I had just returned to Logan, Utah, from the Teton Science School in Wyoming’s Grand Tetons National Park. Though it was a Sunday in deep midwinter, I had a class to prepare for Monday, so I visited my cold office in the second story of the English department. The campus of Utah State University was deserted; a new storm had left three feet of snow on every surface, and more flakes were falling, like cabbage whites gone crazy in a cauliflower world. A different flicker of movement called my eyes away from the student manuscript claiming my attention. In a leaf-stripped hawthorn outside my window, a great flock of cedar waxwings had appeared. For the next hour, until the early darkness blotted both the snowfall and the birds, I got nothing done. Nothing, but to watch the silky gray waxwings grab haws with their sharp bills and swallow them, their bloody-waxed pinfeathers out-redding the fruits and their yellow tail tips flashing. How those masked and crested wonders made it through the Wasatch winter amazed me, but at least I knew how they would make it through the night.

There have been dozens of campuses in my life. Every one has been a distinct, physical, inhabited place, rich in encounters such as that with the waxwings. It is my condition that I need to situate myself and take account of the citizenry of any place I inhabit, however briefly—the airs, scents, colors, seasons, substrates, waters, plants, and animals. Most of all, what matters to me in a workplace is the ability to walk and to be surprised by what I find. I
maintain that an acute visceral attention to the literal places where I work as a transient academic has made me who I am as a scholar and teacher and has dramatically enhanced life for me and for my students. Furthermore, much in my writing and study depends directly upon the living details of these places. I doubt, however, that many campus denizens—even place-conscious scholars—pay this kind of attention to their professional surroundings. In fact, in my experience, it seems that most of my colleagues have been almost oblivious to that which makes the academical enterprise not only tolerable, but often delightful, for me.

My physical introduction to colleges came as a youth at Colorado campuses for visits to see my coed sister in Greeley, for an aunt-inspired speed-reading class at the University of Denver, and for track meets at Boulder and Fort Collins. I liked the ersatz “olde” buildings and the parklike settings, whether for the crispy Norway maple leaves underfoot in autumn or the air redolent of hopa crab blossoms on May nights. These visits set the pattern for a near-infinity of campus explorations to come.

When I left dry Colorado for the moist and verdant University of Washington as a beginning undergraduate, I dived into site survey and discovery with a passionate thirst for new landscapes, plants, and weathers. My daily prowls of the Seattle campus, its marsh and arboretum, over seven years, were part self-education in the stuff of place and part displacement activity. Deeply wishing to be studying ornithology instead of physical chemistry, I failed the latter while indulging the former and spotting one hundred species of birds on campus in one hundred days: #99 was a black-sterne’d gadwall in Gadwall Cove, #100 a Bullock’s oriole, brilliant orange above it. I came to know virtually every corner and thicket of the large campus and what could be found there in each season. This devotion both saved and radicalized me. Harry W. Higman and Earl J. Larrison’s book *Union Bay: The Life of a City Marsh* showed me what these habitats were like before the university leased them to the city for a landfill; my own explorations showed me what was left and committed me to helping to save it.

In clear danger of flunking out altogether, I found academic salvation by making up a sixties-style curriculum based largely on the natural history I found around me, with the assistance of a remarkable group of professors hanging on before the purge of the naturalists in a modern biology department became complete. And
when the campus wetlands, already compromised by a dump, were threatened with paving over, I led a band of students, faculty, and staff on a march to save them. While others took over the administration building and demanded peace and justice, we took over the marsh and landfill, demanding topsoil and trees (Pyle, “Union Bay”). Our actions as student conservationists went far beyond campus, and we protested the Vietnam War as well. But the Union Bay Life-after-Death Plant-In colored all that followed in my life as an activist. And when, after Nixon’s Cambodian invasion, thousands of students faced off against hundreds of riot police, I sought the infinite sanity of the evening grosbeaks thronging the elms in front of old Denny Hall.

Coming to know my college precincts so well made graduate school in the East both exciting and intimidating in its utter novelty. New Haven is an old industrial city, but the traprock ridges known as East and West Rocks loomed within easy reach of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and Atlantic shores lapped close to campus. The mature groves of hardwoods that graced the older colleges and cemeteries not only introduced me to the resplendent eastern autumn without having to go farther afield in New England but also stood ready to receive the warbler waves when they appeared in April and May. Ailanthus trees along railroad cuttings were hung with Cynthia moth cocoons like Christmas balls (Pyle, “Silkmoth”). Architecture and natural history merged as I took to seeking out the academic owls of Yale—stone carvings, wooden effigies, copper weathervanes—tallying in three years more than seventy-five “species.”

Self-consciously Oxbridgean Yale was bracketed by the real thing, as I spent several years in and near Cambridge as a Fulbright Scholar and postdoctoral consultant. Wicken Fen, where Darwin collected beetles while skipping classes, was some distance from campus. But the college Backs, spattered with celandine and crocuses in early spring, opened onto the River Cam (or Granta)—whose towpath could take you into fen, field, or forest, not to mention pub. I found ways to walk from my digs to my lab, three miles, entirely on footpaths, never on a road. I knew what nettle patch was most likely to offer up small tortoiseshells coming out of hibernation and which water meadows echoed with the rising and falling skylarks. Another season, I lived a block from Virginia Woolf’s one-time residence in Newnham, in a lane ending
at a nature reserve known as Owlstone Close, where tawny owls really did wail at night. Blue tits and English robins haunted Little St. Mary’s, and swifts zipped open the ancient air between the Cavendish Laboratory and the Free Press Public House. It wasn’t the Selborne of Gilbert White, but much of England’s familiar natural history could be found in and around Cambridge’s colleges.

Since then, as an independent scholar, I have been the guest of scores of academies. Most frequently, Evergreen State, with its deep woods and long shoreline on southernmost Puget Sound; the urban enclave of Portland State; and the erstwhile department store magnate’s estate of Lewis and Clark College, where poet William Stafford once had the right to glean fruit from campus trees written into his contract. I have watched a red vole skitter among gardens at the University of Saarbrücken; confirmed global warming by giant mauve pasqueflowers blooming in April at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, where I’d been promised dogsledding and found bare-chested frisbee throwers instead; and marveled at a lemon-and-heliotrope imperial moth hanging beneath a midnight archway in College Park, Maryland. At Thomas Jefferson’s “academical village,” the University of Virginia, I’ve watched pairs of cardinals (a big deal to a western birder) courting among old pines and a weathered and crocketed spire imported from Oxford in one of the many walled gardens. At a little college on Florida’s west coast, wood storks stalked the lawn, while across the state, alligators cruised campus waters at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Recently, walking the shore path along Lake Mendota at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, I reveled in the chartreuse explosions of fireflies (another biggie for westerners) in the campus bosque called Muir Woods after the esteemed naturalist and alumnus. One lampyrid beetle, plucked from a spiderweb, flashed on and off in my hand for half an hour. I can’t think of a college or university I have visited without taking home some such sharp image of its living placehood.

Since I have never assumed a full-time faculty position for long, I have not (since Washington) had to contend with the daily reality of a particular academic locus for year on year, day in, day out. As an itinerant don, I have not had to face committees and quotidian life and the strains they impose. No doubt this has made it easier for me to view every appointment as a longer or shorter field trip.
Even so, I fully believe that, had I satisfied my original objective of a long-term professorship, I would have treated whatever campus on which I went to ground in exactly the same manner: as a habitat, to be known more and more intimately for all it offered in the way of teaching, placement, and pleasure. If anything, such a relationship with one’s place of employment ought to provide a balm for the more tedious and difficult demands of the profession.

The closest I’ve come was as a visiting professor of creative writing at Utah State in Logan, the place of the waxwings in the snow. I designed and taught undergraduate and graduate courses in environmental writing for spring semester, 2002. This furnished the opportunity to get to know a particular academy’s locality in greater detail than those I might call upon for an afternoon or a week. Normally a habitué of rainforest that does have its seasons but that drips between them almost insensibly, I was struck by my first opportunity since childhood to experience a Rocky Mountain winter and its abrupt morphing into full-blown spring. It seemed that one week I was snowshoeing in the Wellsville Mountains west of town, the next hiking among balsamroot blooming in the Wasatch foothills to the east. The campus itself had suffered major disruption for new steam tunnels and was in any case fairly manicured. But one side of its hill dropped directly into the mouth of semi-wild Logan Canyon, and another fell away toward town through a squirrel-haunted arboretum. Pollination biologists and botanists in other departments steered me toward rare plants, such as the magenta MacGuire’s primrose, which bloomed in Logan Canyon when the naturalized violets spread their mauvy carpet across every unsprayed lawn in town. Two of my students were good naturalists active in Audubon, and together we found the best local wetlands for waterfowl. Most of the others, though from small Mormon towns and farms, were not much oriented toward the voluntary out-of-doors. But through writing invitations and field trips, I got them out, sharing my discoveries and reminding them of things they had forgotten to remember.

But the most vivid memory of emplacement I took away from Utah State had to do with an alien invasion of the English department. Actually, the invaders were native; the students, staff, and faculty who noticed their invasion were the aliens. At least since the late Pleistocene, bright fire-engine-red-and-black insects known as box elder bugs (*Leptocoris trivittatus*) have frequented
the canyons of the Rockies. They lay their eggs in the bark of box elder trees (*Acer negundo*), a kind of maple, in the early spring. By fall, millions of adult box elder bugs descend from the mountains seeking shelter in caves and hollow trees at lower elevations. When people erect big, heated buildings—the kind that campuses commonly consist of—within box elder bug range, they should not be surprised when the bugs treat them as caves. Yet people repeatedly express shock and indignation when their domiciles and workplaces are chosen for winter quarters by thousands of bright little bugs. And this was the case at Utah State, the winter I arrived.

I'd been enjoying the box elder bugs all term, as they clustered in corners over the ineffectual radiator in my office. As the days began to warm, they flew about the hallways like bright little ingots, seeking egress. Occasionally, I witnessed common varieties of entomophobia or mild irritation as b.e.b.'s flew into someone's careful coif or circled someone else's spectacles. But the first I knew that anyone was seriously disturbed by them was when a memo came around announcing that an exterminating firm had been engaged to spray the English building, as well as Old Main and the library. Apparently, some students and staff had become much distressed by the abundance of b.e.b.'s, especially in the computer room, where they congregated in special abundance, sometimes damaging the hardware, other times dissuading users from even coming in.

I was disturbed by the bad biology of the plan, as well as the decision to subject workers to toxins without their assent or knowledge of the agents to be used. Especially worrisome was the company's assurance that they would monitor for the bugs a month after application—by which date the insects would naturally have dispersed in any case! Between the opportunism of the exterminator and the entomological naiveté of everyone else, a bad situation had developed. Fortunately, many members of the faculty were incensed about the planned poisoning of their workplace for dubious reasons. As I wrote in a return memo, vacuums would do the job just fine where numbers of bugs constituted a real problem, and the bugs would soon evacuate the premises regardless of what we did—and, it was important to note, be back again next fall. The only way to prevent the annual influx would be to air-seal the building or to eradicate box elder trees from the canyons. Furthermore, the bugs were fascinating and quite beautiful, observed closely. Live with them, I advised my colleagues; even enjoy them.
Vacuum them if you must. At least that spring, we forestalled the spray. But I was sure the issue would arise again, after I was long gone. At least my colleagues would be better informed next time. The whole episode illustrated the disconnection many people feel with regard to their nonhuman neighbors, a trait that too often distances academic employees from their workplaces.

As a matter of fact, many academies go to lengths to eradicate or damp down the experience of the more-than-human on campus. For example, sprays are not limited to controlling unwanted residents in college buildings. Too many campuses suffer heavy exposure to chemicals applied to their lawns and gardens. Driven by some administrator’s floraphobic dictate that greenswards be pure bluegrass monocultures, grounds and facilities crews regularly spray the grass with herbicides and insecticides. When the snow melted and the grass greened in Logan, I was distressed to see work-study students employed to broadcast toxins here and there, completely free from protective equipment. I have also watched kids in shorts and sandals spraying herbicides at Albertson College in Idaho. This scene is repeated annually at many colleges and universities across the country. Recently, I witnessed with incredulity as an agricultural rig suited for a Midwest cornfield, with ten nozzles on a boom, sprayed the very swards where students routinely bask, nap, study, and make out at the University of Maryland. At the same time, soccer and softball camps were in progress. The little yellow warning flags were invisible over most of the expansive lawns. Many of the most commonly used biocides have been linked to lymphomas and an array of reproductive ills, and growing numbers of chemically sensitive people react badly to any sprays (Wargo). How sad to think that the blandishments of going barefoot may lead to bodily harm for trusting scholars. Not to mention to boring lawns that might otherwise host an attractive and interesting array of clovers, veronicas, violets, English daisies, native grasses, and their attendant pollinators.

I reserve special disdain for another, nearly ubiquitous abomination on the campus scene: the leaf blower. Is it not ironic that the very ideal of collegiate tranquillity, the much-vaunted and beloved Grove of Academe, where the din and fumes of the hurly-burly mercantile world are left behind in favor of the serene life of the mind, is the very place where one can almost be assured of hearing damnable leaf blowers every autumn? Many is the lovely campus where
I have experienced the shriek of two-stroke gasoline engines shattering the contemplative calm, never worse than one perfect afternoon at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Couched as a labor issue by landscape foremen who call the shots, the displacement of the soft sough of rakes by earsplitting and calm-wrecking leaf blowers and weed eaters can be considered at worst nothing less than a certain sign of the decline of the academy in a deeply philistine land. At best, poisons and machines serve to further disemplace campus residents of ours and other species.

Not that academicians need any further disincentives. In my experience, few campus habitués—whether students, staff, or faculty—attend to the actual place of their college homes with much care. Even those who live much out-of-doors tend to flee the campus as soon as possible for the trails, beaches, kayak waters, and climbing rocks far away. This is perfectly understandable, when the less exciting campus claims so much of their time already. But while they must be present, I maintain, there is no reason not to be more attentive to their surroundings.

I have known a few academics who exercised mindfulness toward their workplace. Not surprisingly, some of these were the relictual naturalists with whom I studied as an undergraduate in Seattle. The great botanist Arthur Kruckeberg, still situated at Washington after half a century, knows its every tree and shrub; he—along with Estella Leopold, another botany professor and daughter of Aldo Leopold—once chained himself to a special South African tree at risk from a paving project. Kruckeberg’s friend and late colleague, mammalogist and ornithologist Frank Richardson, taught me how the eastern gray and fox squirrels partitioned their adopted homes of the campus and arboretum. But one of the keenest such devotions was evidenced by a philosophy professor, John Chambless. When a resident of old, postwar faculty housing beside the landfill, he crossed the remnant marsh on foot daily to get to classes, bird-watching all the while. He became an astute birder, often presenting his introductory philosophy course in terms of local ornithological experiences and metaphors. This made Plato, Berkeley, and Descartes much more memorable for me, and I suspect for others, too.

Likewise, my mentor at Yale, Charles Remington, always knew what was happening outside his rooms in lab and museum. Sometimes, inside and outside merged seamlessly. I recall him lecturing on wasps of the genus *Vespula* one spring day when, as if on call, a
big queen yellow jacket flew in the open window. "Yes, just like that one," he said with a flourish. "Thank you very much." The wasp took one turn around the room and flew out again the way it had come in. That lesson was not forgotten (Pyle, Walking).

It is not surprising that some the academics who have most closely noticed their surroundings have been literary writers. Writer/biologists such as E. O. Wilson, Bernd Heinrich, Lynn Margulis, May Berenbaum, and Vincent Dethier quite naturally sprinkle their texts with observations from their home institutions as well as from distant settings (for example, Wilson). The genre of academically based fiction is also rich in examples. Vladimir Nabokov, still smarting from leaving the wilds of St. Petersburg's hinterlands, paid little attention to Cambridge while there, apart from boating, dating, and playing soccer (Boyd and Pyle). But his mordant and hilarious parody of a confused émigré professor, Pnin, deftly catches details of the campuses where he taught in this country, especially Cornell. In one scene, he even gives himself a cameo role, when Pnin disturbs a puddle-club of celestial blue butterflies: "Pity Vladimir Vladimirovich is not here," remarked Chateau. "He would have told us all about these enchanting insects" (128). They were, of course, the famous Karner Blue, now a conservation cause célèbre, originally given its scientific name and description by Nabokov. In Jane Smiley's Moo, we see the ag campus in intimate detail between an obsolete horticulturist character and a protagonist pig whose lone mad dash finally gains it brief freedom. Jon Hassler's several novels set in a small college in the upper Midwest dwell upon the physical setting with such loving depth that there is no perceptible separation between people, building, river, and geological substrate (e.g., The Dean's List). David Lodge's collegiate comedies, while hardly natural history, closely observe the airy Californian and red-brick English universities he loves to contrast. And in an inspired touch, his novel Small World apotheosizes the Two Cultures by placing the arts at one end of an expansive, new greenfield university, the sciences at the other, their planned bridging abandoned due to budget cuts that leave the intervening miles a wilderness both real and metaphorical.

The antithesis of Lodge's bicameral campus is Nabokov's High Ridge: "Does there not exist," he asks, "a high ridge where the mountainside of 'scientific' knowledge meets the opposite slope of 'artistic' imagination?" (Pyle, Walking). A recent academic job of mine was posited directly on the existence of such a meeting place. The
65,000-acre H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest, a joint enterprise of the Willamette National Forest and Oregon State University, has advanced our knowledge of Cascade Range forests and streams for more than half a century through a program known as Long-Term Ecological Research. A recent initiative of the U.S. Forest Service and the Spring Creek Project of the OSU Department of Philosophy, spearheaded by ecologist Fred Swanson and writer/philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore, launched a parallel program to be known as Long-Term Ecological Reflection. One of the first efforts I know of anywhere to attempt a left brain/right brain bridge based on place, the ecological reflection scheme is precisely an exercise in placing the academy. I was fortunate to be appointed to the first residency for this enlightened notion, subtitled “the Continuum Project” (Pyle, “Long Haul”). Subsequent residents have included Pattiann Rogers and ecocritic Scott Slovic.

As I drafted these thoughts while physically situated among deep wilderness, surrounded by massive Douglas firs and Pacific yews slung with boas of lichens and moss, I realized that I was taking part in literally bringing the academy to the wild. I found that my habit of peering closely into each of my successive domains had prepared me to extend my view beyond the actual H. J. Andrews campus and into the old-growth territory beyond. Of course, as an ecologist and a writer, I had an advantage over one whose biology was less embedded. On the other hand, the experience of a scientific naif, while less informed, might be more revealing for its freshness of view. What one would need for such an experience to be successful is the inherent or cultivated habit of close observation of external detail—for it is the details that make the place, whether or not one possesses names or facts to attach to them.

As stimulating as the H. J. Andrews immersion might be, it would be a grave mistake to imagine that genuine emplacement requires wildness in the strict sense. Fortunate is the nature lover situated at Williams or Middlebury colleges, backing up to the Green Mountains of Vermont as they do. Yet when I visited Columbia University last spring, in its hyperurban Manhattan setting, I saw that it not only possesses its own green space, but that it abuts the close of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, which runs into relatively bucolic Morningside Park, which further connects to Central Park, where I had watched hermit thrushes, white-crowned sparrows, and brown creepers that very March morning.
Nor are we talking strictly about native species. Ornamentals, cultivars, weeds, and the animal life they support all add to the diversity of any scene. Because most campuses are wildly mixed montages resembling no particular ecosystem to be found in the wild does not make them any less arresting to the eye and the mind. In fact, gardening, if not applied as a sort of ethnic cleansing against all things uninvited, may actually increase the overall diversity of a site over what one might find in that region and season in a more “natural” setting.

True placement should always lead one out, beyond the pale of the ivory tower, into the profane precincts beyond, crossing eco-tones and back again like every other creature. We are, after all, the only species (and this may be the one thing that truly differentiates humanity from other beings) that has forsaken its animal vigilance and ecological adeptness for comfort and security, such as it is.

So, how to get some of that back? By being a better naturalist, day by day, regardless of one’s academic discipline. This is not a matter of becoming a dedicated birder or botanist, carrying around a Roger Tory Peterson as an inseparable text (though that can’t be a bad thing, for any scholar interested in place). Rather, it is an openness toward gradual acquaintance, a willingness to get to know neighbors outside our species, let alone our departments. Most of all, it is an active resistance to that anti-intellectual, anticommunitarian quality that John Fowles has beautifully described as “contempt in ignorance.” I am again and again taken aback by otherwise bright people who, in their lack of familiarity with the so-called natural world, exhibit actual contempt for it or for those who pay it much attention. In his novel Daniel Martin (1973), a Fowles character tellingly asks, “Why isn’t it enough that I just love it here? That I don’t want to know all the names and the frightfully scientific words.” The title character answers, “Because you shouldn’t justify contempt in ignorance. In anything” (350). That gets it just right.

To place yourself in your academy, nothing serves better than walking. Walking, in the Thoreauvian sense from his essay by that name (Thoreau), means sauntering with few expectations other than being surprised—not dashing madly to class while shouting into a cell phone or trying to remember if you brought your lecture notes or what’s for dinner. It means dedicating otherwise unchallenged time to perambulation of your immediate environs, again and again, through the changing seasons, and then, following up on
some of the questions that invariably arise. What were those huge pigeons in the deodar cedars? Are these madhouse squirrels native or introduced? Those mushrooms behind the greenhouse—were they palatable, poisonous, or psychoactive? This kind of looking and asking can lead not only to extradepartmental conversation, but to the occasional lyric impulse or connective insight.

I take special pleasure in long night walks on campuses, when sounds and smells are especially vivid and human bustle almost absent. On my lengthy noctivagations of UW Madison one recent summer, I watched Boston ivy ruffle in the breeze on the side of the carillon tower as if it were green waves, just before the bells rang eleven. College-gothic shadows, bits of stained glass, greenhouse palms, and premating primates all showed as they never would have by day, and a lean, feral black cat spotted not far from a small cottontail at graze predicted either a short food chain or a close call. I readily admit to a nocturnal advantage as a large male animal. Even so, company, if not overly loquacious, does not necessarily spoil such dark rambles. They may also be indulged on wheels, in fact more and more so on our post-ADA campuses.

In the end, placing the academy means, to me, paying true attention to one’s academic surrounds. I am both saddened and disturbed by how few seem to do so. Strangely, I have known few less versed in natural history than some of those who style themselves “deep ecologists.” Doubtless these thinkers lead splendid seminars, but most could no more lead an informed nature walk in their own home precincts than they could survive a month in the wild. Likewise, many ecocritics, ecofeminists, ecophilosophers, and environmental historians of my acquaintance tend to neglect their own backyards. I have known professors of place-based disciplines, not to mention molecular biologists, who couldn’t name five native plants or animals outside their offices.

I do not intend this charge as an indictment as much as an invitation. Of course, our jobs seldom demand or reward intimacy with the grounds outside Old Main, nor have we any call to go forth into the wilderness naked (as former University of Washington professor of anthropology Monty West once did in order to perceive the plight of the unequipped aboriginal; he survived, barely) (Pyle, Bigfoot). What, then, is lost through the failure to attend? Just this: anyone who is concerned with the literature or meaning of place, yet who ignores the physical and living details of the very place where she or he works is forsaking a vast reservoir of inspiration, grounding,
Placing the Academy

instruction, authority, tranquillity, consolation, physical and intellectual stimulation, spiritual succor, fun, and sometimes ecstasy, but above all, interest in the real world. When you care about your own place, what you have to say about place in general is certain to mean, and matter, much more. If my experience is any measure, getting to know the campus sensu stricto can dramatically affect one’s teaching, research, writing, engagement, and well-being.

Finally, I do not think it out of order to suggest that intellectual workers whose subjects of study impinge on place (and I can scarcely imagine a field that does not) bear a certain responsibility to know something about the locality where they live, study, and teach. The aunts of Frank Lloyd Wright interviewed prospective teachers for their Hillside Home School based on their knowledge of the local flora and fauna (Chase). While we are unlikely to return to such an Arcady, there is something in that view of pedagogic qualification that still rings true. Would it be too much to ask of our academics that they make an effort to know their nonhuman neighbors, as well as their colleagues and students? For me, doing so has been nothing but a pleasure. And when I arrived in Missoula not long ago for an appointment at the University of Montana and found a bill tacked to a telephone post a block from my apartment urging everyone to be watchful for the local black bear, I knew I was in for another adventure in placement.

One recent year, I had cause to return repeatedly to the University of Washington during a successful course of chemotherapy for my wife, Thea. These occasions gave me the opportunity to revisit many of the crannies and corners I’d known so well some thirty years ago. Picking my way among new buildings since sprung up in the rich fertilizer of Gates and Allen cash, I sought the old haunts. The skyline and footprints of university buildings had grown radically, becoming more an academical city than village. Unaltered habitats had equally shrunk, one of my favorite bird groves having disappeared beneath the new law school, for example. But I found that much remained—from attenuated madrona patch to revivified herb garden. The route of the then-railroad—now the many-mile Burke-Gilman Trail girdling Seattle’s midsection—took me round the campus when it was painted by autumn. In winter rain I found the immense graduate reading room of Suzallo Library, though recently earthquake-proofed, still one of the finest rooms I know, and the mauve stained-glass chipmunk still guarded a small stairway nearby. Come spring, I circumnavigated the shore of Portage Bay,
from Montlake Bridge to University Bridge, past marsh and freeway, past houseboat and dorm, past salmon-spawning pool and birch grove, past Fisheries and Oceanography and Early Childhood Development. Coots and spotted sandpipers still frequented bay and beach, marsh wrens the cattail patch, and Anna’s hummingbird rose to the peak of his molten-throated courtship arc. As I returned to the hospital through the early dusk, the powerful seashore stink of *Cornus mas* and the thick sweet scent of *Daphne odora* displaced the diesel fumes of the day.

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