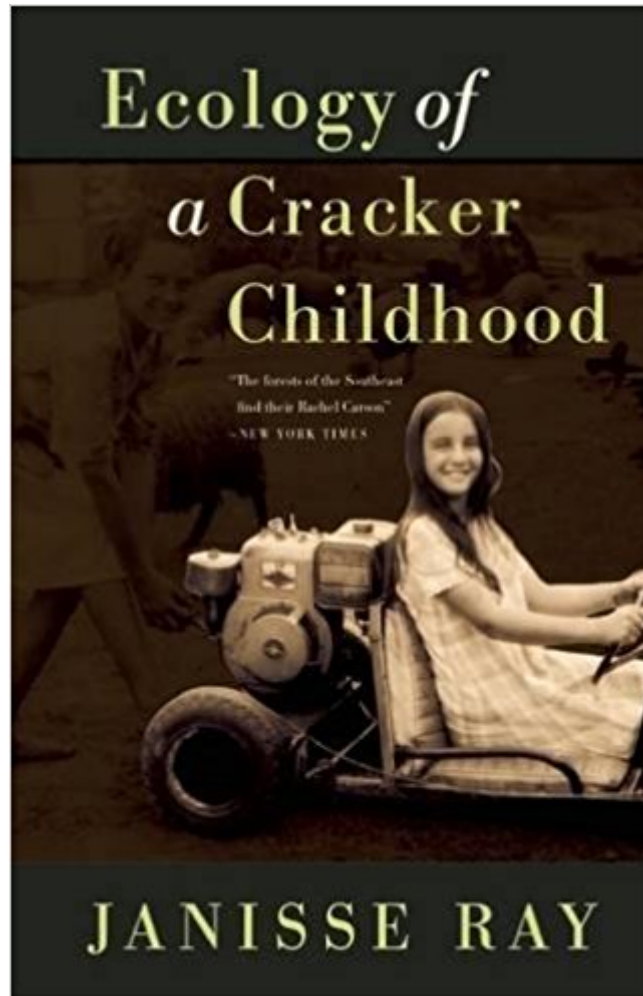




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# Ecology Of A Cracker Childhood: 15th Anniversary Edition



## Synopsis

“A gutsy, wholly original memoir of ragged grace and raw beauty.”—Kirkus Reviews (STARRED) From the memories of a childhood marked by extreme poverty, mental illness, and restrictive fundamentalist Christian rules, Janisse Ray crafted a memoir that has inspired thousands to embrace their beginnings, no matter how humble, and fight for the places they love. This edition, published on the fifteenth anniversary of the original publication, updates and contextualizes the story for a new generation and a wider audience desperately searching for stories of empowerment and hope. Janisse Ray grew up in a junkyard along U.S. Highway 1, hidden from Florida-bound travelers by hulks of old cars. In language at once colloquial, elegiac, and informative, Ray redeems her home and her people, while also cataloging the source of her childhood hope: the Edenic longleaf pine forests, where orchids grow amid wiregrass at the feet of widely spaced, lofty trees. Today, the forests exist in fragments, cherished and threatened, and the South of her youth is gradually being overtaken by golf courses and suburban development. A contemporary classic, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* is a clarion call to protect the cultures and ecologies of every childhood.

## Book Information

Paperback: 294 pages

Publisher: Milkweed Editions; 15th Anniversary ed. edition (November 24, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1571313257

ISBN-13: 978-1571313256

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 102 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #67,265 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Forests & Rainforests](#) #24 in [Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Forestry](#) #56 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Environmentalists & Naturalists](#)

## Customer Reviews

The scrubby forests of southern Georgia, dotting a landscape of low hills and swampy bottoms, are not what many people would consider to be exalted country, the sort of place to inspire lyrical considerations of nature and culture. Yet that is just what essayist Janisse Ray delivers in her

memorable debut, a memoir of life in a part of America that roads and towns have passed by, a land settled by hardscrabble Scots herders who wanted nothing more than to be left alone, and who bear the derogatory epithet "cracker" with quiet pride. Ray grew up in a junkyard outside what had been longleaf pine forest, an ecosystem that has nearly disappeared in the American South through excessive logging. Her family had little money, but that was not important; they more than made up for material want through unabashed love and a passion for learning, values that underlie every turn of Ray's narrative. She finds beauty in weeds and puddles, celebrates the ways of tortoises and woodpeckers, and argues powerfully for the virtues of establishing a connection with one's native ground. "I carry the landscape inside like an ache," Ray writes. Her evocations of fog-enshrouded woods and old ways of living are not without pain for all that has been lost--but full of hope as well for what can be saved. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ray, a poet and an environmental activist, takes a tough-minded look at life in rural southern Georgia in this blend of memoir and nature study. She presents detailed observations of her family members, most notably her grandfather Charlie, who was "terrifying, prone to violent and unmerited punishment

Janisse Ray tells a story of her life with so much love, so much brilliance and laughter. extremely well written, incredibly eye opening about her culture and her environment. i finished the book and purchased everything else she has written. this is an author not to miss.

This is an enjoyable book in a narrative style that combines a lot of the ecology of the longleaf pine forests with a bit of sustainable philosophy in the chapter headings. Many will recognize life growing up in the 1970s. I lived in the area during the 1970's when the author was growing up so perhaps it is especially relevant. I do recommend it for anyone living in Georgia, Alabama, northern Florida, and Mississippi as long-leaf pine region. It also counters some stereotypes of "poor, white trash" as the family was clearly intelligent, hard-working, and her mother kept an immaculate house.

I really enjoyed the author's creativity as she applied different writing techniques in different chapters. She paints a picture of the old south and adeptly reminds us why we need to preserve the environment. She vacillates between nostalgia and facts - her story and the story of the land. Loved it!

Rachel Carson and Janisse Ray are pioneers of the environmental movement. Reading Ray's autobiography gives you insight into her upbringing, the history of the Cracker in Europe and in the southern United States. The story reads like a beautiful patchwork quilt made by the author.

Great memoir interwoven into a naturalist text. I read this over the course of a few days, enjoyed its realness and perspective. I would definitely recommend to a friend.

Finished reading this amazing book last night - could not put it down as it is so beautifully written - one of the better memoirs I've read in awhile as it combines the author's childhood in Georgia with the ecology of the area (southeast Georgia). Having learned so much about the region, I've purchased the sequel -- Ms. Ray is an exceptional writer!

This book should inspire, inform & awe any reader. The author combines personal history with descriptions of the longwood pine area of south Georgia where she grew up. She includes sound & doable actions to preserve this land and in fact our whole earth. She writes beautifully in a pragmatic & tough way.

Memorable memoir and inspirational in every way. Highly recommended for all Southerners. Beautifully written, poetic, moving, and much, much more

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