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DEATH AND DECAY

Death and grief are central themes of *Late Migrations*. In the text, Renkl not only recounts the deaths of her parents and her extended family, but also her experience acting as caregiver during the closing stages of their lives. As such, the book is an extended meditation on what it means to die as well as what it means to survive those who have left us in grief's wake. For Renkl, death should be treated as a crucial dimension of what makes us human and a part of the natural world. Throughout the book, she finds solace in the realization that nature itself is sustained by processes of death and decay and that the rhythms of the seasons and the health of ecosystems depend upon the balance of destruction and regeneration. Ultimately, Renkl shows that understanding death as intrinsic to the natural order can offer a deeper, more sustaining way to live with loss.

"The cycle of life might as well be called the cycle of death: everything that lives will die, and everything that dies will be eaten."

HOW AND WHY DO YOU THINK
THE ACT OF WRITING COINCIDED
SO SIGNIFICANTLY WITH RENKL'S
EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF?

HOW MIGHT THE ACT OF WRITING BE SIMILAR TO,
OR REINFORCE, THE APPRECIATION OF NATURE
THAT THE BOOK EXTOLS?

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

LATE MIGRATIONS
A NATURAL HISTORY OF LOVE AND LOSS

