



The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy

Michael McCarthy

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The moth snowstorm, a phenomenon Michael McCarthy remembers from his boyhood when moths “would pack a car’s headlight beams like snowflakes in a blizzard,” is a distant memory. Wildlife is being lost, not only in the wholesale extinctions of species but also in the dwindling of those species that still exist.

The Moth Snowstorm is unlike any other book about climate change today; combining the personal with the polemical, it is a manifesto rooted in experience, a poignant memoir of the author’s first love: nature. McCarthy traces his adoration of the natural world to when he was seven, when the discovery of butterflies and birds brought sudden joy to a boy whose mother had just been hospitalized and whose family life was deteriorating. He goes on to record in painful detail the rapid dissolution of nature’s abundance in the intervening decades, and he proposes a radical solution to our current problem: that we each recognize in ourselves the capacity to love the natural world.

Arguing that neither sustainable development nor ecosystem services have provided adequate defense against pollution, habitat destruction, species degradation, and climate change, McCarthy asks us to consider nature as an intrinsic good and an emotional and spiritual resource, capable of inspiring joy, wonder, and even love. An award-winning environmental journalist, McCarthy presents a clear, well-documented picture of what he calls “the great thinning” around the world, while interweaving the story of his own early discovery of the wilderness and a childhood saved by nature. Drawing on the truths of poets, the studies of scientists, and the author’s long experience in the field, *The Moth Snowstorm* is part elegy, part ode, and part argument, resulting in a passionate call to action.

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