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Weird Life: The Search for Life That is Very, Very Different from Our Own

By David Toomey

WW Norton & Co. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, *Weird Life: The Search for Life That is Very, Very Different from Our Own*, David Toomey, In the 1980s and 1990s, in places where no one thought it possible, scientists found organisms they called extremophiles: lovers of extremes. There were bacteria in volcanic hydrothermal vents on the ocean floor, single-celled algae in Antarctic ice floes, and fungi in the cooling pools of nuclear reactors. But might there be life stranger than the most extreme extremophile? Might there be, somewhere, another kind of life entirely? In fact, scientists have hypothesized life that uses ammonia instead of water, life based not in carbon but in silicon, life driven by nuclear chemistry, and life whose very atoms are unlike those in life we know. In recent years some scientists have begun to look for the tamer versions of such life on rock surfaces in the American Southwest, in a "shadow biosphere" that might impinge on the known biosphere, and even deep within human tissue. They have also hypothesized more radical versions that might survive in Martian permafrost, in the cold ethylene lakes on Saturn's moon Titan, and in the hydrogen-rich atmospheres of giant...



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