



# Heartsblood: Hunting, Spirituality, and Wildness in America

*David Petersen*

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In this age of boneless chicken breasts and drive-thru Happy Meals, why do some humans still hunt? Is it a visceral, tooth-and-claw hunger for meat, tied in a primitive savage knot with an innate lust for violence and domination? Or might it be a hunger of an entirely different sort? And if so, what?.

In *Heartsblood*, writer and veteran outdoorsman David Petersen offers a thoroughly informed, unsettlingly honest, intensely personal exploration of this increasingly contentious issue. He draws clear distinctions between true hunting and contemporary hunter behavior, praising what's right about the former and damning what's wrong with the latter, as he seeks to render the terms "hunter" and "antihunter" palpable-to put faces on these much-used but little-understood generalizations.

Petersen looks at the evolutionary roots and philosophical underpinnings of hunting, and offers a compelling portrait of an "animistic archetype"-a paradigm for the true hunter/conservationist-that is in sharp contrast with today's technology-laden, gadget-loving sport hunter. He considers the social and ecological implications of trophy hunting and deconstructs the "Bambi syndrome"-the oversentimentalization of young animals by most Americans, including many hunters. He also explores gender issues in hunting, and highlights important qualities that are largely missing in today's mentoring of tomorrow's hunters.

Throughout, Petersen emphasizes the fundamental spiritual aspects of hunting, and offers numerous finely drawn and compelling first-person hunting narratives that explain and provide substance to his arguments. Along with that personal experience, he draws on philosophy, evolutionary theory, biology, and empirical studies to create an engaging and literate work that offers a unique look at hunting, hunters, and, in the words of the author, "life's basic truths."

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