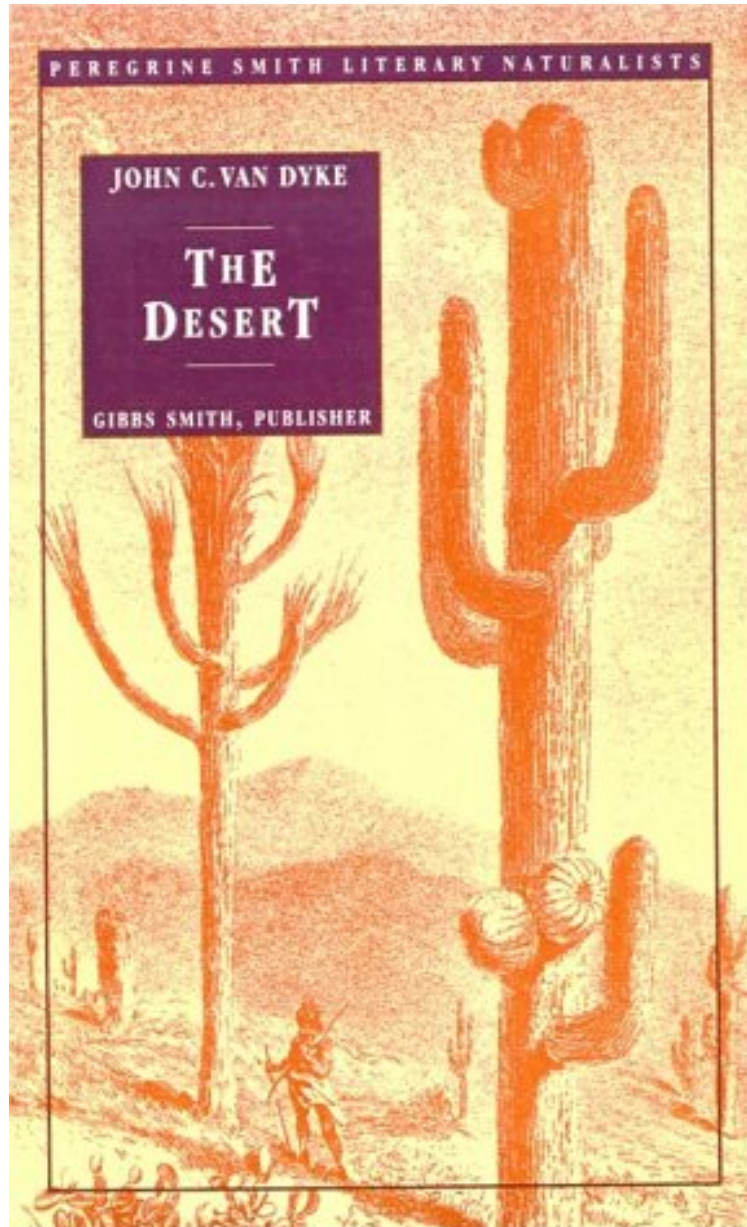


(Download) The Desert (Peregrine Smith Literary Naturalists)

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John C. Van Dyke

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#1796936 in Books Peregrine Smith Books 1991-08Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 .78 x 5.01 x 7.98l, #File Name: 087905395X272 pagesTravel with PetsNature EcologyScience MathNatural HistoryNature Writing Essays | File size: 54.Mb

John C. Van Dyke : The Desert (Peregrine Smith Literary Naturalists) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Desert (Peregrine Smith Literary Naturalists):

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. vintage findBy lotusThe book was pretty aged, and some of the

pages were damaged. Not the condition I had hoped it to be - I gave as a gift to my son, but it's an amazing book anyway. I was happy to locate an original, so kudos to the seller for stocking it. 25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Poetry in Prose By PL Nelson This book is a treasure. Mr. Van Dyke obviously has the soul of a poet, and within his graceful prose he paints vivid and soul-stirring pictures of some of the most beautiful places on earth. He describes in fine detail observations he made on a long trip, on horseback in 1898/99, over, around, and through the lower deserts of Arizona and California. He leaves no stone unturned as he describes the magnificence and beauty of each aspect of the desert, and pulls no punches in his criticism of man's destructive intrusions. To Van Dyke, the play of light and shadow, the star-pocked night skies, the ragged and jagged ranges of mountains, the perfectly adapted plants and animals, the sometimes shifting sands, and the silent river barrier known as the Colorado are each part of the unique sum which is, in its own harsh and angular way, a paradise of color, form, and life: "The Desert." Speaking as one who has lived on and wandered through this same desert for nearly forty years, I can attest to the accuracy of Van Dyke's physical descriptions and, perhaps more importantly, I can note that I've found here both the magic and the majesty which he so ably describes. Still, this isn't a book for everyone. Those who prefer the gleam of glass towers and the roar of jet planes to flaming sunsets and yapping coyotes, save your money. Van Dyke wrote, "Not in the spots of earth where plenty breeds indolence do we meet with the perfected type. It is in the land of adversity ... that finally emerges the highest manifestation." He was right, and he leaves us "The Desert" as evidence.

In the early summer of 1898, John C. Van Dyke, an asthmatic forty-two-year-old art historian and critic, rode an Indian pony out of the Hemet Valley, and headed southeast into the Colorado desert. With his dog, his guns, and few supplies, this sickly aesthete wandered, mostly alone, for nearly three years across the deserts of California, Arizona and Mexico. He crossed the Salton Sea Basin, forded the Colorado below Yuma on a raft he built himself, followed the railroad line to Tucson, then turned west again toward Sonora. His exact route is not known; he did not always know where he was himself. He sought both health and beauty in the dry country and wrote that the desert "never had a sacred poet; it has in me only a lover". This extraordinary book, composed "at odd intervals, when I lay against a rock or propped up in the sand", is a masterpiece of personal philosophy, containing precise scientific analyses of diverse phenomena-- from erosion to sky colors-- and prescient ruminations on the nature of civilization. "The desert should never be reclaimed!" Van Dyke wrote, yet he lived long enough to see the reclamation projects in what became the Imperial Valley. He did not witness the virtual destruction of the Colorado Desert still ongoing. As poet Richard Shelton wonders in his introduction, "Where are the herds of antelope Van Dyke spoke of, and the gray wolves and the pure air?" This series celebrates the tradition of literary naturalists-- writers who embrace the natural world as the setting for some of our most euphoric and serious experiences. Their literary terrain maps the intimate connections between the human and the natural world, a subject defined by Mary Austin in 1920 as "a third thing... the sum of what passed between me and the Land." Literary naturalists transcend political boundaries, social concerns and historical milieus; they speak for what Henry Beston called the "other nations" of the planet. Their message acquires more w