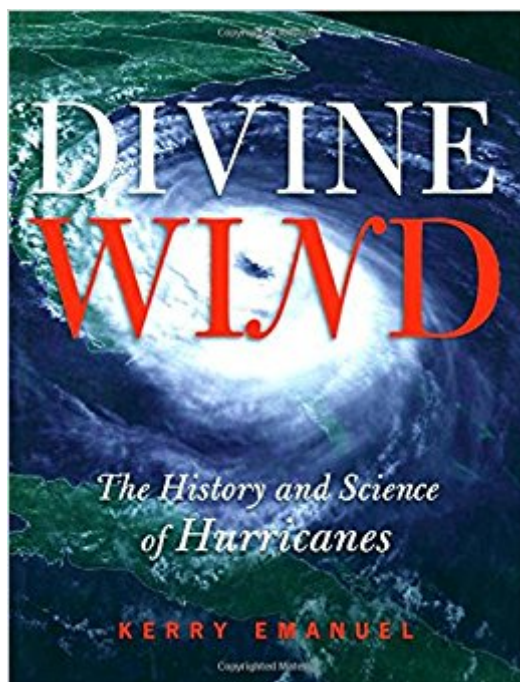


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# Divine Wind: The History And Science Of Hurricanes



## Synopsis

Imagine standing at the center of a Roman coliseum that is 20 miles across, with walls that soar 10 miles into the sky, towering walls with cascades of ice crystals falling along its brilliantly white surface. That's what it's like to stand in the eye of a hurricane. In *Divine Wind*, Kerry Emanuel, one of the world's leading authorities on hurricanes, gives us an engaging account of these awe-inspiring meteorological events, revealing how hurricanes and typhoons have literally altered human history, thwarting military incursions and changing the course of explorations. Offering an account of the physics of the tropical atmosphere, the author explains how such benign climates give rise to the most powerful storms in the world and tells what modern science has learned about them. Interwoven with this scientific account are descriptions of some of the most important hurricanes in history and relevant works of art and literature. For instance, he describes the 17th-century hurricane that likely inspired Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and that led to the British colonization of Bermuda. We also read about the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, by far the worst natural calamity in U.S. history, with a death toll between 8,000 and 12,000 that exceeded the San Francisco earthquake, the Johnstown Flood, and the Okeechobee Hurricane combined. Boasting more than one hundred color illustrations, from ultra-modern Doppler imagery to classic paintings by Winslow Homer, *Divine Wind* captures the profound effects that hurricanes have had on humanity. Its fascinating blend of history, science, and art will appeal to weather junkies, science buffs, and everyone who read Isaac's *Storm*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Named for the evil Caribbean deity Huracan, hurricanes are presented in verse, art, history, and science in this well-designed album by MIT professor Emanuel. His discussions encompass hurricane formation and dissolution, the uncertainty in predicting a storm's behavior, digressions into historical catastrophes, and the risk inherent in building along tropical coastlines. With exceptionally clear prose, Emanuel explains the atmospheric forces that restrict hurricanes to tropical latitudes and upends popular misconceptions about their frequency, noting that "the problem for research scientists is not why hurricanes develop, but why they hardly happen." Noting the genesis of many Atlantic hurricanes in easterly waves flowing off the Sahara Desert, Emanuel delves into the array of physical factors that impinge on the strength and direction of a tempest, points reinforced by a wealth of diagrams, satellite imagery, and a majestic photo-essay about flying into a hurricane. The science is reinforced by evocative artwork of storm-tossed ships and ravaged landscapes. A gripping popular treatment of peril, that will have great resonance in light of recent disasters. Gilbert Taylor

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"A book this magnificent can only be the result of years of both scientific study and the collection of a propos materials." --THE KEY REPORTER "Captures the awesome power of these monsters of the sea with the eye of an artist. The book includes more than 100 color illustrations, from hurricane tracking charts to classic paintings by Winslow Homer." --Good Housekeeping (Holiday Gift Pick) "An attractive package of history, science and art, handsomely printed with more than 100 color illustrations: a coffee-table book of substance.... Hurricane Katrina has reminded us how inadequately prepared we all are to face the Big One. Perusing Divine Wind is one of many things you can do to get ready." --Houston Chronicle "A fascinating tour of these tragic tempests.... Don't let the abundance of art, poetry and prose mislead--this is a serious volume too, ranging even to calculus for those willing to tackle a solid discussion of storm forecasting. The work can be understood without differential equations, but they are there for those who are interested, making this a well-balanced book for anyone with a desire to learn about hurricanes." --Associated Press "Emanuel is a perfect example of the blending of what the late, great English author C.P. Snow called 'The Two Cultures': Science and the Humanities. We need more writers with his graceful handling of literature and painting to bring scientific subject matter to life.... This is a perceptive and important book that will repay constant rereading. I can't recommend it too strongly.... Beautiful and gutsy." --Bluefield.net "The winds of nature's most powerful storm have altered history and blown through the human imagination for ages. Divine Wind puts the science of hurricanes alongside their cultural significance and in so doing makes for fascinating reading." --Dan

Rather, CBS News "An amazing read.... Emanuel offers a look at hurricanes not just as storms, but also as catalysts of change in our history, culture and geography."--Birmingham News "Connoisseurs of natural disasters will devour Divine Wind, but I hope it finds its way into numerous school libraries, too. The author's gifts as a science teacher combine with a cultivated taste in folklore, literature and art. Divine Wind carries across the infamous two-culture gap, allowing the humanities and sciences to enhance each other."--Cleveland Plain Dealer "The philosopher George Santayana observed that Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Kerry Emanuel reminds us of the tremendous impact that hurricanes have had on mankind since the thirteenth century. Today's coastal development along with hurricane amnesia places modern man on a collision course with catastrophe if the lessons of history are ignored."--Max Mayfield, Director, National Hurricane Center "This book is almost sui generis--in-depth science combined with fine narrative history and a real appreciation of folklore and art. Kerry Emanuel has gone about as deep into his subject as it's possible to go, and the result is mandatory reading for anyone who's got the Weather Channel preset on their remotes."--Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and *Wandering Home: A Long Walk Through America's Most Hopeful Region* "Until I read Divine Wind I had never found a book unique enough to contain the science and the history of hurricanes accented with the prose, songs and art about them. It provides fascinating accounts of notorious hurricanes that have changed history. With sound science it educates readers about how hurricanes form, how strong they can get, how they are tracked and what types of devastation they can cause. Both meteorologist and non-meteorologist will be captivated with it. I couldn't put the book down, anxious to absorb the next fascinating piece of hurricane history. Divine Wind is a must read for everyone interested in how hurricanes work, how they have molded coastal city history and how they have affected wars."--Dr. Steve Lyons, Hurricane Expert, The Weather Channel "Professor Emanuel has elegantly synthesized what is known about the science of hurricanes, their effect on history, and their influence on the arts. A 'whirl-de-force' of information, Divine Wind will be of great interest to audiences as diverse as policy planners and connoisseurs of natural phenomena. All 'eyes' should be on this book." --Howard B. Bluestein, University of Oklahoma, author of *Tornado Alley* "Emanuel interweaves scientific, historical, and cultural perspectives on these intense tropical cyclones."--Science

Being a Hurricane Katrina victim I found this book to be quite informative and interesting. The scientific aspect of it is a bit technical, but it related to my current Biology course and it's always nice to come across a real-world application of something you're studying in class. I've also discovered

some interesting facts regarding the history of hurricanes, although I was a little disappointed to find there was practically nothing about the Last Island Hurricane which, to my surprise, is a piece of history that has been largely ignored.

A must for any disaster volunteer nut like me for 45 years now.

As an original member of the 53rd Weather Recon. Sqdn of the USAAC and who has flown in B-17's & B-29's into Hurricanes in the early 1940's, I felt alive as I read Kerry's Divine Wind. I have complimented Kerry on this excellent work that covers History, Poetry and Science. This book is a must for everyone, particularly those living on the Eastern Seaboard of the USA. All of us living on Planet Earth need to know about the forces of nature and Divine Wind educates us about Hurricanes--Thanks to the expertise of Kerry Emanuel!

A classic storm book.

I had the good fortune to attend an event hosted by our local parish on climate change. The speaker was Professor Emanuel of MIT, who also wrote several books geared towards a public audience. I bought one book at that talk, which summarizes the main thrust of his talk about climate change. It is a short book, easy to read and focused on what research is available and how to compare the different results being published. I liked his talk and book so much that I was inspired to look him up on the internet and discovered this other book, Divine Wind. This book integrates his professional expertise in regards to hurricane formation with a rather poetic and historical approach to that subject. I am finding it a very interesting and informative book and highly recommend it to all. With climate change making itself felt more and more in changing and intensified weather conditions, it helps to understand the forces building in our atmosphere. God Bless,

Excellent science plus beautiful art and interesting poetry/prose. I was impressed and fascinated. I wish he could update it with Katrina and Rita.

While it is true that the rating system only goes to 5, this excellent book should get a 10!! I've read/own most of the hurricane books written and this is absolutely one of the best. The rare artwork, clear illustrations, historical treatment and cutting-edge science make this a book that should be in your library.

Thank you for selling this book. The book was as described.

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