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Revolutions That Made the Earth

By Chair in Climate Change/Earth Systems Science Tim Lenton,
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Anglia Andrew Watson

Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2013. Paperback.
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was born out of a few remarkable, near-catastrophic
revolutions, started by biological innovations and marked by
global environmental consequences. The revolutions have
certain features in common, such as an increase in the
complexity, energy utilization, and information processing
capabilities of life. This book describes these revolutions,
showing the fundamental interdependence of the evolution of
life and its non-living environment. We would not exist unless
these upheavals had led eventually to successful outcomes -
meaning that after each one, at length, a new stable world
emerged. The current planet-reshaping activities of our species
may be the start of another great Earth system revolution, but
there is no guarantee that this one will be successful. This book
explains what a successful transition through it might look like,
if we are wise enough to steer such a course. This book places
humanity in context as part of the Earth system, using a new
scientific synthesis to illustrate our debt to the deep past and
our potential for the future.



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