

John McPhee quotation in Five Billion Years of Solitude

**The author John McPhee has devised a more visceral visualization: Throw your arms out wide to represent the span of all Earthly time. Our planet forms at the tip of your left hand's longest finger, and the Cambrian begins at the wrist of your right arm. The rise of complex life lies in the palm of your right hand, and, if you choose, you can wipe out all of human history "in a single stroke with a medium-grained nail file."**

Billings, Lee. Five Billion Years of Solitude (p. 145). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.