

The background of the cover is a photograph of several bright yellow poppies with orange centers, growing from green foliage and brown rocks. In the foreground, an open book with aged, yellowish pages is lying flat, with a single white bookmark sticking out from the center. The overall scene is set against a soft-focus natural background.

# NATURE

## BOOK GUIDE

VOL. 1 ISSUE 3  
SPRING 2023  
[WWW.NATUREBOOKGUIDE.COM](http://WWW.NATUREBOOKGUIDE.COM)

### READING FOR FUN

Fiction, memoir, adventure, mysteries, classics, non-fiction  
New and backlist titles

### READING FOR INSIGHT

Recommended by naturalists and scientists with local, national, and international perspectives

### READING FOR CHANGE

Books to illuminate, inform, challenge, and inspire care for our natural resources

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# Welcome to Nature Book Guide

In this third issue of *Nature Book Guide*, we again offer our favorite books for adult readers--novels, fables, inspiring memoirs, adventure stories, well-researched nonfiction, and thoughtful approaches to the challenges we all face in defending nature.

Nature writing--especially personal stories--inspires me to shift into wonder again, and that's why I'm so eager to share these books with you. In this vein, you'll find more memoirs and works written during the isolation of the pandemic, when nature was experienced close to home. The writers are diverse in background and perspective, each voice enriching the discussion around our future on the planet.

The *Guide* couldn't exist without the book recommendations from our panel of scientists, naturalists, and stewards of the earth--their words are the heart and soul of this endeavor. This issue, we were thrilled to welcome a new member, Kristin Memmott, who describes herself as "a scientist who loves to talk to people," and serves the City of Aurora in Colorado as a Natural Resources Specialist. We've also invited a Guest Panelist, Lisa Fargason Gordon, from the high mountain Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute to recommend books about the desert for kids. We're eager to add more voices to the panel.

If you find something you love in *Nature Book Guide*, will you help spread the word? Our *Guide* will always be free to download from our website ([www.naturebookguide.com](http://www.naturebookguide.com)) along with extra features, bookmarks, and posters. I'd value your thoughts as we plan our upcoming quarterly issues; feel free to contact me at [naturebookguide@gmail.com](mailto:naturebookguide@gmail.com).

Beth Nobles  
FOUNDER/EDITOR

As a high school student in the Youth Conservation Corps, Beth built trails and trail bridges in two Illinois state parks. Mid-career, she led the Texas Mountain Trail as Executive Director for a decade, where she promoted the desert/mountain region's natural and historical assets, including state and national parks. Through a partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife, Beth developed the Far West Texas Wildlife Trail and map. Before she retired in 2021, she led the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, an organization supporting an urban trail along a riparian corridor in the Denver metro area.



# Book Recommendation Panel

**Monique "Mo" Fair**, Executive Director of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, a nonprofit organization supporting an urban trail and riparian habitat in metro Denver, Colorado.



**Adrianna Weickhardt**, US Forest Service hydrologic technician working to conserve and restore watershed resiliency on the western slopes of Colorado and a former wildland firefighter on USFS helitack and hand crews in California, with extensive experience working in outdoor education/interpretation and natural resource management in state and national parks. Adrianna is specializing in wildfire mitigation/restoration planning in her graduate studies at Oregon State University.



**Rich Reading**, Ph.D. is the Vice President of Science and Conservation at Butterfly Pavilion. Rich has a long record of wildlife research around the world; in 2020, he was recognized by the country of Mongolia with the highest award bestowed upon a non-citizen for his contribution to wildlife conservation. His current work includes research on the ecology and population dynamics of threatened species of native Mongolian Parnassius butterflies.



**Kate Vannelli**, Leader of the 'Living with Big Cats' Initiative at World Wildlife Fund, focusing specifically on human - big cat conflict and enabling coexistence between people and lions, jaguars and snow leopards. Kate is based in Arusha, Tanzania.



**Efrain Leal Escalera** is a proud bilingual, multicultural immigrant scientist/artist from Durango, Mexico. He is an interdisciplinary photographer, activist, entomologist, visual storyteller and educator living in the Denver metro area.



**Katie Smither**, an Opto-mechanical Technician, who helps to maintain large telescope mirrors, instrument optics, and laser beams. She's working just south of the Atacama Desert in Chile for an organization that manages telescopes all over the world, particularly Arizona, Hawai'i, and Chile.



**Bill Davison**, Value Chain Development Manager for the Savanna Institute. Bill has worked for The Nature Conservancy as a Land Steward and spent seven years as an organic vegetable farmer in central Illinois. He transitioned from farming to working as a Local Food System Educator with University of Illinois Extension where he developed programs to support staple crops and agroforestry. He is a board member for the John Wesley Powell Audubon Society and an accomplished birder. Bill writes a gardening and re-wilding newsletter on Substack.



**Courtney Lyons-Garcia**, Executive Director of the Public Lands Foundation; previously served as Executive Director of the Big Bend Conservancy in Texas. Courtney is also the Parks and Trail specialist for the Great Springs Project, a network of spring-to-spring trails and protected natural areas over the Edwards Aquifer between San Antonio and Austin.



**Rachel Hutchens**, Executive Director of Bluff Lake Nature Center, a nonprofit agency that owns and manages a 123-acre urban wildlife refuge and outdoor classroom in Denver. Bluff Lake educates individuals to be engaged, resilient, and curious; conserves a natural area in the city; furthers equity in outdoor access; and nurtures the health and well-being of communities and ecosystems.



**Warren Sconiers**, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder. Dr. Sconiers teaches introductory biology and education courses and researches curriculum development and educational approaches for large classroom settings. During the summers, he researches how changes in plant communities in response to climate change impact arthropod communities in alpine systems.



**Dennis Vásquez**, Deputy Director of the City of Albuquerque’s Parks and Recreation Department. Before retiring from the National Park Service, Dennis served as superintendent for a number of parks including White Sands National Park, Bandelier National Monument, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and Petroglyph National Monument.



**Kristin Memmott**, Natural Resources Specialist for the City of Aurora, Colorado. She is passionate about human-wildlife conflict resolution, conserving habitat for wildlife species in densely populated areas, and creating accessible nature play spaces. She is currently focusing her interest and research on the American beaver.



## Guest Panelist



**Lisa Fargason Gordon**, Executive Director at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute (CDRI), also known as the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens, Fort Davis, Texas. Sharing her background as an educator, Lisa has helped to create CDRI’s acclaimed educational programs, free for youth in the TEA Region 18 service area.

The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center & Botanical Gardens, located on a 507-acre site in the foothills of the Davis Mountains of Far West Texas, offers five miles of hiking trails, a botanical garden, a cactus museum collection, a bird blind, and a gift shop inside the Powell Visitor Center. A main tenet of the organization is education about nature and the Chihuahuan Desert to encourage an appreciation and concern for nature. At 5,100 ft., CDRI is set in the high mountain desert with semi-desert grasslands and igneous rock outcrops. Geologic features include Modesta Canyon, a unique riparian canyon with a year-round spring, and Clayton’s Overlook, an igneous intrusion with a spectacular 360° view of the region. Another exceptional feature located inside the fenced 18-acre Botanical Gardens is the Cactus Museum Collection, with more than 200 species, subspecies, and varieties of Chihuahuan Desert cacti. [www.cdri.org](http://www.cdri.org)



As Nature Book Guide develops, we’ll widen our circle of voices by inviting additional scientists, naturalists and stewards to join the Book Recommendation Panel. Learn more about our panel members at [www.naturebookguide.com](http://www.naturebookguide.com)

# Two Novels – Limberlost



Longlisted, Indie Book Awards and Booktopia Favourite Australian Book Award; Commended, Victorian Premier's Literary Awards

"Robbie Arnott is the sort of young writer we all hoped would emerge in Australia, a Conrad-like storyteller whose tales always tremble on the edge of the mythic and legendary."

--Thomas Keneally, Australian author, playwright, and actor

An emotionally searing novel about the transition to adulthood--*Limberlost* by Robbie Arnott--echoes the vintage *Girl of the Limberlost*, published more than a century ago. Arnott's "Limberlost" is a family orchard in Tasmania in the midst of economic and environmental change; Stratton-Porter's an Indiana swamp forested for lumber.

Arnott's Ned dreams of sailing away from his troubled home, hunting a staggering number of rabbits in the heat of the summer to earn money for a boat. His decisions that summer change his future, the fate of his family, and the health of the land. Arnott leads us to a stunning, powerful, and satisfying end.

**"He resumed walking through Limberlost, his father's orchard, the rabbit swinging stiff in his hand. Smoke hazed from the house's chimney. Apple trees in a nearby paddock had taken on the glow of dawn. At Ned's back the river shone, teal blinking into slate and cerulean, revealing a greater truth of colour."**

The setting of Robbie Arnott's 2022 novel "Limberlost" is the family orchard named in honor of *Girl of the Limberlost*, the 1909 novel by Gene Stratton-Porter.

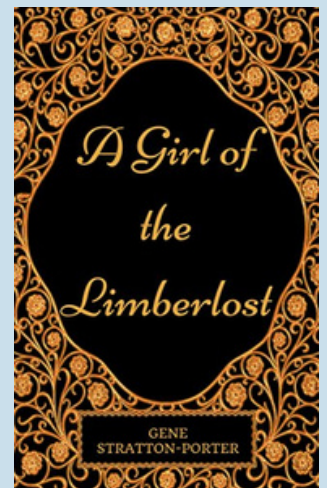
*Limberlost*,  
Robbie Arnott, Text  
Publishing, 2022,  
240 pages



Robbie Arnott



Gene Stratton-Porter



*Girl of the Limberlost*,  
Gene Stratton-Porter,  
Doubleday Page and  
Co., 1909, Reprints,  
various publishers.

*Girl of the Limberlost* was Gene Stratton-Porter's most successful work. A runaway best-seller in print, it was adapted four times for film.



**"I wish to be out of human reach. Out from under the constant stir. Laborious turmoil of this breed. Endless bother of humans." –Timothy, the tortoise**

*Timothy, or, Notes of an Abject Reptile*,  
Verlyn Klinkenborg,  
Knopf, 2006,  
192 pages

This charming novel is narrated by Timothy, a real tortoise who was kidnapped in the Mediterranean to grace 18th century Hampshire gardens. Actually a female, she outlived her first owner and came to live with amateur naturalist the Reverend Gilbert White. White's classic 1789 *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, was the basis for this insightful novel of observation and empathy.

Author Verlyn Klinkenborg was on the editorial board of the *New York Times* and wrote their "The Rural Life" column.

Suggested for inclusion in Nature Book Guide by reader  
Jim Ruebesh of the "Our View from Iowa" blog

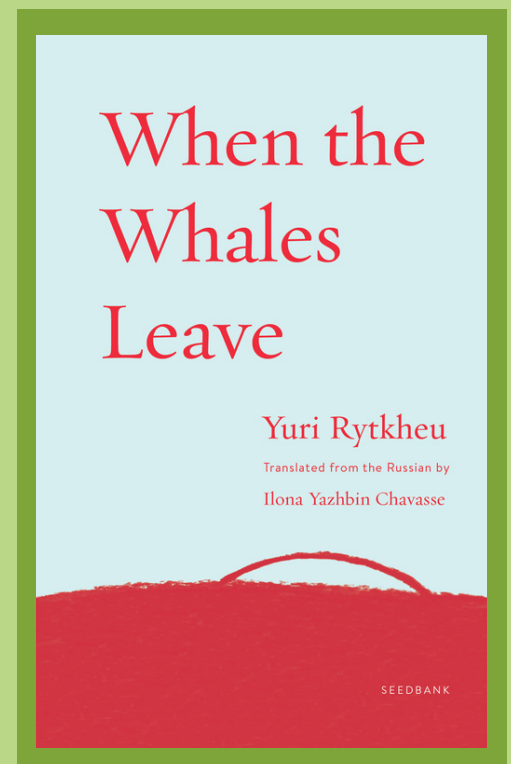
**"Nau is a young woman who falls in love with a whale who, smitten with love, becomes a man so he can live with her. "**  
—Gretel Erhlich, from the introduction of *When the Whales Leave*

*When the Whales Leave* is an engaging and delicately told sensual fable of the Chukchi people of the Arctic. It's an origin story that speaks to a kinship between human and whale and "the destructive power of human arrogance" in a way that feels both ancient and modern.

First published in Russian in 1975, it is available in English for the first time in this beautiful translation by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse.

*When the Whales Leave*, Yuri Rytkheu  
(translation by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse),  
Milkweed Editions,  
2020, 144 pages

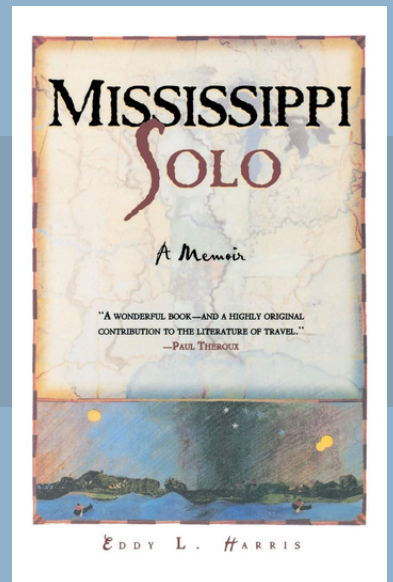
Part of Milkweed Editions' *Seedbank* series of world literature of ancient, historical, and contemporary works from cultures from around the world for American readers.





# An Interview with Author Eddy L. Harris

**The true story of a young black man's quest: to canoe the length of the Mississippi River from Minnesota to New Orleans.**



*Mississippi Solo: A River Quest*, Eddy L. Harris, Holt Paperbacks (Reprint Edition), 1998, 256 pages

***You grew up in St. Louis and saw the Mississippi River every day, yet you didn't have canoeing experience before you started your journey. On the first page of Mississippi Solo, you write that you both feared and respected the river. How did your family influence your feelings about the river and your experience in the outdoors? Who were your role models in the outdoor space and how did they shape your admiration for time spent in the outdoors?"***

When I was a kid, all the parents of all the kids I knew warned us all about the dangers of the river, advising us all not to get too close, certainly not to venture into the water. I only knew two people who braved the river: the Greer brothers. They had a boat and talked about swimming in the river. Everybody thought they were crazy.

There was a pleasure boat, the Admiral, that was an obligatory outing for young teenagers. Friday and Saturday evenings the boat would go up river to the Chain of Rocks and turn around, an excursion of a couple of hours, music and dancing and loud laughter. Parents went so far as to warn us not even to look over the side of the boat and gaze into the river. The Mississippi's swirls would hypnotize us and cause us to plunge into the water and be lost forever. The river was scary.

At the same time, my mother was crazy in love with St. Louis and all things St. Louis, the Mississippi included. She talked about it like it was her personal river and every day, once we had dropped my father off at work (we only had one car and when I was little I went with them), we would stop somewhere along the river and she would talk about how beautiful it was.



Interview conducted by  
Book Recommendation Panelist, Monique  
"Mo" Fair and Founder/Editor, Beth Nobles

Both effects, fear and attraction, danger and beauty, remained. When I got ready to do something crazy, the Mississippi was there.

I didn't need role models. Not for canoeing, not for traveling as a young person, not for going off at spring break to ski. It wasn't until later and upon deeper reflection that I saw how limited and restricted certain activities were -- along racial lines -- and that I began to question.

***You've talked about "golden moments" on the river, and we wonder more than forty years later, what are some of your enduring memories of the wildness of the river journey?***

The nature was important, the encounters were important, but most important of all was the solitude and the ability to determine for myself (as if I hadn't already) what was important for me and how best to interact with the world around me. My relationship with wild nature was only once aspect of that interaction.

What I discovered, alone within my solitude and in the wildness of nature was, beyond the self-confidence that comes with being confronted alone with the bigness of the outdoors, was a great appreciation for the outdoors. A city boy at heart, I felt a oneness with it, a sense of smallness, a sense of ownership.

I described Lake Itasca as the most beautiful spot on earth. And it was. But along the river there were many beautiful -- most beautiful -- spots on earth. Paddling in tranquility, out on the middle of the river, it flooded me with a sense of wonder and fun. Hard work, but man! it was fun.

***Race is mentioned just a few places in Mississippi Solo, and you write "Racism—sure it exists, I know that. But its effect and effectiveness depend as much on the reaction as on the action."***

What I am convinced of is that, racially speaking, I am absolutely in control of how I react to a given situation. Short of physical violence, I can choose to react, reject, internalize, forgive, or ignore what anyone else brings to the table of my little feast. I am not responsible for the actions and thinkings of other people, and it is not up to me to climb inside someone's head to know when an act or action is racist. It doesn't matter to me if it's racist. What matters is the action itself and my reaction to it. That sounds horribly selfish and privileged. Everyone is not in a position to ignore outside influences so readily. One of the things I took away from the river was a grander sense of self, a capacity to paddle away from unwelcome situations.

I knocked on a door one night in Clayton, Iowa, a closed hotel where I had seen a woman cooking in the kitchen. When she opened the door, the first words out of my head: "What's for dinner?" A big black man knocks on your door in the middle of the night, what do you do? That woman Eileen, short, white and old, decided that night to show who she was. She opened a room for me, gave me dinner, and acted like she expected big black men to come off the river every night looking for a place to stay and something to eat. Except for a couple of small incidents, there was no reason to think in terms of race but for the absence of other blacks doing what I was doing and what I do.

***Mo asks: When I read Mississippi Solo five years ago, I read it as a person of color's opportunity to stake claim to a space in which I still struggled to find a way to belong. Today, I work to ensure all folks feel a sense of connection and ownership with the outdoors. If we can create a sense of belonging, the space will receive care. How did the conversations you had on your trip further connect you with nature as a whole? I think the beautiful thing about nature is its power to connect and unite many folks.***

I've just been encountering young people in Grenoble [France] where they are surrounded by mountains but never go hiking in those hills. They are like those kids on the Mississippi who never even thought of paddling the river -- not for an excursion and certainly not from source to sea.

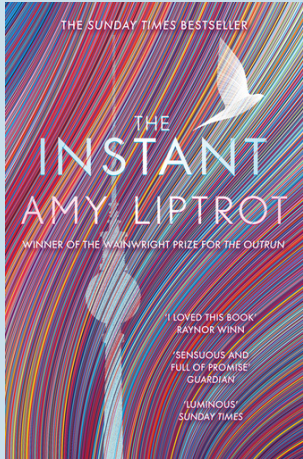


I can't say that it was my encounter with the river (beginning with my mother on the banks of the Mississippi while she fed my dreams about the beauty of the river and the faraway places it passes) that encouraged my desires for independence and sense of belonging, but being on the river gave me a new point of view. I could be city boy in love with nature. I could own it all. But with ownership comes responsibility. To own it (river, nature, or country) is to care for it and take care of it.

***Mo asks: Lastly, it feels like all of the "editing" we do in our day-to-day lives just to survive was stripped away during your journey. Maybe partially because you started this journey with little knowledge or experience canoeing and partially because nature can be very unforgiving? I would love to hear how this journey (and the lessons learned) lean into the larger narrative of finding comfort in the outdoors and in new experiences.***

Mo, you're right about being stripped down to essentials. The river took away my need for stuff and the essentials -- not just physical -- and all the other noise was pushed into the background. Maybe that's the power of nature. It made me see how small I am and how little I need. And just now, writing that, I wonder if a more powerful lesson at the end of that trip was my need for help, underscoring how much help I got all along the way. A kind of union with nature and people at the same time. Sappy message: we're all in this together. We have to take care of our natural spaces and of each other.

# New Forms in Nature Memoirs



*The Instant*, Amy Liptrot, Canongate Books, 2022, 192 pages

Waterstones - The Best books of 2022: Biography; Sunday Times Bestseller; Shortlisted for the Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing

**"I never saw one but I know the raccoons are there. There are layers to the city that we never see, different wave-lengths we could tune into."**

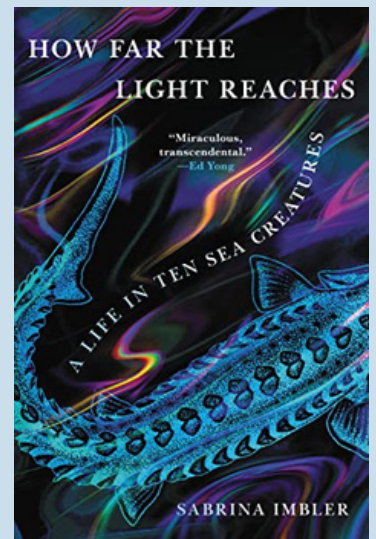
Amy Liptrot left the Orkney Islands for Berlin in pursuit of a new life, new work, and love. A memoir that reads like a novel, *The Instant* is structured in bursts of personal narrative told over the course of the moon's year (January, Wolf Moon; February: Hunger Moon, etc.). Between angst about boyfriends and jobs she could get as an expat, there's curiosity about raccoons, goshawks and crows. "I was interested in transferring those skills from the Scottish island to the city: writing about urban wildlife but writing about human nature as well and human relationships, because nature doesn't exist just in rural places," writes Liptrot.

**"I love the way she finds the parallels within a world where we have barely scratched the surface of our understanding (underwater ecosystems), and our own understanding of all the ways to exist as humans - another world where we have barely scratched the surface."**

**--Kate Vannelli**

Author Sabrina Imbler, frustrated by lack of personal connection in established science writing, asks, "What if I wrote a column where I take a cultural object and use it to help write about my life? Why can't that object be an octopus? I started thinking about how the personal can be present in nature writing, beyond "I'm a white man on a boat." I wanted to explore not only the mystery of the ocean but my lived experience in the world." (From interview on Vogue.com)

The result is the remarkable *How Far the Light Reaches*. Imbler constructs parallel essays about sea creatures and adaption, survival, and sexuality with their own experience as a non-binary, mixed-race individual. In one essay, the eating disorder the author inherited from their mother is entwined with motherhood in deep sea octopuses. In another, Imbler's first sexual experiences are juxtaposed with an exploration of the terrifying bobbit worm. Joy in the queer community is celebrated alongside descriptions of gelatinous sea invertebrates called salps. *How Far the Light Reaches* is a new vision of memoir and science writing that shimmers with creativity, candor, and authenticity.



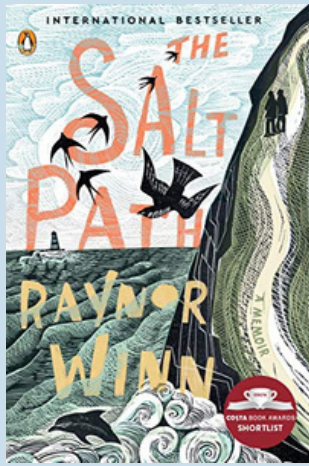
*How Far the Light Reaches: A Life in Ten Sea Creatures*, Sabrina Imbler, Little Brown and Company, 2022, 273 pages

A TIME Best Nonfiction Book of the Year; PEOPLE Best New Book; Barnes & Noble, WIRED, and SHELF AWARENESS Best Book of 2022; An Indie Next Pick



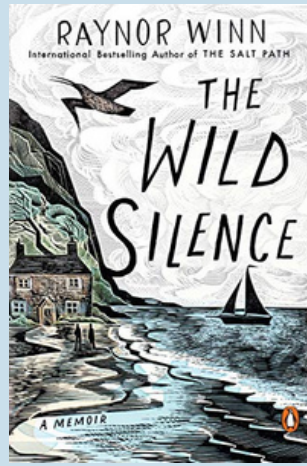
Recommended by Kate Vannelli, Leader of the 'Living with Big Cats' Initiative at World Wildlife Fund

# Raynor Winn's Walking Memoirs



*The Salt Path: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books (paperback), 2019, 288 pages

Won the inaugural RSL Christopher Bland Prize, Shortlisted for the 2018 Costa Biography Award and the Wainwright Golden Beer Book Prize



*The Wild Silence: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books (paperback), 2021, 288 pages

Shortlisted for the 2021 Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing



*Landlines: The Remarkable Story of a Thousand-Mile Journey*, Raynor Winn, Pegasus Books (North America hardcover), release September 2023, 320 pages

Sunday Times bestseller

**"Thousands of feet over thousands of years have trodden many of the same trails we have, tracing their passage onto the landscape, imprinting their memories into the soil. What remains are not just paths, they're precious landlines that connect us to the earth, to our past and to each other." --From *Landlines***

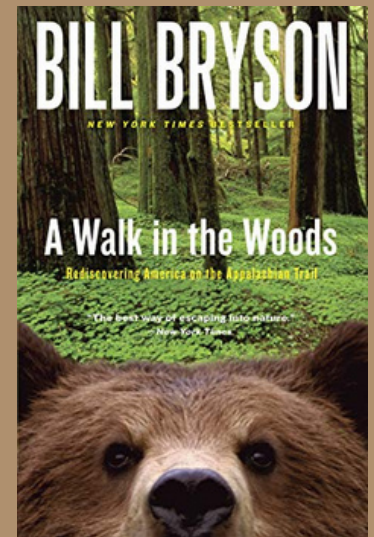
If there ever was a Cinderella story in publishing, it could be Raynor Winn and her walking memoirs. Within days after she learns her husband, Moth, is terminally ill, the couple lose their home and farm and livelihood and are left with nothing. They take a brave and impulsive journey along the Southwest Coast Path in Britain. Winn's *The Salt Path* is the result, a remarkable story of loss and courage, homelessness, and the 630-mile trail along the sea from Somerset to Dorset through Devon and Cornwall. Miraculously, the walk improved Winn's husband's health, and though she had never published before, *Salt Path* became an instant international bestseller.

*The Wild Silence* picks up after the couple settles into life off the trail. Here Winn writes recollections of her childhood and her life with Moth as she processes the illness and death of her mother. Then the couple is offered free lodging in exchange for rewilding a cider farm and reconnecting with the land, Moth's health again improves. With friends, the couple take off to Iceland for another long-distance journey on the Laugavegur trail.

*Landlines* begins with the realization that Moth's health has deteriorated again--perhaps too far--and yet the couple decide to tackle the wildest trail in the north of Scotland, the Cape Wrath Trail, only to continue a thousand miles to the sea in Cornwall.

"One of my all-time favorite books because of the imagery it conjures and the laughter it offers. I first read Bill Bryson's *Walk In The Woods* in 2010 while living abroad in Ecuador. It was one of the few books left on the shelf at the hostel I was staying at. I picked it up on a whim and 13 years later it is a book I recommend to anyone looking for a fun read, a read that brings you along for a wilderness adventure, or a book that makes you contemplate your own limits and interests.

"So, what is this book about? Bill Bryson and his friend Stephen Katz prepare to take on the Appalachian Trail. After buying every item in REI, they take off down the trail, only to quickly realize they are wildly underprepared. Laced with amazing facts about the history of the Appalachian Trail, ways to prepare for a journey of this magnitude, and descriptive stories about the wildlife found on the East Coast of the United States, this book makes you yearn for a larger-than-life adventure while making you grateful for the comforts on your home."  
 --Kristin Memmott

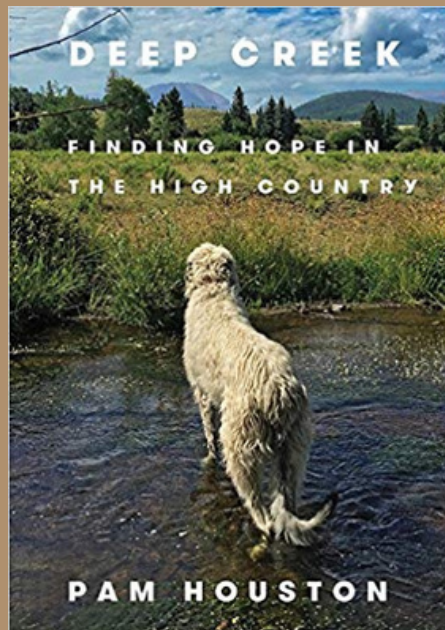


*A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*, Bill Bryson, Crown, 1999, 304 pages

**New York Times Bestseller**



Recommended by Kristin Memmott  
 Natural Resources Specialist for the City of Aurora, Colorado



*Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country*, Pam Houston, WW Norton, 2019, 288 pages

**"If you can't fall in love with the San Juan Mountains during the third week of September, you can't fall in love. The mountainsides are covered with the world's largest aspen forests, and they are changing in vast undulating swathes: yellow, golden, orange, vermilion. The sky is a headstrong break-your-heart blue, the air is so clear you can see a hundred miles on a straight horizon, and the river is cold and crisp and possibly even clearer than the air. The coyotes sing, all night sometimes, and the elk bugle in the misty dawn along the river."**

**--From *Deep Creek***

**Winner of the 2020 Reading the West Advocacy Award  
 Winner of the 2020 Colorado Book Award for Creative Nonfiction**

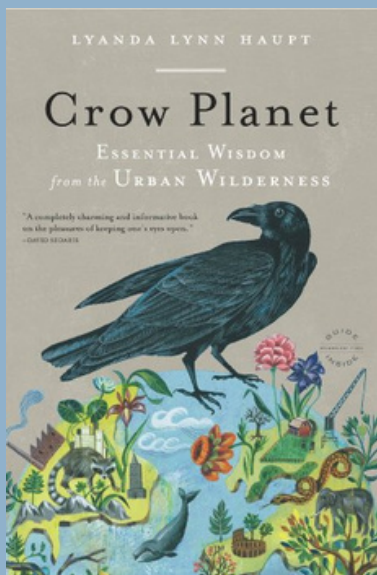
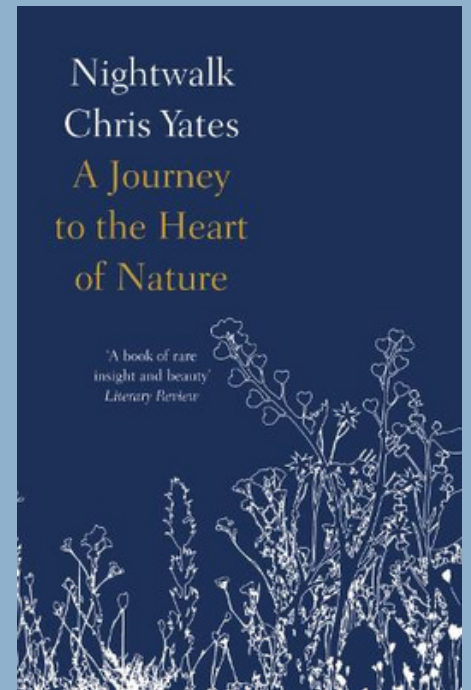
Overcoming a painful and violent childhood, Houston finds a haven in a 120-acre Colorado ranch in this beautifully written memoir. The ranch, purchased on a wing and a prayer and just five percent down, becomes her sanctuary. As she learns to care for the land through hardship and calamity, she also balances stewardship of the ranch with her life as an artist. This is a gripping and deeply personal story of hope and dedication and love for land.

**"Especially in an age that craves accurate information, precise observation and instant recognition, I find a perverse delight in night's less definable reality. Though it offers a unique window onto my local wildlife, it also answers my desire for somewhere different, undisturbed and often unknown."**

**--Chris Yates**

British nature writer Chris Yates takes us on nighttime rambles through the countryside when senses are heightened in the moonlight and sounds and scents are amplified. A satisfying read with gorgeous prose, *Nightwalk* invites us to slow down and enjoy encounters with owls, badgers, deer, and other wildlife around us.

*Nightwalk: A Journey to the Heart of Nature*, Chris Yates, Harper Collins, 2012, 224 pages



*Crow Planet: Essential Wisdom from the Urban Wilderness*, Lyanda Lynn Haupt, Little Brown, Spark (trade paperback), 2011, 256 pages

**"These stories might not be suitable for a scientific journal, but they are fitting for our own field notebooks, for our naturalist's diaries, for the tales we tell, and for the private places we keep and treasure our own observations of the wild earth's wonders, whether they occur thousands of times over or are written only once."**

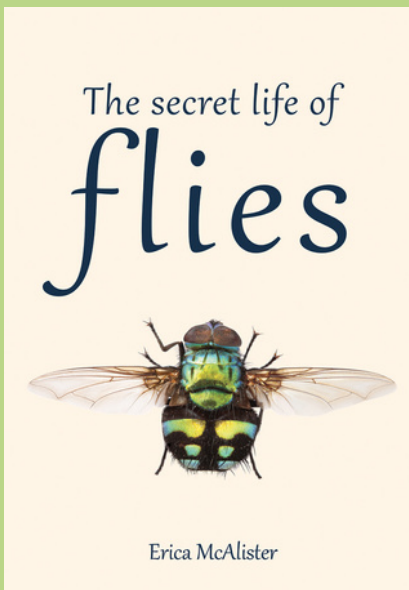
**--Lyanda Lynn Haupt**

"I have become a woman who sits on park benches for hours watching crows do crow things and I have this book to thank. Lyanda Lynn Haupt reminds us that anyone can be a naturalist, if we just take the time to observe the natural world around us with a little more care, attention, and curiosity. This book will entertain you with the mythology, natural history, and mystery of crows, making your future encounters with these abundant and feathered urban creatures a little more interesting." --Kristin Memmott

Recommended by Kristin Memmott  
Natural Resources Specialist for the City of Aurora, Colorado



## An Interview with Author Dr. Erica McAlister



*The Secret Life of Flies*, Erica McAlister,  
Firefly Books  
(paperback), 2022,  
248 pages

**"No other group is more adaptive, crazy or more ingenious in their morphology and general bad-ass behaviour."**

***Your book is full of wild stories of different flies' behavior, morphology, and relationships to other species. We love your charming style of writing and your enthusiasm for each species. What are your favorite stories in the book?***

I think most folks forget that flies are animals, albeit very small ones that pretty much do everything we do! I love the behaviours and adaptations associated with flirting and feeding. What about the some of the dagger flies having an inflating abdominal sac - a bum that blows up, to show the males how fecund you are. Or imagine evolving to live most of your life in a camel's nostril or in the stomach lining of a rhino, as the bot flies do. Or bog snorkeling in a compost heap by breathing out of your posterior or anal spiracle as do many of the hoverfly larvae. Those are just some of the stories that make me smile.

***Given the documented decline of insect population in the world, what is the role of collecting in research and education? Do you advise those wanting to learn about insects to continue to collect?***

Collecting insects is absolutely vital. Many species are not possible to identify without studying their genitalia (how we tell species apart) and with tiny species, this is not possible without catching them. Each specimen has a story to tell - we can study their morphology to see how species have changed over time to study the impact of climate change. We can look at their chemistry, their gut contents, their bacterial load - in fact there are so many questions we can ask from the insects. We can learn a lot from images, and these too are important to help us learn about diet, behaviour and habitat preferences. But to enable us to understand the past, present, and future, we need to collect.

***You've written about your childhood fascination with the natural world. What are your favorite memories of following your curiosity? Who influenced you the most? What inspired you to select flies as the focus of your research?***

I'm nosy and spent an awful lot of my childhood lying on my belly, watching tiny patches of grass to see the ants, spiders, slugs - everything small and wonderful, all getting on with their business. My University lecturer, Dr Dick Askew, once scooped up a load of insects and said, 'this one eats this, this one maims that' and so on, I was hooked - so much fascination. And as for flies - they are everywhere - in all these places, doing all these things and just getting their tarsi into every little bit of mischief that they can.

***What is the role of rewilding projects and the planting of native species in bolstering insect populations? Can an individual make a difference?***

For the last couple of years, I have been working with Operation Wallacea, a research organisation that offers opportunities to high school and university students to work alongside scientists. Thanks to some bold management we are now seeing species that have not been recorded in the UK for years, and populations of existing ones at levels not seen since my childhood. It's not only answer but rewilding is definitely part of the solution. Planting native species is another. Many of the insects in the UK haven't evolved to live on introduced species and so need natives to sustain them. And it's not just the big landowners that can make a difference - small gardens, allotments, plant pots - it all helps.

Erica McAlister is curator of Diptera at the Natural History Museum, London. As a child, she kept dead mammals to watch the maggots emerge, and as an adult admits to "squealing like a child" when rummaging through the museum's collections. She conducts research all over the world.

**Winner: ZSL/Clarivate Analytics Award for Communicating Zoology**

**Can volunteers be a factor in the support and understanding of insect species? What are some of the most exciting ways volunteers have been involved?**

In my field, volunteers are essential. I started at the museum as a volunteer and now have a wonderful cohort that help me process and digitise both new material and existing material so we can provide information for free online. That's a huge amount of data that can be used for asking important questions about what is happening to our planet. Some of my volunteers are working on material that may contain new species to science - that is quite something for all of us to be dealing with. Lots of people volunteer at bioblitzes and other monitoring events to tell us what insects are found there. Currently I am the chair of the Dipterists Forum - a UK organisation dedicated to studying and conserving the flies in the UK where hundreds of people give up their free time to help identify species, write keys, monitor habitats and much, much more.

Erica McAlister is curator of Diptera at the Natural History Museum, London. As a child, she kept dead mammals to watch the maggots emerge from them, and as an adult she will admit to "squealing like a child" when rummaging through the museum's collections. She conducts research all over the world.



CHAPTER 2

## The pollinators

What kind of monster could possibly hate chocolate?

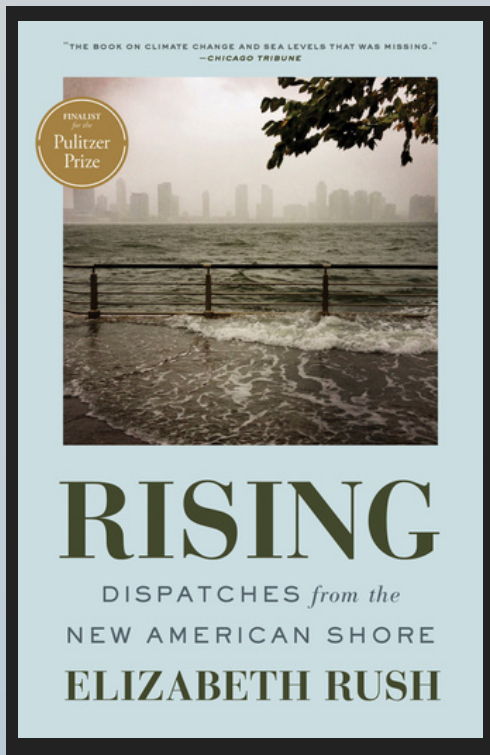
Cassandra Clare - *Clockwork Angel*



**H**ATE CHOCOLATE? Well, I do. I simply detest the stuff - have done for years. I dislike the texture and the way it slimes down your throat, but most of all I don't like the smell - just thinking about it turns my stomach. Even I have to admit this is not the most normal of dislikes. It is ironic considering my love of flies. Confused? Flies, you see, are the only pollinators of chocolate, or more specifically *Theobroma cacao*, the cacao or cocoa tree. This plant species has a complex reproductive structure, so complex in fact that only one group of very small flies, amusingly known as No See Ums, can pollinate it. This group, from the *Forcipomyia* genus of the family Ceratopogonidae, are, along with the rest of the family, known as the biting midges. Biting midges are cursed across the globe for ruining many a day in the countryside, especially the infamous Highland midge swarms in Scotland. According to her diary, Queen Victoria was half-devoured by these little ladies whilst at a picnic in Sutherland woodland in 1872.

The hirsute form of the male chocolate midge, *Forcipomyia* sp., is essential for cocoa pollination.





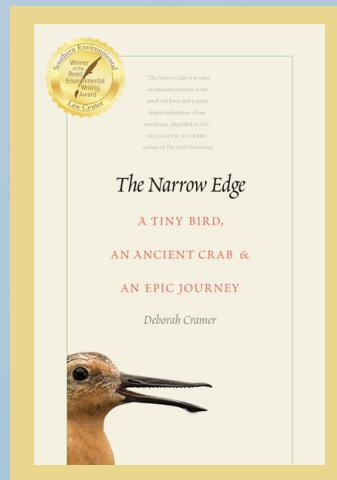
**"And so what I once thought of as inquiry into vulnerable landscapes—and the plants and animals that call those places home—has also become an inquiry into vulnerable human communities."**  
**--Elizabeth Rush**

What are we losing with the rising sea levels that come with climate change? *Rising* makes it clear we are losing much more than many care to admit. Rush provides compelling testimony from storm survivors from Louisiana to Maine and from scientists monitoring wildlife on every American coast. This is a clear-eyed view of our future, a personal meditation on the heartfelt business of letting go of cherished places, and the devastating impact on our communities.

*Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore,*  
 Elizabeth Rush,  
 Milkweed Edition  
 (paperback), 2019,  
 328 pages

Finalist for Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction;  
 Winner: National Outdoor Book Award; 2018 Best Book: Chicago Tribune, Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, Lit Hub

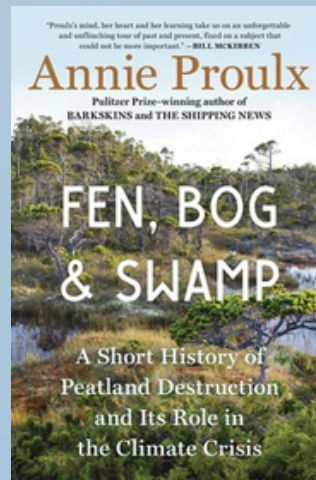
*The Narrow Edge: A Tiny Bird, an Ancient Crab and an Epic Journey,*  
 Deborah Cramer,  
 Yale University Press,  
 2016, 304 pages



**"Red Knots are small, adaptable, and resilient shorebirds that fly from one end of the earth to the other and back again. This epic migration makes them a good indicator of the health of our environment. *The Narrow Edge* tells the story of this remarkable bird and the people that are working to save them. We know what we need to do to protect Red Knots, the question is are we willing to share the earth with wildlife?"** —Bill Davison

Winner of the 2016 National Academies Communications Award for Best Book that Honors the Best in Science Communications

Recommended by Bill Davison,  
 Value Chain Development Manager  
 for the Savanna Institute



*Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis,*  
 Annie Proulx,  
 2022, 208 pages

**"As the sun heats the earth the droplets evaporate, and the illusion that the entire world is held together by fine spider threads evaporates with it."**  
**--Annie Proulx**

Best Book of the Year:  
 The New Yorker,  
 Literary Hub;  
 2022 NBCC Awards  
 Nonfiction Finalist;  
 2023 Phillip D. Reed  
 Environmental Writing  
 Award Finalist

Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Proulx's slender volume is packed with history, research, and a deep abiding affection for wetlands and their vital role in preserving the environment. This is a riveting must-read for those who want to understand this critical and underappreciated resource.

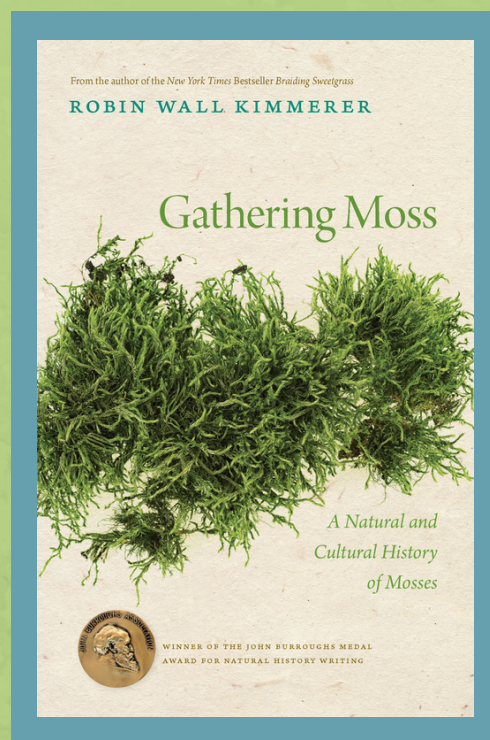
Recommended by Adrianna Weickhardt,  
 US Forest Service hydrologic technician



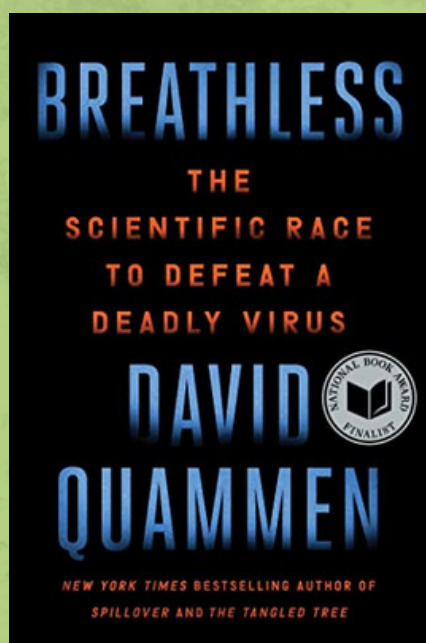
**"Mosses are not elevator music; they are the intertwined threads of a Beethoven quartet. You can look at mosses the way you can listen deeply to water running over rocks. The soothing sound of a stream has many voices, the soothing green of mosses likewise."**

*Gathering Moss* is MacArthur Fellow Robin Wall Kimmerer's first book, a satisfying blend of science writing and illustrations and observation, personal reflection, and cultural considerations. Fans of Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* will find this slim volume both engaging and illuminating.

*Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Oregon State University Press, 2003, 168 pages



**Winner of the 2005 John Burroughs Medal Award for Natural History Writing**



**"Breathless attempts to unveil and solve the mystery behind the arrival of COVID-19. Through raw interviews and more mystery writing to solve this case, Quammen's installment following *Spillover* reveals many facts about this pandemic but also where the theories came from (rumor or fact) and why vaccinations came about so quickly compared to other maladies. If you are ever curious to learn more about the origin, biology, and race against COVID-19, this is it."**

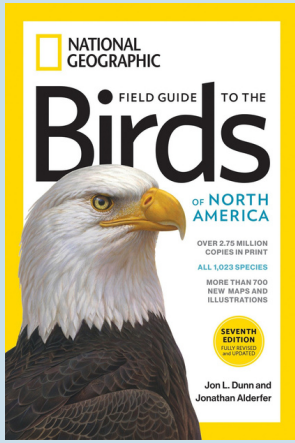
**--Warren Sconiers**

*Breathless: The Scientific Race to Defeat a Deadly Virus*, David Quammen, Simon & Schuster, 2022, 416 pages



Recommended by Warren Sconiers, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder

**National Book Award Finalist**



**"For some years now, I have kept this book and a pair of binoculars in my truck. You never know when that birding moment is going to happen. The Merlin Bird ID and eBird apps are on my phone, but I still like a hard copy book to reference." --Dennis Vásquez**

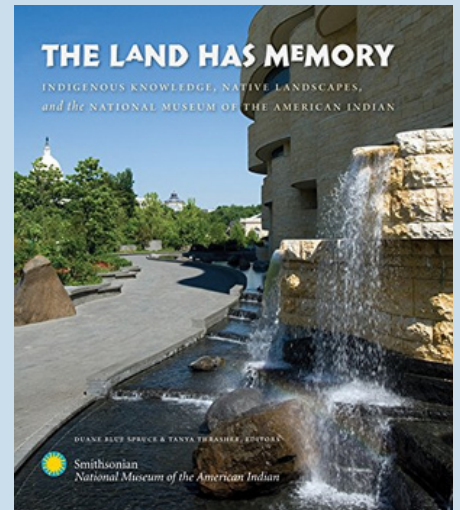
*National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, Jonathan Alderfer and Jon Dunn, National Geographic, 2017, 592 pages



Recommended by Dennis Vásquez, Deputy Director of the City of Albuquerque's Parks and Recreation Department, and retired Park Superintendent with National Park Service

**"You cannot simply talk about the plants alone. How can you ignore the earth and sun, which provide nourishment? The animals and insects that exchange the plant's pollen? The powerful medicine held within a root, stalk, or leaf? The seasonal cycles that affect the plant's growth, when it blooms or bears fruit? Plants are part of our universe, given to us by the Creator to ensure our harmony and survival."**

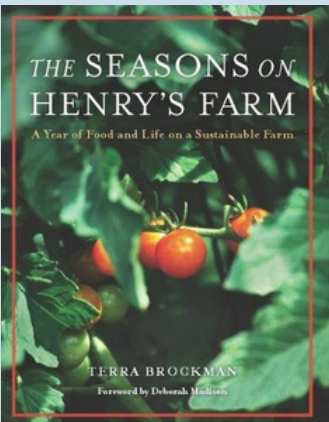
*The Land Has Memory: Indigenous Knowledge, Native Landscapes, and the National Museum of the American Indian*, Duane Blue Spruce and Tanya Thrasher (editors), University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 184 pages



Recommended by Courtney Lyons-Garcia, Executive Director, Public Lands Foundation

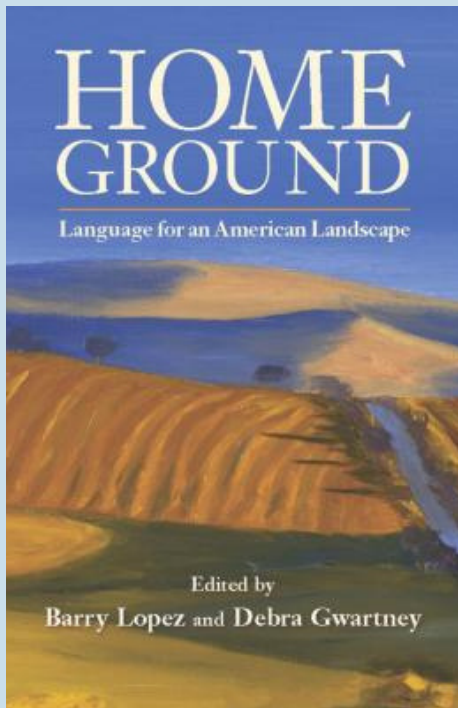
The National Museum of the American Indian cares for one of the world's most expansive collections of Native objects, photographs, and media, covering the entire Western Hemisphere from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego. *The Land Has Memory* takes us inside the planning of the new museum and grounds. Prepare to be impressed by the sensitivity and care taken as Indigenous peoples and their cultures are involved in the planning of this national treasure. Edited by members of the Laguna/San Juan Pueblo and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

**"This book is an invitation to see each week as its own season, and to return to cyclical time, the time of nature and sustainable agriculture, which mimics nature. It is an invitation to recognize that growing good food does not have to mean destroying soil or polluting air and water, and that we can eat well and live well and still leave this earth a better place than we found it." --Terra Brockman**



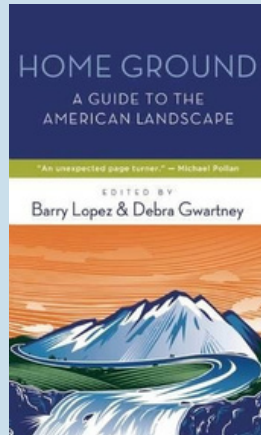
*The Seasons on Henry's Farm: A Year of Food and Life on a Sustainable Farm*, Terra Brockman, Agate Surrey, 2010, 310 pages

If one of your fantasies is to become a farmer, *The Seasons on Henry's Farm* will be both exciting and sobering, but mostly you'll be impressed by the amount of work it takes to farm sustainably. Henry's farm is blessed with the rich soil of Central Illinois along Walnut Creek in the Mackinaw River Valley. A chapter for each month, Brockman covers the challenges (February: Ice Storm Provides) and recipes (May: Roasted Asparagus with Olive Oil and Balsamic Vinegar) that bring the farm to life. Forward is by Deborah Madison, American chef and cookbook author.



2006 Cover

*Home Ground: A Guide to the American Landscape*  
Barry Lopez (editor),  
Debra Gwartney,  
(managing editor),  
Trinity University Press,  
2013, 672 pages



2013 Cover

***Home Ground: A Guide to the American Landscape*** is a masterpiece of wonder, folklore, geography, and literature. Editor Barry Lopez assembled forty-five writers and poets to create more than 850 definitions of aspects of the American landscape such as **quaking bog**, **derelict land**, and **kiss tank**. As Lopez wrote, "In the pages that follow, a community of writers has set down definitions for landscape terms and terms for the forms water takes, each according to his or her own sense of what's right, what's important to know. The definitions have been reviewed for accuracy by professional geographers." This is a volume to keep at the bedside and absorb a little at a time. Originally published in 2006, the latest edition is smaller and more compact for easier reading.

## derelict land

*Land that has been used, ruined, and consequently abandoned by humans is peculiarly described as derelict—as if the land itself had become careless of its duties.* BARBARA KINGSOLVER

## kiss tank

*Walking across the hot, dry lands, through saltbush and snakeweed and desert sage, the tired travelers longed for the sight of a kiss tank, a pool of water left from the last rain and its runoff in a naturally formed rock basin. Ranchers call these pools of water kiss tanks because, when such a pool is found, all creatures of the desert, as well as cattle and horses and humans, put their dry lips and thirsty mouths to its water eagerly, with a kind of passion. And they rise refreshed. Such basins filled with water from snowmelt can also be found in mountainous regions. A basin on top of Maiden, a sandstone spire near Boulder, Colorado, for instance, contains freshwater shrimp that have evolved to survive the dry seasons. A kiss tank is also called a tinaja, which is Spanish for big, earthen jar.* PATTIANN ROGERS

## quaking bog

*The quaking bog is one of the most novel features of forests of the northern United States, especially those in New England and Wisconsin. It's an area of sphagnum moss, rushes, sedges, and decaying vegetation, the whole mass of which is floating on a pool of water. The surface appears solid and stable, until trusted with the weight of a step. What seems to be firm ground then shivers, sinks, and rises, like a natural trampoline or waterbed. If the first shimmy of this rich root mass underfoot is not heeded, one might easily break through the entangled mat into water and loose mud below, as if one had stepped into quicksand. The quaking bog suggests in perceptible human time the larger ripple, rise and fall, and shifting of the Earth's surface in geologic time.* ROBERT MORGAN

# Advocacy



*We Have a Dream: Meet 30 Young Indigenous People and People of Color Protecting the Planet*, Dr. Mya-Rose Craig, H. N. Abrams, 2022, 64 pages,  
**Reading Age 8-12 years**

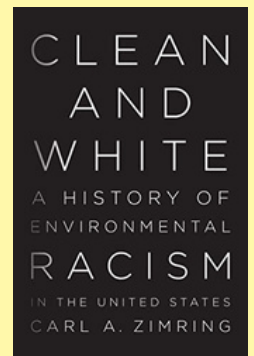
**"Indigenous people and people of color are disproportionately affected by climate change, and yet they are underrepresented within the environmental movement. Not anymore. I believe that to protect the environment is to leverage the input and contribution of as many people as possible, but it is not for me to speak for others."**  
—Dr. Mya-Rose Craig

At the age of 11, British Bangladeshi Mya-Rose Craig was believed to be the youngest person known to spot 3,000 birds of different species. In the years since, Mya-Rose (known as "Birdgirl") has become an ornithologist, environmentalist, and activist. She created the nonprofit Black2Nature to run nature camps for black and other minority ethnic children. In 2020, she became the youngest person—at the age of 17—to be awarded an honorary doctorate in science in the U.K. With *We Have a Dream*, Craig, along with Sierra Leonean American illustrator Sabrena Khadija, have created a joyful, energetic celebration of young climate advocates from around the world.

While the title *Clean and White* may appear out of place in a nature guide, Zimring's well-researched work provides context to modern conflict and understanding of environmental racism from its antebellum roots of Jefferson's time to the present-day. Drawing from archival evidence from statesmen, scholars, sanitarians, novelists, activists, advertisements, and the United States Census of Population, this is a valuable examination of racism and hygiene and the environmental inequalities that persist today.

Recommended by Rachel Hutchens, Executive Director Bluff Lake Nature Center

*Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States*, Carl A. Zimring, New York University Press, 2017 (paperback), 288 pages



**"It is important to note that Indigenous peoples have been stewards and caretakers of our environments since time immemorial. Yet we are often left out from environmental discourse and any decision-making pertaining to our environment."** —Jessica Hernandez, Ph.D.

*Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Jessica Hernandez, North Atlantic Books, 2022, 256 pages

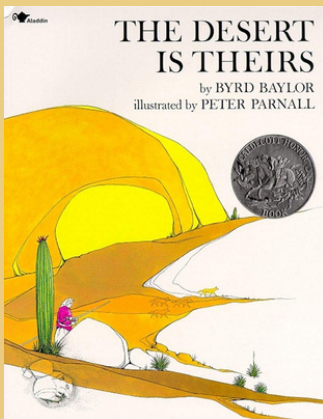


Jessica Hernandez's analysis of conservationism is gripping, personal (the title comes from her father's experience as a child soldier in El Salvador), and supported by her work as an environmental scientist and advocate. Grounded in the Indigenous Maya Ch'orti' and Binnizá cultures of her family, she presents a vision of land stewardship that should be included in environmental discourse.

Recommended by Efrain Leal Escalera, a proud bilingual, multicultural immigrant scientist/artist from Durango, Mexico

# For the Kid in All of Us: Books about the Desert

Recommendations and comments by Guest Panelist,  
Lisa Fargason Gordon, Executive Director,  
Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanic Gardens



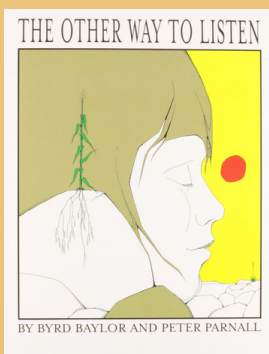
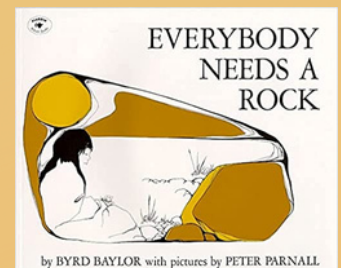
*The Desert is Theirs*,  
Byrd Baylor (Illustrated  
by Peter Parnall),  
Aladdin, 1987,  
32 pages,  
**Reading age: 5-8**

**Awarded the Randolph  
Caldecott Medal for the  
most distinguished  
American picture book  
for children in 1976**

This book gets to the heart of what people who love the desert know. A desert is a special place for the Desert People, as it is also a special place for the animals that inhabit it. The poetic text weaves bits of folklore in its description of the desert animals, and it talks about how similarly they and the Desert People have adapted to living in a harsh environment. And when it finally rains in the desert, everything and everyone celebrates – including the plants, the animals, and the children.

Some of us are rock collectors. It comes naturally. You just seem to know what the right size or shape of rock fits best in your hand and how it feels in your pocket. For others who wish they knew how to find just the right rock, *Everybody Needs a Rock* helps in that discovery with its ten rules for finding your very special rock.

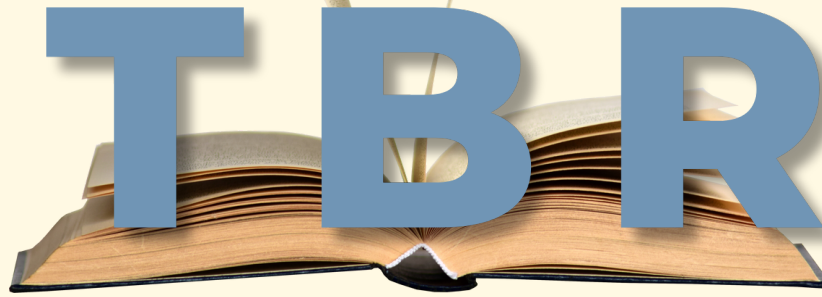
*Everybody Needs a  
Rock*, Byrd Baylor  
(illustrated by Peter  
Parnall), Aladdin  
Paperbacks, 1985,  
32 pages  
**Reading age: 3-6**



*The Other Way to  
Listen*, Byrd Baylor  
(Illustrated by Peter  
Parnall), Aladdin  
Paperbacks, 1997,  
32 pages  
**Reading age: 6-9**

*The Other Way to Listen* is a story of an old man who can hear the corn singing. He can hear wildflower seeds bursting open and sprouting underground. And when asked if he was surprised to hear these things, he says, "It seemed like the most natural thing in the world." The theme that runs through the book is respect for nature. It introduces children to the concept of respect for individual things like plants, animals, and rocks. The gentle conversation between the old man and the child sparks curiosity and a sense of wonder, and an appreciation for sometimes being alone and finding a quiet space. It's then when you can listen. And someday, if you happen to hear the hills singing or the leaves on the tree laughing, you might agree, "It seemed like the most natural thing in the world."

## "TO BE READ" BOOKS IN THE SPRING 2023 ISSUE



- Page 7: *Limberlost*, Robbie Arnott, Text Publishing, 2022, 240 pages  
*Girl of the Limberlost*, Gene Stratton-Porter, Doubleday Page and Co., 1909, Reprints, various publishers.
- Page 8: *Timothy; or, Notes of an Abject Reptile*, Verlyn Klinkenborg, Knopf, 2006, 192 pages  
*When the Whales Leave*, Yuri Rytkheu (translation by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse), Milkweed Editions, 2020, 144 pages
- Page 9: *Mississippi Solo: A River Quest*, Eddy L. Harris, Holt Paperbacks (Reprint Edition), 1998, 256 pages
- Page 11: *The Instant*, Amy Liptrot, Canongate Books, 2022, 192 pages  
*How Far the Light Reaches: A Life in Ten Sea Creatures*, Sabrina Imbler, Little Brown and Company, 2022, 273 pages
- Page 12: *The Salt Path: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books (paperback), 2019, 288 pages  
*The Wild Silence: A Memoir*, Raynor Winn, Penguin Books (paperback), 2021, 288 pages  
*Landlines: The Remarkable Story of a Thousand-Mile Journey*, Raynor Winn, Pegasus Books (North America hardcover), release September 2023, 320 pages
- Page 13: *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*, Bill Bryson, Crown, 1999, 304 pages  
*Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country*, Pam Houston, WW Norton, 2019, 288 pages
- Page 14: *Nightwalk: A Journey to the Heart of Nature*, Chris Yates, Harper Collins, 2012, 224 pages  
*Crow Planet: Essential Wisdom from the Urban Wilderness*, Lyanda Lynn Haupt, Little Brown, Spark (trade paperback), 2011, 256 pages
- Page 15: *The Secret Life of Flies*, Erica McAlister, Firefly Books (paperback), 2022, 248 pages
- Page 17: *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore*, Elizabeth Rush, Milkweed Edition (paperback), 2019, 328 pages  
*The Narrow Edge: A Tiny Bird, an Ancient Crab and an Epic Journey*, Deborah Cramer, Yale University Press, 2016, 304 pages  
*Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis*, Annie Proulx, 2022, 208 pages
- Page 18: *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Oregon State University Press, 2003, 168 pages  
*Breathless: The Scientific Race to Defeat a Deadly Virus*, David Quammen, Simon & Schuster, 2022, 416 pages
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*The Land Has Memory: Indigenous Knowledge, Native Landscapes, and the National Museum of the American Indian*, Duane Blue Spruce and Tanya Thrasher (editors), University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 184 pages  
*The Seasons on Henry's Farm: A Year of Food and Life on a Sustainable Farm*, Terra Brockman, Agate Surrey, 2010, 310 pages
- Page 20: *Home Ground: A Guide to the American Landscape*, Barry Lopez (editor), Debra Gwartney, (managing editor), Trinity University Press, 2013, 672 pages
- Page 21: *We Have a Dream: Meet 30 Young Indigenous People and People of Color Protecting the Planet*, Dr. Mya-Rose Craig, H. N. Abrams, 2022, 64 pages  
*Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States*, Carl A. Zimring, New York University Press, 2017 (paperback), 288 pages  
*Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Jessica Hernandez, North Atlantic Books, 2022, 256 pages
- Page 22: *The Desert is Theirs*, Byrd Baylor (Illustrated by Peter Parnall), Aladdin, 1987, 32 pages  
*Everybody Needs a Rock*, Byrd Baylor (illustrated by Peter Parnall), Aladdin Paperbacks, 1985, 32 pages  
*The Other Way to Listen*, Byrd Baylor (Illustrated by Peter Parnall), Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997, 32 pages

## Finding the Books Featured in the Guide

We consider our public library the primary resource for locating books. Many libraries offer interlibrary loan or can find an electronic copy when books are not in their physical collection. We also recommend readers patronize their local independent bookstores, or independent bookstores that are producing free events online. To locate an independent bookseller near you, [Indiebound](#) offers a "[bookstore finder](#)" feature on their website. Another resource is [bookshop.org](#), where every purchase on the site financially supports independent bookstores. Authors often suggest purchasing through Indiebound, [bookshop.org](#), or directly through the publisher. Some of our selections, including vintage or backlist titles, might be more challenging to locate. We've had good luck finding older titles through [Alibris](#) or other online merchants.

## Discovering Inspiring Places



Rocky Mountain Land Library's mission is to help connect people to nature and the land. Their work and their generosity have inspired the *Nature Book Guide*.  
Website: [landlibrary.wordpress.com](#) Instagram: @landlibrary



An independent bookstore on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Exile in Bookville has small but thoughtfully curated nature collection worth visiting. Located in the historic 1885 Fine Arts Building, the store's second floor location overlooks Grant Park and Lake Michigan. Within walking distance of Union Station, it is a valued stop for any bookish multi-modal adventure through the Windy City. Website: [exileinbookville.com](#) Instagram: @exileinbookville



The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center & Botanical Gardens, located on a 507-acre site in the foothills of the Davis Mountains of Far West Texas, offers five miles of hiking trails, a botanical garden, a cactus museum collection, a bird blind, and a gift shop (with excellent book selections) inside the Powell Visitor Center. Their Executive Director, Lisa Fargason Gordon was our guest panelist this issue. Website: [cdri.org](#) Instagram: @cdri\_naturecenter

## Thanks and Acknowledgements

*Nature Book Guide* is the result of a community of exceptionally kind people:

- Book Recommendation Panel members are the heart of this project. Friends, your recommendations and your work inspire us, illuminate us, educate, and entertain us. We couldn't put the *Guide* together without you.
- Eddy L. Harris and Dr. Erica McAlister, for giving us time and enthusiasm for our author interviews, thank you.
- Friends who've left our bookmarks in Little Free Libraries, who put up posters in public libraries, who thank us for recommendations, and help spread the word about *Nature Book Guide*, thank you.
- Linda, your editorial talents make every page, every sentence better. Thank you.
- Monte, thank you for your enthusiasm and for supporting this project in every possible way.

--Beth Nobles, Founder/Editor of *Nature Book Guide*

## Keeping in Touch

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