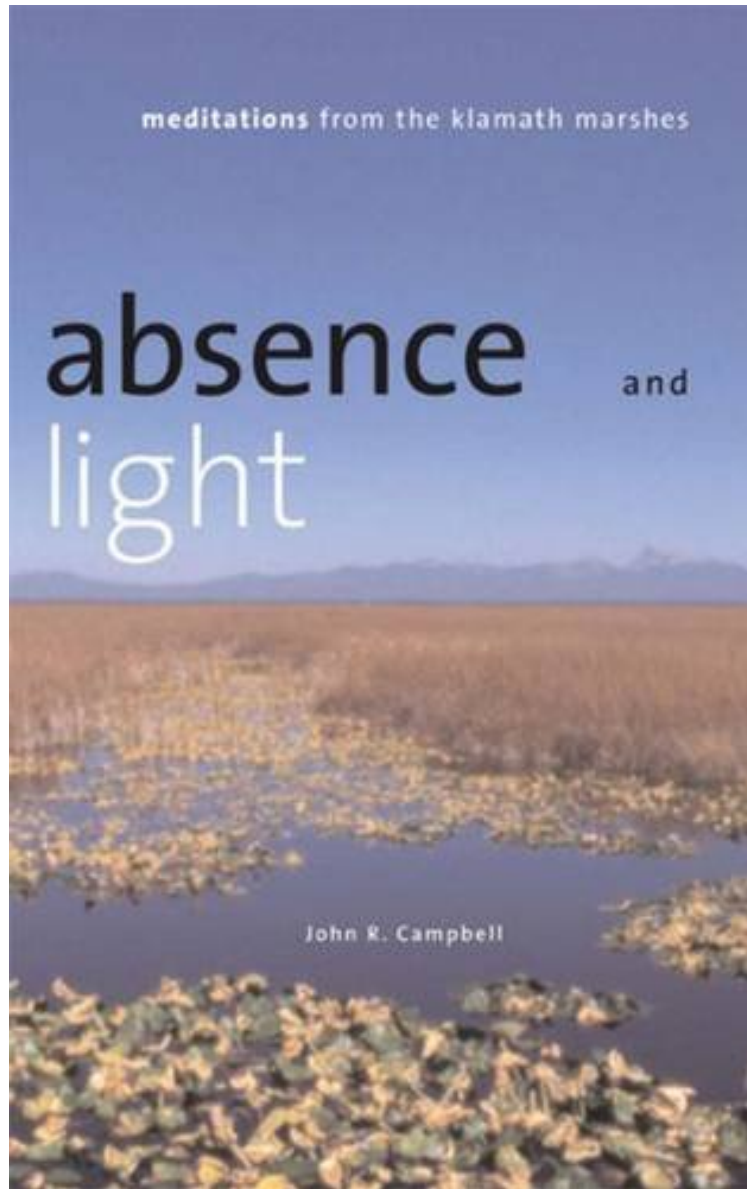


(Free) Absence And Light: Meditations From The Klamath Marshes (Environmental Arts and Humanities)

## Absence And Light: Meditations From The Klamath Marshes (Environmental Arts and Humanities)

*John R. Campbell*

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**John R. Campbell : Absence And Light: Meditations From The Klamath Marshes (Environmental Arts and Humanities)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Absence And Light: Meditations From The Klamath Marshes (Environmental Arts and Humanities):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. what the professional critics said

By Robert Pax

My goodness, what mean-spirited reviews have been posted here. *Absence and Light* received many very positive reviews from professional reviewers and literary critics nationwide. A few samples:

Douglas Carlson in *The Georgia Review*, Winter, 2005: "The prose is careful, beautifully descriptive, and thoroughly engaging....The book moves easily within the possibilities Campbell has set for himself, always aware of presenting his landscape as a process to his audience--sharing, showing, and enabling. Campbell's awareness of the natural world as process allows him to abandon the usually stationary eye of the speaker so as to observe the unseen, to capture nuance, to enter and exit at will." Sarah Gianelli, in *The Sunday Oregonian* (Portland): "*Absence and Light* is at once a heartfelt, poetic work of nature writing and an eloquent discourse about how humankind must rethink certain beliefs in order to slow Earth's destruction.... For Campbell, the beauty of the marshes is a vehicle that takes him deep within. Not only does he delve fearlessly into issues of an 'incomprehensible scope,' but he never loses sight of the reader, from the first glimpse of the heron. . . through the complex annals of thought the image inspires." Lori D. Kranz, in *The Bloomsbury Review*: "In the best tradition of natural history writing, his powers of description are marvelous. . . Campbell sees in the American West a 'poignant ground for unfathomable pockets of life, whether they be desert marshes, itinerant birds, or frail and terrible human bodies.' His *Absence and Light* is a book of great spirit, both poignant and full of life." Scott Slovic (University of Nevada, Reno), the noted expert on Literature and the Environment, described *Absence and Light* as "offering a rare mixture of lyricism and philosophical vigor" and "exploring an extraordinary range of topics, from the concept of borders to the meaning of animals in the lives of human beings, working with short, exploratory essays . . . like musical riffs. This is a gem of a manuscript."

7 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely Dreadful!

By J. Sanchez

This "work" done by Campbell is the poorest excuse for ecological literature, I have ever read. His idea of confronting real environmental issues concerning the Klamath Marshes amounts to his own unthoughtful, unpractical, and inane ramblings which he so inaccurately calls "meditations". I hope that this publication was funded by himself, because if it was financed by a publishing company they were greatly robbed. Instead of producing a coherent work, the reader is forced to endure hearing about his (the author's) past. (This guy has a "Christ" complex.) I'd compare reading this book with the job of a psychiatrist listening to their patient. Of course, the reader isn't being paid to hear this personal diatribe. After I finished forcing myself to read this book, I felt that my time had been completely and utterly wasted. There was very little if anything valuable to extract from the "meditations". In actuality this book is a compilation of the thoughts from a no-body who has delusions of grandeur. I say this because he actually tries to credit himself with birthing some type of mystical and magical experience which has been done much better by other authors before him, and as future authors will far exceed. The only portions of this book worth reading were the quotations taken from other writers who actually are WORTH reading! Please don't waste your time on this dull, pseudo-religious "book". As for the author, I think time would be better-spent seeking psychiatric help or admitting himself into a mental institution. Too many skeletons in this guys closet! In the end this is just another European-Extract (with an identity crisis) who ignorantly arrogantly believes that he can understand the spirituality behind lands that were stolen! As I've seen in other critical reviews I'd ask to include a scale that has degrees of positive AND negative stars. This would definately deserve a -5 rating. This book is sort of an attempt at an inept poet who's trying to wax theosophical and be poetic. Real poetry of this genre is found in the wonderous work of Whitman. The only practical use for this text? I'd recommend shredding it and using it in envelope padding, or the bottoms of hamster cages.

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Mediocre

By J. Chestor

Some of the insights seemed interesting, but the author seems to have difficulty focusing on what it is, he's actually doing/ writing about. Book goes back and forth and never seems to develop a solid purpose. Plus it needed to be proofread and seriously edited.

In order to accept the enormous responsibility that comes of being in the world, we must first conceive, in spite of all the obstacles, the state of actually being the world. It is for this reason that John R. Campbell came to the Klamath marshes, a wetland in southern Oregon formed by three ancient, shallow lakes, a vast emptiness that is paradoxically home to an amazing diversity of life, of untold thousands of birds both migratory and resident, of all the interconnected life forms that make up one of North America's richest natural environments. *Absence and Light* is Campbell's account of his exploration of the marshes and a meditation on the world he found there, on his growing understanding of the physical, emotional, moral, and aesthetic meaning of that world, on his own growth as a man. Through Campbell's eyes, we observe the stirring and astonishing beauty of the marshes and their creatures, and the utter poignancy of their fragility before the heedless ambitions of humankind. This is nature writing at its most profound and moving, writing that in examining and defining the world of nature helps us to understand the very complicated and contradictory realities of being hum

"...a book of great spirit, both poignant and full of life." -- Lori D. Kranz, *The Bloomsbury*, July/August 2002 "...a heartfelt, poetic work of nature writing and an eloquent discourse about how humankind must rethink certain beliefs..." -- Sarah Gianelli, *The Sunday Oregonian*, 18 August 2002 "...his spare, elegant yet forceful notes are recommended for those who are curious to peel back the controversy..." -- Ken Pirie, *Terrain.org: A Journal of the*

Built Natural Environments, Summer/Fall 2003 "The prose is careful, beautifully descriptive, and thoroughly engaging." -- Douglas Carlson, *The Georgia* 59.4, Winter 2005

About the Author John R. Campbell's poems and essays have appeared in numerous magazine and journals including *Poetry*, *The Georgia*, *The Threepenny*, and *Sewanee*. Since moving west from Chicago in the 1970s, he has lived in California, Oregon, and Utah, and has worked as a ranch-hand, tree planter, migrant camp teacher, railroad worker, high school teacher, poetry editor, and, most recently, university instructor. He currently lives in Salt Lake City with his wife and daughter. This is his first book.