

## DNA hunter Svante Pääbo takes us back to our roots

DNA, the stuff from which our genes are made, decays the moment an organism dies. The long coils break down into fragments and the longer the passage of time, the shorter the fragments become. Trying to put these tiny pieces together is a stunningly complex task that has been likened, by writer Elizabeth Kolbert, to trying “to reassemble a Manhattan telephone book from pages that have been put through a shredder, mixed with yesterday’s trash, and left to rot in a landfill”.

Yet Svante Pääbo has succeeded in this remarkable task, a story he recalls with striking frankness in *Neanderthal Man: In Search of Lost Genomes*, published by Basic Books later in February.

**Read the full, original story: [Svante Pääbo: the DNA hunter taking us back to our roots](#)**