



# Suburban Wild

*Peter Friederici*

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Set in the North Shore suburbs of Chicago, amid traffic, pollution, and ever-increasing neighborhoods of houses and apartments, these meditative personal essays explore the importance of our connection with the natural world, history, and memory. "The Suburban Wild" follows the seasons from one spring to the next, celebrating the natural miracles we frequently miss and revealing a territory less tamed than we might imagine. These essays offer the sights and sounds found on the outskirts of cities, just perceptible amid the clutter and din of crowded streets and sidewalks. From the constant humming of cicadas on summer evenings and the seasonal migrations of ducks to the myriad hues in a green heron's feathers, Peter Friederici reveals a complex place in which wild geese and morning commuters share the same habitat.

The essays honor our lost creatures and places, emphasizing the importance of history, memory, and consciousness. The author describes the varying shades and textures of a clay bluff near his childhood home, relating the gradual erosion and recession of this Ice Age-old landform. A description of spirogyra algae blooms on Lake Michigan merges with a discussion of the lake's once abundant native mussels and the imported zebra mussels that are threatening their existence. From recorded memories, Friederici re-creates the sight of the now extinct passenger pigeon. Though awareness of the destruction of the landscape and its creatures is never far from the wonders presented here, "The Suburban Wild" connects the tracks of wildlife and traces of our changing landscape with our own path through the world. The book explores how history--whether natural or cultural, collective or personal--shapes a landscape, and how human memory shapes that history. At heart, it seeks to forge a link between the world outside our windows and the one inside.

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