

The Extravagant World Costa Rica Writing Retreat April 2009

Peggy Shumaker: Strong Places, Strong Writing

For lush language and an intimate sense of place:

James Galvin, *The Meadow*

Mark Spragg, *Where Rivers Change Direction*

Eva Saulitis, *Leaving Resurrection*

Norman MacLean, *A River Runs Through It*

Judith Kitchen, *Distance and Direction* (and her three anthologies of brief prose:
Short Takes, In Short and In Brief)

For a combination of political and spiritual ecologies:

Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*

Ed Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

Nancy Lord, *Beluga Days*

For science and language:

Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses*

Allison Hawthorne Deming, *The Monarchs* and *Writing the Sacred into the Real*

Home Places

Robert Michael Pyle, *Sky Time in Gray's River: Living for Keeps in a Forgotten Place*

Richard Nelson, *The Island Within*

Mary Clearman Blew, *All But the Waltz*

Alberto Rios, *Capirotada: a Nogales Memoir* and *The Theatre of Night*

Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Latin Deli*

Jill Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*

Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*

Theresa Jordan, *Riding the White Horse Home*

Ted Kooser, *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps*

Natalie Kusz, *Road Song*

Michael Martone, *The Flatness and other Landscapes*

Jerah Chadwick, *Story Hunger*

Travel Places

Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia*

Naomi Shihab Nye, *19 Varieties of Gazelle*
Pico Iyer, *Falling Off the Map*
Gretchen Legler, *On the Ice: An Intimate Portrait of Life at McMurdo Station*
Cynthia Huntington, *The Salt House: A Summer on the Dunes of Cape Cod*
Robert Michael Pyle, *Wintergreen: Rambles in a Ravaged Land*
Bob Pyle's blog (Includes notes from the road and his blog for Orion)
http://www.xerces.org/Butterfly_Conservation/butterflyathon.html

Writing Activities: *Tell It Slant*, Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola



ELOISE'S READING LIST

Writing Guidebooks:

Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth, eds. *Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You*

Christian McEwen and Mark Statman, eds. *The Alphabet Of The Trees: A Guide To Nature Writing*

John A. Murray. *Writing About Nature: A Creative Guide.*

David Petersen. *Writing Naturally: A Down-To-Earth Guide to Nature Writing.*

Francine Prose. *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them.*

Fiction:

Chris Abani. *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin)
excellent angle on nature(s) in the city

J.M. Coetzee. *The Lives of Animals*

Luisa González. *A ras del suelo* (Editorial Costa Rica).

Katharine Haake. *That River, Those Rocks.* (University of Nevada Press)

Helen Humphreys. *Wild Dogs: A Novel* (Norton).

Enrique Jaramillo Levi, ed. *When New Flowers Bloomed: Women Writers of Costa Rica & Panama* (Latin American Literary Review)

Carmen Lyra. *Cuentos de mi tía Panchita* (Editorial Costa Rica).

Alice Munro. *The View From Castle Rock; Lives of Girls and Women*.

**Barbara Ras, ed. *Costa Rica: A Traveler's Literary Companion* (Whereabouts Press. 1994).

A collection of stories selected and arranged by region. This makes for a perfect "read as you travel" book. You can just check where we are and read a story from a local author.

Cuentos tradicionales afolimonenses—in Spanish, traditional stories from the Afro-Costra Rican tradition

Zora Neale Hurston. *Mules and Men*.

Memoir:

Alison Hawthorne Deming & Lauret E. Savoy, eds. *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity and the Natural World*. (Milkweed 2002)

Lorraine Ferra. *A Crow Doesn't Need A Shadow*.

Aldo Leopold. *A Sand County Almanac*.

Janisse Ray. *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*.

Sandra Steingraber. *Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood*.

Terry Tempest Williams. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*.

Nonfiction (not memoir):

Robert Atwan. *The Best American Essays* (Houghton Mifflin)

Lee Gutkind, ed. *The Best Creative Nonfiction*, Vol 1 & 2 (Norton)

Judith Kitchen & Mary Paumier Jones, eds. *In Brief: Short Takes on the Personal* (Norton).

John McPhee. *Oranges* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux).

Sharman Apt Russell. *Hunger: An Unnatural History; Standing in the Light: My Life as a Pantheist; Anatomy of a Rose: Exploring the Secret Life of Flowers*.

Henry David Thoreau. *Wild Fruits: Thoreau's Rediscovered Lost Manuscript* (Norton 2000)

Poetry:

Elizabeth Bradfield. *Interpretive Work* (Arktoi Books 2008)

Mary Crow, ed. *Woman Who Has Sprouted Wings: Poems By Contemporary Latin American Women Poets*. Second Edition. Latin American Literary Review Press.

Alison Hawthorne Deming. *The Monarchs*.

Lilly Guardia. *Extraña circunstancia* (Editorial Tecnocencia).

May Swenson. *Nature: Poems Old and New* (Houghton Mifflin)

Gary Snyder. *Danger On Peaks* (Shoemaker Hoard)

Robert Wrigley. *Lives of the Animals* (Penguin)

Some Sites of Interest:

<http://cloudbridge.org/project.htm>

<http://centralamerica.com/cr/moon/moart.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Costa Rican writers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Costa_Rican_writers)

<http://www.infocostarica.com/culture/prose.html>

http://www.ncsu.edu/project/acontracorriente/spring_04/Dixon.pdf

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/139528/Costa-Rica/272326/The-arts#ref=ref467934>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=lrLI2BJkPu4C&pg=PA401&dq=costa+rican+writers&ei=alz3SK-NApK6tQOIqtm9CA#PPA402,M1>

Overview of critique of Costa Rica literature

<http://books.google.com/books?id=xl1rbaPN7mIC&pg=PA269&dq=costa+rican+writers&lr=&ei=6Yz3SOjLDZqktAO769i9CA>

About Costa Rica Women's Movement

<http://books.google.com/books?id=lpXTF7D5G4cC&pg=RA1-PA411&dq=costa+rican+writers&lr=&ei=Zo33SKbUEo2EtAP3hs2-CA#PRA1-PA413,M1>

About Shirley Campbell, Afro-Hispanic writer

<http://www.deepgreenphotography.com/aboutdeepgreen.htm>



Colleen's Costa Rica Suggested Reading List

NATURAL HISTORY AND ECOLOGY

Field Guides:

We are likely to see a wide variety of fauna (monkeys, crocodile, agouti, coatimundi, sloth, armadillo, bats, birds, lizards, frogs, butterflies) but we will see more birds than any other species. This is because there are so many species of birds in Costa Rica, they are more easily seen than mammals, and they are often much more abundant. If you want to bring a field guide, here are a couple of options.

The Ecotraveller's Wildlife Guide: Costa Rica (1998) by Les Beletsky, from the Wildlife Conservation Society, is a good overall guide to the most common amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals you might see in Costa Rica. It has color plates and natural history of the selected species. A drawback is the book is quite heavy.

Neotropical Rainforest Mammals (1997) by Louise Emmons is another good field guide but covers all of the neotropics, not just Costa Rica.

Tropical Plants of Costa Rica: A Guide to Native and Exotic Flora (2007) by Willow Zuchowski.

The Birds of Costa Rica: A Field Guide (2007) by Richard Garrigues and Robert Dean. Good field guide.

A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica (1989) by Gary Stiles and Alexander Skutch. If you are primarily interested in the birds, this is a great reference book.

Tropical Ecology:

Here are a couple of suggestions if you want to read something about tropical ecology in general. I like these because they focus on the neotropics.

A Neotropical Companion (1997) by John Kricher - readable, serious science

Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America by Adrian Forsyth and Ken Miyata (1984) - readable essays on tropical ecology topics.

Natural History:

Central America: A Natural and Cultural History (1997) edited by Anthony G. Coates.
A very readable natural history of Costa Rica, a country with many ecological zones and active volcanoes. Not only does the book deal with geology, it also covers plants, animals, and people. It's a little heavy for a backpack, however.

Sarapiquí Chronicle: A Naturalist in Costa Rica by Allen Young. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. Young is a bug guy. If you like bugs, the history of bugs, and pictures of bugs—this is it.