

Overall this book is highly recommended specially for the students of media who have a penchant for making a career in the field of media industry. The book's real strength, and what makes it unique among media education publications, are the sections which are more focused on the power structure of the contemporary media, with fantastic overviews of theory, context and case studies- with the different chapters complementing one another sufficiently to ensure that many topics are re-visited from different angles.

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### Book Review

Pallavi Gogoi\*

JOHN MUIR. *My first summer in the Sierra*.  
New York: Dover Publications, 2004, pp. 130,  
Price US\$: \$ 7.95, ISBN- 10: 0464373353, ISBN-13: 978-0486437354.

Meeting the prospect of serving as a shepherd for a season in the refreshing climate of the Sierra, John Muir begins his journey to the mountains with a flock of sheep, four companions and a fine St. Bernard named Carlo. Muir unravels his fascination for the wilderness as he also reminisces his previous summer in the Yosemite region, a region that in time has been honored in his memory. His passionate love and longing for the mountains finds a captivating expression in the beauty of his prose steeped in the sensibilities of a poet-philosopher and the meticulous observations of a naturalist. With an eye for details and an intrinsic regard for the natural world, Muir records his thoughts and experiences of his journey with illustrating sketches in a note-book, dated 3 June to 22 September, 1869, that makes up for his work spanning across eleven chapters.

*My First Summer* is a treat to all nature lovers and lovers of the wilderness. Muir captures the enchanting landscape of Sierra Nevada flanked by cool mountains and his admiration of the topography of the region with its metamorphic slates, valleys, garden-like meadows, shimmering lakes, sunny hillsides, fragrant air, songful

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rivers, crystalline caves, glacial rivers, glacial meadows, snow fountains, moraines, cliffs, promising peaks, sweeping rush of waterfalls, finely spread forest floor, flowery glades, charming plants, noble trees, sacred woods, coniferous forests dotted with insects, birds and land animals. In most of his entries, he never misses a note on the weather, ever quick to note the drifting occurrence of cumuli, as well as, the changing skies, from the delicate azure to the pale rose and purple shades, from the pouring sunbeams to the starry nights, all held in his awe and wonder. His exhilarating experience in the glorious wilderness almost effortlessly reveals his wide knowledge of the natural world which holds him in good stead throughout his adventurous journey. It is in these moments of solitude that he experiences the divine omnipresence of God, the bounteous beauty of God's design, awakened to a sense of solidarity with the natural world and enriched with moments of spiritual realizations in these surroundings.

Muir is at his best with interesting narratives of shepherds in Scotland, camp food, camp life, little accounts of land animals, bear hunters, ant-homes, plants described in all their majestic beauty, nature's fineness, raindrops, grasshoppers, bird life, age of trees, scaling heights, soaring eagles, avalanches, scattered flock, descriptions of his companions, lives of Indians, gold diggers and miners; the most memorable being his striking telepathic experience that actualizes in his finding of his old friend Professor Butler near the Vernal Fall. Although, his readings of Emerson and Thoreau may have cast a lasting impression on his thoughts, he stands as a nature visionary in the intrinsic value that he accords to the natural world and the way in which the silent world receives a 'voice' through his remarkable writings. His are the illuminating glimpses of life and stirrings of a carefree nature lover, romancing with nature in sheer freedom, soaking in every moment, reveling in the surrounding music of nature, sleeping under the stars, recording plant life at all altitudes, examining tree rings, talking with flowers, praising little creatures, quoting verses from the Bible. The value of the work increases manifold due to its relevance in the context of the anthropocentric world today.

In his response to the call of the mountains, one certainly finds the grace of a soft-hearted and a gentle soul. Aesthetically rich and enlivening to the senses, his documented work stands as a testimony of his remarkable experiences and deserves a special place in the hallowed shelves of literature.