

Natural State: A Literary Anthology of California Nature Writing

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A Literary Anthology of California Nature Writing

Selected and Edited by Steven Gilbar With a Foreword by David Brower

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Acknowledgments

DAVID BROWER

Foreword

This book is a feast and requires a celebration. For one thing, I have known, or am almost old enough to have known, so many of the authors: LeConte, Twain, Kerouac, Brewer, Stevenson, London, Steinbeck, Stegner, Abbey, Chase, Powell, Miller (Joaquin and Henry), Muir, and Austin—all of whom preceded me (which isn't easy). I was overwhelmed with serendipity, not to be relieved by the current host of authors who are younger (who isn't?), including John Daniel, who had learned about writing from Wallace Stegner and was fleetingly a student of mine, when as a Berkeley dropout (1931) I briefly became a visiting professor at Stanford (1982). I should take Mr. Daniel to court for overstressing my emotional stability by revealing, in matchless prose, what a desert is all about. It hurts to hold back tears when they have no place else to go.

What John McPhee, from whose *Encounters with the Archdruid* I learned who I was, writes about the seismic cross California bears renews all my old anxieties. I was born in Berkeley so close to the San Andreas that I still find fault too easily and brake for tectonic plates.

But book work, as an editor for the Sierra Club and the University of California Press, informed my Berkeley decades; and I was ready, when Ted Koppel was chairing a Stanford assembly and asked me for a couple of environmental sound bites, to conclude, "We must reform television, which is causing cerebral gridlock across America." The audience loved it. I hope the audience for this book can agree that we must also reform the Internet and Web, where electronics fail to distinguish between data and knowledge, or between surfeit and craft, or between merde (to avoid scatological alliteration) and substance.

There is no such problem with *Natural State*. The book will not cause cerebral problems; it will cure them. Moreover, it can be enjoyed indoors or out; in natural light, unencumbered by power surges; survive splashes of coffee, rain, or chardonnay; comfortably endure thermal changes on a shelf or in a knapsack, never asking to be pointed or clicked. And you can lift your eyes, when you want to, to the hills without suffering painful disintegration of the carpal tunnels or becoming roadkill on the Information Superhighway.

Add a further fussy detail: words written for a book are likely to endure in the mind, rather than perish in a landfill. There are wiser uses for land, considering that the two million Californians here when I arrived have already become thirty-two million. California wildness deserves a chance to recover, and *Natural State* lets us know why.

David Brower

Berkeley, 1997

INTRODUCTION

California is a land of contrasts. Both the highest and lowest elevations of the lower forty-eight states are in California—and then only eighty miles apart. The hottest temperatures in the United States are found there. It has some of the world's greatest wonders, and has had some of its worst natural disasters. Naturally, this landscape has inspired prose that, like the land itself, is diverse and full of contrasts. This book aims to corral the best of it.

The special quality of California's landscape has affected all sorts of writers, not all of whom fall into the category of "nature writer" or "naturalist." Gretel Ehrlich, Barry Lopez, and David Rains Wallace, for example, have certainly made nature their special province, but they also write fiction. Then there are writers known primarily for their fiction—Henry Miller, Wallace Stegner, and Robert Louis Stevenson, to name but three—who turned to nonfiction to express their feelings about California's wild places. Also present are authors who work principally in nonfiction, such as M.F.K. Fisher, John McPhee, and John Muir. Others yet seem equally at home in both fiction and nonfiction; these include Edward Abbey, Joan Didion, and Mark Twain. Finally, there are poets, such as John Daniel, Joaquin Miller, and Gary Snyder, who have also worked in prose. Not all the pieces rounded up here are nonfiction, however. Included are selections from works of fiction by Jack Kerouac, Jack London, John Steinbeck, and others. What all the pieces by these authors have in common is good writing, which is what makes this anthology "literary," rather than a historical survey of nature writing in the state.

The constraints of space have regrettably forced the omission of much worthwhile writing. Some of the early European explorers, pioneers, and settlers left wonderfully descriptive journals about a wilder California. Writers as varied as Clarence King, Stewart Edward White, George Wharton James, Page Stegner, Judy Van Der Veer, Galen Rowell, David Wicinas, and Paul McHugh have all written memorably about the outdoors, while others, such as Jaime de Angulo, Gerald Haslam, Maxine Hong Kingston, Roy Parvin, William Saroyan, and Gary Soto, have given life and voice to the people of California, on the land and in their diverse communities. Many other important contributions could be mentioned. In order to strike a balance between classic writers and newer voices, and to provide a consistent focus on the state's natural treasures, hard choices had to be made.

The incredible biodiversity of California has not been mirrored to date by a like diversity in the cultural backgrounds of those who write about nature. Not surprisingly, most such essayists, poets, and fiction writers have been European-Americans, for they had the education and leisure required to trek through the wilderness and record their impressions. Although today some of the best writers in California are of Mexican, African, and Asian descent, these authors have usually chosen to write about their immigrant and urban experiences rather than rhapsodize about the mountains, deserts, and forests. The same is true of Native Californian writers, most of whom write about their people on the land, rather than the land itself. This situation is changing, however, and soon, no doubt, a body of "nature writing" will emerge that better reflects the cultural diversity of California's population.

Women are perhaps more adequately represented in contemporary writings about nature. Although historically they lacked not only rooms of their own, but tents as well, that has changed in the past several decades, and today women are among the best in the field.

Some years ago the Central Valley writer Gerald Haslam claimed that California has four "geo-literary" regions: the greater San Francisco Bay Area, the Heartland, the Southland, and Wilderness California. Most of the places covered in this collection are in the last region—if, that is, "wilderness" can be stretched to embrace the merely rustic and pastoral as well as the truly untamed. It does not mean places where men and women do not dwell. Simply, when we speak of wilderness, our attention is focused not on people, but on the place itself.

The book is organized around the basic landforms: mountains, hills and valleys, deserts, and coast. As a prelude, there are two California Indian myths about how the land was created. The first is an old Cahto narrative, and the second is an A-juma-wi story filtered through the modern sensibility of Darryl Babe Wilson.

Of all California's many mountain ranges, the most imposing is the Sierra Nevada. This

four-hundred-mile-long wall of jagged, glaciersculpted mountains has probably inspired more writers than any other topographical feature in the state. At the top of the list of Sierran natural wonders is surely Yosemite, represented here by Joseph LeConte experiencing its wonders for the first time, Jack Kerouac and a couple of his dharma-bum companions scaling Matterhorn Peak, Daniel Duane climbing Half Dome, and Ann Zwinger delighting in the high country's "trumpets of light." Elsewhere in the Sierra, John Muir relishes a wind storm, and Mark Twain camps out at Lake Tahoe.

Extending north and south between the Central Valley and the Pacific are the Coast Ranges. The Santa Lucia Range, for example, which is visited in a short piece by John Steinbeck, rises abruptly from the ocean to heights of almost 6,000 feet.

Other mountains, too, have heartened writers. Bordering Oregon, the Klamath Mountains (visited here by Joaquin Miller and David Rains Wallace), the Cascade Range, and the Modoc Plateau terminate the Central Valley at its north end. In the south, the valley is closed by the Transverse Ranges—so called because of their east-west lineation, which runs at an oblique angle to the northwest-southwest-trending Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges. The Transverse Ranges comprise such mountain chains as the San Bernardinos, Santa Monicas, and Santa Ynez, as well as their interior valleys, including San Fernando, San Gabriel, and Ojai. South of the Transverse are the Peninsular Ranges—so called because most of them are in the Baja Peninsula—which include the Santa Ana and San Jacinto ranges. Isolated mountains have captured writers' hearts as well. Mount Tamalpais, for example, whose skyline and trails delight San Francisco Bay Area residents, is described here in closely observed detail by Harold Gilliam.

Wherever there are mountains, there are hills at their feet and valleys in between. Separating the Coast Ranges from the Sierra Nevada is the Great Central Valley, almost five hundred miles in length. The northern portion is known as the Sacramento Valley, and the southern the San Joaquin Valley, after the two rivers that drain them. David Mas Masumoto writes eloquently of the land that he farms near Del Rey, in the San Joaquin. Another prominent valley lies between the Transverse and Peninsular ranges: the populated Los Angeles Basin. Less great, but nonetheless dear to those who live or hike there, are the hundreds of smaller valleys and foothills throughout California. In this collection you will read about Napa Valley (Robert Louis Stevenson), Sonoma Valley (Jack London), Salinas Valley (William H. Brewer), the Altadena foothills (Hildegard Flanner), Hemet Valley (M. F. K. Fisher), the Santa Barbara foothills (Margaret Millar), the San Rafael Wilderness (David Darlington), the Klamath Basin (Barry Lopez), and the Los Altos hills (Wallace Stegner).

California has three major deserts—the Mojave, the Colorado (or Sonoran), and the Great Basin. Each is unique and thus presents a special challenge to writers who wish to "explain" the desert. Here, the extremes of Death Valley are detailed by Edward Abbey; John Daniel and Sue Zwinger recollect memorable desert treks; Gary Paul Nabhan visits some oases in the Colorado Desert; and Mary Austin writes of the high desert of the Owens Valley.

California is delimited on the west by eight hundred miles of Pacific coastline, with its rocky headlands, bays, beaches, and offshore islands. This collection highlights various faces of this diverse margin. In the northern and central reaches we encounter the "lost coast" as it is walked by John McKinney; Russell Chatham narrates a fishing excursion on Bodega Bay; and Henry Miller describes his beloved Big Sur. Farther south, around Santa Barbara, J. Smeaton Chase and Jane Hollister Wheelwright travel on horseback on the beach, while Kem Nunn surfs the waves and Gretel Ehrlich hikes one of the Channel Islands. In the southland, T. H. Watkins and Lawrence Clark Powell reminisce about Dana Point and Malibu, respectively.

The elements—earthquakes, storms, fire—play a significant role in California. In the last section, the infamous San Andreas Fault is observed by James D. Houston and John McPhee. John Muir and

Joan Didion write about the wind—a storm in the Sierra as experienced from the top of a tall tree, and a Santa Ana in Los Angeles—while Mary Austin and Jane Hollister Wheelwright describe the rain as it pours down on the Owens Valley and a Pacific beach. The aftermath of a forest fire is taken up by Margaret Millar.

Finally, in an afterword, Gary Snyder takes a broad look at California's environment and suggests ways in which it can be preserved.

I hope that this book will be kept on a nearby shelf by armchair naturalists and virtual wanderers, and in the backpacks of hikers and trekkers—to refresh and inspire them, like a dip in a cool mountain lake, and as a reminder of the “natural state” of California.

THE CREATION

CAHTO MYTH

Cahto Valley

The Creation

The creation myths of the Native American peoples of California have many elements in common. The following myth of the Cahto (sometimes spelled “Kato”), who inhabited Cahto and Long Valleys in Mendocino County and the upper drainage of the South Fork of the Eel River in Lake County, is a typical example. Collected in 1909 by the University of California ethnologist Pliny E. Goddard (1869–1928), it tells of the great deluge, after which Thunder, the original being, created the landscape, the animals, and humankind.

Every day it rained, every night it rained. All the people slept. The sky fell. The land was not. For a very great distance there was no land. The waters of the oceans came together. Animals of all kinds drowned. Where the water went there were no trees. There was no land.

People became. Seal, sea-lion, and grizzly built a dance-house. They looked for a place in vain. At Usal they built it, for there the ground was good. There are many sea-lions there. Whale became a human woman. That is why women are so fat. There were no grizzlies. There were no fish. Blue lizard was thrown into the water and became sucker. Bull-snake was thrown into the water and became black salmon. Salamander was thrown into the water and became hook-bill salmon. Grass-snake was thrown into the water and became steel-head salmon. Lizard was thrown into the water and became trout....

“What will grow in the water?” he [the creator] asked. Seaweeds grew in the water. Abalones and mussels grew in the water. Two kinds of kelp grew in the ocean. Many different kinds grew there....

“How will the water of the ocean behave? What will be in front of it?” he asked. “The water will rise up in ridges. It will settle back again. There will be sand. On top of the sand it will glisten,” he said. “Old kelp will float ashore. Old whales will float ashore.

“People will eat fish, big fish,” he said. “Sea-lions will come ashore. They will eat them. They will be good. Devil-fish, although they are ugly looking, will be good. The people will eat them. The fish in

the ocean will be fat. They will be good.

"There will be many different kinds in the ocean. There will be water-panther. There will be stone-fish. He will catch people. Long-tooth-fish will kill sea-lion. He will feel around in the water.

"Sea-lion will have no feet. He will have a tail. His teeth will be large. There will be no trees in the ocean. The water will be powerful in the ocean," he said.

He placed redwoods and firs along the shore. At the tail of the earth, at the north, he made them grow. He placed land in walls along in front of the ocean. From the north he put down rocks here and there. Over there the ocean beats against them. Far to the south he did that. He stood up pines along the way. He placed yellow pines. Far away he placed them. He placed mountains along in front of the water. He did not stop putting them up, even way to the south.

Redwoods and various pines were growing. He looked back and saw them growing. The redwoods had become tall. He placed stones along. He made small creeks by dragging along his foot. "Wherever they flow this water will be good," he said. "They will drink this. Only the ocean they will not drink." That is why all drink, many different kinds of animals. "Because the water is good, because it is not salt, deer, elk, panther, and fishes will drink of it," he said. He caused trees to grow up along. When he looked behind himself he saw they had grown up. "Birds will drink, squirrels will drink," he said. "Many different kinds will drink. I am placing good water along the way."

Many redwoods grew up. He placed water along toward the south. He kicked out springs. "There will be springs," he said. "These will belong to the deer," he said of the deer-licks.

He took along a dog. "Drink this water," he told his dog. He, himself, drank of it....

Tanbark oaks he made to spring up along the way. Many kinds, redwoods, firs, and pines, he caused to grow. He placed water along.... To make valleys for the streams he placed the land on edge. The mountains were large. They had grown....

He threw salamanders and turtles into the creeks. "Eels will live in this stream," he said. "Fish will come into it. Hook-bill and black salmon will run up this creek. Last of all steel-heads will swim in it. Crabs, small eels, and day-eels will come up.

"Grizzlies will live in large numbers on this mountain. On this mountain will be many deer. The people will eat them. Because they have no gall they may be eaten raw. Deer meat will be very sweet. Panthers will be numerous. There will be many jack-rabbits on this mountain," he said.

He did not like yellow-jackets. He nearly killed them. He made blue-flies and wasps.

His dog walked along with him. "There will be much water in this stream," he said. "This will be a small creek and the fish will run in it. The fish will be good. There will be many suckers and trout in this stream."

"There will be brush on this mountain," he said. He made manzanita and white-thorn grow there. "Here will be a valley. Here will be many deer. There will be many grizzlies at this place. Here a mountain will stand. Many rattlesnakes, bull-snakes, and water snakes will be in this place. Here will be good land. It shall be a valley.

"There will be many owls here, the barking-owl, the screech-owl, and the little owl. There shall be many blue jays, grouse, and quails. Here on this mountain will be many wood-rats. Here shall be

many varied robins. There shall be many woodcocks, yellow-hammers, and sap-suckers. Here will be herons and blackbirds. There will be many turtle-doves and pigeons. The kingfishers will catch fish. There will be many buzzards, and ravens. There will be many chicken-hawks. There will be many robins. On this high mountain there will be many deer," he said.

... The land had become good. The valleys had become broad. All kinds of trees and plants had sprung up. Springs had become and the water was flowing....

"I have made a good earth, my dog," he said. "Walk fast, my dog." Acorns were on the trees. The chestnuts were ripe. The hazelnuts were ripe. The manzanita berries were getting white. All sorts of food had become good. The buckeyes were good. The peppernuts were black. The bunch grass was ripe. The grass-hoppers were growing. The clover was in bloom. The bear-clover was good. The mountains had grown. The rocks had grown. All kinds that are eaten had become good. "We made it good, my dog," he said. Fish for the people to eat had grown in the streams.

"We have come to the south now," he said. All the different kinds were matured. They started back, he and his dog. "We will go back," he said. "The mountains have grown up quickly. The land has become flat. The trout have grown. Good water is flowing. Walk fast. All things have become good. We have made them good, my dog. It is warm. The land is good.

" ... We are about to arrive. We are close to home, my dog," he said. "I am about to get back north," he said to himself. "I am about to get back north. I am about to get back north. I am about to get back north," he said to himself.

That is all.

DARRYL BABE WILSON

Fall River Valley

Grampa Ramsey and the Great Canyon

Darryl Babe Wilson (b. 1939) was born at the confluence of Fall River and Pit River at Fall River Mills in northeastern California, "into two people": Atsuge-wi on his father's side and A-juma-wi on his mother's. He graduated from the University of California at Davis in 1992 with a major in English, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in 1997. He has spent his life preserving the oral tradition through his speaking and writing. His essays, poetry, and short fiction have appeared in numerous anthologies. This creation story first appeared in the quarterly News from Native California.

It was a summer before I kept track of time. In our decrepit automobile, we rattled into the driveway, a cloud of exhaust fumes, dust, and screaming, excited children. A half dozen ragged kids and an old black dog poured from the ancient vehicle. Confusion reigned supreme. Uncle Ramsey (after we became parents, his official title changed to "Grampa") was standing in the door of the comfortable little pine-board home just east of McArthur. Aunt Lorena was in her immaculate kitchen making coffee.

Just as quickly as we poured from the vehicle, we disappeared. There was a pervading silence. Always the crystal bowl rested on Aunt Lorena's kitchen table. Usually it held exotic, distant, tasty objects: oranges, bananas, store-bought candy! There seemed to be three hundred black, shiny eyes staring at the contents of that bowl, but we knew that we must wait for Aunt Lorena to say "when" before we could have the contents—which we instantly devoured.

I cannot remember if we had any cares. It was before I began the first grade. I didn't care if I had shoes or clothes. I didn't care about anything—except not to allow my brothers and sisters to have something that I couldn't. And when I did not know that they got something more than me, it didn't matter, really.

It seems that my "thoughts" were already focused upon some other objective. I listened to the old people. I remembered what they said, the tone of their voice, the waving of the hands. My mind registered the long silences between their choppy sentences and between their quiet words.

They spoke in our languages, A-Juma-wi and Opore-gee, and they used a very crude and stumbling English. The English words were strange. I preferred the "old language." As our lives moved into the world of the English speakers and our "old" language became less and less important and less and less used, something within the old people hesitated.

His employment as a "cowboy" came to an end when a shying horse threw him and he landed on his neck, nearly breaking it. After his days in the saddle faded, he worked on various ranches in the Fall River Valley until his retirement.

He spoke to us in Opore-gee (Dixie Valley language), giggling when the twins would say the words correctly after he explained them. We would have to go visit him many times before he would tell us a "real, not fake," story of our people and our history. During these times I took notes because a tape recorder "spooked" him; it mattered little what he was trying to say, the "ghost" inside the tape recorder affected him—he was occupied with the "ghost" instead of the lesson.

Close to the time of his "departure," he spoke of being "so old that I no longer think about the end, but think about the beginning again."

As a silent, powerful, unseen ship passing into an endless sea in the darkness, he moved into the spirit world to join his wife and others of our shattered little nation. He departed during the full moon of October 1986. Aunt Lorena preceded him by sixteen years.

Discard the rules of English kings and queens. Suspend logic. Grampa speaks as he learned to around campfires and in a distance so long ago that he claimed, "I didn't have enough good sense to listen good."

Grandfather's story:

HOW THE GREAT CANYON WAS MADE

[This canyon is between Fall River Mills and Barn, California, on the Pit River. Grandfather interchanges the names Qon and Silver-gray Fox occasionally. They are the same being in his thought.]

Qon [Silver-gray Fox] worked to make the world from a mist and a song long ago. He and Makada [Coyote] set to making things on earth. Makada was constantly trying to change things. Qon had the power to create. Makada had the power only to change things. He was always jealous because he could not create—he could only change. Qon created things. Makada always tried to change them. Qon persisted. Makada insisted. Sometimes he made a go of it. Sometimes Makada got his way. He sure was insistent, that Makada. [Smile, twinkle, and gruff giggle.]

His was the time when Qon put his place, his home—maybe you say "office"—on the Pit River/Hat Creek rim near Hogback [a small mountain]. From that place he could watch everything. This was before there was a Great Canyon, so Da-we-wewe and It-Ajuma [streams, including the Fall River and Pit River] could make it to the ocean, so salmon could come up there. Fall River and Dixie

Valley are the valley drainage.

It [the office] was like an umbrella that you can look through but you could not see it—like a bubble or something but you can't see him [it]. When it rained, it did not rain in there. When it snowed, snow could not get in. Wind must go around. Storms and lightning bounced off. I don't know just how to say—as if an arch. Like a thinking or a thought or something.

I dunno. You couldn't touch it or see it. Anyhow, it was there so the Power could watch. Qon wanted everything just right. He knew he had to watch old Makada. It was bad. Qon needed help from Makada. Makada was insistent.

Qon molded earth like *wa-hach* [a form of bread made in an iron skillet without grease], flattened here, raised there. Everywhere not the same. It was when Chum-see-akoo was being made [the small area where the Hat Creek and Pit River come together and create a small peninsula in a shape like Argentina; Highway 299 East now runs through it]. Some call it Ya-nee-na. It was made. Qon wanted to name it. Makada wanted to name it. They talked. They argued.

Qon said, "Let's make some other things and get back to this place." So they did. They roamed and made *a-hew* [mountains] and *da-wi-wiwi* [streams] and *a-ju-juji* [springs]. Qon named these places. They returned to Chum-see-akoo/Ya-nee-na. Makada said, "You, brother, have named all of these other places. It is my turn to name this place right here." [A gruff giggle from Grandfather because Coyote called Silver-gray Fox "brother."]

Qon said, "No, you will call it by any name but a real name. Sometimes when you talk you don't make much sense. Let's go and make some more."

So they did. [Silver-gray Fox was in the process of making the Pit River Country into a livable place.]

Watching from a high bluff, Qon saw the insistence of Makada. He waited. Meanwhile, he forgot to make a place for the Pit River to run and drain the upper valley. He forgot to make a canyon. There was a mountain of solid rock. No canyon.

They returned to the small valley. Again they got in an argument. This time Qon give in. He give up. He got tired of arguments.

Makada called it Chum-see Akoo [Mice Valley] because he liked to eat mice. He really liked the taste of fresh mice. Today that is what we call it. Mice Valley. But what about the canyon that was filled with solid rock? The Pit River cannot run through it. The salmon must come so people can eat.

Qon looked and saw a wide spot below rock mountain. Rock mountain must be made into a canyon for Pit River. He spoke to big bass-sturgeon. "You must do this so river can run to the ocean." Sturgeon said, "Okay, but I am not strong enough to break that mountain." Qon said, "Tomorrow I shall tell you what to do, after I think." Why did Qon have to think? I dunno.

Next day Qon said, "Go to the top of mountain [Mount Shasta] and get power." He went, then he swam back from mountain. He got back and took a run at it and hit it [the rock mountain] with his head. BANG! Again and again, BANG! It hurt. He got tired, and it hurt. Qon said, "Go back to the mountain for more power."

Meanwhile Makada was off doing something. He could not create. He was changing something. Always changing, Makada.

Sturgeon struck the mountain, BANG! again and again. Again and again. Again he got tired. Again it hurt. He went back to the mountaintop and got some more power. BANG! Old mountain rock he began to break. It got weakness. He cracked it! He got more power in a hurry. He broke it! Rocks were everywhere. Later they found some rocks clear up in Dixie [Valley]. Rocks flying everywhere. He broke through. He did it! He came out to Bo-ma-ree [Fall River Valley].

Qon said, "Good."

Meanwhile, Qon found Makada. He was up at the hot springs cooking quail eggs and looking with his head down seeing himself in the water. [Gruff giggle.] Makada always thought he was real cute.

When they came back, Makada noticed the great canyon. Qon looked at Makada. Makada looked away, with his tongue hanging sideways from his mouth, and said, "I didn't do it [make the canyon]. I was gathering quail eggs to boil in hot springs."

Looking to the rim today, you will see power [the "office"] is gone. Qon and Makada ran east up the canyon that was rushing with water [the Pit River]. There were more things to make. Maybe it was then that people were mad, but that is another story. Not for today.

We left Grampa Ramsey in possession of a "real, not fake," story. At times it seemed as if it was a story about creation in general, but it was, for the most part, a story of the Great Canyon. For this time spent with Grampa we are made richer. Richer in knowledge and understanding. Richer in language and the function of that language. Richer in the spiritual connection that binds us to the earth.

THE MOUNTAINS

JOAQUIN MILLER

Mt. Shasta

An Elk Hunt

Joaquin Miller (1837–1913), born Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, was an eccentric, larger-than-life poet, the self-styled "Byron of the West," who achieved great popularity in his day but whose reputation has since melted into the mists. After living in England for some years he retired to an estate he built in the hills of Oakland, California. This hunting account is taken from his autobiography, Memorie and Rime (1884).

When the spring came tripping by from the south over the chaparral hills of Shasta, leaving flowers in every footprint as we passed, I set my face for Mount Shasta, the lightest-hearted lad that ever mounted horse. A hard day's ride brought me to Portuguese Flat, the last new mining camp and the nearest town to my beloved Mount Shasta. Here I found my former partner in the Soda Springs property, Mountain Joe, and together we went up to Mount Shasta.

The Indian chief, Blackbeard, gave me a beautiful little valley then known as Now-ow-wa, but now called by the euphonious name of Squaw Valley, and I built a cabin there. As winter settled down and the snow fell deep and fast, however, the Indians all retreated down from out the spurs of Mount Shasta and took refuge on the banks of the McCloud River. I nailed up my cabin and on

snowshoes recrossed the fifteen miles of steep and stupendous mountains, and got down to winter at my old home, Soda Springs. But a new Yankee partner had got his grasp about the throat of things there, and instead of pitching him out into the snow I determined to give it all up and set my face where I left my heart, once more, finally and forever, with the Indians. Loaded down with arms and ammunition, one clear, frosty morning in December I climbed up the spur of Mount Shasta, which lay between me and my little valley of snow, and left the last vestige of civilization behind me. It was steep, hard climbing. Sometimes I would sink into the snow to my waist. Sometimes the snow would slide down the mountain and bear me back, half buried, to the place I had started from half an hour before. A marvel that I kept on. But there was hatred behind, there was love before—elements that have built cities and founded empires. As the setting sun gilded the snowy pines with gold I stood on the lofty summit, looking down into my unpeopled world of snow.

An hour of glorious gliding, darting, shooting on my snowshoes, and I stood on the steep bluff that girt above and about my little valley. A great, strange light, like silver, enveloped the land. Across the valley, on the brow of the mountain beyond, the curved moon, new and white and bright, gleamed before me like a drawn cimeter [*sic*] to drive me back. Down in the valley under me busy little foxes moved and shuttle-cocked across the level sea of snow. But I heard no sound nor saw any other sign of life. The solitude, the desolation, the silence, was so vast, so actual, that I could feel it—hear it. A strange terror came upon me there. And oh, I wished—how devoutly I wished I never shall forget—that I had not ventured on this mad enterprise. But I had burned my ship. It had been as impossible for me to return, tired, hungry, heartsick as I then was, as it had been for me to lay hold of the bright cold horns of the moon before me. With a sigh I tightened my belt, took up my rifle, which I had leaned against a pine, and once more shot ahead. Breaking open my cabin door, I took off my snowshoes and crept down the steep wall of snow, and soon had a roaring fire from the sweet smelling pine wood that lay heaped in cords against the walls. Seven days I rested there, as lone as the moon in the cold blue above. Queer days! Queer thoughts I had there then. Those days left their impression clearly, as strange creatures of another age had left their footprints in the plastic clay that has become now solid stone. When the mind is so void, queer thoughts get into one's head; and they come and establish themselves and stay. I had some books, and read them all through. Here I first began to write.

On the eighth day my door darkened, and I sprang up from my work, rifle in hand. Two Indians, brave, handsome young fellows, one my best and dearest friend in all the world, stood before me. And sad tales they told me that night as I feasted them around my great fireplace. The tribe was starving over on the McCloud! The gold-diggers had so muddied and soiled the waters the season before that the annual run of salmon had failed. The Indians had for the first time in centuries no stores of dried salmon, and they were starving to death by the hundreds. And what was still more alarming, for it meant the ultimate destruction of all the Indians concerned, I was told that the natives of Pit River Valley had resolved to massacre all the settlers there. After a day's rest these two Indians, loaded with flour for the famishing tribe, set out to return. Again I was left alone, this time for nearly three weeks. The Indians returned with other young men to carry flour back to the famishing, while we who were strong and rested prepared for a grand hunt for a great band of elk which we knew wintered near the warm springs high up on the wood slopes of Mount Shasta. Perhaps I might mention here that this cabin full of provisions had remained untouched all the time of my absence. I will say further that I believe the last Indian would have starved to death rather than have touched one crumb of bread without permission. These Indians had never yet come in contact with any white man but myself. Such honesty I never knew as I found here. As for their valor and prowess, I can only point you to the Modoc battlefields, where the whole United States Army was held at bay so long nearly twenty years after, and pass on. *

This is the first anthology of nature writing that celebrates California, the most geographically diverse state in the union. Readers—be they naturalists or armchair explorers—will find themselves transported to California's many wild places in the company of forty noted writers whose works span more than a century. Divided into sections on California's mountains, hills and valleys, deserts, coast, and elements (earth, wind, and fire), the book contains essays, diary entries, and excerpts from larger works, including fiction. As a prelude to the collection, editor Steven Gilbar presents two California Indian creation myths, one a Cahto narrative and the other an A-juma-wi story as told by Darryl Babe Wilson.

Familiar names appear in these pages—John Muir, Robert Louis Stevenson, John McPhee, M.F.K. Fisher, Gretel Ehrlich—but less familiar writers such as Daniel Duane, Margaret Millar, and John McKinney are also included. Among the gems in this treasure trove are Jack Kerouac on climbing Mt. Matterhorn, Barry Lopez on snow geese migration at Tule Lake, Edward Abbey on Death Valley, Henry Miller on Big Sur, and Joan Didion on the Santa Ana winds. Gary Snyder's inspiring Afterword reflects the spirit of environmentalism that runs throughout the book. *Natural State* also reveals the many changes to California's landscape that have occurred in geological time and in human terms. More than a book of nature writing, this book is superb writing about nature.

Children's literature - Wikipedia - The winner receives \$500, the chapbook published as print book and eBook, 20 author Poets & Writers Live is an initiative developed in response to interviews and May 22, 2016 Becky Varley-Winter Deerhart, Grant Tarbard, kfs, Nature, and poems have appeared in countless literary magazines and anthologies. Under the Sign of Nature - Cover for *Bedrock: Writers on the Wonders of Geology* at in his or her degree of natural world understanding, this book will provide new California Literary Review providing a platform for many of the state's most passionate and progressive. In this eclectic anthology, more than twenty scientists, nature writers, poets, Anthologies - Heyday Books - John Muir: *Nature Writings* (LOA #92): *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth My First Summer in the Sierra The Mountains of California* Stickeen essays (Library of America) Verkauft von: Book Depository DE. he was also a master of natural description who evoked with unique power and intimacy the untrammelled Prose Poetry - Western Colorado University Nature Writing of the Anthropocene - DiVA - Rare first edition, first issue, of Locke's remarkable study of the nature of knowledge,. First edition of the novel that changed the path of modern literature, number 670 of only... "Edition de Luxe" of the writings of the adventurous 26th president of the United States, number 17 of... *A Natural and Civil History of California. The Colors of Nature: Culture Identity & the Natural World* - Buy this book After reading more than a hundred poems from African American writers, Dungy explains in her introduction to *Black Nature*, "For years, poets and African Americans, specifically, are fundamental to the natural fabric of this

anniversary California Poets in the Schools anthology What the World Hears. Natural State: A Literary Anthology of California Nature Writing - To be eligible for the 2019 award, books must have been published in 2018 or 2019. to L. The annual Best Indie Book Award (or BIBA) is an international literary. Prize ensures that they honour fiction and the best writing on a global basis. It is a normal investment that lets you use your ISA allowance to make it tax Nathaniel tarn poetry - Autumn House Press is a nonprofit corporation registered in the state of Barclay Creek Press is a publisher of literary works of fiction and nonfiction on outdoor art, nature studies, and poetry, as well as venturing into thoughtful books that explore Publishers of natural history, travel and garden books for California. Natural State: A Literary Anthology of California - Goodreads - Natural State also reveals the many changes to California's landscape that have occurred in geological time and in human terms. More than a book of "nature Literary Laureate" Inlandia Institute - Winners of the 2019 National Outdoor Book Awards (NOBA). Outdoor Literature Ed Gillet to cross the Pacific Ocean from California to Hawaii, a journey that would take at least two months. Inner Ranges: An Anthology of Mountain Thoughts. Compelling and thought provoking, this is natural history writing at its best. Persea Books - raph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism. Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and Environment in the U.S. The Irish Poet and the Natural World: An Anthology of Verse in English Albany: State U of New York P, 2009.

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