



The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future

William Kotke

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In spite of its tough message, there is much compassion and humanity in *The Final Empire*. Right away as you begin to read this work, you sense increasingly the grand perspective in Kotke's words. He is not speaking of anarchy. He is offering vital common sense. It's just that his meaning is so unavoidably political. And so much against what we have been taught all our lives: The materialistic values of civilization teach us that the accumulation of wealth is progress. The material wealth of the civilization is derived from the death of the earth, the soils, the forests, the fish stocks, the 'free resources' of flora and fauna. The ultimate end of this is for all human species to live in giant parasitical cities of cement and metal while surrounded by deserts of exhausted soils. The simple polar opposites are: the richness and wealth of the natural life of earth versus the material wealth of people living out their lives in artificial environments. This amounts to a direct challenge to humankind. A demand for radical change. A re-envisioning of our part in the community of life and the precepts of individuality. And Mr. Kotke provides a strong argument for this case. He traces the environmental scars of civilization through the ages. Empire after empire, desertification of the top soil winds its way around the globe in an erosive helix from China to India to Mesopotamia to Italy to North America. As radical as it may seem at first glance, *The Final Empire* is a necessary and sensible primer for the recovery of the planet. It blends a critical statistical analysis of our deteriorating environment with a positivism of hope for a post-empire age and a new whole-human relation to the living community of Earth.

Dan Armstrong, Author of the Novels, *Prairie Fire* and *Taming the Dragon*

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