

Small Creatures and Ordinary Places: Essays on Nature

Allen M. Young



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Small Creatures and Ordinary Places reveals to us the beauty and value of hornets, bats, katydids, mice, cicadas, and other tiny dwellers in our own backyards. Young, a renowned expert on butterflies and cicadas of the American tropics, records in these charming essays his keen observations of the natural world as he walks through an urban woods near the Lake Michigan shore, or sits on his deck facing his backyard, or gazes at a field of corn stubble in autumn. He invites us to venture into our own yards, neighborhood parks, fields, and forests and pause there . . . to look and to listen.

Small creatures have unique and interesting stories to tell us, Young points out. Their brief life cycles illustrate the intricate workings of a bigger clock driving the seasons, and they dominate the larger web of life in which humans are but a strand. Far too often they are ignored, taken for granted, reviled, or misunderstood. Even now, Young writes, as we move into a new millennium as a species and the technological pace of our existence further quickens, we can gain much from appreciating nature close at hand, despite how steadily it is being pushed aside.



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