



Dirt, David Vann, Text Publishing Company, 2012, 1921921617, 9781921921612, 240 pages. Galen and his mother survive on old family money - an inheritance that his Aunt Helen and 17-year-old cousin, Jennifer, are determined to get their hands on. A bulimic vegetarian who considers himself an old soul, Galen is a New Age believer on a warpath towards transcendence, practising meditation, firewalking, etheric surgery and authentic movement. He yearns for transformation: to free himself from the corporeal, to be as weightless as air, to walk on water. But he's powerless to stop the manic binges that overtake him, leading him to gorge on meat and other forbidden desires, including sex. When the family takes a trip to an old cabin in the Sierras, near South Lake Tahoe, tensions come to a climax. Caught in a compromising position, Galen will discover the shocking truth of just how far he will go to attain the transcendence he craves. David Vann is an internationally bestselling author published in seventeen languages. He is the winner of fourteen prizes, including France's Prix Medicis Etranger 2010, Spain's Premi Llibreter 2011, the Grace Paley Prize 2007, a California Book Award 2008, the AWP Nonfiction Award 2009, and France's L'Express readers' prize 2010. His books - Legend of a Suicide, Caribou Island, A Mile Down, and Last Day On Earth - have appeared on forty-five Best Books of the Year lists in ten countries, and he's been shortlisted for the Flaherty-Dunnann First Novel Prize and the Sunday Times Short Story Award, and longlisted for the Story Prize. A current Guggenheim fellow and former Stegner fellow and NEA fellow, he is a professor at the University of San Francisco and has written for the Atlantic Monthly, Esquire, Outside, Men's Health, Men's Journal, Sunday Times, Observer, and many others and appeared in documentaries with the BBC, NOVA, National Geographic, and CNN. [textpublishing.com.au](http://textpublishing.com.au) 'A piece of relentless, heartbreaking brilliance that bears comparison with Cormac McCarthy's The Road.' Australian 'This is a novel of violence, destruction and ruin. There is no salvation. And yet Mr Vann's soaring writing carries it forward - a reminder of the beauty that can grace even the beastliest things.' Economist 'Vann really is a brilliant documentarian of folie de grandeur. From this point on, Dirt is unputdownable, thundering at breathtaking speed towards the shocking climactic act. Brilliantly chilling.' Evening Standard 'Another dispatch from dysfunctional suburbia by one of the US's hottest writers...A morbid fascination with the family's eye-poppingly vicious interactions keeps you turning the pages...It's hard to forget.' Metro 'David Vann has a talent for being able to pack a lot into very few words - and to make them all effective and forceful. ...Compelling. If I start reading Vann I know that I'm going to have to keep reading no matter how painful, how distressing the story...What marks this book out as being something special is the forensic examination of the tipping point at which a disturbed mind, an unfocused mind tumbles into madness.' The Bookbag.

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