A celebrated storyteller-poet-naturalist explores a year of dawns in her most personal book to date. In an eye-opening sequence of personal meditations through the cycle of seasons, Diane Ackerman awakens us to the world at dawn—drawing on sources as diverse as meteorology, world religion, etymology, art history, poetry, organic farming, and beekeeping. As a patient and learned observer of animal and human physiology and behavior, she introduces us to varieties of bird music and other signs of avian intelligence, while she herself “migrates” from winter in Florida to spring, summer, and fall in upstate New York. Humans might luxuriate in the idea of being “in” nature, Ackerman points out, but we often forget that we are nature—for “no facet of nature is as unlikely as we, the tiny bipeds with the giant dreams.” Joining science’s devotion to detail with religion’s appreciation of the sublime, Dawn Light is an impassioned celebration of the miracles of evolution—especially human consciousness of our numbered days on a turning earth. 8 pages of color.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
"Dawn Light" is a new work by storyteller/poet/naturalist Diane Ackerman, in which she, natch, considers the world around her at dawn. It is chock full of close personal observation, research, and learning and shows a distinct resemblance to her previous best-selling A Natural History of the Senses. It also, in its level of detail, animal-loving spirit, and lushly-written prose, shows its kinship to her recent New York Times best-seller, The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story.

Ackerman gives us a year of dawns, as she considers that time of day at her homes in Palm Beach, Florida, and Ithaca, New York. We get her
wonderfully fresh, sympathetic observations of the birds that sing dawn in, and all the other animals -- including us humans, she never lets us forget -- that then begin their days. She gives us a consideration of astronomy, particularly as it relates to dawn. But she does much more, roaming the current-day world, going as far as Australia's aborigines and India's holy rivers, to show us the dawn beliefs and rituals of other societies. She tells us that Jewish liturgy includes a list of blessings to be said first thing in the morning, one of them being thanks to God for giving us roosters to crow in dawn.

The writer also goes backwards in time to the ancients, giving us a good picture of the learned Greek scientist Archimedes; explaining how the works of the well-known lesbian poet Sapho came to be saved in that wonder of the ancient world, the library at Alexandria, Egypt: then came to be lost, and partially found again. She explains long-ago Celtic, Nordic and Roman dawn legends and myths. Yet, although her mind is evidently full of facts, inclined to poetry, and interested in everything she sees around her and learns, she never overwhelms us, but wears all this information lightly.

Well, let me moderate that previous statement slightly. Occasionally, very occasionally, she gets a little too intense for me; but I am not generally one to leap out of a warm bed of a cold winter's morning, not if I don't have to. Besides, her exploration and capture of winter's dawn, in upstate New York, at Ithaca, is thrilling; especially to me, who went to Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, and spent four years in that enchanted kingdom of the Finger Lakes. Many years ago now, I interviewed Dame Iris Murdoch, the outstanding Anglo-Irish writer, whose first published novel, Under the Net (Vintage Classics), was selected in 2001 by the editorial board of the American Modern Library as one of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. She asked where I'd gone to university, and I replied Cornell. She said she'd visited there, while working at Yale University, and it was "beautiful and mountainy," wasn't it. It surely was, and is. At any rate, I can remember one particular winter morning so clear and sharp that I did go out to clamber around the gorges, coming back only to find it was, to me, an astonishing minus 5 degrees Fahrenheit out. I'd give the writer an extra star for this book if I could, but, unfortunately, five's the limit.

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Dawn Light: Dancing with Cranes and Other Ways to Start the Day by Diane Ackerman - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!