



Nine Ways to Cross a River: Midstream Reflections on Swimming and Getting There from Here

Akiko Busch

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From Thoreau to Edward Abbey to Annie Dillard, American writers have looked at nature and described the sublime and transcendent. Now comes Akiko Busch, who finds multitudes of meaning in the practice of swimming across rivers. The notion that rivers divide us is old and venerated, but they also limn our identities and mark the passage of time; they anchor communities and connect one to another. And, in the hands of writer and swimmer Akiko Busch, they are living archives of human behavior and natural changes.

After a transformative swim across the Hudson just before September 11, Busch undertook to explore eight of America's great waterways: the Hudson (twice), the Delaware, the Connecticut, the Susquehanna, the Monongahela, the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Current. She observes each river's goings-on and reflects on its history (human and natural) and possible futures. Some of the rivers have rebounded from past industrial misuse; others still struggle with pollution and waste. The swims are also opportunities to muse on the ordinary passages faced by most of us—the death of a parent, raising children, becoming older—and the ways in which the rhythms and patterns of the natural world can offer reassurance, ballast and inspiration. A deeply moving exploration of the themes of renewal and reclamation at midlife, *Nine Ways to Cross a River* is a book to be treasured and given to friends.

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