



Adios to the Brushlands (Wardlaw Books)

Arturo Longoria

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In a little-known area of South Texas, extending across the Rio Grande into Mexico, a mysterious, lush land once harbored mighty trees, bushes, and grasses--brushland home to a plethora of wildlife. In *Adios to the Brushlands* native son Arturo Longoria remembers this chaparral land of his childhood: hot summer days and frigid winter mornings walking with his grandfather or his best friend through the dense underbrush, watching birds, studying reptiles, identifying plants. Boyhood hunting and varmint calling, encounters with rattlesnakes and fierce pamorana ants, hours spent with his grandfather, Papagrande, and cousins bring to life another time and place. A trained biologist and one-time investigative reporter, Longoria brings his skills of observation and expression to sing the song of this vanishing habitat that once covered nearly four million acres of the Rio Grande Valley. In moving but understated prose he captures the wonder of the brushland and symbolically and emotionally links its loss, through rootplows and bulldozers, to the death of his grandfather, who had introduced him to that world. He reports as well the public policies and private actions that have reduced the brushland to less than five percent of its former extent. He chronicles the efforts to publicize the brushland's destruction and to save the remaining richness for future generations. At once a celebration of a region's nature and a call to preserve the little bit of it still left today, this book is to the South Texas Brushlands what Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was to the nation's wetlands or John Graves's *Goodbye to a River* was to the Brazos River. Rife with the natural history of an endangered ecology and capturing as well the binational culture of the region, *Adios to the Brushlands* draws readers into a land as raw, beautiful, and complex as life itself. A unique descriptive documentary of a disappearing natural treasure, it is a slice of the new natural history that weds the details of the physical world with their significance to the human heart.

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