



Island Home: A Landscape Memoir

Tim Winton

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Island Home is a lyrical and artistic look into the human relationship to landscape, especially in Australia. Part memoir, part ode, it combines a strong sense of place with a reflection on the personal impact of land, and of what humans lost when they separated from nature.

Structurally, *Island Home* is nearly free-form, drifting across periods in the author's life in a manner that evokes a dreamscape. This fits well with the spirituality with which the author describes the Australian outback, evoking not only his own communion with the sea and sand, but the Aboriginal beliefs that attach significance to landmarks, environment, and nature. The book invokes David Mowaljarlai and other Aboriginal thinkers several times in the author's quest to articulate his feelings about his unique island.

While many modern environmental books examine the external issues of the human relationship to nature, namely climate change, *Island Home* departs from this model by focusing on how the loss of a relationship to nature has impacted the inner lives of Australians. The author bemoans the fact that most Australians will live their entire lives in cities that he describes as ugly and soulless, while at the same time identifying a deep impetus for both connection and domination of the land in the national Australian spirit. Though the true character of the Australian relationship to the land ends up being a little unclear, this turns out to be a good way to describe a relationship that itself contains many contradictions and confusions.

The evocative beauty of *Island Home* is not to be denied. The book demonstrates a deep, sincere love of place that constitutes a refreshing break from intellectualized climate-change theses and scientific analyses of atmospheric carbon levels. Winton does not warn us about what we might lose, but shows us through his own vision. This "landscape memoir" is an excellent choice for book clubs.

ANNA CALL (July/August 2017)

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