



## Finding Beauty in a Broken World

By Terry Tempest Williams

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"Shards of glass can cut and wound or magnify a vision," Terry Tempest Williams tells us. "Mosaic celebrates brokenness and the beauty of being brought together." Ranging from Ravenna, Italy, where she learns the ancient art of mosaic, to the American Southwest, where she observes prairie dogs on the brink of extinction, to a small village in Rwanda where she joins genocide survivors to build a memorial from the rubble of war, Williams searches for meaning and community in an era of physical and spiritual fragmentation.

In her compassionate meditation on how nature and humans both collide and connect, Williams affirms a reverence for all life, and constructs a narrative of hopeful acts, taking that which is broken and creating something whole.

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## **Finding Beauty in a Broken World** By Terry Tempest Williams Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Williams (*The Open Space of Democracy*) travels to Ravenna, Italy, a town famous for its ancient mosaics, to learn a new language with my hands. Back home in Utah, Williams views the lives of a clan of endangered prairie dogs—a species essential to the ecological mosaic of the grasslands and the creators of the most sophisticated animal language decoded so far—through the rules of Italian mosaics. After intimate study of a prairie dog town at Bryce Canyon, her visit to 19th-century prairie dog specimens at the American Museum of Natural History segues, dreamlike, to a glass case of bones from the genocide in Rwanda, where Williams, overwhelmed by the death of her brother but knowing that her own spiritual evolution depended upon it, travels with artist Lily Yeh, who understands mosaic as taking that which is broken and creating something whole, to build a memorial with genocide survivors. The book, itself a skillful, nuanced mosaic (a conversation between what is broken... a conversation with light, with color, with form) uses this way of thinking about the world to convincingly make the connection between racism and sexism and sensitively argues for respect for life in all its myriad forms. (Oct.)

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Ecologist and writer Williams composes gracefully structured inquiries lush with unexpected and revelatory correspondences. In her most far-reaching and profoundly clarifying work to date, Williams considers the complex beauty of brokenness and the redemptive art of creating wholeness from fragments in a triptych of explorations. She begins in a mosaics workshop in Ravenna, Italy, and then brings the understanding gleaned from working with tesserae to her day-by-day observations of a beleaguered Utah prairie dog town. Williams marvels over this tunnel-building, highly communicative species and dubs them “prayer dogs” for their habit of standing and watching the sunset. Prairie dogs are crucial to the biodiversity of the grassland ecosystem, a living mosaic, yet they have been brutally massacred and driven to the brink of extinction. The story of her brother’s death entwines with Williams’ riveting account of her trip to Rwanda with visionary artist Lily Yeh to help create a genocide memorial. Brokenhearted in this land of bones and sorrow, Williams gathers shattering stories of death and resilience with the help of an extraordinary survivor who becomes her son, bearing witness to the horror of neighbors slaughtering neighbors in an attempted annihilation. Scientific in her exactitude, compassionate in her receptivity, and rhapsodic in expression, Williams has constructed a beautiful mosaic of loss and renewal that affirms, with striking lucidity, the need for reverence for all of life. --Donna Seaman

Review

“*Beauty* is Williams’s most important, most visceral, most demanding work. It should—no must—be read.”  
—*The Baltimore Sun*

“An amalgam of art, intellect, ecology and spirit. . . . Moving. . . . Terry Tempest Williams’s tools are words, ideas, sentences, fragments. . . . She uses them to dig into chosen corners of our world, and to illuminate some unknowns in flickering light.” —*The Washington Times*

“Sublime art. . . . An ambitious, even audacious, work.” —*The Denver Post*

“Intense, tough, profound. . . . This is an ambitious, risk-taking book that defies narrative conventions and avoids signpost solutions. Yet it also prompts reflection, inspiration, and awe. . . . A resounding hymn to creativity, community and engagement.” —*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“Williams is an ecosystem writer—concepts in her world are joined together by physical and spiritual threads... *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* offers its answers in fragments, pieces—as a mosaic must.... And yet there is always beauty.” —*Los Angeles Times*

“Wonderfully descriptive.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“In *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, Williams discovers her way along a path that, though at times obscured, leads to an unlikely yet inspired destination. . . . Will stir and reward.” —*The Oregonian*

“[*Finding Beauty in a Broken World*] explores deeper and more lyrical territory than other books along the same theme.” —*Arizona Daily Sun*

“Part postmodern memoir, part historical inquiry, part cultural critique and part spiritual meditation.” —*The Salt Lake Tribune*

“This is an essential book. . . . Nonfiction in [Williams’s] hands is literature.” —*The Bloomsbury Review*

“Terry Tempest Williams has half-broken my heart with everything she has written. . . . *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* will break your heart and put it back together again. It is as powerful in its experiment with form as it is in meaning.” —Bill McKibben

“Williams’s affecting prose, written with the skill and economy of a poet, enlivens [*Finding Beauty in a Broken World*].” —*Real Change*

“Poignant. . . . Filled with the emotional honesty and grace that we’ve come to expect from Williams.” —*High Country News*

“Wide awake, utterly open, completely feeling. . . . Williams presents us with an incredible achievement, a beautiful, terrible, wonderful, hopeful witness. The farthest thing from insanity I’ve read.” —Alexandra Fuller, author of *The Legend of Colton H. Bryant*

“Williams knows the earth and writes about it with native intimacy, no matter the setting or continent.” —*Metro Santa Cruz*

“Passionate. . . . [*Finding Beauty in a Broken World*] will not leave the reader with the thought ‘all is well’ but with the challenged belief that the beauty in all life can be—and must be—identified, believed in and brought forth.” —*New Thought*

“Behave with dignity. . . . Take the broken pieces you are given and find the new harmony that holds your future. When you finish *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* you will look at the landscape of your own life with new eyes.” —*Blogcritics magazine*

“How a book could be this gentle and this heartbreaking simultaneously I do not know. . . . Terry Tempest Williams leads us with methodical accuracy into the devastations and delights of now.” —John D’Agata, author of *Halls of Fame*

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