



What Wildness Is This: Women Write about the Southwest (Southwestern Writers Collection)

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Winner, WILLA Literary Award for Creative Nonfiction, 2008

How do women experience the vast, arid, rugged land of the American Southwest? The Story Circle Network, a national organization dedicated to helping women write about their lives, posed this question, and nearly three hundred women responded with original pieces of writing that told true and meaningful stories of their personal experiences of the land. From this deep reservoir of writing—as well as from previously published work by writers including Joy Harjo, Denise Chávez, Diane Ackerman, Naomi Shihab Nye, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gloria Anzaldua, Terry Tempest Williams, and Barbara Kingsolver—the editors of this book have drawn nearly a hundred pieces that witness both to the ever-changing, ever-mysterious life of the natural world and to the vivid, creative, evolving lives of women interacting with it.

Through prose, poetry, creative nonfiction, and memoir, the women in this anthology explore both the outer landscape of the Southwest and their own inner landscapes as women living on the land—the congruence of where they are and who they are. The editors have grouped the writings around eight evocative themes:

- The way we live on the land
- Our journeys through the land
- Nature in cities
- Nature at risk
- Nature that sustains us
- Our memories of the land
- Our kinship with the animal world
- What we leave on the land when we are gone

From the Gulf Coast of Texas to the Pacific Coast of California, and from the southern borderlands to the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, these intimate portraits of women's lives on the land powerfully demonstrate that nature writing is no longer the exclusive domain of men, that women bring unique and transformative perspectives to this genre.

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