

Morning Light: Wildflowers, Night Skies, and Other Ordinary Joys of Oregon Country Life**Barbara Drake**

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As a genius nature writer, Henry David Thoreau made good use of his New England backyard and didn't choose to explore the wild frontier that beckoned to the west in the mid- 1800s. He loved the way nature ceaselessly encroached on civilization: "There is something indescribably inspiring and beautiful in the aspect of the forest skirting and occasionally jutting into the midst of new towns."

Barbara Drake can relate. In nearly thirty years of living on a small farm in rural Oregon with a husband and border collies, she has trained her eye on the natural world sharing her beloved place. The lichens and mosses thriving on the forest floor of their large groves of white oak, for example, or the quick work a couple coyotes can make of sheep or chickens, the anxiety accompanying drilling a well for water, her satisfaction in recognizing stars and constellations in a brilliant night sky—this is the stuff of Drake's life. Her many years teaching university-level English brings a sprinkling of Tennyson, Leopold, Eliot, and others, lending a commiserative voice to her warm, restrained, marvelously grown up way with words.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Spring 2015)

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