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## The Oldest Living Things in the World

*Rachel Sussman*

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**Rachel Sussman : The Oldest Living Things in the World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Oldest Living Things in the World*:

76 of 78 people found the following review helpful. Rachel Sussman goes on a quest, and it's beautiful. By David Dubbert I agree with the other two reviewers who gave this book five stars, but I don't think they touched on what was so meaningful to me about the book. The photography is good, even though many of the subjects don't really lend themselves to easy framing or notable settings - try photographing a fungus if you don't believe me. The theme is engaging as well, but what really made this book for me were the stories, thoughts, ponderings that accompany each chapter. Despite writing only about living things over 2,000 years old, Sussman has made this into an intensely personal book, part story, part quest, and all heart. Please read this, you'll be better for having done so. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful photos, and interesting text. By Jar Beautiful photos, and interesting text. My only complaint is that the print is small and very light, so it is difficult to read without really good light. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Chicago University Press volume marred by typos. By Juliana This book, which I bought at full price last year as a birthday present for my husband, has beautiful images and is based on an interesting concept. The writing, however, is rather disappointing, but the absolutely worse thing about the book is the astonishing number of typographical errors it contains. The publisher, CHICAGO UNIVERSITY PRESS, ought to be ashamed! Something went seriously wrong with the copyediting process here.

*The Oldest Living Things in the World* is an epic journey through time and space. Over the past decade, artist Rachel Sussman has researched, worked with biologists, and traveled the world to photograph continuously living organisms that are 2,000 years old and older. Spanning from Antarctica to Greenland, the Mojave Desert to the Australian Outback, the result is a stunning and unique visual collection of ancient organisms unlike anything that has been

created in the arts or sciences before, insightfully and accessibly narrated by Sussman along the way. Her work is both timeless and timely, and spans disciplines, continents, and millennia. It is underscored by an innate environmentalism and driven by Sussman's relentless curiosity. She begins at "year zero" and looks back from there, photographing the past in the present. These ancient individuals live on every continent and range from Greenlandic lichens that grow only one centimeter a century, to unique desert shrubs in Africa and South America, a predatory fungus in Oregon, Caribbean brain coral, to an 80,000-year-old colony of aspen in Utah. Sussman journeyed to Antarctica to photograph 5,500-year-old moss; Australia for stromatolites, primeval organisms tied to the oxygenation of the planet and the beginnings of life on Earth; and to Tasmania to capture a 43,600-year-old self-propagating shrub that's the last individual of its kind. Her portraits reveal the living history of our planet—and what we stand to lose in the future. These ancient survivors have weathered millennia in some of the world's most extreme environments, yet climate change and human encroachment have put many of them in danger. Two of her subjects have already met with untimely deaths by human hands. Alongside the photographs, Sussman relays fascinating—and sometimes harrowing—tales of her global adventures tracking down her subjects and shares insights from the scientists who research them. The oldest living things in the world are a record and celebration of the past, a call to action in the present, and a barometer of our future.

"As a kind of time-traveling expeditionist—a chrononaut—Sussman lets us drink from primeval wells. One of the great satisfactions of her book is that it allows us to peer at the almost eternal even as we're mired in a culture quick to praise the new and ephemeral."