



Religious Naturalist Association

encouraging awareness of the religious naturalist orientation

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Personal essay (excerpt) – Cortney Cameron

My love affair with igneous rocks began before I had a name for them. Growing up near the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, evidence of the power lurking within the Earth never left my sight. I lived near a mountain stream glittering with mica and edged by gneiss cliffs several times my height. In high school, my earth science class finally taught me what I could call them. That evening, I pulled over on the highway to stare at the mountain silhouettes, marveling that they had once rivaled the Rockies in stature, and feeling the weight of the eons needed to whittle away those miles of rock. I lived in a small fundamentalist community; my preacher, warning us of endless hellfire, had once described eternity as the time it would take for an eagle to level Stone Mountain—a magnificently exposed granite intrusion of Devonian age—were the bird to graze its beak across the rock face just once every millennium. That night, gazing at the Appalachians and envisioning two continents, riding upon magma, colliding, I realized that my preacher understood neither fire nor eternity.

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