



Tree Lines

Valerie P Cohen, Michael P. Cohen

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Tree Lines unites striking ink drawings of high-altitude pine trees with poetic vignettes about how people interact with mountain environments. The drawings and text work together to form a direct artistic encounter with timberline conifers. The husband and wife team of Valerie and Michael Cohen employ a unique process whereby she draws in isolation, gives him her drawings, and he then writes whatever he's inspired to create. Neither offers the other any kind of feedback or instruction. The result is an accessible and deeply engaging work that is also extremely well researched; the Cohens bring a lifetime of scholarship in literature, history, and the environment to this work.

The drawings are black-and-white, pen-and-ink representations of high alpine ecosystems. The prose is stripped bare, abbreviated in an epigrammatic style that is poetic and spontaneous. Trees represented here are the Western Juniper or Sierra Juniper, the Limber, and the Bristlecone Pine—three species of long-lived, slow-growing conifers that grow across the Great Basin. While they represent only a small portion of the vegetative culture high in the western mountains, the Cohens use representation as abstraction as is utilized by writers and artists to convey a unique kind of microcosm of our natural environment. This book compares to such classics as Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, and Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, which open up lines of observation, analysis, and art for a new generation of readers.

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