



# AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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April 2012

**JOHN BURROUGHS 2012 MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED NATURAL HISTORY BOOK  
AWARDED TO EDWARD HOAGLAND,  
AUTHOR OF *SEX AND THE RIVER STYX***

**HOAGLAND AND OTHERS WILL BE HONORED AT SPECIAL LUNCHEON ON APRIL 2  
AT AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

The John Burroughs Association announces the 2012 winner of its annual award, created 86 years ago to honor outstanding natural history writing, a genre perfected by John Burroughs: Edward Hoagland, for his book *Sex and the River Styx* (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2011). In this book, his newest collection of essays in 10 years, Hoagland shares his intense curiosity of nature and the human condition in 13 works that span his childhood exploring the woods in rural Connecticut, his days as a circus worker in the 1950s, and his later years traveling the world.

The award will be given on Monday, April 2, during the 2012 John Burroughs Literary Awards Ceremony and Luncheon at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The event also celebrates the 175th anniversary of the birth of John Burroughs.

Hoagland's essays and short stories have been published in more than twenty books, both fiction and nonfiction, including *Cat Man*, *Walking the Dead Diamond River*, *African Calliope*, and *The Tugman's Passage*. Born in 1932 in New York City, Hoagland has received two Guggenheim Fellowships, two awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Brandeis and National Endowment for the Arts awards. He has taught at The New School, Rutgers, Sarah Lawrence, CUNY, The University of Iowa, UC Davis, Columbia University, Beloit College, Brown University, and Bennington College.

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In *Sex and the River Styx*, Hoagland reflects on aging, love, and sex in a deeply personal, often surprising way, lamenting degradations and threats to the environment as he considers his own declining health and his upcoming 80th birthday. He introduces us to the wonder of wild places and the people who live there, from African matriarchs, Tibetan yak herders, circus performers, and strippers he remembers from his college days. Hailed as one of the greatest essayists of our time by such noted writers as Philip Roth, John Updike, and Edward Abbey, Hoagland continues to captivate us with his empathy for creatures who cannot speak and for people who are misplaced, marginalized, and struggling for survival.

The John Burroughs Medal has been given annually since 1926 for books that combine scientific accuracy, firsthand fieldwork, and creative natural history writing. Past Burroughs medalists include Rachel Carson, Joseph Wood Krutch, Loren Eiseley, John McPhee, Paul Brooks, John Hay, Ann Zwinger, Barry Lopez, Gary Nabhan, Robert Pyle, Richard Nelson, Carl Safina, as well as Ted Levin, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Julia Whitty, Franklin Burroughs, Michael Welland and Elisabeth Tova Baily.

At the same luncheon, Brian Doyle will receive the John Burroughs Award for Outstanding Published Nature Essay for “The Creature Beyond the Mountains” which originally appeared in the September/October 2011 issue of *Orion* and explores the enormous, mysterious sturgeon of the West. The award recognizes an outstanding periodical essay of the type that John Burroughs himself wrote and made famous, stressing the author’s own connection with nature through either original natural history research or the author’s own life experience. The John Burroughs Recognition Award for Outstanding Published Nature Essay has been given annually since 1993. Past recipients include John Daniel, Kenneth Brower, John Mitchell, Michael Pollan, Gary Noel Ross, Gerrit Vermeij, Carl Safina, Freeman House, Edward Kanze, David Gessner, and Christopher Cokinos, Mark A. Smith, Scott Russell Sanders, and Jill Sisson Quinn.

The Young Reader’s award for children’s nature writing will also be awarded to Sophie Webb, *Far from Shore: Chronicles of an Open Ocean Voyage*; Caitlin O’Connell and Donna M.

Jackson, *The Elephant Scientist*; Peter Lourie, *The Manatee Scientists: Saving Vulnerable Species*; Joyce Sidman, *Swirl by Swirl*; and Peggy Thomas, *For The Birds: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson*.

The John Burroughs Association, a membership organization of conservation and environmental literary professionals and stewards dedicated to preserving the environment which is headquartered at the Museum, gives the Medal Award to encourage writing in the Burroughs tradition and maintains sites associated with the famous naturalist such as Slabsides located in West Park, NY. The Association publishes the newsletter *Wake-Robin*.

For reservations and more information about the John Burroughs Award and a complete list of winners, including the complete John Burroughs List of Nature Books for Young Readers, please contact Lisa Breslof at 212-769-5169, write the John Burroughs Association at 15 West 77th Street, New York, NY, 10024, or visit the website at [research.amnh.org/burroughs](http://research.amnh.org/burroughs).

To arrange an interview with Edward Hoagland or to receive a review copy of *Sex and the River Styx*, contact Jennifer McCharen at [jmccharen@chelseagreen.com](mailto:jmccharen@chelseagreen.com).

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