



Christian Knoeller, *Reimagining Environmental History: Ecological Memory in the Wake of Landscape Change*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2017. 352 pp. Cloth \$89.95. Paper \$32.95.

Despite its unfortunate reputation as a flyover region, the American Midwest contains biodiverse places for nature writers to investigate massive ecological extirpation (and extinction), landscape changes, and cultural displacements. In *Reimagining Environmental History*, Knoeller situates nineteenth-century and contemporary Midwestern nature writers into an ecology of environmental history. To do so, he emphasizes ecological memory, the biological process through which ecosystems recover from disruptions. Moreover, he expands this phenomenon to include cultural processes by which humans trace landscape changes and their environmental consequences and develop ethical approaches to ecological crises.

Knoeller selects ten Midwestern authors who either witness firsthand the loss of biodiversity or wrestle with its aftermaths. Notwithstanding similar themes throughout his ten chapters—including indigenous approaches to land management, ethical stewardship, European American settler ideology, and wildlife restoration efforts—Knoeller groups his chapters into five pairings roughly positioned by time periods, literary genres, and media. In the first pairing, he analyzes the art and literature of naturalists John James Audubon and Gene Stratton-Porter. In the second pairing, he explores how Paul Errington and Scott Russell Sanders reimagine stewardship on different scales. Knoeller analyzes in the third pairing Theodore Roethke and William Stafford's poetics of place and ecological sentiments. He then analyzes two contemporary Native American authors—Louise Erdrich and Diane Glancy—who through autobiographical and fictional texts explore how environmental and physical displacement affect indigenous cultural identity. In the final set, Knoeller investigates how Elizabeth Dodd and Paul Gruchow emphasize scales of time as they discuss landscape changes.

In his preface and epilogue, Knoeller situates himself into his understanding of ecological memory within environmental history. He recounts personal stories that provide biographical rationale for his research on these Midwestern authors. He too gathers fauna and flora samples and witnesses habitat destruction. By providing these sketches, Knoeller argues for the interrelationship between environmental history, ecological memory as a cultural phenomenon, and ecocriticism.

Reimagining Environmental History: Ecological Memory in the Wake of Landscape Change is an ambitious project that merits additional reads and should appeal to multiple audiences. Those new to ecological discourse will find Knoeller's literature review in the preface particularly helpful. Readers will appreciate Knoeller's interdisciplinary approach to the Midwest and its

environmental literature canon. Given his emphasis on different literary forms and media, perhaps environmental historians and literary critics will perceive these authors—and the many cited theorists, naturalists, and ecologists—as constituting an ecology of writers rather than a canon.

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