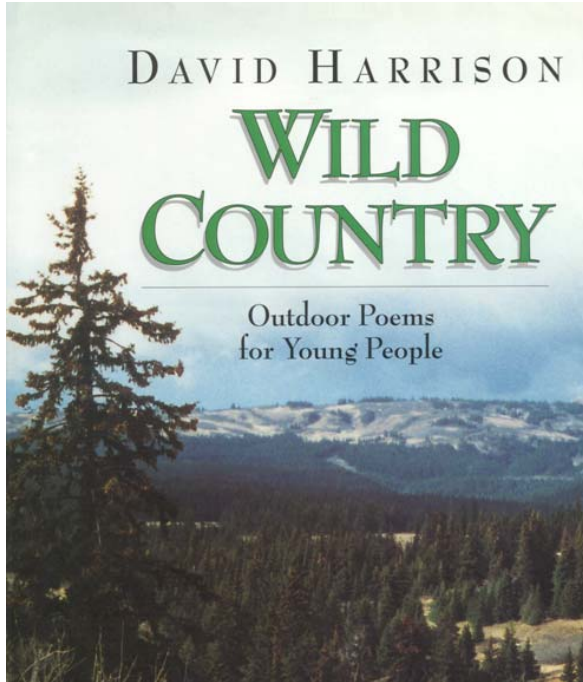


## Wild Country



**Publisher:** Boyds Mills Press

**Pub. Date:** September 1999

**ISBN-13:** 9781563977848

**Age Range:** Young Adult

**Hardcover:** 48pp

### Children's Literature

The feel of the outdoors is nicely captured within the pages of this book of poetry.

The poems about the mountains and the high country will resonate with anyone who has witnessed the often desolate beauty of the landscape at higher elevations.

"Above the Tree Line" describes how "plants crouch/on stingy soil" where "cold wind blows/and life belongs/to the strong." "Summer Vacation" depicts a different scene as in August, "the mountain counts/forget-me-nots/listens to squirrels,/and rests." Hardy creatures, including sheep and eagles, are depicted in their natural habitat, where the visitor is often surprised by their presence. The quiet of the forest is felt in "Crossing Paths" where the hiker stands near the hoofprint of a deer, and one of the irritants of nature is described in "Landlords," where flies abound and force the visitor to run from the shady spot. "Low Tide" pictures the sand as a table deserted by guests who leave "sand-dollar cookie crumbs" and "shell coins" for tips.

### VOYA

Mountains, forests, high country, and sea are the four elements of nature that readers visit in this collection of delightful wilderness poetry. All but the briefest poems have their own pages, and titles announce the subject of most poems. Harrison uses

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appropriate figurative language, with a pleasing mixture of metaphor, simile, alliteration, and personification. The short verses capture authentic sounds and images, with seagulls "Mewing like cats," sandpipers "dodging the tide / like tourists wearing / their Sunday shoes," and butterflies appearing as "Palettes of pigment." The poems are readily understood, although some encourage further thought, such as in the last stanza of "The Pond": "What if the glacier / had not dug here? / Where would / the animals drink?" Harrison also reminds readers of humanity's connection to the wild. This lovely collection of outdoor verse would be a useful source for teaching poetic devices to students in the middle school grades and would provide solid enrichment in a science class to compliment the study of nature's ecosystems. Harrison's word pictures create pleasing, recognizable images, especially for those students with firsthand experience in the wild. More photographs of his subjects would have been a boon for the uninitiated. As Harrison points out in his last poem, "No words / can paint pictures of nature only remind us / that beauty surrounds us, / the heart must supply the rest." VOYA CODES: 4Q 3P M (Better than most, marred only by occasional lapses; Will appeal with pushing; Middle School, defined as grades 6 to 8). 1999, Boyds Mills, 48p. Ages 12 to 14. Reviewer: Mary Ann Darby VOYA, February 2001 (Vol. 23, No.6)

## Library Journal

Gr 4-7-In this collection of 47 free-verse poems, Harrison offers a tour of four areas: mountains, the high country, forests, and the sea. These selections evoke clear images that invite readers to observe and to marvel at some of the wilder regions of our natural world. There are no illustrations; none are needed. There is a nice balance between poems that celebrate the power and majesty of nature and those that offer glimpses of simple worlds to be discovered in nature walks. All of the verses are reflective; some are touched with humor. Young readers are likely to find the short poems about animals most accessible and engaging.-Carolyn Angus, The Claremont Graduate School, CA Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information.