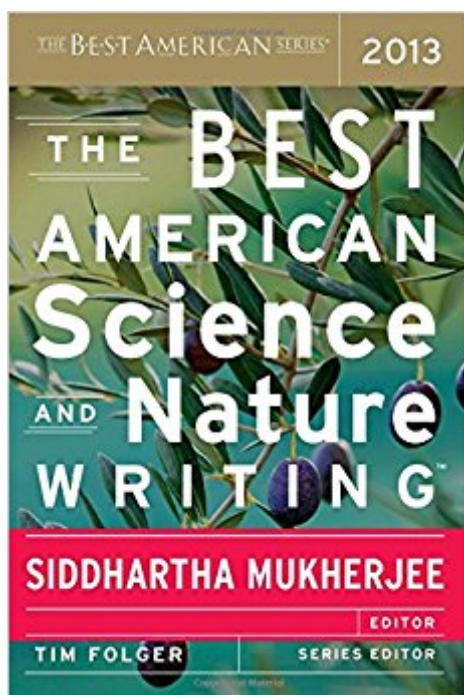


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# The Best American Science And Nature Writing 2013



## Synopsis

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Siddhartha Mukherjee, a leading cancer physician and researcher, selects the year's top science and nature writing from journalists who dive into their fields with curiosity and passion, delivering must-read articles from a wide array of fields.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Best American Series(r)First, Best, and Best-Selling The Best American series is the premier annual showcase for the country's finest short fiction and nonfiction. Each volume's series editor selects notable works from hundreds of magazines, journals, and websites. A special guest editor, a leading writer in the field, then chooses the best twenty or so pieces to publish. This unique system has made the Best American series the most respected and most popular of its kind. The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2011 includes Atul Gawande, Jonathan Franzen, Deborah Blum, Malcolm Gladwell, Oliver Sacks, Jon Mooallem, Jon Cohen, Luke Dittrich, and others [insert author photo] Mary Roach, editor, is the author of the New York Times bestsellers *Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void*; *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*; and *Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex*. She has written for *National Geographic*, *Wired*, *New Scientist*, the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Journal of Clinical Anatomy*, and *Outside*, among others. She is a member of the Mars Institute's advisory board and a winner of the American Engineering Societies' Engineering Journalism Award, in a category for which, let's be honest, she

was the sole entrant. More at [www.maryroach.net](http://www.maryroach.net). Look for the other best-selling titles in the Best American series: The Best American Comics The Best American Essays The Best American Mystery Stories The Best American Nonrequired Reading The Best American Short Stories The Best American Sports Writing The Best American Travel Writing "

SIDDHARTHA MUKHERJEE, cancer physician and researcher, is the author of *The Emperor of Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, the 2011 Pulitzer Prize winner for general nonfiction. TIM FOLGER is a contributing editor at Discover and writes about science for several magazines.

Even to the non-scientifically inclined, this is an exceptionally informative collection. The editor, S. Mukherjee, apparently has placed an emphasis on a submission being comprehensible to the non-scientists among us. Unlike, say, most articles in *Scientific American*. Especially notable are Rick Bass's 'The Larch' (a lyrical exposition on a tree); Alan Lightman's 'Our Place in the Universe'; and three incisive articles on viruses and the medical professionals who do battle: Jerome Groopman's 'The T-cell Army'; Michael Specter's 'The Deadliest Virus'; and David Quammen's 'Out of the Wild.' Stephen Marche's 'Is Facebook Making Us Lonely' is also excellent, but it's a bit incongruous in this collection, because it is more sociological than 'scientific.'

This book led me to read Mukherjee's own books. Those were a bit of a slog to get through because of their size, but well worth the effort. I bought some of the others in the Best of American Science series that are not quite as good as this one. This one though is a keeper. I think I will begin re-reading it soon. The important part of these series is it has led me to other authors I was not familiar with.

I've been a science reader for most of my life. Since I just received a Kindle as a gift this is my first ebook. I must say, this is a lot easier than carrying paper printed books around. As for the book itself, the content is, as with previous years of this series, quite interesting, especially if you do not limit your reading to one branch of science. Science in general tells us about the world in which we live and the more diversified your reading the more all encompassing your worldview. This is an excellent way to accomplish that. The science is varied and the writing is clear. All in all, this volume is a great addition to the rest of the series.

I have been reading these collections of science articles for over ten years. They are an easy way to access the best of science articles written for magazines, that is, a bit longer than in weekly sources, without the bother of having to scan the contents of a dozen or so magazines monthly. The Kindle format means they will always be nearby. But for goodness sake, the author's names need to be next to the titles in the Table of Contents!

Siddhartha Mukherjee's beautifully written "Introduction: On Tenderness" describing his quest to visit Gregor Mendel's abbey already justifies purchasing this magnificent collection of recent science essays. Like other reviewers I am looking forward to this collection every year, in spite of having read some of the pieces in the New Yorker or Harper's before. Most of the essays here are to the point, informative and avoid obfuscating jargon. I particularly liked Oliver Sack's candid "Altered States" and Sylvia A. Earle's "The Sweet Spot in Time".

I look forward to these publications the way other people might look forward to their favorite rock band's tour. Always awe inspiringly interesting, these are the latest, greatest discoveries, ideas, and innovations of a particular year. I usually eat them like potato chips then review them slowly and take in what is, for me, their deeper meaning and ramifications. To me, the best of them introduce me to someone and explain their work. Never skip over the introductions. They are always just as interesting as the articles presented.

Having read the 2012 edition, I was looking forward to enjoying this tome as well. The authors definitely fulfilled their roles in conveying factual scientific advances, although the book was not as uplifting as the earlier book. Quite realistically Siddhartha included some chapters of doom and gloom regarding the havoc we are creating on planet Earth. However, the book delivers on its promise of the amazing scientists among us and their progress in diagnosing ills if not resolving them.

I was assigned to read specific articles for my AP Biology summer reading, and these go so deep in detail that it feels like you're there! (Can a Jellyfish Unlock the Secret of Immortality? by Nathaniel Rich... LOVE.) Not only did this book come in faster than I expected, it came in perfect condition! I will definitely be ordering the rest of Mukherjee's books for sure!

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