



Milton and the Natural World: Science and Poetry in Paradise Lost

By Karen L. Edwards

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Karen L. Edwards

Karen Edwards offers a fresh view of *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton is shown to represent Eden's plants and animals in the light of the century's new, scientific natural history. Debunking the fabulous lore of the old science, the poem embraces new imaginative and symbolic possibilities for depicting the natural world, suggested by the speculations of Milton's scientific contemporaries including Robert Boyle, Thomas Browne and John Evelyn. The natural world in *Paradise Lost*, with its flowers and trees, insects and beasts, emerges as a text alive with meaning.

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"[Edwards's] lucid, accessible summary of 17th-century scientific literature is exhaustive....[Edwards] demonstrates in this volume a clear grasp of 17th-century science and culture and effectively integrates Milton's work into that milieu. This title complements other studies that integrate societal and cultural influences with literature..." *Choice*

"Milton and the Natural World is a "must" for all Miltonists. It sends us back to Paradise Lost with renewed interest and greater knowledge, ready for deeper appreciation and debate. Karen Edwards is to be congratulated, as is Cambridge University Press, for publishing such a handsome volume, with delightful contemporary illustrations..." *Sixteenth Century Journal*

"Karen L. Edwards's revisionist account of John Milton's relation to seventeenth-century science retells an old story in an important new way that has significant implications for seventeenth-century scholars, historians of science, and students of Paradise Lost alike...Edwards's work is as refreshing as it is important." *Modern Philology*

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