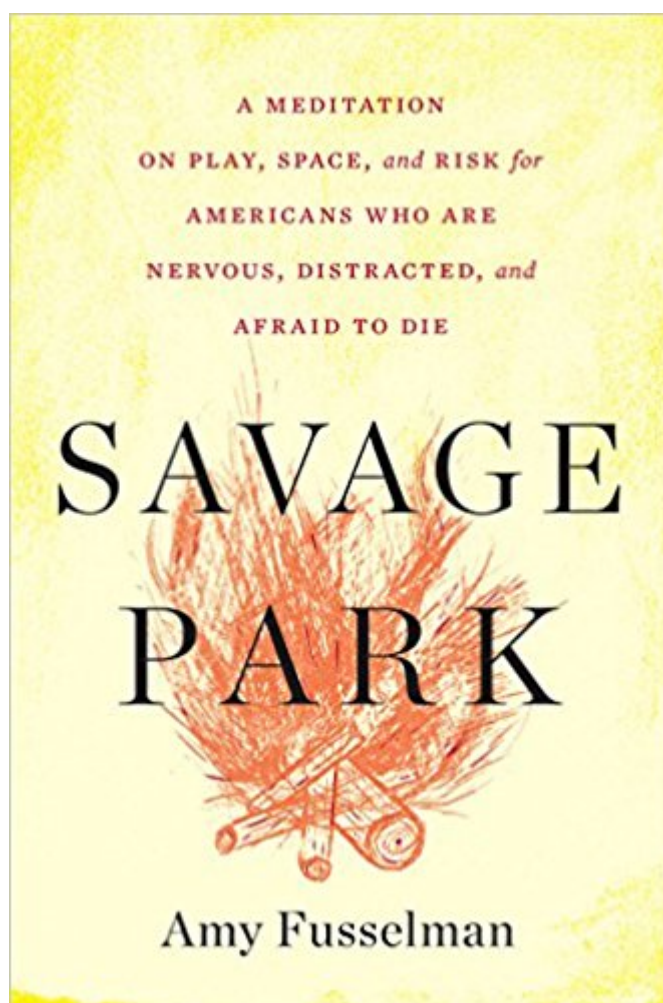


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# Savage Park: A Meditation On Play, Space, And Risk For Americans Who Are Nervous, Distracted, And Afraid To Die



## Synopsis

Part memoir, part manifesto, this exploration of the underside of America's obsession with safety is prompted by the author's visit to a thrillingly alarming adventure playground in Tokyo. "How fully can the world be explored," asks Amy Fusselman " . . . if you are also trying not to die?" On a visit to Tokyo with her family, Fusselman stumbles on Hanegi playpark, where children are sawing wood, hammering nails, stringing hammocks to trees, building open fires. When she returns to New York, her conceptions of space, risk, and fear are completely changed. Fusselman invites us along on her tightrope-walking expeditions with Philippe Petit and late night adventures with the Tokyo park-workers, showing that when we deprive ourselves, and our children, of the experience of taking risks in space, we make them less safe, not more so. *Savage Park* is a fresh, poetic reconsideration of behaviors in our culture that "in the guise of protecting us" make us numb and encourage us to sleepwalk through our lives. We babyproof our homes; plug our ears to our devices while walking through the city. What would happen if we exposed ourselves, if "like the children at Hanegi park" we put ourselves in situations that require true vigilance? Readers of Rebecca Solnit and Cheryl Strayed will delight in the revelations in *Savage Park*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[View larger](#) Amy Fusselman on the inspiration for *Savage Park* On a visit to Tokyo with my husband and two sons, I was introduced to an adventure playground that confounded, excited, and surprised me. Upon our return home to New York City, I began thinking and reading about play, space, risk, and why we make playgrounds that look the way they do. The result of this process is

my book, *Savage Park*.

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Photo credits: Amy Fusselman and

Koji Takiguchi

Advance Praise for *Savage Park*: "Amy Fusselman writes with a unique depth of feeling, and *Savage Park* is a fascinating and daresay essential meditation on childhood, parenthood, and the importance of wild spaces for those wild creatures known as kids." — Dave Eggers "In this unusually refreshing meditation (which reads like a novel), we are given a tour of the space around and within us. With poetic efficiency Amy Fusselman reveals what makes us savage or not; why secret, wild spaces are essential; and, why playing should be taken seriously." — Philippe Petit, *High Wire Artist* — I yield to no one in my admiration for Amy Fusselman's work. Her new book, *Savage Park*, further explores with astonishing power, eloquence, precision, and acid humor her obsessive, necessary theme: the gossamer-thin separation between life and death. — David Shields, author of *Reality Hunger* "Savage Park is a deeply felt and brilliant evocation of one of motherhood's most pressing concerns: safety. In asking whether we can live fully--or parent successfully--when we're governed by an unacknowledged fear of death, Fusselman jumps high above the tedious Mommy Wars, elevating crucial questions of parenting to a profound philosophical level. Here's hoping more writer-mothers follow her lead." --Darcey Steinke, author of *Sister Golden Hair* "Amy Fusselman helps us see, and feel, what matters most about being alive. This is a daring and artful and exhilarating book. The ideas are bracing; the stories are irresistible; the prose sets a new standard for non-fiction literature." — Joshua Wolf Shenk, author of *Powers of Two* — "Fusselman's mind is a playground in and of itself. [Her] prose has a spare, clean elegance that can carry a knife-like precision." — San Francisco Chronicle — "This brief, passionate book never fails to engage." — Kate Tuttle, *The Boston Globe*

HMH hardcover, 2015; previous ISBN 978-0-544-30300-3 --This text refers to the Digital edition.

I loved *Savage Park*. No wonder. Fusselman's topics of risk, playgrounds and creativity matched my quest to create a playground for adults with creativity workshops. What makes the book exceptional is that these topics are addressed from a very personal and honest viewpoint. Writings on these topics are usually devoid of intimacy, let alone questioning so they result in empty distortions. These topics deserve close observation. Creativity is messy work. I have been an artist

and teacher all my life. When I taught mind-mapping I would show the professionally illustrated diagrams from the how-to books to show the students what it wasn't. In my class the results were a tangle of overlapping words and lines. Fusselman is hunting for the real. It's worthwhile to follow along with her and see what you learn. Why is her message important? Seeing, feeling, making and exploring things with openness and joy makes life engaging. Why miss the fun? Anne Richter

An inspiring read from cover to cover, thoughtful and vivid. SAVAGE PARK is a necessary addition to the library of anyone pondering play, playwork, working to nurture children's playful lives or simply thinking critically about the built world around us. I've added Amy Fusselman to my list of people who "get it" and return to the book frequently. Five stars.

Meditative, beautiful, and very thought provoking. I really enjoyed it. Her writing style is gentle and meandering in a very good way - the narrative moves between times and explores the ideas of space, time, death, and danger. It was a unique and refreshing way to write a book about children's play.

If Oprah still had her favorite things this book would be one for sure. I loved it for its beautiful writing, I loved it for giving me new ideas of what play is. And for its pure poetry, "Shall we go," floats through my mind day after day.

This book was interesting and revealing! I was born in Japan of a Japanese mom and American dad and sometimes wonder about cultural brain wiring. We have attitudes regarding risk that are innate, it seems. I found the book to be illuminating. I enjoyed it!

Amy Fusselman takes us for a gentle yet powerful walk through unexpected spaces, reframing how we think of and inhabit our everyday lives. In a poetic prose, she invites us to explore the world, playing at our own risk.

A contrarian look at the role of play with kids and is definitely an "anti-helicoptering parent" guide!

It's wonderful and important in its own special quiet way.

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