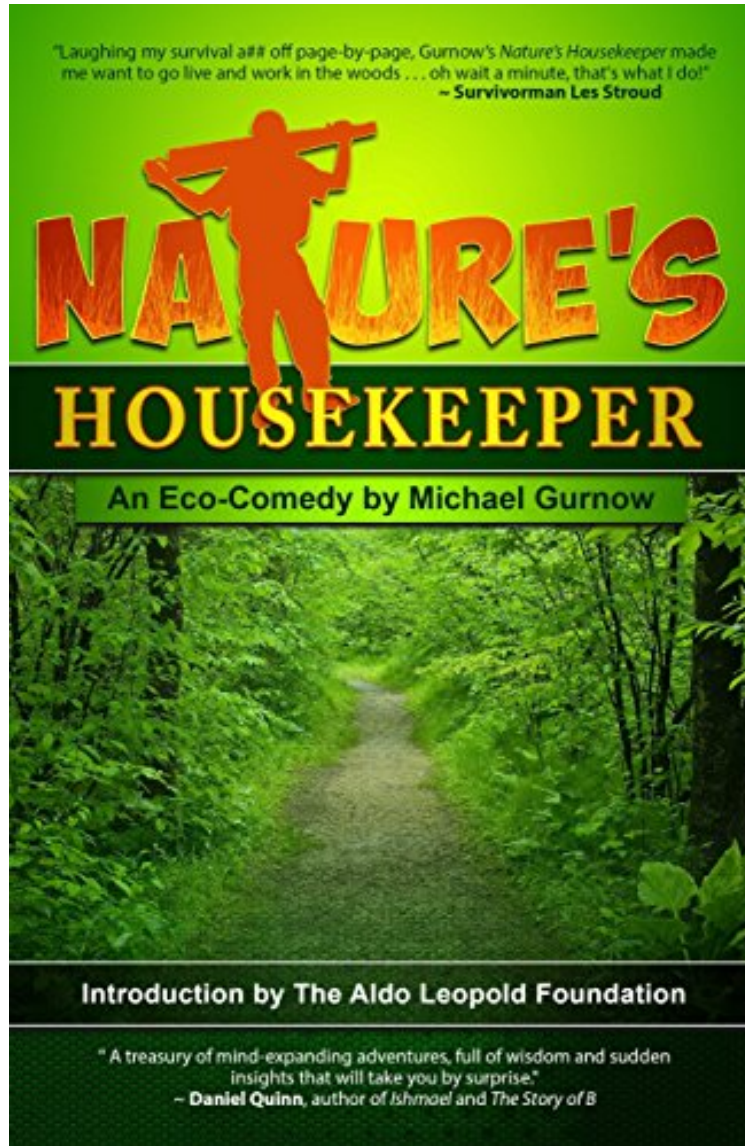


(Free read ebook) Nature's Housekeeper: An Eco-Comedy

Nature's Housekeeper: An Eco-Comedy

Michael Gurnow, Intro by The Aldo Leopold Foundation, Afterword by Lawton Grinter
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Michael Gurnow, Intro by The Aldo Leopold Foundation, Afterword by Lawton Grinter : Nature's Housekeeper: An Eco-Comedy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nature's Housekeeper: An Eco-Comedy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Ecological Adventure Into The Wilderness! By Betty Cooper NATURE'S HOUSEKEEPER is not only an ecological comedy, it is simply put, a literary masterpiece. At the offset, the author dislikes nature immensely, but then a shift occurs and he does the unthinkable: he resigns from his

white collar academic teaching position (a career he loved and was passionate about) and takes a brown collar job as a trail maintenance worker (complete with minimum pay and no benefits). What's the motive for his tectonic life-shift? After studying the works of Henry David Thoreau, especially WALDEN, Gurnow finds inner meaning and the courage to make life changes and becomes a student of Mother Earth. His experiences inside nature are shared with us; there are surprises, such as the comical Missouri Tree Snorer, but also emotional, intellectual, and psychological ones as well: we, the reader, live vicariously with nature as we read numerous heart-moving passages. We enjoy wonderful sounds and find honesty and truth in them. Least of all, we recognize that brown-collar labor requires an immense amount of knowledge and skill, as much, if not more, than white-shirt labor does. Gurnow jests, [] in order to be proficient in [. . .] trail maintenance, one must possess advanced degrees in engineering, soil science, geology, and hydrology. I had one too many literature diplomas, which meant I could read really fast, but rode the mathematical short bus. This was a problem. To set a grade [a type of slope on a trail], one must know geometry and a lot of it. But what Gurnow relays is second only to the craft of how he tells his tale. For example, the seasons serve as a metaphor and provide changes beyond shifts in natural growth: Not only does spring, summer, etc., come and go, but, once connected with nature, we the reader transform alongside the main character. The author writes, Within a few short months of being out in the woods, my perspective had changed. Before, I looked upon the natural world in awe and mystified bewilderment. Now, no less daunted, I stood fascinated by its splendor and solemn dignity. Most would be so lucky to be able to view their daily world in this way but, in the course of telling his tale, Gurnow shows us how to do just that: The wilderness was very much alive. [. . .] Even though catastrophe had struck [a monstrous mudslide], every creature had immediately begun reconstruction as their individual contributions slowly rebuilt an organic city. Nature teaches us to not only pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, but to recognize and value contributions each living species provides including our own. But Gurnow doesn't shy away from the uncomfortable and acknowledges the darker side of the natural world, yet, being an artist, he transcribes nature's inherent beauty in the process. He experiences emergencies, and is even hospitalized after suffering excessive wasp stings. Being determined to succeed, he completes a wilderness survival class so as to sally forth. Afterwards, he finds his time in the woods more consistently rewarding and less frequently life threatening. The woods work provides valid information and, channeling Freud, the author relays that whether doing white-collar or brown-collar work, one needs to take pride in what one does. While referring to degree positions, Gurnow asks the question, What is the psychological effect of not being able to witness the product of one's labors? as he challenges the status quo's value placed upon academic work as he contrasts it that of the worth (and reward) of manual labor. Useful interdisciplinary education is the crux of Gurnow's prose. Using Annie Dillard's work as his argumentative springboard, the author shows there is no clear dividing line between the Arts and Sciences, Science majors are trained to avoid the subjective adverb and adjective and merely report on the facts using steadfast nouns and numbers. Pretty has no place in science. Conversely, those focusing on the Liberal Arts are told that how something is being said is as important as what is being said. They are taught not to admire touch, taste, sight, sound, and color, but wallow in them. For these pupils, statistics are often viewed as cold, immovable, and boring things that arbitrarily disrupt a story's natural flow and rhythm. Nouns are the hooks upon which descriptive terms and phrases are to be hung. Yet he reminds us that in the end, Both sides appreciate exacting detail and have the shared goal of finding meaning in the particulars. Such philosophic musings pepper the text, such as when the author introduces the differences between conservation and preservation by contrasting the father of nature writing to the father of conservation, [Aldo] Leopold is no Thoreau, but he doesn't try to be. His writing is much more carefree and playful because he revels in nature whereas H.D.T. marvels at it. As he educates his reader, Gurnow makes sure to remind his audience to enjoy life. A simple yet profound edict that most forget all too easily. NATURE'S HOUSEKEEPER is timely. The ideas align with ECOLiterate--The current generation of students has inherited daunting environmental issues and challenges that will require major shifts in conceptual understanding, ways of thinking, and everyday behaviors. Gurnow demonstrates that when making needed shifts, difficulties exist, but, also abundant joys are derived from making the shifts. In short, he lives the adage, Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I highly recommend this book. As an educator (and psychologist), I think it contains useful information for everyone. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Delightful Romo Into Life's Forest By Ms. Kruth Seaber Gurnow's Nature's Housekeeper is a delightful romp into the woods and into the discovery of meaningful work. While Gurnow sometimes waxes a bit too academe for many (maybe he's just trying to remind himself of his academic roots?), he nevertheless leaves readers both pensive and laughing. In the chapter, "Missouri Tree Snorer," I spent considerable time laughing so hard I had tears in my eyes. Gurnow sort of reminds me of David Sedaris's Me Talk Pretty One Day, only instead of a gay guy trying to speak French and get along in Paris, Gurnow is an academic trying to "speak" the language of the wilderness and find his footing amongst the park rangers. His voice relays a matter-of-fact, dry wit. Nature lovers and avoiders alike will enjoy this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Extremely funny and surprisingly informative book, looking forward to more of the author's work.

We've all read books that changed our lives but one college professor gets more than he bargains for when he picks up a dusty, dog-eared copy of the American classic Walden by Henry David Thoreau. Proud postmodern consumer and

card-carrying member of the "I Hate Nature" Club, Michael Gurnow is content in his role as American literature professor at a Midwest college. Everything changes once he gets done reading Thoreau's masterpiece. Realizing he has been living a life of quiet desperation, it suddenly occurs to him that even though it's his job to teach tales of other people's adventures, he hasn't lived any of his own. Without a second thought, Gurnow hands in his resignation before driving to the nearest state park and applies to be the wilderness equivalent of a construction worker. "How hard can trail maintenance be?" he asks himself. "It's a minimum-wage job." He quickly learns there's a difference between book smarts and common sense. In this mile-a-minute comedy of errors, Gurnow discovers why it's a bad idea to get into a fistfight with a mudslide, horny hornets are a force to be reckoned with, being able to identify poison ivy is a grossly undervalued skill, and you can't outrun deer--even if you're naked. With a tie-dye cast of characters, Gurnow compresses several hard-won years in the wilderness into four side-splitting seasons. With his newly minted critical eye toward consumer culture, he reveals the surprisingly complex world of trail maintenance while taking the reader on a guided, philosophic tour of the nature classics. Introduction by The Aldo Leopold Foundation; Afterword by Lawton Grinter, author of *I Hike*.

"Nature's Housekeeper is a treasury of mind-expanding adventures, full of wisdom and sudden insights that will take you by surprise." --Daniel Quinn, author of *Ishmael*"Laughing my survival a## off page-by-page, Nature's Housekeeper made me want to go live and work in the woods . . . oh wait a minute, that's what I do!" --Discovery Channel's *Survivorman* Les Stroud"Reading Nature's Housekeeper is like sitting around the table sharing drinks and laughing with Thoreau, Herriot, Twain, Abbey, and Lenny Bruce. But be sure to wipe those laughter-sponsored tears from your eyes every once in a while because Gurnow's adventure is nothing short of a heros journey that would make Joseph Campbell proud." --Brian King, Director, Wilderness Skills Institute "Thoreau meets Hunter S. Thompson." --Ron Dakron, author of *Hello Devilfish*"Nature's Housekeeper pulls off the difficult and unique feat of marrying comedy and wilderness philosophy into one entertaining and informative whole. The book had me laughing out loud yet the central tale is moving and intellectually profound." --Chris Townsend, author of *The Backpacker's Handbook*"Michael Gurnow's Nature's Housekeeper uses humor to communicate the why, where, and how of developing a deeper and richer understanding of humanity's role in becoming better stewards of the Earth. It is definitely worth a read!" --Buddy Huffaker, President Executive Director, The Aldo Leopold Foundation"Nature's Housekeeper is a laugh-out-loud, page-turning memoir. This is a must read for anyone looking to reconnect with nature or hoping to see wilderness through a different lens." --Jennifer Pharr Davis, author of *Becoming Odyssa: Adventures on the Appalachian Trail*"A uniquely fascinating personal story and a thoroughly absorbing read from first page to last, Nature's Housekeeper is a deftly written memoir replete with wit and wisdom, insights and all-too-human foibles." --Midwest Book