



Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes

By Kerry Emanuel

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Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes By Kerry Emanuel

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 listen 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. *Divine Wind* captures the profound effects that hurricanes have had on humanity. It's fascinating blend of history, science, and art will appeal to weather junkies, science buffs, and everyone who read Isaac's *Storm*.

The accompanying reference guide is included as a PDF on this disc.

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Editorial Review

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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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Review

"Emanuel's work, inspired by these terrible storms, reaches a different, and thrilling, level of art." -- *Plain Dealer*, Karen Long, September 11, 2005

About the Author

Kerry Emanuel is Professor of Atmospheric Science in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Science at MIT. He is the author of "Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes and Atmospheric Convection." In May 2006 he was named one of Time magazine's "Time 100: The People Who Shape Our World." A Republican, he has made it clear that he disagrees with his party on climate change.

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