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Resilience

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Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities, Volume 1, Number 1, Winter 2013, (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press



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I've been thinking about this term since it was presented as a collective project. I spent days forming definitions out of wisps of possibilities. Without fail, I rejected every one. Each performed some sense of engagement with the term by employing an ever-widening range of stylistics. I detested each and every one. Although grounded in scholarship, they offered little feeling. And that's when I realized what was missing.

Resiliency feels. It moves and breathes and shifts and stretches and aches. It brought me to college—as the great-granddaughter of a woman born into slavery. It kept me focused on learning and walking with others as opposed to telling others what to think, be, or do. It shifted my consideration of islands, forcing me to think of them as living entities as opposed to geographical accretions. It made me a relentless champion of community engagement—not the university-conscripted version, but the common one that stretches across species, microbiota, and the abiotic components that surround them.

I desire to be resilient and to live openly in a resilient world. As opposed to being aggressive and demanding, resiliency—at least the version that makes my soul sing—speaks to and with others within this web of living and dying. It is not something that staves off cycles, but one that works in tandem with them.

For me, resilience begins with hope. I know that some will see resiliency as survival or living and adjusting to challenges or changes. Those are excellent considerations. Yet I find that resilience operates as a lever that drives adjustment. It propels the reapplication of previously failed ideas. It activates the desire to find another way or path through the wilderness of doubt. It may not always be transformative or even positive, but it channels the potential of hope. And we need hope in this world, more so now, perhaps, than ever before.