

# SUNBEAMS

It's a popular fact that 90 percent of the brain is not used and, like most popular facts, it is wrong. . . . It is used. One of its functions is to make the miraculous seem ordinary, to turn the unusual into the usual. Otherwise, human beings, faced with the daily wondrousness of everything, would go around wearing a stupid grin, saying, "Wow," a lot. Part of the brain exists to stop this from happening. It is very efficient, and can make people experience boredom in the middle of marvels.

Terry Pratchett

Such things . . . as the grasp of a child's hand in your own, the flavor of an apple, the embrace of a friend or a lover, the silk of a girl's thigh, the sunlight on rock and leaves, the feel of music, the bark of a tree, the abrasion of granite and sand, the plunge of clear water into a pool, the face of the wind — what else is there? What else do we need?

Edward Abbey

I don't think I can learn from a wild animal how to live in particular . . . but I might learn something of mindlessness, something of the purity of living in the physical senses and the dignity of living without bias or motive.

Annie Dillard

All the creatures on the planet today share a huge number of genetic ideas. Most of my genes are like most gorilla genes, but they're also like many of the genes in a mushroom. I have more genes than a mushroom, to be sure, and some critical genes are certainly different, but the important piece to take in here is our deep interrelatedness . . . with the rest of the living world.

Ursula Goodenough

It is of interest to note that while some dolphins are reported to have learned English — up to fifty words used in correct context — no human being has been reported to have learned dolphinese.

Carl Sagan

Wildness and silence disappeared from the countryside, sweetness fell from the air, not because anyone wished them to vanish or fall but because throughways had to floor the meadows with cement to carry the automobiles which advancing technology produced. . . . Tropical beaches turned into high-priced slums where thousand-room hotels elbowed each other for glimpses of once-famous surf not because those who loved the beaches wanted them there but because enormous jets could bring a million tourists every year — and therefore did.

Archibald MacLeish

Do you not know, my son, with what little understanding the world is ruled?

Pope Julius III

So bleak is the picture . . . that the bulldozer and not the atomic bomb may turn out to be the most destructive invention of the twentieth century.

Philip Shabecoff

I had assumed that the earth, the spirit of the earth, noticed exceptions — those who wantonly damage it and those who do not. But the earth is wise. It has given itself into the keeping of all, and all are therefore accountable.

Alice Walker

If you see a whole thing — it seems that it's always beautiful. Planets, lives. . . . But up close a world's all dirt and rocks. And day to day, life's a hard job, you get tired, you lose the pattern.

Ursula K. Le Guin

When seeing a new place, I often think: *I am going to come back here later — when I am rich, or when I have more time, or when I have a purpose, or when I am with someone I love — and do this right.* But it is a self-deception. More often than not, my feet lead me somewhere new rather than somewhere I have already been. And as I sat at that window watching the train bore through the heart of China, I had a different, more probable thought: *I'd better remember what this place looks like. I will never be back.*

Brad Newsham

I have knocked about the world enough to know that one lot of flesh and blood is as good as another. But that's why you get tired and try to put down roots. To find somewhere where you belong so that you are worth more than the usual round of the seasons and last a bit longer.

Cesare Pavese

Perhaps the most radical thing we can do is to stay home, so we can learn the names of the plants and animals around us; so that we can begin to know what tradition we're part of.

Terry Tempest Williams

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world than the breathing respect that you carry wherever you go right now?

William Stafford

We still do not know one-thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us.

Albert Einstein

*Sunbeams are welcome and may be sent to The Sun, 107 North Roberson Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516. We're sorry, but we're unable to respond personally to your suggestions.*