⭐ How to Catch a Mole: Wisdom from a Life Lived in Nature

Marc Hamer
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Quantum physics recognizes that electrons behave differently when under observation—to be, or not to be a wave or a particle, depending on whether it's being observed. And nature writing presents a similar situation because nature writers, as observers, must abide the fact that they themselves are an element of nature. To be human in nature is to become nature. The point is: nature writing is always part memoir.

Welshman Marc Hamer embraces his inner autobiographer in this visionary writing project that showcases the extraordinary roles he played over a lifetime spent primarily in the rural outdoors. He's been an observer, student, inhabitant, celebrant, professional gardener, and reluctant mercenary: "I had to work to depersonalise the moles, because if, as I believe, all living things have equal value and we are all the same, then I was killing myself."

He also provides a lovely anthem to that garden ravager, the common mole, a far more interesting, intrepid creature than is commonly known. He writes movingly of marital love, solitude, and weather. Of aging, he says, "In decay I see the beginning of growth, because that is how I choose to see the world, because it makes the world elegant and poetic; because I have no religion; because I am a gardener and I see it every day." Discovering Hamer's nature writing par excellence is a godsend.

MATT SUTHERLAND (September / October 2019)

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