



Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage

Dianne D. Glave

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Crossing the ocean on a slave ship, working the land under threat of violence, eluding racists in nighttime chases through moonless fields and woodlands, stumbling across a murder victim hanging from a tree—these are images associated with the African American experience of nature. Over the decades, many African Americans have come to accept that natural areas are dangerous. Unfamiliar with the culture's rich environmental heritage, people overlook the knowledge and skills required at every turn in black history: thriving in natural settings in ancestral African lands, using and discovering farming techniques to survive during slavery and Reconstruction, and navigating escape routes to freedom, all of which required remarkable outdoor talents and a level of expertise far beyond what's needed to hike or camp in a national forest or park.

In *Rooted in the Earth*, environmental historian Dianne D. Glave overturns the stereotype that a meaningful attachment to nature and the outdoors is contrary to the black experience. In tracing the history of African Americans' relationship with the environment, emphasizing the unique preservation-conservation aspect of black environmentalism, and using her storytelling skills to re-create black naturalists of the past, Glave reclaims the African American heritage of the land. This book is a groundbreaking, important first step toward getting back into nature, not only for personal growth but for the future of the planet.

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