



A TERRIBLE BEAUTY The Wilderness of American Literature

Jonah Raskin

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ABOUT THE BOOK Shortly before he published *Walden; or Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau called "The library a wilderness of books." He also noted that while Americans were "clearing the forest in our westward progress, we are accumulating a forest of books in our rear, as wild and unexplored as any of nature's primitive wildernesses." In *A Terrible Beauty: The Wilderness of American Literature*, Jonah Raskin takes a long close look at the forest of books that poets, novelists and essayists mapped and explored before and after Thoreau. The first work of cultural criticism to look back at writing in the United States from the perspective of the contemporary environmental crisis, Raskin offers insights for students, teachers and lovers of literature as well as for backpackers and hikers who have trekked across untrammelled forests, deserts and mountains. **ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Jonah Raskin has taught American literature at Sonoma State University, the State University of New York at Stony Brook and as a Fulbright professor at the University of Antwerp and the University of Ghent in Belgium. The author of fifteen books, he earned his B.A. at Columbia College in New York, his M.A. at Columbia University and his Ph.D. at the University of Manchester, Manchester, England. He lives in northern California and has written for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The L.A. Times*, *The Nation*, *The Redwood Coast Review* and *Catamaran*.

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