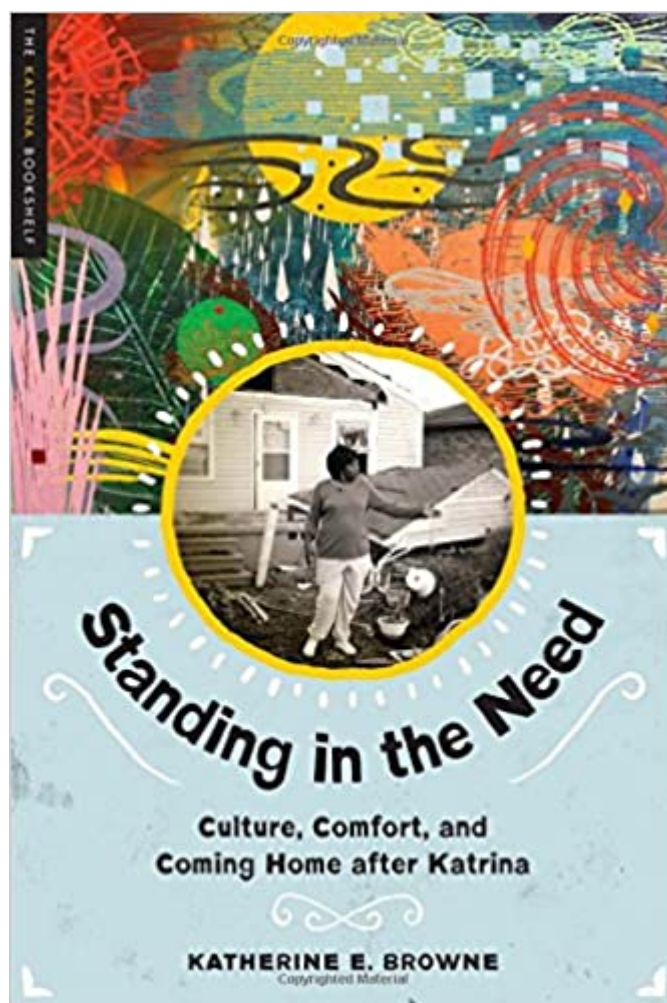


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# Standing In The Need: Culture, Comfort, And Coming Home After Katrina (Katrina Bookshelf)



## Synopsis

Standing in the Need presents an intimate account of an African American family's ordeal after Hurricane Katrina. Before the storm struck, this family of one hundred fifty members lived in the bayou communities of St. Bernard Parish just outside New Orleans. Rooted there like the wild red iris of the coastal wetlands, the family had gathered for generations to cook and share homemade seafood meals, savor conversation, and refresh their interconnected lives. In this lively narrative, Katherine Browne weaves together voices and experiences from eight years of post-Katrina research. Her story documents the heartbreaking struggles to remake life after everyone in the family faced ruin. Cast against a recovery landscape managed by outsiders, the efforts of family members to help themselves could get no traction; outsiders undermined any sense of their control over the process. In the end, the insights of the story offer hope. Written for a broad audience and supported by an array of photographs and graphics, Standing in the Need offers readers an inside view of life at its most vulnerable.

## Book Information

Series: Katrina Bookshelf

Paperback: 281 pages

Publisher: University of Texas Press (September 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1477307370

ISBN-13: 978-1477307373

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 14 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #72,646 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Atmospheric Sciences #817 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local #2045 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology

## Customer Reviews

"A shining example of anthropology at its most revealing—a beautifully written, compelling and insightful ethnography and it should be considered a valuable contribution to the field." (Natural Hazards Observer 2015-11-01)"The book's close ethnographic style gives us a textured view of the daily practices through which those most impacted by disasters make their lives meaningful and assist one another. . . . The book features an innovative use of graphic art that familiarizes readers

with the experiences as well as the historical and environmental contexts of Katrina's displaced." (Current Anthropology 2016-02-01)"This book answers the question of what people need in order to recover from disasters like Hurricane Katrina...(it) is distinguished by the comprehensive nature of its ethnographic methods, the eight-year time period of the in-depth research, and the recommendations for how people can support families who undergo devastating trauma from events like a hurricane." (Choice 2016-02-01)". . . her text reads like good journalism â " sharp, clear, observant, insightful, and meaningful. Browne's seasoned expertise as a cultural anthropologist and keen writing skills allow her to produce a book that offers much to disaster recovery professionals, policymakers, and academics outside her field about disaster recovery politics, the complexities and variability of African-Americans' social lives and experiences, as well as the continuities of institutionalized racism in the United States." (Ethnic and Racial Studies 2016-09-01)"Standing in the Need delivers an epic story about disaster and the haunting problems imposed by our "recovery culture." The lesson in these pages is of urgent concern as the world moves into weather we have never seen before. This is a book we must read in our book groups, in our university courses, in our city halls and in our centers of bureaucracy. It should be the entrance exam for employment at FEMA. It will certainly be required reading in all of my courses." (Mindy Fullilove, MD, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University)"By telling the vivid story of one family's ordeal in Hurricane Katrina, Browne's book offers completely new and highly relevant insights into disaster response. No other study in the field bears such focus and intensity. With uncommon discernment Browne shows how culture, history, language, customs, rituals, and especially kinship, so often ignored, are key factors in recovery and how, when they are disregarded, create far worse devastation for survivors. Browne imparts to us all what we have so blithely neglected." (Susanna Hoffman, disaster anthropologist and director, Hoffman Consulting)"I am moved by the honesty and compassion of Browne's enthralling narrative and the ways she captures both the cherished bonds of family and the world of the dispossessed. A stunning ethnography." (Carol Stack, author of All Our Kin and Call to Home)

Katherine E. Browne is a professor of anthropology at Colorado State University. She has published two previous books and produced two documentary films, including Still Waiting: Life After Katrina, which also portrays the family in this book. It has been broadcast on PBS stations in the United States and Canada.

Standing in the Need is a path breaking, close-up look at Hurricane Katrina and the travails and

victories of a sizeable extended family in southern Louisiana. Some of us rely on stock models and ideas to pursue our work. A few others, like Kate Browne, chart new ways to imagine and make sense of the world about us. I found the book a compelling read, in part because it is not a facsimile. Here truly is an original story, written to be read, about an historic disaster and a resilient family. Bravo!

I finished this book in a few days on the metro -- I really loved the stories that the author was able to tell while also explaining why the hurricane response (and other issues) made it so difficult to recover. There was so much deep engagement and thought about how people live, survive, and thrive. I'll be using this in my courses, citing it, and borrowing the idea of a methods appendix...Very well done - poignant and valuable.

A grand narrative of the strength and resilience of love, the family, community. Wrapped in the scholarly package of ethnography, which draws you in like the most sophisticated fiction, this is a beautifully written story of one family's resolve in the face of one of the most tragic disasters of our time.

It was an interesting look back on the Katrina disaster. Since I knew most of the family members personally, it shed a light on their experience, which I had witnessed first hand. It was an outstanding read. On top of this, I met the author, who signed my book!!

This book is a gem. The author's superb storytelling about the long-term experiences of an extended African American family to recover from the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina made this book an easy and engaging read. The descriptions of scenes and social interactions were exquisite - they evoked in me both the physical sensation of being there and an emotional response. While the book opened my eyes to aspects of a unique bayou culture of which I am not familiar, my gut and predominant reaction was to identify strongly with what the family members experienced, including their frustration and perseverance. The storytelling approach also effectively conveyed many big ideas that kept me thinking about the book long after finishing it. This book should be a must-read for policy-makers in governmental and private agencies involved in disaster relief. It is also a timely and important book for those like myself who are not directly involved in such work but who care about those suffering from catastrophic events.

I started reading this book for my academic work in disaster anthropology, but was soon engrossed in the world of the Johnson Fernandez family and their experience of life after Hurricane Katrina. Kate Browne's captivating account of this family's path towards recovery makes you feel as if you know them. I shed a tear reading the final chapter. While there is much to be said about the book as an academic endeavour (as other reviewers have), I would also like to underline the utility of the book for disaster relief practitioners. Policy papers, guidance documents, and reports have previously been published on the place of culture in disaster response. These are often dry and rather abstract documents, easily tossed in a pile of other material never to be read, and with recommendations that are often no more helpful than a vague instruction to keep local culture in mind. International and national disaster response efforts give frequent lip service to the need to be locally and culturally sensitive. I would propose that this book should be given to practitioners, over and above any other documents, as it actively engages the reader to consider the place of people affected by disaster (rather than the response agencies) and the intricacy of their culture. Even if the context is completely different, the situations described in this book force the reader to consider how local culture can be more truly represented and taken into account in disaster response efforts. I'm just about to finish my PhD and I can say, without hesitation, that this has been the most enjoyable book I have read throughout the whole degree. I have since recommended the book to both academic colleagues and non-academic friends.

This is an amazing book. It is the story of an extended family displaced by Katrina - how they coped as individuals and as a group. One of the more fascinating aspects of the book is that things such as shelter, clothes, medicine - the things we immediately think of when people are displaced - were important, but what was most painful and wrenching for the family was their cultural loss. For example, the kinds of food this family ate in New Orleans were not available in their new 'home'. The church they attended was not familiar. The music was different. The book illuminates all the things that make us feel at home - or make us feel lost. Highly recommend.

I could not stop reading this book. I am a colleague of Dr. Browne's at Colorado State University, and I had the honor and pleasure of reading a pre-publication draft of this book, and I could not put it down. The writing is so rich, clear, and compelling, as are the people represented in the book. Their words propel this beautiful story forward, and Dr. Browne's scholarly framework helps put the post-Katrina experience in context. This is a beautifully written book, and I hope that everyone interested in disasters, ethnography, and recovery from trauma and crisis will read it.

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