



The Machinery of Life

David S. Goodsell

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Imagine that we had some way to look directly at the molecules in a living organism. An x-ray microscope would do the trick, or since we're dreaming, perhaps an Asimov-style nanosubmarine (unfortunately, neither is currently feasible). Think of the wonders we could witness firsthand: antibodies attacking a virus, electrical signals racing down nerve fibers, proteins building new strands of DNA. Many of the questions puzzling the current cadre of scientists would be answered at a glance. But the nanoscale world of molecules is separated from our everyday world of experience by a daunting million-fold difference in size, so the world of molecules is completely invisible. I created the illustrations in this book to help bridge this gulf and allow us to see the molecular structure of cells, if not directly, then in an artistic rendition. I have included two types of illustrations with this goal in mind: watercolor paintings which magnify a small portion of a living cell by one million times, showing the arrangement of molecules inside, and computer-generated pictures, which show the atomic details of individual molecules. In this second edition of *The Machinery of Life*, these illustrations are presented in full color, and they incorporate many of the exciting scientific advances of the 15 years since the first edition.

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