



# The Magnetic North: Notes from the Arctic Circle

*Sara Wheeler*

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**The Magnetic North: Notes from the Arctic Circle** Sara Wheeler

A *Globe and Mail* Best Books of the Year 2011 Title

More than a decade ago, Sara Wheeler traveled to Antarctica to understand a continent nearly lost to myth and lore. In the widely acclaimed, bestselling *Terra Incognita*, she chronicled her quest to find a hidden history buried in Antarctica's extreme surroundings. Now, Wheeler journeys to the opposite pole to create a definitive picture of life on the fringes. In *The Magnetic North*, she takes full measure of the Arctic: at once the most pristine place on earth and the locus of global warming.

Inspired by the spiraling shape of a reindeer-horn bangle, she travels counterclockwise around the North Pole through the territories belonging to Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and Finland, marking the transformations of what once seemed an unchangeable landscape. As she witnesses the mounting pollution concentrated at the pole, Wheeler reckons with the illness of the whole organism of the earth.

Smashing through the Arctic Ocean with the crew of a Russian icebreaker, shadowing the endless Trans-Alaska Pipeline with a tough Idaho-born outdoorswoman, herding reindeer with the Lapps, and visiting the haunting, deceptively peaceful lands of the Gulag, Wheeler brings the Arctic's many contradictions to life. *The Magnetic North* is an urgent, beautiful book, rich in dramatic description and vivid reporting. It is a singular, deeply personal portrait of a region growing daily in global importance.

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