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Review of Wilkinson, Matt. Restless Creatures: the Story of Life in Ten Movements

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Wilkinson, Matt. *Restless Creatures : the Story of Life in Ten Movements*. NY : Basic Books, 2016

Tracing the evolutionary history of locomotion from single celled animals to humans, Wilkinson (Zoology, Univ. of Cambridge) demonstrates how the need to move has shaped the living world. His broad definition of locomotion includes the dispersal of seeds and pollen by plants and closing of Venus flytrap leaves, and the use of muscle contractions by sponges and jellyfish to move in the marine environment. The survival of any creature depends upon locomotion and the physical laws that govern it. The author describes human gait in comparison to that of chimpanzees, explains why humans cannot fly, and discusses the evolution of the backbone which makes swimming efficient. Wilkinson's Ph.D. research on the subject of pterodactyl flight gives him insight into the evolutionary path from dinosaurs to birds. He concludes with a discussion of the deleterious effects of both cars and mass transit on the human ability to walk. VERDICT: Illustrated with drawings and photographs, this book is aimed at undergraduates and the general reader with some background in biology. While Wallace Arthur's "Evolving Animals : the Story of our Kingdom" (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014) is wider in scope, this work deeply investigates the importance of locomotion to all life forms. A 15 page bibliography and index are included.