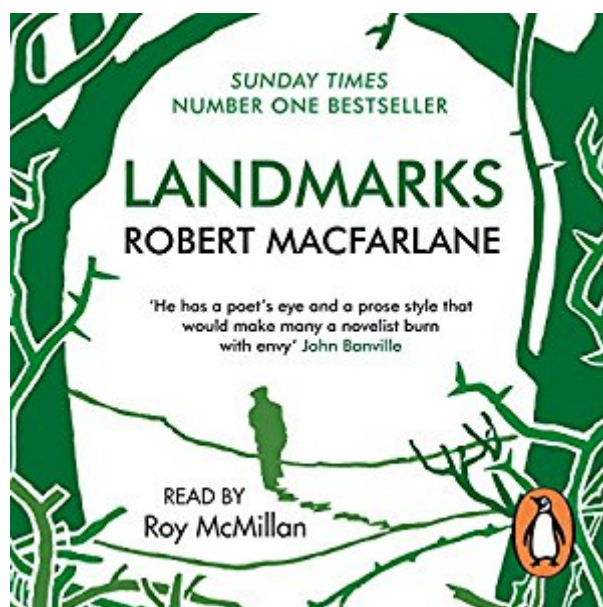


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# Landmarks



## Synopsis

Penguin presents the unabridged, downloadable audiobook edition of *Landmarks*, a fascinating exploration of the relationship between language and landscapes by Robert Macfarlane, read by Roy McMillan. Words are grained into our landscapes, and landscapes are grained into our words. *Landmarks* is about the power of language to shape our sense of place. It is a field guide to the literature of nature and a glossary containing thousands of remarkable words used in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to describe land, nature, and weather. Travelling from Cumbria to the Cairngorms and exploring the landscapes of Roger Deakin, J. A. Baker, Nan Shepherd, and others, Robert Macfarlane shows that language, well used, is a keen way of knowing landscape and a vital means of coming to love it. The audiobook version contains an exclusive bonus chapter - a recording of Finlay MacLeod (novelist, historian, broadcaster, archivist, and one of the dedicatees of *Landmarks*) reading words and definitions from his *Peat Glossary* for the Isle of Lewis. This hoard of rare and evocative terms was one of the inspiring documents for the book. Finlay's voice is also used as a divider between chapters, and the other glossaries in the text are bracketed with appropriate sound effects.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

This is a magical book. It is both a collection of landscape words from the British Isles and a meditation on writing, mountains and landscapes. It is not a quick read but something that satiates after a few pages, requiring digestion, or rereading. The place words are from a vanishing time when we knew our land like we now know how to get about town. The words shimmer with beauty

even though I suspect I am making a poor job of the Gaelic pronunciations. I thought I was a pretty good writer but reading this is humbling in a happy way, taking pleasure in his writing and glad that there are people who can write like this. If you love nature, if you love words, if you think there is more than one way to climb a mountain (p. 63), this is a book that will give you pleasure.

This is a very interesting approach to nature and to language. Anything that R. Macfarlane writes is going to make me think, and probably point me in the direction of several other books to add to my list. After only 2 or 3 chapters of this book, I already have 2 other books to find and read. I wasn't sure what to expect. Much of this is about other writers and their approach to nature and outdoors. Each chapter has a lengthy glossary, probably 70% of which contains words new to me. The book is definitely British-centric, but don't let that put you off. Rather, let it start you on an exploration of how regional writers in the US relate to and reflect their chosen environments.

Well-written book makes for a pleasurable, slow read. The impressive catalog of nature-related words is nicely organized. My only suggestion for improvement is the inclusion of photos or art to better illustrate each term.

In MacFarlane's words: 'This is a book about the power of language... to shape our sense of place'. Words gleaned from meteorology, words gleaned from mountaineering, Macfarlane has examined, sorted and stacked them all into 'word-hoards' - glossaries describing the natural world. His glossary on snow and ice contains almost as many words for different types of snow as Eskimos are erroneously ascribed. He treasures words like 'it that show how closely we once understood the natural world, 'placing quartz stones in moorland streams so that they will sparkle in moonlight and therefore attract salmon'. Macfarlane describes how his book was partly a response to the holes left in the Oxford children's dictionary after the 'culling of words concerning nature': 'conker' making room for 'cut and paste'. If we lose such words we lose the ability not only describe but to see and understand nature. Scattered among the glossaries are essays on the writers he loves, and some of their themes will be familiar to fans of his writing. At times the expansiveness of the essays seemed at odds with the concise precision of the glossaries and I wished that Macfarlane had applied his 'pemmican logic' to this book, packing in 'maximum intellectual calories content per ounce', paring back these sections. Macfarlane revels in the beauty and expressiveness of words such as aquabob and clinkerbell (icicles) - how they sound, how they feel in the mouth. He strikes new words to describe our relationship to place. He is 'north-minded' ('drawn to high latitudes and high altitudes')

and drawn also to the language of the north, the cadence of old English, the kenning. His words, and the words he gathers here, will make you look again in wonder at the natural world.

This is a book from a man in love with Earth. Wonderfully written. I absolutely loved it! I bought it for Kindle, but now I'll buy it on paper so I can easily write my own memories, experiences, go back and forth, draw, paste images of birds and plants and rocks and landscapes Macfarlane talks about. He certainly offers us an amazing lens focused on our partners - other Nature's beings - inciting us to respect them and meet them in person. A book every professional working with landscape and education should read.

What a wonderful, uplifting book this is. Landmarks is a tribute to extraordinary people and cultures that have carefully observed and described the natural world using words and language of astonishing richness, clarity and detail. I highly recommend it.

It is an epic poem of field and stream. Many articles- cum- chapters on nature in the suburban british land. Hugely aware of sky and terrain. Very energetic prose and as charged with poetry as any transcendentalist. Fits no category. Beautiful language a keeper in english language and among naturists I liked it a lot.

MacFarlane tells the stories of Muir, Deakin, JA Baker (Author of The Peregrine, a much more interesting book than H is for Hawk), Barry Lopez, Richard Skelton, and more, and proves himself to be very much a link in this chain of brilliance.

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