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PRESENCE

RADICAL STILLNESS OR POETIC ESCAPISM?

In *Late Migrations*, Margaret Renkl's dramatic descriptions of bird fights, close encounters with snakes, and butterfly metamorphoses invite us to slow down, listen, watch, and be more present to notice the natural world that exists right outside our windows. For Renkl, to be present, then, is to be made more fully aware of both the beauty (creation) and the chaos (destruction) that shape the natural world and our own communities. In the text, however, presentness is often portrayed as having ambiguous aims: at times, it serves as a form of escapism, allowing us to retreat from the stresses and crises of modern life; at other times, it emerges as a radical mindset that urges us to become more responsible stewards of a natural world threatened by climate change and human impact. The wager of Renkl's book is that presence is a practice worth cultivating, much like we would a garden or homestead.

**"IN THE STIR OF TOO MUCH MOTION:
HOLD STILL.
BE QUIET.
LISTEN."**

WHAT DOES BEING PRESENT MEAN TO YOU?

**HOW CAN WE INCORPORATE MORE "PRESENCE"
INTO OUR DAILY LIVES?**

**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