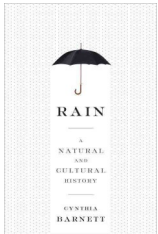


Nonfiction

Rain: a natural and cultural history



[view in catalog](#)

My family and I lived for five years in the North American rainforest of Southeast Alaska. In those days, it rained over three hundred days a year. To this day my children prefer a rainy day to one filled with sun. That's one reason why this book called out to me.

It's a compendium of archaeological, historical, and scientific facts about our most common precipitation. Also, included in it are a series of mini-biographies of people who are renowned for some connection to rain.

One of these includes Princess Anne of Denmark who tried vainly several time to sail to Scotland to marry her fiancé, King James VI. Violent storms blew her back to the Nordic regions twice. This was in August, 1589 during the time known as The Little Ice Age. King James VI eventually enlisted his navy to take him north to marry her. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on November 11, 2015

[Rain: a natural and cultural history](#)

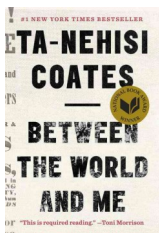
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Between the World and Me



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In a radio broadcast this year, President Obama said this about racism in America. "We are not cured? Societies don't overnight completely erase everything that happened 200-300 years prior." That's the premise of Ta-Nehisi Coates' new nonfiction book, a moving personal letter to his son.

Coates begins by sharing his own difficult childhood on the streets of Baltimore where his only goal was to survive. He describes learning another language ?of head nods and handshakes.? He learned ?a list of prohibited blocks? and even learned the ?smell and feel of fighting weather.?

Growing up in a bad neighborhood taught him one vital thing: he had to protect and shield his body. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 20, 2015

[Between the World and Me](#)

[African American](#)

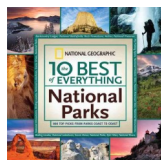
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The Ten Best of Everything National Parks



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As the days shorten, and autumn winds blow, it's time to dream about and plan your next national park vacation. We are lucky to live in a country with so many outstanding natural places to visit: the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Acadia, Yellowstone, Zion...the list goes on and on.

If you can't decide which national park to visit next, this guide will give you lots of ideas.

Whatever your interests--photography, horseback riding, climbing summits, mountain biking, fly-fishing, petroglyph-viewing, you'll find lots of great recommendations.

Say you're a history *aficionado*, how about the ten best parks to follow our presidential footprints?

Try Gettysburg, Mount Rushmore (of course), Theodore Roosevelt N.P., the Jefferson Monument, etc. Each list has at least a half page entry on why it's included.

One of my favorite entries came from the seasonal category section: Dark Skies. Can you guess which parks offer the best star-viewing? Big Bend makes the top of the list [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on October 12, 2015

[The Ten Best of Everything National Parks: 800 Top Pics from Coast to Coast](#)

[Travel](#)

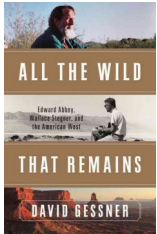
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All the Wild that Remains: Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner and the American West



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This is a hard book to categorize. Is it a dual biography? A history of a region? An environmental paean to a place? A literary memoir of the West? A road book to both grand and despoiled places?

It's all of the above and more. Gessner began the book as a tribute to two western writers who have inspired him: Edward Abbey and Wallace Stegner. Gessner went to grad school in Colorado and fell in love with the southwest. Abbey and Stegner became his heroes and teachers, although not literally—he learned through their writing.

He compares the more revolutionary-seeming Abbey who broke laws (trashed earth-moving machines to stop development and threatened to blow up dams) with the more straight-laced Stegner. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on July 21, 2015

[All the Wild that Remains: Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner and the American West](#)

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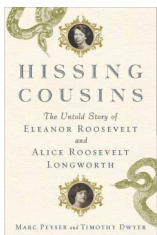
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Hissing Cousins



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This double biography of two famous first cousins, both belonging to the famous Roosevelt clan, brings the early 20th century to life in both Washington DC and New York and gives us a fascinating peak into two strong women's lives, both of whom married or were born into politics. Eleanor Roosevelt and her first cousin Alice were born just eight months apart. Alice came from the Republican Oyster Bay branch of the family and Eleanor from the Democratic Hyde Park (NYC) branch. Not only did they differ in political and social outlooks, but they even pronounced their last name differently. Alice's family said Rose-velt. And Eleanor's pronounced the same name as Ruse-velt. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 1, 2015

[Hissing Cousins : the untold story of Eleanor Roosevelt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth](#)

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[American History](#)

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H is for Hawk

I almost became a falconer once. The ad promised you hands-on training for catching raptors, and you would be working with ones needing care, so it seemed like the perfect volunteer gig. However, our time in California was drawing to a close, so I never got to experience the drama and force of a raptor landing on my gloved hand. But, wow, did I love this book.

This memoir artfully intertwines three stories: Helen's experience training her first goshawk, her grieving for her father, and author T. H. White's mixed results raising falcons and hawks. All these stories are told powerfully, and the subject is so interesting that I found the book riveting. Training the small fierce goshawk Mable (the author chose the name as something opposite of what you'd expect) for a few hours every day away took Helen from her disabling grief over her father's sudden death on the street taking pictures for his job. At one point, Macdonald describes his last photograph--at street level, a line of blurs and a patch of sky as her father fell and died from a heart attack. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on May 13, 2015

[H is for Hawk](#)

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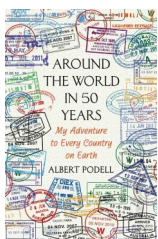
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Around the World in 50 Days: my adventure to every country on Earth



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I'm not one for doing the whole of anything: the Appalachian Trail, canoeing the Amazon, skiing across Antarctica, but yes I can see the attraction of visiting every country in the world. The problem is that it is a moving target. Governments change, countries come and go, and unless you are super rich doing the world in a timely fashion is not possible.

Yet the inventive, gutsy, rule-breaking Podell finally managed to complete them all though it did take a half century. He began his foreign travels with a quick trip to Canada when he was 24.

And yes, he considered this international travel light.

He just completed a degree in international studies. A few years later, as editor of an adventure magazine, he decided he was tired of sending people off on exotic jaunts and staying home, so

he set off with a friend to complete the longest land journey ever attempted with his good friend Steve. They got sponsors to pay for the trip and hired a photographer. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2015

[Around the World in 50 Years: My Adventure to Every Country on Earth](#)

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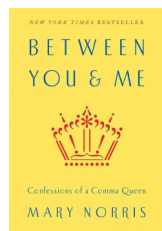
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Between You & Me: confessions of a comma queen



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Are you a grammar *aficionado*? Do you love learning the ins and outs of different jobs? Do you like reaffirming that your grammar and punctuation is spot-on, or why and how it has strayed from the path of correctness? If so, Mary Norris's *Between You & Me* is exactly right for you.

Norris describes her life before and during her thirty year tenure at *The New Yorker* as a copy writer with the detailed knowledge to make sure that the correct word, usage and punctuation is always employed. To accomplish that, her best tool (other than her comprehensive knowledge of grammar) was her noteworthy stash of No. 1 pencils. What an odyssey it was to keep a supply of the best proofreading pencil in the world. And those in a perfect working state.

Solution: a passionate epistolary correspondence with one manufacturer of the yellow-painted rods.

With humor and great descriptive ability Norris describes her first jobs, as a foot checker at a public swimming pool (checking for Athletes foot before swimmers entered the pool), and milkman?make that milkwoman--a job those under fifty may not even know existed. Later, she went to graduate school in literature, and moved to New York where she took a few lowly desk jobs before she scored an interview at America's most prestigious literary magazine, *The New Yorker*. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2015

[Between You & Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen](#)

[Writing](#)

[Nonfiction](#)

[Memoir](#)

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Tales from Gombe



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If you're fascinated by some of our closest animal relatives, the chimpanzee, this delightful collection of photographs will delight and inspire you.

Gombe National Park in Tanzania is where Richard Leakey and Jane Goodall first studied these fascinating primates over fifty years ago.

The married photographer pair, Shah and Rogers, made many trips over a period of ten plus years to the park. What makes this book special is to see how individual chimps changed over the years, from babyhood to young adult, to young adult to mature, from mature to old.

The photos show the chimps doing daily activities, hunting, food-gathering eating, grooming, nursing and taking care of their young, even displaying as powerful males and females do to show who is boss and on top of the hierarchy.

What I liked most were the family portraits, a line of chimps in a row, siblings and one or both parents.

For many years, scientists have named all the chimps in one family with names beginning with the same consonants for instance: Frodo, Freud, Fanni, Flossi, Faustino, etc. Representing the G family are Galahad, Gaia, Gizmo, and Google, among others.

It's amazing how distinct the chimp's faces are, just as distinct as those of humans. Also, how intelligent and expressive their eyes are. The book's text describes the struggle for power in each community and how certain chimps are loners, while others go off and join other communities.

It also describes how they help each other, how siblings look after their younger family members, how even adults stay close to their parents.

Several photos document tool use by chimps, including the famous termite-foraging with long grasses that Dr. Goodall first discovered in November, 1960 that amazed scientists around the world.

This is a very beautiful book that will also fill you in on some of the latest chimp research in Gombe. For more on Goodall's fascinating work and life, try [*Jane Goodall: a Twentieth Century Life*](#) by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen.

Posted by Dory L. on March 10, 2015

[Tales from Gombe](#)

[Science & Nature](#)

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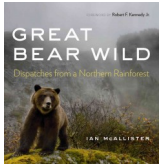
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Great Bear Wild: Dispatches from a Northern Rainforest



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If one area of our continent calls to me more than any other it's the Northwest, that region of coastal rain forests that extends from northern California to Alaska.

This magnificent book of photographs covers one of the few unspoiled areas left there, the Great Bear Rainforest.

It's located on the mainland slightly north of Vancouver and extends past Prince Rupert to the border with Alaska. Talk about wild: salmon, bear, wolves, sea lions, great Douglas firs and hundred-year-old cedars all thrive there.

Ian McAllister, who lives nearby and works as an ecologist, has taken many incredible photographs of the wildlife and the plants. He also photographed the native people, including a few of the matriarchs of the Gitga'at clan.

The photos are thrilling including some of spirit bears—a bear I was not familiar with. They are white black bears (yes, that's right) produced by a recessive gene. They are not albinos, so a spirit bear could have black-furred bear mother and siblings. Francis Kermode, a museum curator, first named them.

The chapter on sea wolves shows how tough making a daily living is for the wolves who have bred on this coastal area for centuries. They must swim between islands to find food, and one young male, ostracized by his family is shown swimming away from all that he has known after his family boots him away because they cannot feed him.

In one charming photo, tens of curious stellar sea lion bob on the Pacific's surface—only their heads showing. They stare straight at the photographer. McAllister reports that these wonderfully intelligent and agile creatures are making a comeback in the waters off the Great Bear.

If you've ever seen the starfish in the Northwest, you know that these echinoderms are huge and often bright orange. McAllister also takes incredible photographs of colorful underwater creatures: purple urchins and striking rose anemones. Some interesting shots focus on both above-water and below-water life in the same shot.

Like many pristine landscapes left in the world, McAllister reports that the area of the Great Bear Rainforest is under threat from oil drilling. Additionally, there are plans to create a large port in seas that are often stormy and dangerous. This motivated McAllister to publish these beautiful photographs. But the text of the book also provides much information about the creatures of the region. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 3, 2015

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