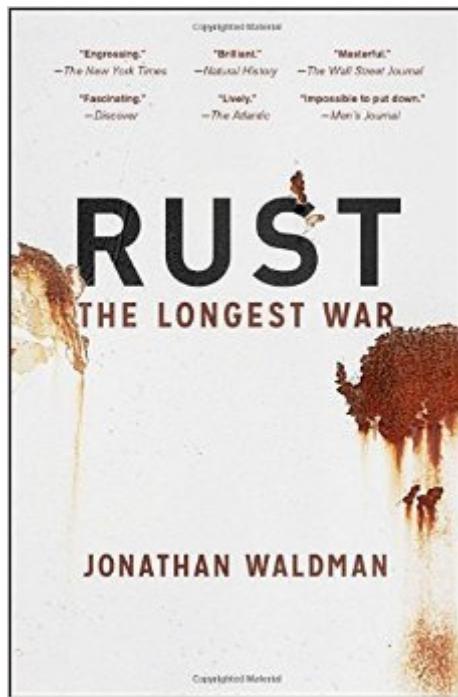


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Rust: The Longest War



Synopsis

Finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize ** A Wall Street Journal Best Book of the Year Rust has been called "the great destroyer," "the pervasive menace," and "the evil." This look at corrosion "its causes, its consequences, and especially the people devoted to combating it" is wide-ranging and consistently engrossing. (The New York Times). It is the hidden enemy, the one that challenges the very basis of civilization. This entropic menace destroys cars, fells bridges, sinks ships, sparks house fires, and nearly brought down the Statue of Liberty's torch. It is rust "and this book, full of wit and insight, disasters and triumphs" is its story.

Jonathan Waldman's first book is as obsessive as it is informative; he takes us deep into places and situations that are too often ignored or unknown. (The Washington Post). In Rust, Waldman travels from Key West to Prudhoe Bay, meeting people concerned with corrosion. He sneaks into an abandoned steelworks and nearly gets kicked out of Can School. He follows a high-tech robot through an arctic winter, hunting for rust in the Alaska pipeline. In Texas, he finds a corrosion engineer named Rusty, and in Colorado, he learns of the animosity between the galvanizing industry and the paint army. Along the way, Waldman recounts stories of flying pigs, Trekkies, rust boogers, and unlikely superheroes. The result is a man-versus-nature tale that's as fascinating as it is grand, illuminating a hidden phenomenon that shapes the modern world. Rust affects everything from the design of our currency to the composition of our tap water, and it will determine the legacy we leave on this planet. This exploration of corrosion, and the incredible lengths we go to fight it, is engrossing, brilliant. Waldman's gift for narrative nonfiction shines in every chapter. Watching things rust: who would have thought it could be so exciting. (Natural History).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rust the Longest War is a fascinating read. The writer presents an enthralling easy to read book on a topic that is typically approached as a nuisance in our daily lives. Many of the stories chosen in it start off in a compelling manner. By this he introduces the key players immediately, dives deep into their history, often sprinkled with witty humor that does make one chuckle, and wrap it up with some huge climax that ends up being resolved. The stories chosen have interesting setpieces that are familiar to most people, for example the Statue of Liberty and its rust situation, the history of Stainless Steel, the Trans Atlantic Pipeline, and shopping for Rust products at a local hardware store. Other less familiar topics include the governments role in rust as well as an avid photographer interested in it. I was wholly absorbed into this nonfiction book for the past three days as it was just a really interesting topic to me. Often structural problems are only focused on massive disasters due to oversight issues in building design or natural disasters, but never before have I encountered someone approaching it from a materials/chemical engineering standpoint of a nuisance that can eventually lead to a major problem. As I was reading it, I began to wish that I could switch fields and become a Corrosion Engineer to pursue and assist in a future of preventative measures against rust. I was inspired by many of the people chosen in the book, for example the remarkable integrity manager of Aleyska and the pipeline issues as they combated and tried to stay one step ahead of rust.

In a world where water and oxygen are common, most useful metals have long since been turned into oxides. We have built much of our technology by wresting these metals from the ground and refining them into their pure forms. Nature is relentlessly turning them back to the way they were. This engaging book chronicles our efforts to delay this process of re-oxydation. It's a battle we may be destined to lose, but we can delay the outcome. 'Rust' is a series of connected essays, some slight (and perhaps not always necessary), and some quite meaty. We begin with a political stunt: protesters scaling the statue of Liberty inadvertently reveal its rapid disintegration. The effort to restore this national icon is our entry into the world of corrosion. Among the best of these essays we meet a photographer who's built a notable portfolio from the crumbling Bethlehem steel plant. We meet a dedicated bureaucrat who uses a former Star Trek star to fight rust in ships, airplanes

and government structures of all sorts. We meet an engineering team pushing a 'pig': a structural probe that passes the entire length of the Alaska pipeline. We learn about galvanization, concrete, paints and coatings of all sorts. And there's not a dull moment. This is interesting stuff, written in an engaging hands-on style with a light touch. Corrosion affects us all. It costs us money and it can endanger our lives. Boring it's not. The most thought-provoking section is about cans. The food (or other goods) we place in cans is highly corrosive. We've learned to make cans that are lighter, stronger and more resistant to the things eating them away from the inside. But we also learn about the industry's dirty little secret.

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