

Nature & Writing: Book Passage Panel with Isabel Allende March 11, 2006

NATURE'S VIRTUES:

- **Perspective**
 - *Geologic* time: lives of humans, trees, Earth, stars
 - *Infinite* space & time: night sky, stars bright
 - To feel both very large and very small—at once
- **Connection**
 - *Geese overhead*: “The wind has gone with the geese...and so would I, were I the wind.
 - Their flight connects *so many sacred places*—and connects us to all those places, by the very beating of their wings.
 - *The Butterfly Effect*: ultimate connection
- **Inspiration**
 - *Renewal*: “There are flowers under that snow.”
 - *Transformation*: Merlin caught in storm, atop tree
 - *Oneness with Creation*
 - ✓ *Kate becomes a tree* in *TAO*
 - ✓ *Avalon*: *World tree*; *the last place* anywhere where humanity and all creatures live in harmony...for a time.

BIBLICAL VIEW:

- *Job* declares: “Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee. And speak to the fowls of the air, and they shall teach thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee.”
- *Noah's ark*: If God made Noah go through so much trouble to save the animals, *can we do any less?*

[Remember: Environmentalism isn't just about saving other, obscure species: *It's about saving ourselves.*

Example: How many conflicts about *scarce resources*: oil, water, food, trees, land.

NATURE WRITING:

- *Make it true!* Coleridge's standard way too low.
- *Place as character.*

- All 5 senses: *the sensuous details* (Example: Young Merlin washes ashore.)
- *The Hero*—a concept in stories through *all cultures, all times*.
 - If life is a journey (Joseph Campbell), or a hike: heroes are *our trail guides*: They show us how far we can go, how *high* we can climb
 - The *least likely*, most unnoticed people: heroic qualities
- *Massive confusion* in this society: **hero vs. celebrity**.
 - Celebrities: *Fame; visible* qualities
 - Heroes: *Character; invisible* qualities [This is why I made Merlin lose eyesight. *To see with his heart.*]
- *Best stories* of all are **the true ones**:
 - *Gloria Barron Prize*
 - ✓ *All kinds of kids: Anyone can find heroic qualities.*
 - ✓ *Goal: Turn the spotlight on kids, inspire others.*
- *Materialism and Media messages*:
 - We tell our children: Worth from **what they own**, not **who they are**
 - **Consumer**: synonym for “person”, “citizen”. Be we are much more! *We create, invent, hope, heal, love, try...*
 - **Let us be creators, not consumers!** *Teach our children: Create their own lives, their own world. They have the power.*
 - **May you be a creator.** And wherever you can... find **just the right word**.