



Light in the Trees (Voice in the American West)

Gail Folkins

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From the book

At the end of our visit in the big snow, I hiked the mountain behind Dad's house with my brother, stepping into his size 13 footprints. With trail signposts long buried, we kept to the main road, a route once used for logging. Although almost every trip home included this steep climb, I'd never hiked it in two feet of snow. The muffled whiteness made it difficult to tell how far we'd come, how much farther we had to go. More than once I sat on a log saying I'd stay there and wait for Ken, whose long strides made it look easy, to go up without me. Each time I did this, he stopped, waited, and told me we were almost there, although I suspected we weren't.

A memoir of home, nature, and change in the American West, *Light in the Trees* makes cultural and environmental topics personal through a narrator's travels between past and present, rural and urban. Growing up on a mountain foothill in western Washington, Gail Folkins offers a small-town viewpoint of the Pacific Northwest. Sasquatch myths and serial killer realities, a runaway Appaloosa, and turbulent volcanoes beneath serene mountaintops help chronicle a coming of age for both a narrator and a place. Later, a move to the Southwest expands Folkins's view of the West. From this new perspective paired with frequent journeys to the Northwest, she explores challenges of the natural world, from wildlife habitat and water quality to a changeable climate and wildfires, navigating new versions of home and self along the way.

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