



## ★ **Wildheart: The Daring Adventures of John Muir**

**Julie Bertagna**

**William Goldsmith, Illustrator**

Yosemite Conservancy (Mar 19, 2019)

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Co-founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir is best known in environmentalist circles. Julie Bertagna and William Goldsmith delightfully illuminate his life in their graphic novel *Wildheart*.

From his modest beginnings in Scotland, Muir lived his life fully in tune with his environment. His family moved to the United States when he was a boy, and his natural curiosity and affinity for nature provided the most valuable lessons of his education, as depicted in the book.

In *Wildheart*, Muir overcomes near-death experiences and dangers, as well as a temporary spell of blindness caused by a factory accident, which inspires him to spend the rest of his days “out in the wild beauty of the world.” Muir travels extensively by foot in America, going so far as the Alaska territory. The latter adventure introduces Muir’s dog Stickeen, and the two travelers bond, prompting the observation that “humans and animals are true companions on the Earth.”

Goldsmith’s illustrations are deceptively simple, capturing the essential elements of the story in a clean, appealing, almost childlike style, but they are no less inspiring or beautiful for it. Muir’s wonder at the natural world translates perfectly.

Rounding out the book is a chronology of Muir’s life, along with a glossary and a list of sources for Muir’s words and inspiration. The glossary is indicative of the book’s effort to appeal to young readers, with terms like “scurvy,” “perilous,” “kin,” and “continent” defined, among others. The beauty of *Wildheart* is that it delivers its message effectively and enjoyably for both children and adults.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2019)

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