

## Exile and Pride

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At long last, an essay on the politics and poetics of queer disability. Eli Clare, a poet with cerebral palsy, movingly describes her attempt to climb Mount Adams--not, she points out, as a "supercrip," like the boy without hands who bats .486 on his Little League team, but just as an impaired person who loves to hike: a story about ableism rather than disability. Avoiding easy answers and journalistic sunshine, she recounts the story of the fight for disabled access, touching on the history of the freak show. She tracks the origins of her own tenacity and self-knowledge to her rural Oregon upbringing and the conflicting personality of her father--who sexually abused her, but also taught her how to frame a house, how to use a chainsaw. "I think of the words crip, queer, freak, redneck," Clare remarks. "None of these are easy words. They mark the jagged edge between self-hatred and pride, the chasm between how the dominant culture views marginalized peoples and how we view ourselves, the razor between finding home, finding our bodies, and living in exile, living on the metaphoric mountain." --Regina Marler

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