



In Earshot of Water: Notes from the Columbia Plateau (Sightline Books)

Paul Lindholdt

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Whether the subject is the plants that grow there, the animals that live there, the rivers that run there, or the people he has known there, Paul Lindholdt's *In Earshot of Water* illuminates the Pacific Northwest in vivid detail. Lindholdt writes with the precision of a naturalist, the critical eye of an ecologist, the affection of an apologist, and the self-revelation and self-awareness of a personal essayist in the manner of Annie Dillard, Loren Eiseley, Derrick Jensen, John McPhee, Robert Michael Pyle, and Kathleen Dean Moore.

Exploring both the literal and literary sense of place, with particular emphasis on environmental issues and politics in the far Northwest, Lindholdt weaves passages from the journals of Lewis and Clark, the log of Captain James Cook, the novelized memoir of Theodore Winthrop, and Bureau of Reclamation records growing from the paintings that the agency commissioned to publicize its dams in the 1960s and 1970s, to tell ecological and personal histories of the region he knows and loves.

In Lindholdt's beautiful prose, America's environmental legacies—those inherited from his blood relatives as well as those from the influences of mass culture—and illuminations of the hazards of neglecting nature's warning signs blur and merge and reemerge in new forms. Themes of fathers and sons layer the book, as well—the narrator as father and as son—interwoven with a call to responsible social activism with appeals to reason and emotion. Like water itself, *In Earshot of Water* cascades across boundaries and blends genres, at once learned and literary.

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