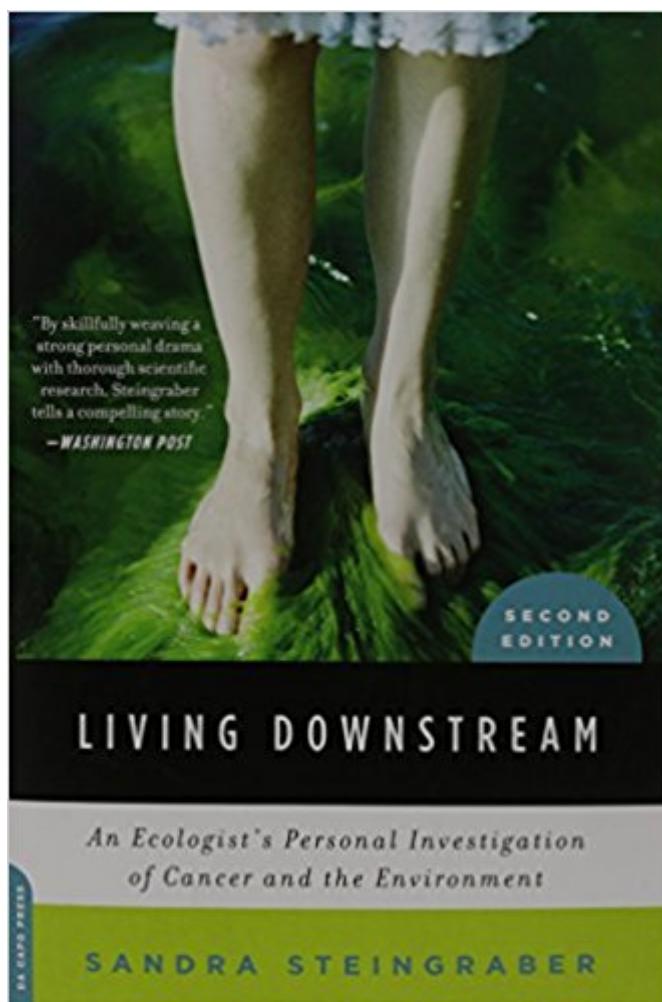


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Living Downstream: An Ecologist's Personal Investigation Of Cancer And The Environment



Synopsis

The first edition of Living Downstream is an exquisite blend of precise science and engaging narrative; it set a new standard for scientific writing. Poet, biologist, and cancer survivor, Steingraber uses all three kinds of experience to investigate the links between cancer and environmental toxins. The updated science in this exciting new edition strengthens the case for banning poisons now pervasive in our air, our food, and our bodies. Because synthetic chemicals linked to cancer come mostly from petroleum and coal, Steingraber shows that investing in green energy also helps prevent cancer. Saving the planet becomes a matter of saving ourselves and an issue of human rights. A documentary film based on the book will coincide with publication.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tuscon Citizen, 4/20/10 : In this second edition of a contemporary classic, Steingraber, a cancer survivor, biologist, and mother, builds a convincing case that many cancers can be prevented through environmental change. This spare, beautifully written book, originally published in 1997, presents a passionate, hopeful view, asserting that it's a good thing that the environment has such influence over cancer because, she insists, we can do something about it. •InfoDad.com, 4/29/10 : A book with a strong personal as well as societal orientation; The book's language is more plainspoken and thus more accessible than that of many other books warning of environmental hazards. •Energy Times, May 2010 : Beautifully written, Living Downstream blends [Steingraber's] own tale; a cancer

diagnosis at age 20; with an environmental detective story; If you've ever wondered about the link between pollution and cancer, read *Living Downstream*. •Ms., Spring 2010

In the film, as well as in her memoir of the same title, Steingraber moves to break the silence about chemical carcinogens by doing what Rachel Carson couldn't: use her own diagnosis to prove a scientific point. •TheSmartMama.com, 3/6/10 ;I thought I would talk about two of the books that most moved me to do more, to do better, to live a less toxic life. The first is Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and the second is Sandra Steingraber's incredibly powerful *Living Downstream: An Ecologist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*

Why these two books? Because they point out something very, very telling about the link between the lives we live and the cancers we get. •The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener, Spring 2010 ;Steingraber presents a clear, cogent and convincing case for the environmental roots of cancer. •Gaia Fitness blog, 3/11/10 ;Living Downstream is a very well-written book by Sandra Steingraber about the status of the world in which we live and it's affects on our lives. If you haven't read it, I highly recommend picking it up. It will likely give you a whole new perspective on the health of our world and us. •Ithaca Journal, 4/2/10 ;A part-memoir/part-scientific treatise about her battles with cancer, and the environmental roots of many cancers. •Ithaca Times, 3/31/10 ;Part analysis and presentation of available scientific information on the links between cancer and the environment and part memoir. •The Sun, January 2009 ;Steingraber's ability to meld literary prose with complex scientific information has made her a best-selling author. Like her hero Rachel Carson, whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* led to the ban on the pesticide DDT and kick-started the grass-roots environmental movement, Steingraber somehow finds language beautiful and compelling enough to seduce readers to sit through a science lesson. •The Ithacan, 2/12/10 ;Jeff Cohen, director of the Park Center for Independent Media, said that Steingraber's expertise in writing and biology as well as her personal experience created an unbelievable combination. ;What she's brilliant at;almost in a league of her own;is mixing personal passionate stories with totally comprehensive and accurate science, ; he said. ;It's not easy to do, it's not easy to make complex scientific issues interesting, but no one does it better than Sandra Steingraber. ; •

With this eloquent and impassioned book, biologist and poet Sandra Steingraber shoulders the legacy of Rachel Carson, producing a work about people and land, cancer and the environment, that is as accessible and invaluable as "Silent Spring--and potentially as historic. In her early

twenties, Steingraber was afflicted with cancer, a disease that has afflicted other members of her adoptive family. Writing from the twin perspectives of a survivor and a concerned scientist, she traces the high incidence of cancer and the terrifying concentrations of environmental toxins in her native rural Illinois. She goes on to show similar correlation in other communities, such as Boston and Long Island, and throughout the United States, where cancer rates have risen alarmingly since mid-century. At once a deeply moving personal document and a groundbreaking work of scientific detection, *Living Downstream* will be a touchstone for generations, reminding us of the intimate connection between the health of our bodies and the integrity of our air, land, and water. "By skillfully weaving a strong personal drama with thorough scientific research, Steingraber tells a compelling story....Well worth reading."--Washington Post

It is only rarely that I have purchased a book based completely on hearing of seeing an interview of the author. That is, however, the pathway that led me to the second edition of Sandra Steingraber's incredibly powerful narrative "Living Downstream". The interview, conducted by TV Host Bill Moyers, was aired this year just before Earth Day 2013, and in it Steingraber discussed her reasons for joining in the protest against "fracking" which led to being jailed. Since this is a second edition of a book published originally over a decade ago, there are of course numerous updates. All of them, however, simply emphasize that the facts and experiences the author shares are becoming increasingly critical. Steingraber, born and brought up on an Illinois farm, was diagnosed at the age of 20 with bladder cancer. She survived the initial bout, and became a PhD biologist. She has since dedicated her life to the environmental, genetic and biochemical study of cancer, and the resulting environmental activism that is focused in her books and civil actions such as the protest discussed in the Moyers interview. This particular narrative acknowledges the extreme impact that Rachel Carson's famous book "Silent Spring" had on Sandra's own developing activism and deep concern about the across-the-board impact of runaway pollution of all sorts on the health of our planet and the beings inhabiting it. Again, though, I find myself grateful for my own organic chemistry background, because a great deal of Steingraber's discussion goes into the somewhat technical details of the main carcinogenic pollutants that result from insecticide and herbicide use, chemical, paper and plastics manufacturing, fossil fuel extraction and burning, hazardous waste storage and trash incineration, and so on. She really leaves no stone unturned in developing the case that our total scientific approach has been completely backwards, based on completely useless attempts to identify individual carcinogenic effects of a few specific toxicants when in fact there are thousands of materials which not only may be harmful in and of themselves, but whose potential hazards multiply

exponentially when they are in concert with one another. The Afterword of Steingraber's extraordinarily important book, added of course to the Second Edition, focuses on the "Precautionary Principle" articulated by "an international group of scientists, lawyers, farmers, governmental officials, physicians, urban planners, environmental thinkers, and others" who gathered in 1998 at Frank Lloyd Wright's Wingspread house in Racine, Wisconsin. She cites in its entirety the Statement issued by this group, the last two paragraphs of which deserve to be printed in bold face across every argument about the pros and cons of environmental issues: "Therefore, it is necessary to implement the Precautionary Principle. When an activity raises threat of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof." The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action." Steingraber's extraordinary writing, as well as the activism with which she supports her thesis, bears powerful witness to the importance of the current issue of combatting with all our strength the insane rush of our profit-mongering economy to destroy our earth and all the life that lives upon it.

I enjoy all of Steingraber's books, and this one is no exception. I even have others who picked it up and flipped through it ask if they can borrow it. Very eye opening look at what is all around us and seemingly inescapable, yet it doesn't fill you with panic and alarm. I like to know the why's and how things work together, this explains it in an easy to understand and enjoyable storytelling fashion.

Before I read this book I had read and loved Silent Spring, and I always wondered what the current status of man-made chemicals was in our country. This book is a must-read for not just scientists, but anyone that could be affected by artificial chemicals (spoiler - it's everyone). It's shocking, distressing, extremely informative, and yet inspirational. One of the best qualities of this book is Steingraber's explanation for why determining the cause of cancer is so complex. Interweaving her own personal story only made this book more compelling.

I give Living Down Stream a 5 Star Review because this book address the issues of Toxic Chemical waste and the lack of information held undercover by our government and their friends in large corporations all around this planet. For those of us with cancer it is not hard to look back in our history and know the reason for our condition. I am soon to be 82 and trying to complete a Bucket

List Challenge of writing about Superfund Sites and Toxic Waste and their role in illness and death in this country. Dr Steingraber has a great style of written language for us to understand her struggle and cause. I will try to get the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida to have her speak in the near future. Bob Hallman

Steingraber has a wonderfully accessible writing style, and I was duly impressed by the way she was able to weave her personal life experience into a work about the environmental dangers we are facing today from our own excesses and lack of foresight. If you've ever seen her giving a presentation, you can see how she is like her writing. Natural, sweet yet carrying a hardcore edge of determination to get people to understand what is happening and what we can do to change things. Strangely enough, she makes me feel like it's possible if we but have the courage to use our common sense and stop pissing in our own backyards.

This book is an eye opener!!! I bought this along with Sandra's other two books and could not put them down. Packed with research, they've helped me navigate the complex subject of chemicals in our everyday environments. The effects are poorly understood but Sandra took on the task of wading through the research that has been done to discuss what is known about some, what isn't known about many and what to watch out for. Her books have helped me see things in a new way and confirmed a few of my suspicions about some consumer products that I will now stay away from. I highly recommend this book!!!! 5 stars !!!! Thank you Sandra for all of your hard work !PS This is a must read for those planning on having a baby in a couple years, are pregnant or have children.

Excellent, thank you.

This book is superb. Eloquent, warm, and informative, it is a worthy successor to Silent Spring. In just a few short pages, she summarizes what we know about the complex way that environmental pollutants can lead to cancer. It is both a heart tugging human story and a dazzling scientific adventure. My only gripe is the relatively brief foray into the politics of how pollution can and has been controlled. Most of what she reports, politically speaking, leaves one with a sense of despair. But perhaps, engendering hope in political change is the topic of another book...

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