

Review by Francis S. Griego <fsg@aruba.ccit.arizona.edu>

Program Development Specialist/Coordinator Library Programs, 1515 E First St., University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA. TEL: 520-621-1031.

Deming, Alison Hawthorne. TEMPORARY HOMELANDS. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1994. 203 pp. US\$18.00 hardback ISBN: 1-56279-062-5. Recycled, acid-free paper.

The Library of Congress has classified Alison Hawthorne Deming's TEMPORARY HOMELANDS, under Human Ecology-Religious Aspects. Another reviewer, W.S. Di Piero, in the publisher's news release, uses "spiritual autobiography", and Ms. Deming, herself, on the first page of her preface, describes her views of nature as "miraculous" and "spiritual."

Not to worry. For those who may be concerned or put off by the previous religious references, let me assure you, Alison Deming is an award winning literary artist who has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Academically she serves as the Director of The University of Arizona Poetry Center, but more importantly, Ms. Deming qualifies as an ecological writer, and her TEMPORARY HOMELANDS is an examination of her personal relationship with nature.

The twelve essays are written in a comfortable and enjoyable first-person narrative. These eclectic vignettes do not have to be read in order; however, there is continuity starting with an eight-year old first ecological awareness as we share her Island Notebook. Did you know that there are Canadian bats who "... eat their weight in blackflies every day"(7)? Alison Deming makes no excuses, does not define, and she does not offer prescriptions to the fanatical ecologist. She does offer you a chance to share a sensitive writer's perspective of nature.

Alison Deming, in order to fully comprehend the connection between her view of nature and her literary world, smoothly weaves in allusions (her reference points) to Klee, Service, Ellman, Cohen, Yeats, Fromm, Aesop, Shakespeare, Miller, O'Neill, Saenz, Stoddard, Sebeok, and Ingemann, to name only a few. The inclusion of these "artistic grates" does not interfere with the reader's enjoyment, if one remembers that we are sharing this writer's experience with nature. These essays represent Alison Hawthorne Deming's ecological "weltanschauung" or world view.

Ecology is the interrelationship of organisms with their total environment, and Deming's book neatly fits into this schema. As for the religious aspect, well, that depends on one's own weltanschauung.