LOVING NATURE

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Riddick Hall, Room 451
Map: http://www.ncsu.edu/campus_map/north.htm

Abstract: You may find talk of love to be syrupy, sentimental, or even confused—certainly not the language of a tough-minded philosopher. Yet philosophers love paradoxes, and love seems to at least border on this (as does this sentence). Love is categorical and individual, yet radically contingent. You will do almost anything for your lover and will certainly not accept a replacement. (Someone who “trades up” when it comes to partners, never loved their partner in the first place.) Yet if you were born in a different time or place you know there would be a different beloved in your life. Indeed, if someone else had responded to you on OK Cupid, that might now be the person for whom you’d sacrifice everything. In this talk I try to resolve some of these apparent paradoxes. I then go on to argue that nature is a proper object of love, and that loving nature can be a powerful motivator for protecting it—even more strongly I suggest that people who do not love nature may not succeed in protecting it at all.

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