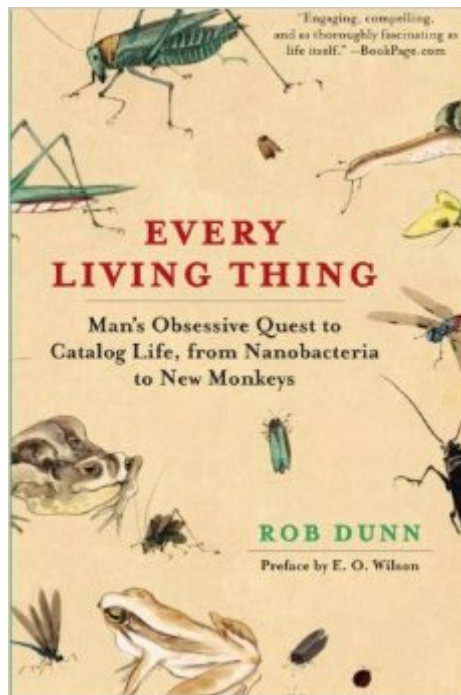


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Every Living Thing: Man's Obsessive Quest To Catalog Life, From Nanobacteria To New Monkeys



Synopsis

“If you have any interest in life beyond your own, you should read this book.” —Paul R. Ehrlich, author of *The Dominant Animal* — Biologist Rob Dunn’s *Every Little Thing* is the story of man’s obsessive quest to catalog life, from nanobacteria to new monkeys. In the tradition of E.O. Wilson, this engaging and fascinating work of popular science follows humanity’s unending quest to discover every living thing in our natural world “from the unimaginably small in the most inhospitable of places on earth to the unimaginably far away in the unexplored canals on Mars.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this history of the discovery and study of new life-forms, author Ron Dunn is at his best recounting the triumphs and foibles of earlier investigators like Leeuwenhoek (credited with invention of the microscope), Linnaeus (credited with invention of taxonomy) and Wallace (credited as co-originator of the theory of evolution). His book loses a lot of momentum once Dunn is up to the present day and dealing with investigators who are still alive and, if they are Lynn Margulis or Carl Woese, taking themselves very, very seriously. Professional courtesy apparently demands a respectful, rather worshipful tone when dealing with these ambulatory colleagues, and no mention of any hint of foible or foolishness, so reading becomes a lot less fun. But not every tale of moderns is stilted. Dunn gives us the story of Dan Janzen, a naturalist so in touch with nature, and so out of touch with civilization that, after collecting twenty million dollars to fund a complete survey of species in a national park, he gives the money to a Central American government to administer. The Central American government administers the twenty million out of sight in less time than it takes a

magician to make a silver dollar disappear, and the survey is never done. Dunn also provides a sympathetic treatment of the much-scorned Olavi Kajander, but more or less credits him with the discovery of nanobacteria, ignoring Robert Folk (it probably never occurred to Dunn to google "nannobacteria" as well as "nanobacteria"). Sometimes Dunn ends his stories too soon. Tullis Onstott reports finding, 2.8 miles down in the earth, bacteria that are living on the "energy produced by the radioactive decay of rocks." What?? Are they living on alpha rays, beta rays, gamma rays?

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