



Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash

By Elizabeth Royte

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Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash By Elizabeth Royte

Out of sight, out of mind ... Into our trash cans go dead batteries, dirty diapers, bygone burritos, broken toys, tattered socks, eight-track cassettes, scratched CDs, banana peels.... But where do these things go next? In a country that consumes and then casts off more and more, what actually happens to the things we throw away? In Garbage Land, acclaimed science writer Elizabeth Royte leads us on the wild adventure that begins once our trash hits the bottom of the can. Along the way, we meet an odor chemist who explains why trash smells so bad; garbage fairies and recycling gurus; neighbors of massive waste dumps; CEOs making fortunes by encouraging waste or encouraging recycling—often both at the same time; scientists trying to revive our most polluted places; fertilizer fanatics and adventurers who kayak amid sewage; paper people, steel people, aluminum people, plastic people, and even a guy who swears by recycling human waste. With a wink and a nod and a tightly clasped nose, Royte takes us on a bizarre cultural tour through slime, stench, and heat—in other words, through the back end of our ever-more supersized lifestyles. By showing us what happens to the things we've "disposed of," Royte reminds us that our decisions about consumption and waste have a very real impact—and that unless we undertake radical change, the garbage we create will always be with us: in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we consume. Radiantly written and boldly reported, Garbage Land is a brilliant exploration into the soiled heart of the American trash can.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The v-p of a New York City waste transfer station recommends, "You want to solve the garbage problem? Stop eating. Stop living." Indeed, to ponder waste disposal is to confront the very limits of our society. Where does it all go? Most of us are content to shrug off the details—as long as it's out of sight (and smell). Not so journalist Royte, whose book in some ways (including its title) echoes *Fast Food Nation*. That McDonald's is more immediately engaging a subject doesn't make, say, the massive, defunct Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island, N.Y., any less compelling. Royte nicely balances autobiographical elements (where does her Fig Newmans carton end up, anyway?), interviews and fieldwork with more technical research. Her method yields palpable benefits, not least a wealth of vivid refuse-related slang (maggots are known as disco rice). The details unavoidably venture into the nauseating on occasion, and some might find the chemistry of trichloroethane and other toxins a bit dull. As the NIMBY logic of waste disposal forces its practitioners into secrecy, Royte is obliged to engage in some entertainingly furtive skullduggery. All in all, this is a comprehensive, readable foray into a world we'd prefer not to heed—but should.

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From *The New Yorker*

Royte is a journalist with a nose for the "sordid afterlife" of trash, thoroughly at home in the putrid world of "Coney Island whitefish" (used condoms); "disco rice" (maggots); and—the darling of American consumer culture and the nemesis of waste activists—"Satan's resin" (plastic). Her book takes the form of a quest for the surprising final resting places of her yogurt cups, beer bottles, personal computer, and organic-fig-cookie packaging, and leads to an impassioned attack on overconsumption in America. If Royte does not quite demonstrate the muckraking skills of an Eric Schlosser in "Fast Food Nation," she does expose the feculent underside of our appetite for things and challenges her readers to disprove the resigned assessment of a former New York sanitation commissioner: "In the end, the garbage will win."

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From *Bookmarks Magazine*

Royte, a science writer, has written a disturbing and enlightening book about the 2 percent of our total waste stream that American households generate. Despite *Garbage Land*'s almost inevitable environmentalist sympathies, Royte does not offer up easy answers; in fact, she leaves readers sensing the futility of their own small efforts to recycle and reduce waste. Although Royte considers herself to be "in the middle of the argument," her liberal perspective might grate some readers. Even though portions of the book are overly technical or obviously biased, *Garbage Land* transcends the usual environmental audience to interest any reader.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Morrell:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity honestly,

that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day long to reading a reserve. The book Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book offers high quality.

Betty Abbott:

This Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash is great publication for you because the content that is full of information for you who always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it facts accurately using great arrange word or we can point out no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only offers you straight forward sentences but tricky core information with beautiful delivering sentences. Having Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash in your hand like having the world in your arm, data in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no publication that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen second right but this guide already do that. So , this is good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. hectic do you still doubt that?

Pedro Gonzales:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher in which print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you is Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That's why this book ideal all of you.

Gary Wells:

Is it you who having spare time then spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something new? This Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash can be the respond to, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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