



# Timothy; or, Notes of an Abject Reptile

*Verlyn Klinkenborg*

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Few writers have attempted to explore the natural history of a particular animal by adopting the animal's own sensibility. But Verlyn Klinkenborg—with his deeply empathetic relation to the world around him—has done just that, and done it brilliantly, in *Timothy*.

This is the story of a tortoise whose real life was observed by the eighteenth-century English curate Gilbert White, author of *The Natural History of Selborne*. For thirteen years, Timothy lived in White's garden—making an occasional appearance in his journals. Now Klinkenborg gives the tortoise an unforgettable voice and powers of observation as keen as those of any bipedal naturalist. The happy result: Timothy regales us with an account of a gracefully paced (no unseemly hurry!) eight-day adventure outside the gate (“How do I escape from that nimble-tongued, fleet-footed race? . . . Walk through the holes in their attention”) and entertains us with shrewd observations about the curious habits and habitations of humanity. “To humans,” Timothy says with doleful understanding, “in and out are matters of life and death. Not to me. Warm earth waits just beneath me. . . . The humans' own heat keeps them from sensing it.”

Wry and wise, unexpectedly moving, and enchanting at every—careful—turn, *Timothy* will surprise and delight readers of all ages.

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