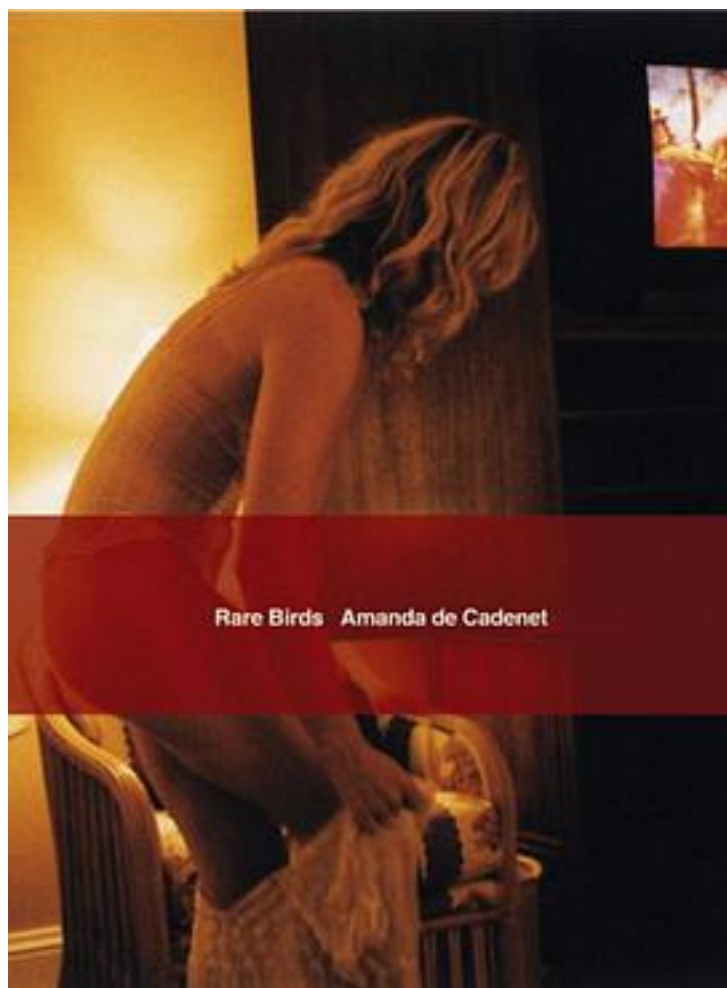


# Rare Birds



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著者:Bessie, Dan

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What does a writer do when he's got a family that includes a blacklisted member of the Hollywood Ten, the brains behind Tony the Tiger and the Marlboro Man, a trio

of gay puppeteers, the world's leading birdwatcher, sixties hippies, a Dutch stowaway who served in an all-black regiment during the American Civil War, a mother of unusual compassion and understanding, and a convicted murderer? He tells their stories and secrets, illuminating 150 years of American life along the way. Dan Bessie begins the journey through his family history with his great-grandfather in the cargo hold of a ship bound for New York on the storm-tossed Atlantic. What follows are stories of his grandfather's various entrepreneurial schemes (including a folding butter box business), a grandmother who was voted "New York's Prettiest Shop Girl" (and who resisted the recruitment efforts of various city madams), and his uncle Harry's Turnabout Theater in Los Angeles (a renowned puppet theater drawing patrons as diverse as Shirley Temple, Ray Bradbury, and Albert Einstein). Through inherited journals and literary effects, Bessie comes to a new understanding of his father, Alvah. An actor and writer, he fought in the Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. When he returned to the States, he headed to the Warner backlots to begin a screenwriting career. But as congress began investigating radicals in the film industry, Alvah was blacklisted for his Communist sympathies and was soon sent to jail as one of the Hollywood Ten. His grandmother's cousin, Sidney Lenz, wrote *Lenz on Bridge*, a classic guide to the game of contract bridge. Bessie describes what was billed as the Bridge Battle of the Century, a 1931 match between Lenz and an upstart opponent that was covered by journalists from all over the world. Bessie's brother-in-law Wes Wilson designed rock and roll posters for the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco during the 1960s, living a counterculture existence vastly different from the bridge-mad Depression Era. Cousin Michael was heir to the compulsive storytelling characterizing many of the Bessies. He found his niche in publishing, co-founding the Atheneum Press and shaping books by people such as Anwar Sadat, Edward Albee, and Aldous Huxley. With an equally impressive career, Uncle Leo built the country's fifth largest advertising agency. Working 364 days a year, he lived for the passion of putting words and images together. A passion of a different sort led cousin Phoebe Snetsinger to travel from Webster Groves, Missouri, to the far corners of Africa and Asia. The world's leading birder, she sighted 8,400 different birds—nearly 85 percent of the species known to exist. An extraordinary strain of creativity runs through the Bessie and Burnett clans, and *Rare Birds* celebrates the colorful diversity of a remarkable and accomplished family. While their choices and professions run the gamut of the American experience in the twentieth century, the history of the nation can be traced in these people's lives. Bessie's passionate birds of a feather gather to sing their unique song across decades and generations.

作者介绍:

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