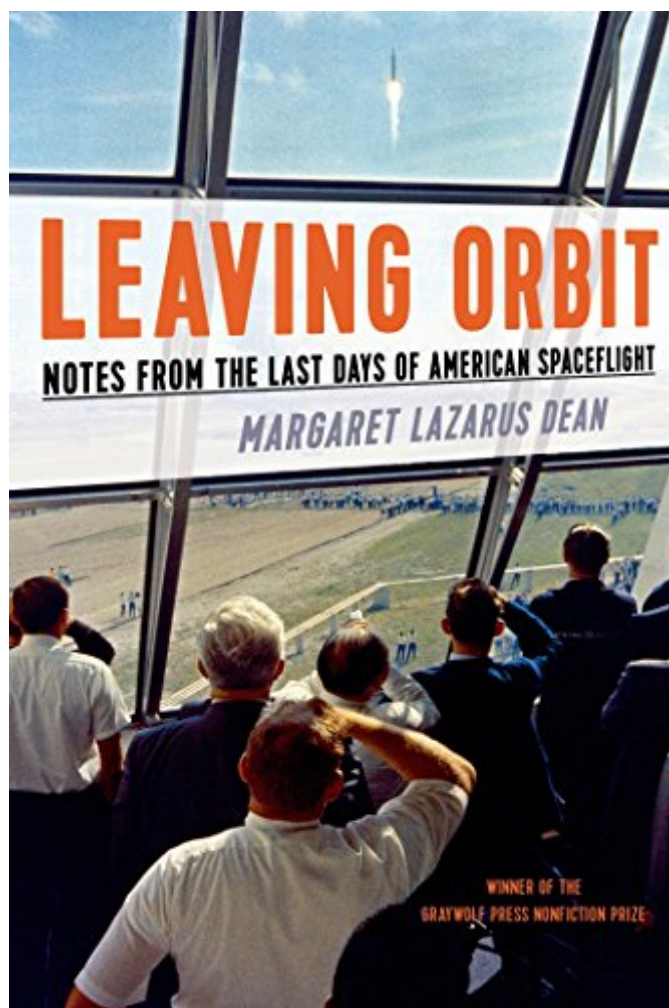


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# Leaving Orbit: Notes From The Last Days Of American Spaceflight



## Synopsis

Winner of the Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize, a breathtaking elegy to the waning days of human spaceflight as we have known it. In the 1960s, humans took their first steps away from Earth, and for a time our possibilities in space seemed endless. But in a time of austerity and in the wake of high-profile disasters like Challenger, that dream has ended. In early 2011, Margaret Lazarus Dean traveled to Cape Canaveral for NASA's last three space shuttle launches in order to bear witness to the end of an era. With Dean as our guide to Florida's Space Coast and to the history of NASA, *Leaving Orbit* takes the measure of what American spaceflight has achieved while reckoning with its earlier witnesses, such as Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, and Oriana Fallaci. Along the way, Dean meets NASA workers, astronauts, and space fans, gathering possible answers to the question: What does it mean that a spacefaring nation won't be going to space anymore?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The author is very pretentious and judge mental. I absolutely loved the content about shuttle and the last three launches. However, by the end of the book, the book became more about the author and

unimportant information that includes song lyrics, her social media life, and how she views certain characters she met (All in negative viewpoints except a select few). I wished I could rate this higher because I did love some of the content, but her structure of the book was all over the place and seemed to have little connections from one page to the next other than being chronological.

I greatly enjoyed this book, it provided a nice inside look of the chronicles of the last three shuttle flight. I would have enjoyed picture, it would have enhanced the reading experience.

This is the worst book about the USA space program I've ever read. The author repeats herself constantly. There is no story here.

Brave...Visceral...Insightful...Not since Chaikin's A MAN ON THE MOON or Burrows's THIS NEW OCEAN has the history of space flight been made so accessible to so many...the first space history for the modern generation. Dean combines her own personal experiences with the space program with an interesting and oftentimes insightful look at a marvelous era in history. Manned spaceflight has been so many things to so many people that it's often hard to quantify. Even those who boast that there are "better days" ahead for NASA worry secretly that the agency's best days are already behind it. Her sense of dread, despair, or even disgust at times, for the loss of one of the few remaining sources of American pride and inspiration is visceral. Any argument for shuttering the shuttle program without a replacement spacecraft is shortsighted at best, disingenuous at worst -- and she doesn't shy away from saying so! Whether you remember exactly where you were when the Eagle landed, or are perhaps unsure who the first man to walk on the moon was, you will find something interesting, something new, something exciting in Dean's brave accounting of the end of an era.

Good book. Wanders around a bit.

Leaving Orbit is smart, funny, heart-wrenching, and beautifully told. I teared up on four separate times reading this book and I'm not the kind to tear up during a read about the space program, so. But there is something so affecting and personal about how Dean approaches this and her own history with the space program and the personal connection the men and women working on Shuttle that it unsettled me in the best possible way.

Wonderful book. This is a very personal, heartfelt, deeply sincere account of the last days of an era that is now long past. The author's passion, love for, and commitment to space flight come through on every page. While the narrative describes a succession of goodbyes, to the last three shuttle vehicles, the account is moving while at the same time not being sad. Extremely absorbing, not a dull page in the book.

I bought this book because I saw a program on public television KLRN. The author was one of the guest writers on this book review show. She is very well spoken and I decided that I would give the book a try. It is an easy, fast read and I enjoyed her style. I grew up during the space race time and I could relate to all of what she was saying and I have lived in Florida and been present at lift offs (there is no way that one can adequately be explained, one must feel it, see it and marvel at the accomplishment). The author is an English teacher and I was amazed when she spoke to her students about the space program, how little younger people today know or care about the space age. This book is a good general overall information book, written in an interesting way coming from the authors experience while writing the novel. When I was finished, I felt a personal attachment to the events and experiences, as does the author, although she is much younger. There is a lament about the U.S. and how we have changed so much and not in a good way, not only in the space program area. I recommend this book.

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