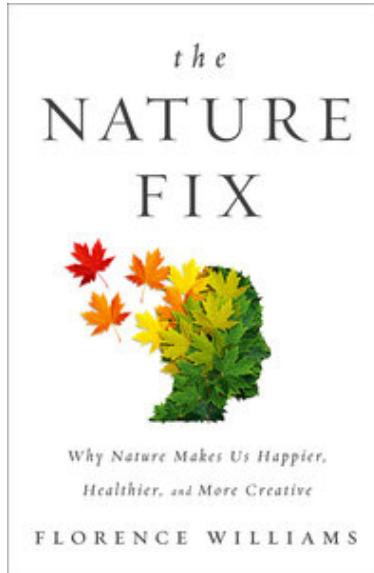


The New York Times

Book Review

March 3, 2017

Happy Trails



In The New York Times Book Review, Jason Mark reviews ["The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative,"](#) by Florence Williams. Mark writes:

Maybe it's the forest smells that turn us on; aerosols present in evergreen forests act as mild sedatives while also stimulating respiration. Perhaps it's the soundscape, since water and, especially, birdsong have been proven to improve mood and alertness. Nature's benefits might be due to something as simple as the fact that natural landscapes are, literally, easy on the eyes. Many of nature's patterns — raindrops hitting a pool of water or the arrangement of leaves — are organized as fractals, and the human retina moves in a fractal pattern while taking in a view. Such congruence creates alpha waves in the brains — the neural resonance of relaxation.

On this week's podcast, Williams discusses "The Nature Fix"; Jennifer Szalai talks about [new Argentine fiction](#); Alexandra Alter has news from the publishing world; and Parul Sehgal, Gregory Cowles and John Williams on what people are reading. Pamela Paul is the host.

Here are the books mentioned in this week's "What We're Reading":

["The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V. S. Naipaul"](#) by Patrick French

["Exit West"](#) by Mohsin Hamid

“Under the 82nd Airborne” by [Deborah Eisenberg](#)

[“The Lost City of the Monkey God”](#) by Douglas Preston

[“Destiny of the Republic”](#) by Candice Millard

We would love to hear your thoughts about this episode, and about the Book Review’s podcast in general. You can send them to books@nytimes.com.

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