boston Globe* top 10 science book of 2011. She lives in Gainesville, Florida with her husband and children. Visit her website at cynthiabarnett.net.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Betty Ahlstrom:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always try to and must have the time or they will get great deal

of stress from both everyday life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, the book you have read is definitely Rain: A Natural and Cultural History.

Kimberly Hopkins:

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History can be one of your nice books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Rain: A Natural and Cultural History yet doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand new stage of crucial considering.

Hal Clemens:

This Rain: A Natural and Cultural History is great guide for you because the content which can be full of information for you who also always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This particular book reveal it info accurately using great manage word or we can state no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole details in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having Rain: A Natural and Cultural History in your hand like finding the world in your arm, data in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no publication that offer you world in ten or fifteen small right but this publication already do that. So , this is certainly good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt in which?

James Fox:

As we know that book is essential thing to add our information for everything. By a publication we can know everything we would like. A book is a list of written, printed, illustrated or blank sheet. Every year seemed to be exactly added. This book Rain: A Natural and Cultural History was filled in relation to science. Spend your extra time to add your knowledge about your scientific research competence. Some people has various feel when they reading a book. If you know how big benefit from a book, you can experience enjoy to read a reserve. In the modern era like currently, many ways to get book which you wanted.

Download and Read Online Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett #G7J6SZ4L5Q8

Read Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett for online ebook

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett books to read online.

Online Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett ebook PDF download

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett Doc

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett Mobipocket

Rain: A Natural and Cultural History By Cynthia Barnett EPub