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Title

Human universe

Author(s)

[Cox, Brian](#) ; [Cohen, Andrew](#)

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Abstract

Human life is a staggeringly strange thing. On the surface of a ball of rock falling around a nuclear fireball in the blackness of a vacuum the laws of nature conspired to create a naked ape that can look up at the stars and wonder where it came from. What is a human being? Objectively, nothing of consequence. Particles of dust in an infinite arena, present for an instant in eternity. Clumps of atoms in a universe with more galaxies than people. And yet a human being is necessary for the question itself to exist, and the presence of a question in the universe - any question - is the most wonderful thing. Questions require minds, and minds bring meaning. What is meaning? I don't know, except that the universe and every pointless speck inside it means something to me. I am astonished by the existence of a single atom, and find my civilisation to be an outrageous imprint on reality. I don't understand it. Nobody does, but it makes me smile. This book asks questions about our origins, our destiny, and our place in the universe. We have no right to expect answers; we have no right to even ask. But ask and wonder we do. Human Universe is first and foremost a love letter to humanity; a celebration of our outrageous fortune in existing at all. I have chosen to write my letter in the language of science, because there is no

better demonstration of our magnificent ascent from dust to paragon of animals than the exponentiation of knowledge generated by science. Two million years ago we were apemen. Now we are spacemen. That has happened, as far as we know, nowhere else. That is worth celebrating.

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