

# The John Burroughs Association, Inc.

At The American Museum of Natural History  
15 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10024

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## Department of Communications

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## Robin Wall Kimmerer wins John Burroughs Nature Essay Award

The John Burroughs Association is pleased to announce the 2013 winner of the **John Burroughs Nature Essay Award** is Robin Wall Kimmerer for "Council of the Pecans," published by *Orion Magazine* in its September/October 2013 issue.

The award will be presented on Monday, April 7, at the Annual Literary Awards ceremony of the John Burroughs Association during a celebratory luncheon at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

In "Council of the Pecans" Kimmerer writes with a naturalist's knowledge, a poet's imagination, and the narrative grace of a fine storyteller. She effortlessly weaves the social history of the Potawatomi Native Americans with detailed biological information about pecans, especially their abundance during mast fruiting, thereby giving substance to the value of sacred land. Not only are the pecan trees a model for human behavior, but they are a symbol for the resilience of Kimmerer's Potawatomi peoples. She writes with a sensitive descriptive hand, knowing the effectiveness of varying sentence rhythms along with an awareness of concrete verbs in telling her informative and moving story of the metaphorically expressive "Council of the Pecans."

"*Orion* is thrilled that Robin Wall Kimmerer's essay 'Council of the Pecans' has won the John Burroughs Nature Essay Award. The gracefulness of Robin's prose, combined with her unique ability to bring multiple ways of knowing to bear on her subject matter, made this a standout piece for *Orion*. We are so proud to see it honored in this way." *Orion Magazine*

Kimmerer is a mother, scientist, decorated professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Her first book, *Gathering Moss*, was awarded the John Burroughs Medal for distinguished nature writing in 2005. Her writings have appeared in *Orion*, *Whole Terrain*, and numerous scientific journals. She lives in Fabius, New York, where she is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and the founder and director of the Center for

Native Peoples and the Environment.

The John Burroughs Association first gave a distinguished published nature essay an award in 1993 to recognize exceptional nature writing in essay form, and to honor the literary legacy of naturalist John Burroughs, who is credited with creating the modern nature essay. The Award is given annually to a published essay that is scientifically accurate, yet does more by using a personal point of view to present material in vivid writing.

Past winners of the **John Burroughs Nature Essay Award** included John Hanson Mitchell, John Daniel, Gary Noel Ross, Geerat Vermeij, Michael Pollan, Kenneth Brower, Richard Conniff, Barbara Smuts, Jeff Lockwood, Freeman House, Edward Kanze, Judith Lowry, David Gessner, Christopher Cokinos, Mark A. Smith, Jill Sisson Quinn, Brian Doyle, and Rick Bass. Scott Russell Sanders has the distinction of receiving the award twice.

The John Burroughs Association brings to life the legacy, writing, and natural world of John Burroughs, one of the nation's first literary naturalists, by making his historic property "Slabsides" and surrounding land with hiking trails available to the public, and by recognizing distinguished nature writing through its annual literary awards; the John Burroughs Medal, the John Burroughs Essay Award, and the Riverby Award for nature books for young readers.

The John Burroughs Association invites you to join the celebration of "Council of the Pecans" and meet Robin Wall Kimmerer on April 7, at the American Museum of Natural History. Attendees will receive a copy Orion containing the winning essay, as well as a set of this year's **John Burroughs Medal** and **Riverby Award** winning-books. For more information and reservations visit us at [www.johnburroughsassociation.org](http://www.johnburroughsassociation.org), or call Lisa Breslof at 212-769-5169.

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