



White Poplar, Black Locust

Louise Wagenknecht

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Louise Wagenknecht grew up in one of the West's last company lumber towns, a small community called Hilt on the California-Oregon border. There she witnessed the dying years of a unique way of life, the tailend of the 1950s lumber boom that would devastate the ancient old-growth forests of the Klamath Mountains as well as the people of Hilt, whose lives were inextricably tied to the company lumber mill. White Poplar, Black Locust is the story of that transformation, but it is also something more—a noteworthy addition to the literature of place, and a sensitive and richly textured family memoir. As Wagenknecht unravels the threads that still bind her to both Hilt's history and her own, unforgettable characters emerge, and what should have been the happy ending to this story, the marriage of her divorced mother to a forester working for the Fruit Growers Supply Company, becomes instead the end of childhood innocence, foretelling the demise of the mill and the end of Hilt itself.

Expertly weaving memoir and history against the backdrop of a powerful yet little-known landscape, *White Poplar, Black Locust* is an immensely readable narrative of pain, loss, and ultimate survival.

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