



The Southwest's Contrary Land: Forever Changing Between Four Corners and the Sea of Cortes

Craig Childs

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Here are stories and color photographs that will excite your spirit and lead you on scenic adventures through a land deemed contrary because it brims with contradictions in the landscapes that it puts side by side. This land changes its look as readily as a jet-setter switches wardrobes. Cool, fern-draped valleys sidle up to snow-capped mountains cloaked in conifers. A few miles distant, desertscapes coated with cactus bask under a lamp of sun.

Some compare the Southwest's environmental transitions to what you'd experience traveling from Mexico to Canada. For this book, author Craig Childs trekked over hundreds of miles, observing the transitions close to his Southwest home and discovering something about life. In crystalline prose he relates the landscape to a passage in his life. Scattering his father's ashes in remote Canyon Creek, he reflects:

"I did not think of my father and his ashes as a traveler, ceaselessly flowing from one confluence to the next. Instead, I thought of him as a process. A story being told. I thought of him as a pool of unknown trout and the busted trunk of an alder half sticking up through the water. I thought of him as a raw, deep canyon heaped with boulders and mazes of creek passages -- the canyon he had once promised me. I thought of him as the beginning and the end at once."

Childs' journey of discovery covers Alpine to the Little Blue River; up Mount Graham, a perfectly contained sky island; around Sedona; through Canyon Country; along the lower Colorado River; and through the Sonoran Desert to the Sea of Cortes, with magnificent full-color photography by internationally recognized Arizona Highways photographers illustrating the range of his travels.

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Ross Turner:

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