



A Word for Nature: Four Pioneering Environmental Advocates, 1845-1913

Robert L. Dorman

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The careers and ideas of four figures of monumental importance in the history of American conservation--George Perkins Marsh, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and John Wesley Powell--are explored in *A Word for Nature*. Robert Dorman offers lively portraits of each of these early environmental advocates, who witnessed firsthand the impact of economic expansion and industrial revolution on fragile landscapes from the forests of New England to the mountains of the West.

By examining the nineteenth-century world in which the four men lived--its society, economy, politics, and culture--Dorman sheds light on the roots of American environmentalism. He provides an overview of the early decades of both resource conservation and wilderness preservation, discussing how Marsh, Thoreau, Muir, and Powell helped define the issues that began changing the nation's attitudes toward its environment by the early twentieth century. Dorman's readings of works including Marsh's *Man and Nature*, Thoreau's *The Maine Woods*, Muir's *The Mountains of California*, and Powell's *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* reveal their authors' influence on environmental thought and politics even up to the present day.

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