

March 15

Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place, Terry Tempest Williams

Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place (1991) is an autobiographical account which chronicles a disruptive period in the life of author Terry Tempest Williams. In 1983, several sources of stability and inspiration for Williams were shaken, when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and her beloved Bear River Bird Refuge was threatened by the rising waters of the Great Salt Lake. Critical of less-than-sensitive responses to the land, Williams finds her own peace as she comes to embrace continuity in change, both in the land of her LDS ancestors and in rhythms of her family and her own life.



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Idaho Tough Paradise



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Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

October 20

Bloodlines: Odyssey of a Native Daughter, Janet Campbell Hale

November 17

Lives of the Saints in Southeast Idaho, Susan H. Swetnam

January 19

A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West, Mary Hallock Foote

February 16

Thousand Pieces of Gold, Ruthanne Lum McCunn

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Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place, Terry Tempest Williams



October 20

Bloodlines: Odyssey of a Native Daughter, Janet Campbell Hale

Bloodlines (1993) is a collection of autobiographical essays in which Janet Campbell Hale reflects on her youth as a member of a poor, troubled Indian family and on connections between her own identity and Indian culture and history. Lyrical, angry, caught up in the process of writing and self-creation, Hale explores what it means to her to be an Indian in contemporary America.



November 17

Lives of the Saints in Southeast Idaho, Susan H. Swetnam

Lives of the Saints (1990) is a study of the ways that Mormons tell the life stories of their pioneer experiences in biographies and autobiographies. Using many extended direct quotes from an archive of over 6000 pages of original written material by LDS writers, it offers rich insights and enjoyable reading.

January 19

A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West, Mary Hallock Foote

A Victorian Gentlewoman (1972) presents the reminiscences of Mary Hallock Foote, the cultivated eastern wife of an engineer who came to the Boise River Canyon in the 1880s. An illustrator and writer of short stories and sketches, Foote chronicles her ambivalence to Idaho and to the West—she loves the harsh beauty of the land but dislikes the isolation and debilitating roughness of the life for women.

February 16

Thousand Pieces of Gold, Ruthanne Lum McCunn

Thousand Pieces of Gold (1981) is a novelized account of the life of Polly Bemis, a Chinese slave girl brought to the Warrens mining district of Idaho in the late 19th century. Describing anti-Chinese prejudice in Idaho, the novel also brings to life Polly's courage, hard work, and indomitable spirit as she adapts to life and to love in her new homeland.

