



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
COMMON READ/
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BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Late Migrations takes its name from a central theme that runs throughout Renkl's text: the precarious life cycle of birds, as the title refers to the negative impact that climate change has had on their seasonal, hemispheric migrations. For Renkl, then, birds serve as both metaphor and reality—linking the past, present, and future of her own personal life to the broader ecological implications of our modern technological society. For instance, her passion for birdwatching can be read as a symbol of what a more ethical relationship with nature might look like. However, Renkl is also quick to always remind us that the harsh conditions of a bird's life cycle—"nasty, brutish, and short"—should be factual reminders of our own mortality and our own effect on the natural world. For her, birds have a lot to teach us about ourselves and our relationship to the planet.

*"I stand at the window and watch them,
cataloging all the human conflicts
their ferocity calls to mind."*

**DO YOU THINK RENKL'S PASSION FOR
& STEWARDSHIP TOWARD BIRDS
CAN FUNCTION AS A MODEL FOR A MORE**

**ETHICAL AND ECOLOGICALLY-MINDED
RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE,
DESPITE HER CLAIM THAT**

**"THERE IS NOTHING NATURAL ABOUT OFFERING
WILD BIRDS FOOD & WATER & HOUSING"?**

USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2025/26 BOOK SELECTION:

LATE MIGRATIONS
A NATURAL HISTORY OF LOVE AND LOSS



*"Late Migrations has the makings of
an American classic." —ANN PATCHETT*

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