

***Electronic Green Journal***  
**Volume 1, Issue 44**  
**Special Issue: In honor of Ryder W. Miller**

**Editorial to the Special Issue:**  
**Commemorating Environmental Writing of Ryder W. Miller**

**Maria A. Jankowska**  
*UCLA Library, Los Angeles, CA*



Ryder W. Miller's photo by Jon Miller

**A Tribute to Ryder W. Miller**

It is my honor to present the special issue of the *Electronic Green Journal* to celebrate and commemorate the environmental writing of Ryder W. Miller and his lasting contribution to the *EGJ*. As his brother, Jon Miller communicated to me:

“Ryder W. Miller passed away on March 15, 2020 after a six-month struggle with pancreatic cancer.

Ryder went to SUNY Stony Brook and completed a degree in biology with a minor in environmental sciences. He used this to work as a park ranger, a guide at aquariums, an environmental reporter, a participant on the Great Peace March for global nuclear disarmament, an eco-critic and more. He also obtained a Master's degree in environmental education from CSU at Hayward.

He wrote about nature, the sea, astronomy, astrobiology, art, Steinbeck, Arthur C. Clarke, and the Inklings. He also had a steady day job on the phone as an interviewer, telemarketer, and lead generator for more than 20 years. He was the author of: *Ocean Beach Diary*, *From Narnia to a Space Odyssey*, a co-writer of *San Francisco: A Natural History*, and he self-published books of short stories called *Tales of Horror and Suspense* and *Green Visions*. He was intensely interested in astroenvironmentalism, Mars, and terraforming. He was a prolific reviewer of books and movies, and his articles filled local papers and journals.

For those who knew him personally, Ryder will be remembered as the gentlest of giants, filled with compassion. As a person who was unique and creative in his writings and interests, with a mind full of wonder and a heart as tender as they come. Ryder is sorely missed by his family.”

Irwin Weintraub, one of the first editors of the EGJ introduced Ryder to the Journal. This is how Irwin remembers Ryder:

“I was involved with the Electronic Green Journal in its early years. I submitted articles and book reviews on issues of environmental concern. My nephew, Ryder Miller, had a lifelong interest in making Planet Earth a sustainable entity that will help us survive. I introduced him to the Electronic Green Journal and its goal of informing readers of the many challenges facing the environment. He decided to submit articles and book reviews concerning land, air and sea issues to convince readers that they should take note of the possible crises that may confront us if we do not change our troublesome interactions with nature. He had a keen interest in both the significant and minor factors that need attention. Ryder's book reviews provided insights into the

environmental issues and the authors' goals of educating readers to include nature and its characteristics into their daily thinking.

He and I spent many hours discussing environmental issues and the responsibility of all citizens around the world to cooperate in a myriad of actions to "save the planet." I am retired now and living in Israel but we continued to pursue our discussion via Skype and telephone. He had an astute understanding of the situations around him and the dire need to act. When he passed away a short time ago, I was saddened. I will miss his perspectives and long for the time when mankind will follow some of his ideas and incorporate them into dealing with climate change."

Ryder's association with the Journal started in 2001 after the contribution of his innovative piece: "[Astroenvironmentalism: The case for Space Exploration as an Environmental Issue](#)." After many controversial reviews, we made the decision to publish Ryder's forward thinking article as an opinion piece. Today his article has more than 1,540 hits and has been republished in different publications. In 2003, he wrote a piece "[An Ocean Beach Diary?](#)", which he expanded within the following years into a book by the same title, published in 2016 and held today by libraries worldwide. A year later, in his essay "[The Missing Historical Environmental Context of Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings](#)," he questioned the absence of environmental statements in the cinematic version of J.R.R. Tolkien's literary classic. His curiosity of Mars was expressed in "[Viewpoint: Millennial Fever, Extremophiles, NASA, Astroenvironmentalism, and Planetary Protection](#)," published in 2005, Issue 22. In Issue 23, we published "[On my mind: The Ecological explanation for the Environmental Crisis](#)", in which Ryder debated the role of ecology as the study of interaction between organisms, pointing to six severe environmental problems (global warming, pollution poisoning, extinction, harmful non-indigenous species, habitat destruction, and overpopulation). In 2008, as a part of Issue 26, we published Ryders' essay "[Searching for the Astronomical Environmental Nature Writing Classic: Ehrlich, Abbey, and Others](#)", in which he emphasized that our actions and plans directed at the solar system say a lot about humanity and our aspirations as environmentalists.

Ryder was a prolific book reviewer. Since Issue 15 of the EGJ, published in 2001, he contributed multiple reviews per issue ranging from two (Issues 15, 16, 18, 25, 27, 32, 35, and 41), to three (Issues 17, 22, 26, 30, 37, 38, 39), four (Issues 20, 23, 24, 36) and even six (Issue 40) book reviews. Altogether, Ryder wrote sixty four reviews of numerous environmental books.

Theresa Calcagno, a former EGJ Book Review Editor worked closely with Ryder. This is how she remembers him:

“I have been thinking about my interactions with Ryder and here is what I would like to say: I worked with Ryder Miller for about 5 years as the EGJ Book Review Editor. Ryder was one of my most prolific reviewers and he had been involved with EGJ for a long time when I met him. Ryder had wide ranging interests and the books he reviewed reflected that. The one book that I really remember is [Citizen Steinbeck: Giving Voice to the People](#). When Ryder first suggested it, I didn't know if it would be a good fit for EGJ. Ryder persisted, I relented, and in the end, it was worth all the discussion. Ryder and I didn't always agree but we always were able to come to a compromise. We had many discussions via email over the years, and they revealed to me how passionate he was about the environment, climate change, the oceans and more. I learned much from Ryder and our discussions and I am grateful to him for that.”

We and our readers learned from Ryder not only about the environment but how passionate and active we all should be to save our Earth. We are all going to miss him. His innovative ideas conveyed through his writings will stay with us for a long time. As Abbey Lewis, our current Book Review Editor stated:

“Ryder was a fierce advocate for environmental issues and thought compassionately about ways to bring about a better future for the Earth and all the life it holds. His contributions will be missed.”

---

***Electronic Green Journal, Special Issue 44, 2020, ISSN: 1076-7975***