



Cigarette Lighter (Object Lessons)

Jack Pendarvis

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Object Lessons is a series of short, beautifully designed books about the hidden lives of ordinary things.

Smokers, survivalists, teenagers, collectors?. The cigarette lighter is a charged, complex, yet often entirely disposable object that moves across these various groups of people, acquiring and emitting different meanings while always supplying its primary function, that of ignition. While the lighter may seem at first a niche object-only for old fashioned cigarette smokers-in this book Jack Pendarvis explodes the lighter as something with deep history, as something with quirky episodes in cultural contexts, and as something that dances with wide ranging taboos and traditions. Pendarvis shows how the lighter tarries with the cheapest ends of consumer culture as much as it displays more profound dramas of human survival, technological advances, and aesthetics.

Object Lessons is published in partnership with an essay series in the *The Atlantic*.

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