

## Blossom as the Cliffrose: Mormon Legacies and the Beckoning Wild

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The poems and prose pieces of *Blossom as the Cliffrose* celebrate the beauty and nature of the Mormon faith.

The cliffrose is a beautiful but perhaps unlikely plant that blooms in the rugged Western deserts, where Mormons were forced to settle. It is wild and strong, living as a seeming contradiction, out of place and yet entirely at home. This collection celebrates it as a vision of Mormon identity: beauty in the wilderness. It embraces the spirit of Mormonism, with its deep, steady faith and appreciation for beauty and open spaces.

The entries are organized by theme; poetry and prose pieces mix together. Pieces like Danielle Beazer Dubrasky's "Prelude: Leave No Trace" are elegant in recounting Mormon history. Elsewhere, Scott Cameron's "Sonnet for the Day After Easter" marries natural and religious imagery, and Sarah Newcomb's "Where Grandmother Walked" pays tribute to a family member. The titles of each section—like Embrace, Revel, and Wander—are sparse and elegant, like the wilderness itself.

The book's more than forty contributors showcase a wide variety of vantage points on Mormonism. They include artists, clergy members, and academics; all hold unshakable reverence for their faith and for nature, bringing beautiful harmony to this choir of voices.

Some of the entries are personal, and some are more intellectual. Many brim with imagery and heartfelt wonder. There are voices that challenge the faith and voices that are soothing, voices that welcome believers home and voices that beckon them to adventures. The whole is meditative and energizing, fierce and loving, balanced and rhythmic.

An invitation to welcome faith and nature, and to embrace the tensions and beauty that spring from every crack and cranny along the way, *Blossom as the Cliffrose* is a Mormon anthology that invites contemplation and adventure.

MELISSA WUSKE (July / August 2021)

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