



Unrestorable Habitat: Microsoft Is My Neighbor Now

Lois Phillips Hudson

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Unrestorable Habitat: Microsoft Is My Neighbor Now Lois Phillips Hudson

Lois Phillips Hudson was a novelist, essayist, professor at the University of Washington, environmental activist, and mother of two daughters. She was born in 1927 in Jamestown, North Dakota. Because of the Depression, her family was forced to move back and forth between North Dakota and Washington State. In 1937 her family finally settled on a twenty-acre homestead in the rural Sammamish River Valley near the town of Redmond, Washington, population, then, only about 300. *Unrestorable Habitat: Microsoft Is My Neighbor Now* recounts how that valley was transformed over the course of Hudson's lifetime, roughly the sixty-five years from 1937 to 2003. The Sammamish River Valley was for her what Walden Pond was for Thoreau, what the Lake District was for Wordsworth, what the farm at Port Royal, Kentucky, is for Wendell Berry. It was both her home land and it was the womb of her imagination. Day after day, year after year, she rode her bicycles, first along the county gravel roads of her youth, then along the asphalt pathways of the Kings County Park and Trail System. As she rode, she observed the natural order and its cycles; she observed the human habitation of this world and how it changed the natural order; she saw rivers where salmon had once been plentiful now dammed for power generation and straightened for flood control. Parking lots covered wetlands. Golf courses and soccer parks replaced farm fields. Suburban housing developments overran apple and cherry orchards. Hudson's rural habitat of small farms, salmon streams, forests, and the human community closely tied to the natural world were transformed into the suburban technological-capitol of the world, the headquarters of Microsoft, Hudson's new "neighbor." *Unrestorable Habitat: Microsoft Is My Neighbor Now* was not published during Hudson's lifetime. Hudson left a manuscript that is substantially complete, but not fully finished. The book tells a unified story. It has a clear beginning, coherent development of ideas, and a satisfying conclusion. But it is obvious that Hudson had not done her final editing. There are many parenthetical comments within the text where she reminds herself to recheck sources, to verify facts, and to delete repetitions. We are able to observe Hudson's thought process as she makes suggestions for further revision of her book. Also, there are a few typographical mistakes. However, the text is being published as Hudson last left it, without editorial corrections.

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