

Campfire Stories Volume II: Tales from America's National Parks and Trails

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Campfire Stories Volume II is a lively, thought-provoking collection of essays and poems that represent diverse perspectives on national parks and trails.

This volume highlights five national parks and two trails via pieces like George Bird Grinnell's lyrical description of Glacier Park from 1901 and Cheryl Strayed's gripping account of losing her boots on the Pacific Crest Trail. Most of its selections were written by members of LGBTQ+, Indigenous, Black, and other marginalized communities not traditionally centered in stories of outdoor spaces. As Rosette Royale notes in an entertaining essay on the search for baby elk in Olympic Park, "Along with being queer, I'm Black, and I've been told...that the backcountry was no place for someone like me." Similarly, Deborah Jackson Taffa, raised on a Yuma reservation far from her ancestors' homeland, observes in her powerful essay on the Grand Canyon that national parks tend to be "pristine places...set aside for wealthy individuals who need time off to relax." Such voices offer scintillating new views on the national parks.

There's a delightful essay about a queer person's quest for perfect silence in the Hoh rainforest; a compelling description of the jewel-like tree snails of the Everglades; a haunting poem on the desert's power in Joshua Tree; and a thru-hiker's chilling account of vertigo on the Appalachian Trail. Although the title implies these selections should be recited aloud over a crackling fire, most would be better read while lounging on a comfortable couch. A few, however, would make engaging campfire entertainment, including a woman's hilarious musings about warm enchiladas while hiking the Pacific Crest Trail and a suspenseful Quinault version of the Glukeek, or Sasquatch, legend.

The diverse, sparkling entries of *Campfire Stories Volume II* explore the remote backroads and surprising vistas of the national parks.

KRISTEN RABE (March / April 2023)

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