



A Natural History of Nature Writing

Frank Stewart

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A Natural History of Nature Writing is a penetrating overview of the origins and development of a uniquely American literature. Essayist and poet Frank Stewart describes in rich and compelling prose the lives and works of the most prominent American nature writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, including:

- Henry D. Thoreau, the father of American nature writing.
- John Burroughs, a schoolteacher and failed businessman who found his calling as a writer and elevated the nature essay to a loved and respected literary form.
- John Muir, founder of Sierra Club, who celebrated the wilderness of the Far West as few before him had.
- Aldo Leopold, a Forest Service employee and scholar who extended our moral responsibility to include all animals and plants.
- Rachel Carson, a scientist who raised the consciousness of the nation by revealing the catastrophic effects of human intervention on the Earth's living systems.
- Edward Abbey, an outspoken activist who charted the boundaries of ecological responsibility and pushed these boundaries to political extremes.

Stewart highlights the controversies ignited by the powerful and eloquent prose of these and other writers with their expansive – and often strongly political – points of view. Combining a deeply-felt sense of wonder at the beauty surrounding us with a rare ability to capture and explain the meaning of that beauty, nature writers have had a profound effect on American culture and politics. *A Natural History of Nature Writing* is an insightful examination of an important body of American literature.

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