

## HOME PLACE: ESSAYS ON ECOLOGY

J. STAN ROWE. 2002. NeWest Press, Edmonton. ISBN 1-8963-0053-7. Paper \$24.95

Lyrical ecology. Admirers of veteran Canadian ecologist Stan Rowe's 1990 volume of reflective essays on human ecology called *Home Place* will welcome a new revised edition from NeWest Press. Rowe spent several decades at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon as a plant ecologist in what was then called field husbandry. The Western Canadian prairie sings through this volume, but so does a multivoiced lyrical awareness of our humble place in the larger and more profound realm of Earth. Rowe wants us to learn how to gaze outwards from our human condition, to consider "the theme of Earth as the life-giving, life-sustaining milieu of people."

The essays talk about place, western history, the rightful nature of human relationships to nature and land, the rights of nature, environmental dangers, significant voyages, environmental ethics, and the choices facing human endeavours such as agriculture. The essays are permeated by a reflective serenity, a measured sense of what matters most and how best to communicate important ideas to others. Those looking for both philosophical and pragmatic advice can find it here. Rowe is now in his 80s and this gracious collection beautifully reflects a lifetime of productive thought.

I have a small corner on a bookshelf where I put the dozen or so favourite books that I like to take out at those odd times of weariness or loneliness, when the soul needs a tune-up or massage. *Home Place* is there, with its measured whispers of wisdom, right next to *The Gypsies*, Jan Yoors' poignant memoir of running off with the travelling folk as a young boy, and Tim Lilburn's evocative poems in *The Moose Woods Sandhills* that resulted from several years of isolation in the dune lands on the Saskatchewan River.

I'm sure you will find these essays as nourishing as I did. Royalties from the book will help keep the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society from going hungry too.

Greg Michalenko, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1 E-mail: <gcmichal@fes.uwaterloo.ca>

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"Earth-as-home is not a self-evident percept. Few pause daily to consider with a sense of wonder the enveloping matrix from which we came and to which, at the end, we all return. Because we are issue of the Earth, the harmonies of its lands, seas, skies and its countless beautiful organisms carry rich meanings barely understood."

Ted Mosquin and Stan Rowe. A Manifesto for Earth. *Biodiversity* Vol 5(1): 3-9. 2004