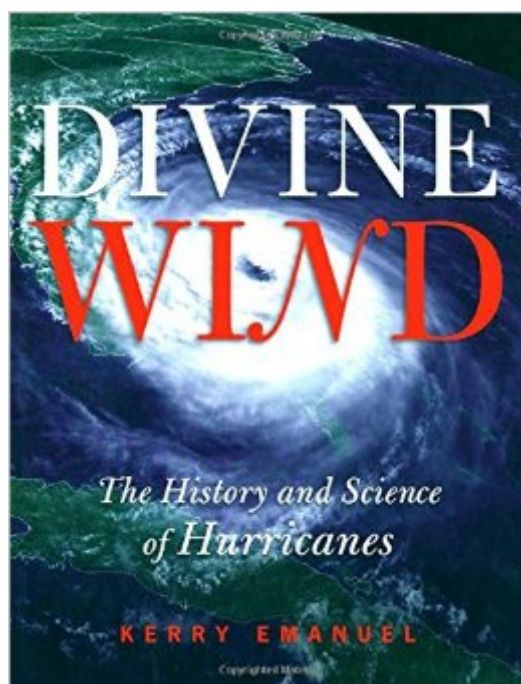


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# Divine Wind: The History And Science Of Hurricanes



## 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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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Rarely has a book come out in so timely a fashion. And to match the timeliness, rarely has a book had such an excellent match of science and history. The book gives a series of historical stories beginning with the Kamikaze storms that saved Japan from the Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281. He continues with numerous stories from the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico including incidents beginning with Columbus and continuing until recent times. Two particularly interesting chapters dealt with the 1945 typhoons that did more damage to Admiral Halsey's fleet than the Japanese, and then the chapter on flying airplanes into the eye of the storms. From the scientific standpoint he presents numerous chapters on every aspect from general descriptions to explaining terms used by the weather forecasters such as wind shear. At the conclusion you'll understand what's happening much better. And to prove just how good forecasting has become, the forecast at the beginning of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season 15 named tropical storms and eight hurricanes were predicted. By November 1, 2005 there have been 23 named storms...with 13 becoming hurricanes and 7 becoming major hurricanes.

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.

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!

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.

Both storm freaks and those seeking a general education about tropical storms will like this one. Parallel chapters look at storm surge, wind and rain on the one hand and historical hurricanes on the other. Especially good are the chapters on the Galveston storm and the Labor day hurricane of 1935. Good maps, photos, and color illustrations are liberally sprinkled throughout. I only wish it had been longer. While anyone can read this, it is certainly science oriented. At one point Emanuel describes an eighteen digit equation as 'simple'. Perhaps it is for him and his students. Fortunately, innumeracy kills none of the enjoyment or learning here.

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

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

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