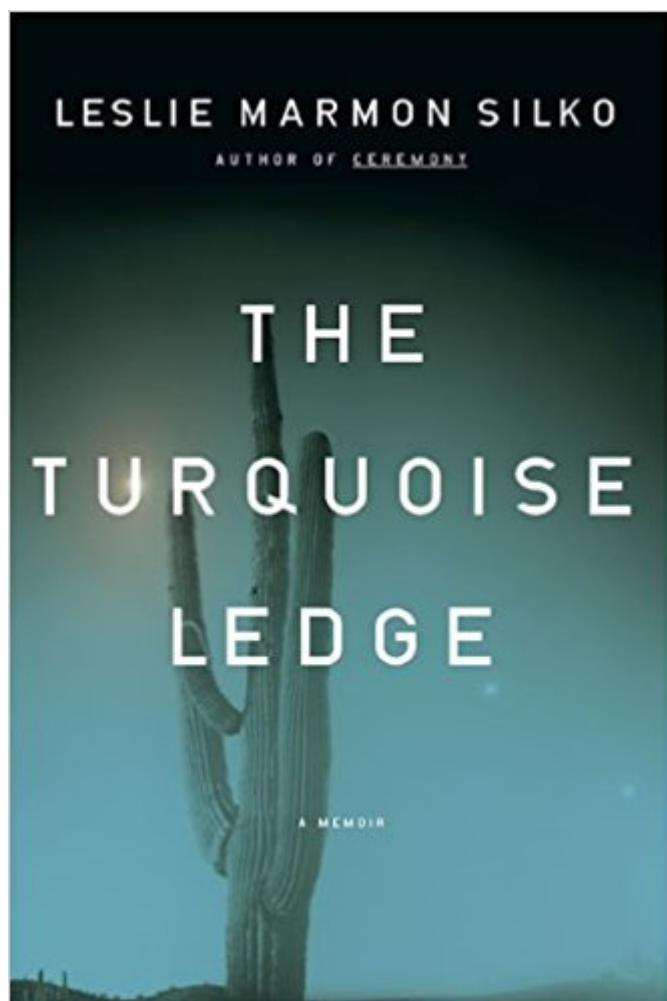


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The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir



Synopsis

A highly original and poetic self-portrait from one of America's most acclaimed writers. Leslie Marmon Silko's new book, her first in ten years, combines memoir with family history and reflections on the creatures and beings that command her attention and inform her vision of the world, taking readers along on her daily walks through the arroyos and ledges of the Sonoran desert in Arizona. Silko weaves tales from her family's past into her observations, using the turquoise stones she finds on the walks to unite the strands of her stories, while the beauty and symbolism of the landscape around her, and of the snakes, birds, dogs, and other animals that share her life and form part of her family, figure prominently in her memories. Strongly influenced by Native American storytelling traditions, *The Turquoise Ledge* becomes a moving and deeply personal contemplation of the enormous spiritual power of the natural world-of what these creatures and landscapes can communicate to us, and how they are all linked. The book is Silko's first extended work of nonfiction, and its ambitious scope, clear prose, and inventive structure are captivating. *The Turquoise Ledge* will delight loyal fans and new readers alike, and it marks the return of the unique voice and vision of a gifted storyteller.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (29 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

By rights I shouldn't like this book. I'm a rationalist-materialist kind of guy, and Leslie Marmon Silko spends much of this book in full-on New Age mode. She believes, or tells us she believes (not necessarily the same thing with a crafty storyteller like Silko), that spirits of the dead come back as owls, that the bees around her house recognize her, that she communicates with mysterious

extraterrestrials whom she calls the Star Beings. She tosses out some astonishing facts, for instance that the Sonoran Desert at its hottest reaches the surface temperature on the planet Venus (!!), and surmises that an odd distortion of light on some foothills near her house might be caused by the gravity of a parallel universe or a tiny black hole. She consistently misspells the official name of her most populous Native neighbors, the Tohono O'odham. More unsettling, she obsesses over the admittedly destructive activities of a neighbor with a bulldozer and sends an awfully convincing death wish his way via the Star Beings. So yes, this book has its quirks and its flaws. In the end they are outweighed by its power and its beauty. Leslie Marmon Silko has done for a few square miles near her home in the Tucson Mountains what Thoreau did for Concord and Walden, written a journal of how she came to inhabit a certain place, who she was there, and what she saw there, with such detail and immediacy that for the time we are immersed in the narrative the single place expands into a world. Silko moved to Tucson in 1978 and became part of what in retrospect was a literary renaissance in southern Arizona.

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