

PRAISE FOR *FEATHERED FOREST: ALOFT WITH BIRDS IN ANCIENT TREES*

by Marina Richie, September 8, 2026 release from Chelsea Green Publishing

“Luminous. You can feel the deep, cool shadow of the great Western forest and the flicker of bird color flashing across it. The kind of book that inspires contemplation but also action.”

—Bill McKibben, author of *Here Comes the Sun*

“In a feast of wonder and winged delight, Marina Richie takes us from the heights of towering old-growth forests to the depths of their tangled roots, and from the past of her childhood to a future of unraveling—or renewal. Reminding us that the choice is ours, her fascinating and well-researched book is particularly important in a harrowing time. Highly recommended.”

—Kathleen Dean Moore, author of *Earth’s Wild Music*

“Many people have written about birds, and many people have written about trees, but almost no one has written about birds and trees. Travel along with Marina Richie as she brings both these subjects together on her journeys through the forests of the Northwest. Without trees, we would not have the birds that live among us today, and without birds . . . well, we cannot imagine.”

—Joan Maloof, author of *Nature’s Temples*

“By rhyming bird and tree, environmental and personal history, and close observation and activism, Marina Richie has created a literary refugium. Here, readers can find a moment of respite from capitalism’s disastrous monoculture and consider how we might return to interconnectedness with other species.”

—Theo Downes-Le Guin, literary executor for Ursula K. Le Guin and head, Ursula K. Le Guin Foundation

“Marina Richie’s life-long love of trees, abundant curiosity, and decades of forays into the Pacific Northwest forests imbue her stories with wisdom, authenticity, and delight. If you’re looking for the perfect guide to the ancient forests of Cascadia, look no further. Feathered Forest engages all our senses so that we both lose and find ourselves in each chapter, in each forest, and in each of the precious lives of the birds within it.”

—Maria Mudd Ruth, author of *The Bird with the Flaming Red Feet* and *Rare Bird*

“What a glorious tangle! In these pages, Marina Richie brazenly dissolves false boundaries—between bird and forest, human and wild, observer and observed. In her beautiful telling, communion is not a metaphor but a practice: witness, listen, be changed. As the ancient forest sings a chorus of relations—owl! pine! fungus! finch!—Richie guides us along a path that leads inexorably from wonder to belonging to action.”

—Lyanda Lynn Haupt, author of *Rooted* and *Among the Birds*

“Bird by bird and tree by tree, Marina Richie weaves a magical world of our forests and the birds that require them—just as we do—for survival and well-being. A must-read for tree and bird lovers alike.”

—Lynda Mapes, author of *The Trees are Speaking*; 2025 Pulitzer Prize finalist

“The trees are the forest’s framework, the birds its vibrant soul. Together they comprise an ecological whole. While Marina Richie is not the first to make this juxtaposition between birds and their environment, her refreshing take breathes new life into our understanding of the interrelationships that are a forest. From somber-eyed owls to raucous jays to the ethereal song of Varied Thrushes, Richie brings readers to understand the splendor of the forests she calls home. “Not since Loren Eiseley has a writer so effortlessly integrated the intellect of a scientist with the soulful insights of a poet. If you are reading this line, then Marina Richie already has you by the hand. Let her guide you through the enchanting landscape she knows so well: cathedral-like canopies and birds whose songs are the ‘om’ of the forest.”

—**Pete Dunne, author of *Under Their Wing*; former director, Cape May Bird Observatory**

“The title of Marina’s book reflects her complete love for the birds and the trees that support them. Her evocative writing brings to life the Pacific wilderness and amplifies the fact that her words are from the heart.”

—**David Lindo, *The Urban Birder*; vice president, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust**

“‘As alarmingly fewer birds trace our skies,’ Marina Richie writes, ‘isn’t it time we looked up . . . and took notice?’ In an adventure both personal and expansive, Richie lifts us from our earthbound anchors to explore the intricate, often unseen, and always astonishing world of birds. We witness the whirling dance of swifts, feel the drumbeats of woodpeckers, and hear the haunting music of thrushes. Within each vivid encounter with wild birds, there is a trace of deep concern for the wildness of the world. With lyrical descriptions and fine-tuned science, Richie shows a deep love for and expansive understanding of these ‘troubadours of rebirth.’ She tunes our ears and our hearts to hear the stories sung within the feathered forest.”

—**M. L. Herring, author of *Born of Fire and Rain***

“With evocative imagery and a poet’s flair, Richie blends natural history and personal experiences to illuminate the threads that weave together Cascadia’s ancient forests and the captivating birds that dwell in them. A story of community and connections—and the power of ancient forests to sustain biodiversity while nurturing our own well-being in a fast-changing world.”

—**Sophie Osborn, author of *Feather Trails***

“In *Feathered Forest*, Marina Richie delights readers with her eloquent and atmospheric prose, imagery, and sensory detail. Her lyrical language leads us on a journey through the vertical layers of the old-growth forests and giant trees of the Pacific Northwest, introducing us to the elusive birds who depend on these threatened ecosystems for their survival. She unveils the significance of sound, sight, observation, and even smell to revealing their unique biodiversity. She immerses us in the world of feathers—avian and arboreal—until the dividing line between her beloved birds and trees becomes muted and interlocking, like the barbs and barbules of her subjects. As we meet the denizens of her forests and learn about the threats that plague them today, we become as invested as she is in protecting their fragile existence. By book’s end, Marina has become our teacher, our guide, our interpreter, and, most importantly, our forest companion. She has beckoned us with a call to action that we are ready to follow as we delight in this captivating and informative scientific memoir.”

—**Tina Morris, author of *Return to the Sky***

“Through richly detailed stories of birds and trees, Marina Richie’s deeply personal account brings readers into close connection with the worlds that are ancient forests. This wonderful book is an homage to refuge and refugia, to close observation, and to the beauty of interlocking systems: feathers, ecosystems, and kinships.”

—**Marguerite Holloway, author of *Take to the Trees***

“Starting with a riveting climb up an ancient Douglas-fir and ending with the tree’s destruction and a devastating fire, *Feathered Forest* is nature writing at its best: alive, absorbing, and full of consequence. The vivid, verb-driven language, where ‘wings flare with fire’ and the songs of finches are ‘like chips of sunshine freed from clouds,’ invites us into a world of birds and branches, full of bustling life. Science mixes with wonder in this beautiful book, which offers hope in our hard world.”

—**David Gessner, author of *Return of the Osprey* and *All the Wild That Remains***

“Author Richie (*Halcyon Journey*, 2022) has coined a new term for the interlocking ecosystem that is an old growth forest: the feathered forest, which shelters its inhabitants like a bird is sheltered by its feathers. In this lyrical new book, Richie explores the communities of birds living in ancient groves in the Cascadia bioregion, from southeast Alaska to northern California. Beginning with a rope ascent to the canopy of an ancient Douglas fir, the author spins a story web out of ecology, bird behavior, discussions with forest and bird researchers, and her own observations. A wonderful chapter on feathers looks not only at the feather itself, but also at how its structure and myriad functions parallel those of trees (and even of spider webs). Further chapters look at the forest understory as insulation for the forest floor; how American Dippers show the importance of forest streams and rivers; and why woodpeckers of many species rely on standing dead trees. All make this perfect for sampling chapter by chapter and learning about connections we never considered before.” — **Booklist**

Following up *Halcyon Journey: In Search of the Belted Kingfisher*, nature writer Richie broadens her focus beyond a single species to examine all the birds of Oregon's Cascadia region, where she lives. The marbled murrelet is perhaps the most mysterious of these species. It is a seabird that nests in trees, a fact unknown until the 1970s. Richie blends ornithology, conservation, and refugia with personal memories of growing up in wild spaces that inspired her work in conservation and nature writing. Throughout the book, Richie develops an extended analogy between birds and forests, linking the forests' overstory, midstory, and understory to layers of bird plumage. Just as a bird regrows feathers after its molt, the forest renews itself. Forest fires, both natural and human-caused, attract new life—fire beetles and woodpeckers. Richie writes about the natural world's complexity in a way that inspires and comforts, offering hope even as she discusses difficult environmental truths, such as declining natural habitats. VERDICT Highly recommended for all, especially budding naturalists.—**Library Journal**