



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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**JOHN BURROUGHS 2011 MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED NATURAL HISTORY BOOK
AWARDED TO ELISABETH TOVA BAILEY,
AUTHOR OF *THE SOUND OF A WILD SNAIL EATING***

**BAILEY AND OTHERS WILL BE HONORED AT SPECIAL LUNCHEON ON APRIL 4
AT AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

The John Burroughs Association announces the 2011 winner of its annual award, created 85 years ago to honor outstanding natural history writing, a genre perfected by John Burroughs: Elisabeth Tova Bailey, for her book *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* (Algonquin Books, 2010). In her book, Bailey shares an inspiring and intimate story of her uncommon encounter with a *Neohelix albolabris* – a common woodland snail.

Bailey's essays and short stories have been published in the *Missouri Review*, *Northwest Review*, and the *Sycamore Review*. She has received a Notable Essay listing in *Best American Essays*. In *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, Bailey chronicles her astute and amused observations of a wild snail that takes up residence in her room during a year when the author is bedridden with a neurological disorder. Intrigued by the snail's molluscan anatomy, cryptic defenses, clear decision making, hydraulic locomotion, and mysterious courtship activities, Bailey shows us how this underappreciated small animal illuminates our own human existence and provides an appreciation of what it means to be fully alive.

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, Paul Brooks, John Hay, Ann Zwinger, Barry Lopez, Gary Nabhan, Robert Pyle, Richard Nelson, Carl Safina, and Ted Levin, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Julia Whitty, Franklin Burroughs, and Michael Welland.

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The award will be given on Monday, April 4, during the annual meeting of the Burroughs Association at a reservations-only luncheon at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

At the same luncheon, Jill Sisson Quinn will receive the John Burroughs Award for Outstanding Published Nature Essay for "Sign Here If You Exist," which originally appeared in the 2010 Fall issue of *Ecotone*. 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 with 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 Daniels, 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 and Scott Russell Sanders.

The Young Reader's award for children's nature writing will also be awarded to Kenneth Mallory, *Adventure Beneath the Sea: Living in an Underwater Science Station*; Amy S. Hansen, *Bugs and Bugsicles*; Mary Morton Cowan, *Captain Mac: The Life of Donald Baxter MacMillan Arctic Explorer*; Loree Griffin Burns, *The Hive Detectives: Chronicle of a Honey Bee Catastrophe*; Steve Jenkins, *How to Clean a Hippopotamus: A Look at Unusual Animal Partnerships*; and Joyce Sidman, *Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors*.

The John Burroughs Association, a membership organization of conservation and environmental literary professionals and stewards dedicated to preserving the environment, gives the Medal Award to encourage writing in the Burroughs tradition and maintains sites associated with the famous naturalist. The Association publishes the newsletter *Wake-Robin*.

For reservations and more information about the John Burroughs Award and a complete list of award 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 <http://research.amnh.org/burroughs/>.

To arrange an interview with Elisabeth Tova Bailey or to receive a review copy of *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, contact kelly@algonquin.com.

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