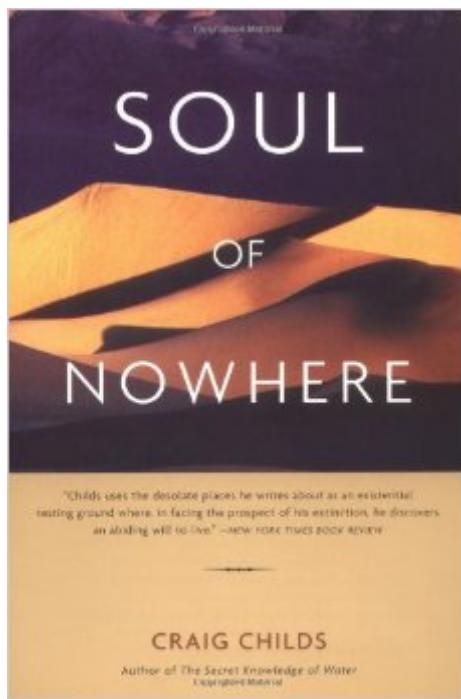


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Soul Of Nowhere



Synopsis

Childs answers the call of fierce places; the more desolate the landscape, the more passionately he is drawn to it. For Childs, these are the types of terrain that sharpen the senses, and demand a physicality the modern civilized world no longer requires. Includes black-and-white photos and pen-and-ink drawings by the author.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #543,469 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Ecosystems > Deserts #678 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Nature Writing & Essays

Customer Reviews

Craig Childs' writing is lyrical, personal, dramatic. He lives a life I wish I'd known I wanted to live when I was able to do so. Every one of his books is in my library. Last year I gave at least a half-dozen copies of 'The Secret Knowledge of Water' to friends and family. I look forward with keen anticipation to vicariously participating in his next set of adventures. So what happened this time? Craig finds and reveals to his readers what it is that he searches for out there in the desert wilderness. Maybe I didn't like so much introspection. I know more about his friends and their private lives than I want to know. And (I don't want to sound prudish...everything has its place) I really don't want to know the color of his wife Regan Choi's various body parts. That said, I must also say that I think it would be impossible to read anything by this author that does not inspire and impress. He is a gifted, very gifted, writer. And he is a crazy-man explorer of the wild places that are left in this world.

I heard about this book on NPR and living in the area decided to read it. I have read several books about this area and the desert, in general and this is one of the best. Up there with Edward Abbey's

books, but nowhere near as acidic. I have not yet read Child's other books, but he gives a great insight into the vastness of this area, both physically and mentally. From someone who came to this area from back east, I recommend this book to anyone who would wonder why people would want to come to this area to live and work.

I have a long-standing interest in the desert, having lived there for years and having done some explorations of my own. But never did I dream of taking the kind of trips Craig Childs recounts in his books. After reading *The Secret Knowledge of Water*, I eagerly dove into *Soul of Nowhere* expecting more spellbinding tales of survival on the margins of life. When I finished, I felt a little disappointed. Yes, there are some harrowing tales but there is also a little too much new-age prose and speculation for my taste. And I agree with the reviewer who complained of too much personal information. Still, *Soul of Nowhere* is overall an enjoyable read. My favorite chapters are *Passage*, *Labrynth*, and *Island*. It is in these three chapters that Childs' storytelling comes alive. Emotion leaps off the page, the reader feels at one with the narrator as he traverses this wild and dangerous country. Since I have hiked in some of this same country, albeit on marked trails, I could very nearly feel the trembling fear Childs felt when he lost momentum climbing the sandstone arch or when the rock crumbled beneath his boots as he decended the old Anasazi passage into the Grand Canyon, or when he found himself nearly lost in a thicket of cactus in the searing mid-day heat as his every avenue of escape seemed blocked. Childs has a definite talent for painting a life-like picture with his words, but he also has a talent for obscuring that picture with a lot of pseudo-intellectual mumbo-jumbo that gives the reader the impression that he is just trying too hard to write a "serious" book. Despite those drawbacks, Childs' otherworldly escapades are like a magnet to the adventurous spirit. I look forward to reading more of his work because he sure does seem to have an interesting lifestyle.

I read a lot of outdoor books, and I have to say this is one of the best that I have read in ages. Craig Childs lives, breaths, eats "wild." He writes with a clarity that makes me feel like I am alongside him -- and with a passion that is contagious. I am already planning a trip to visit some of the places he writes about. In the meantime, I'll nurse my desires by trying some of his other books.

Not my favorite Craig Childs book, but still a good read. If I were recommending a Crag Childs book to a first time reader, I would recommend "Finders Keepers", "House of Rain" or "The Animal Dialogues". As always, well written by the author but much of the action is in his head and heart.

Like other reviewers, my first exposure to Craig Childs was through his book *The Secret Knowledge of Water*, which is excellent. *Soul of Nowhere* doesn't move me as much as *Secret Knowledge*, but it's still a great read. The first book focused on his adventures looking for water sources in deserts of the southwest. In this book, the focus is more on finding archaeological relics in the deep desert. In some cases it's ruins, in others jars or petroglyphs. One can sense his desire to find evidence of and connect with long vanished people of the desert. I thought the inclusion of the other people was interesting. It places Childs in a social context - we encounter others who share his passion, and they're memorable characters. Other reviewers have said that Childs shares way too much here - it may not be to their taste, but it's not necessarily a bad thing. In any event, he shares some fascinating stories with us. I will definitely be reading more of his books.

I loved this book not so much because of the difficulties and delights Childs experienced in the wild but because of the journey of his spirit as he bonded with the wild places. I've read many books of true adventure written by people who were brave and sensitive and articulate, but this book goes far beyond anything I've come across. It speaks to my soul, so evocative, so intense that I feel I have journeyed with him. It's almost frightening to be drawn so far into the mind of another human being I don't even know. He is undoubtedly brave as a lion in his explorations, but his true bravery is revealed in the opening and dissection of his own soul. His eloquent words describe the feelings I could not articulate for myself in my travels in the southwest deserts. Now I know why I went back to them time after time.

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