

# JOHN MCPHEE

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# ASSEMBLING CALIFORNIA

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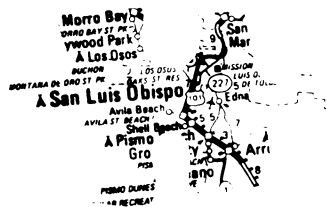
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**The Adventurous Gardener's Sourcebook of Rare and Unusual Plants**—William C. Mulligan. After attending a meeting of the Hortus Club of New York, where members spent some time trying to stump each other with "Name that species," Mulligan thought it might be interesting to bring together a variety of rare species from around the world in one volume. His overviews of uncommon annuals, perennials, bulbs, herbs, vegetables, trees, and shrubs offer advice on planting and climate and detail the plants' origins. Beautiful color photographs by Elvin McDonald accompany each specimen. The last chapter lists names and addresses for sources of these rare plants. S&S, 1992, 224 p., color photos, hardcover, \$40.00.

**Cranks, Quarks and the Cosmos: Writings on Science**—Jeremy Bernstein. William Shawn, late editor of the *NEW YORKER*, was in search of someone to explore and explain the scientific advances of the day. That was in 1960, and the man he chose for the job was Jeremy Bernstein. This volume, Bernstein's third collection of essays, contains some previously published in the *NEW YORKER* and several new works. It includes profiles of scientists Erwin Schrödinger, Sophia Kovalevsky, Edwin Land, and Stephen Jay Gould. These profiles are not only historical, but also theoretical, and they reveal the author's often witty and insightful viewpoints. Bernstein rightly professes that he directs his essays not necessarily toward scientists, but to anyone who is "intellectually curious." Basic, 1993, 220 p., hardcover, \$23.00.

**A Dog Is Listening: The Way Some of Our Closest Friends View Us**—Roger A. Caras. Even though it is believed to be the first domesticated animal in the world, the dog's behavior, senses, and interpretations of the world mostly elude humans. As the owner of more than 50 dogs during his lifetime, Caras has spent a great deal of time studying the behavior and physiology of his own animals and has made a career of writing about his perceptions. He details the world through a dog's eyes and examines the capabilities of the dog's senses, which can be sensitive enough to detect human epileptic seizures before they happen. The history and habits of canines through the ages are also discussed. Originally published in hardcover in 1992. Fireside, 1993, 239 p., b&w photos and illus., paperback, \$11.00.

**The Evolution of Useful Things: How Everyday Artifacts—From Forks and Pins to Paper Clips and Zippers—Came to Be As They Are**—Henry Petroski. On the heels of *The Pencil and To Engineer Is Human*, Petroski delivers another compelling history of many common items taken for granted. Learn about the evolution of forks, windshield wipers, and zippers and discover how the interplay between society and the successes and failures of technology combine to create inventions. Petroski also looks at design failures and improvements. Knopf, 1992, 288 p., illus., hardcover, \$24.00

**Fuzzy Logic: The Discovery of a Revolutionary Computer Technology and How It Is Changing Our World**—Daniel McNeill and Paul Freiberger. Applications of fuzzy logic include cars that park themselves and washing machines that independently choose water temperature and detergent amounts or, more fundamentally, computers that comprehend and respond. Here, beyond the applications of the mathematics of complexity, is an easily comprehensible look fuzzy logic, its concepts, and the implications of the theory. The authors provide a good overview of fuzzy logic's history, the pros and cons, and describes the possibilities yet to come and those already explored by the Japanese, who marketed the technology that American industrialists would not touch. S&S, 1993, 319 p., illus., hardcover, \$22.00.

**Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition**—Merlin Donald. This psychologist proposes that the human mind evolved in three stages: The first transition marked development of the ability to produce self-initiated, representational acts; the second was characterized by the development of speech; the third was a largely nonbiological transition represented by the emergence of external memory storage devices, such as graphic symbols. His well-referenced argument is written for lay readers. Originally published in hardcover in 1991. Harvard U Pr, 1993, 413 p., paperback, \$14.95.

**Quest for the African Dinosaurs: Ancient Roots of the Modern World**—Louis Jacobs. This account of the author's time in the country of Malawi details his amazing finds of 13 kinds of fossilized vertebrates, including two gigantic herbivorous sauropods believed to be 100 million years old. It also contains insights about the lives, customs, and culture of the people now dwelling in the land where these creatures once roamed. Jacobs, a paleontologist, not only explains how fossils are excavated and identified and the importance of paleontology, but also simultaneously chronicles life as it is today and as it was 100 million years ago. Villard Bks, 1993, 314 p., illus., hardcover, \$25.00

**Rocks and Minerals: The Visual Guide to More Than 500 Rocks and Minerals from Around the World**—Chris Pellant. Large color photographs of each specimen accompany definitions and descriptions, including cleavage, hardness, specific gravity, authenticity test procedures, and compositions. The introduction explains how rocks and minerals form, the difference between the two, and the tools needed for field work. Easily understood by the beginner and a great reference for the experienced geologist. Some 600 vivid color photographs illustrate this easy-to-use volume. Dorling Kindersley, 1992, 256 p., paperback, \$17.95.

**Searching for Certainty: What Scientists Can Know About the Future**—John L. Casti. Is it really possible to forecast the weather or to predict the behavior of the stock market? Do nuclear winter and the greenhouse effect truly threaten humanity? Casti, author of *Paradigms Lost*, explores the worlds of probability, chance, and chaos, demonstrating how a better understanding of these forces can improve forecasting methods, though we can never eliminate the risks and uncertainties of daily life. Originally published in hardcover in 1991. Morrow, 1992, 496 p., illus., paperback, \$12.00.