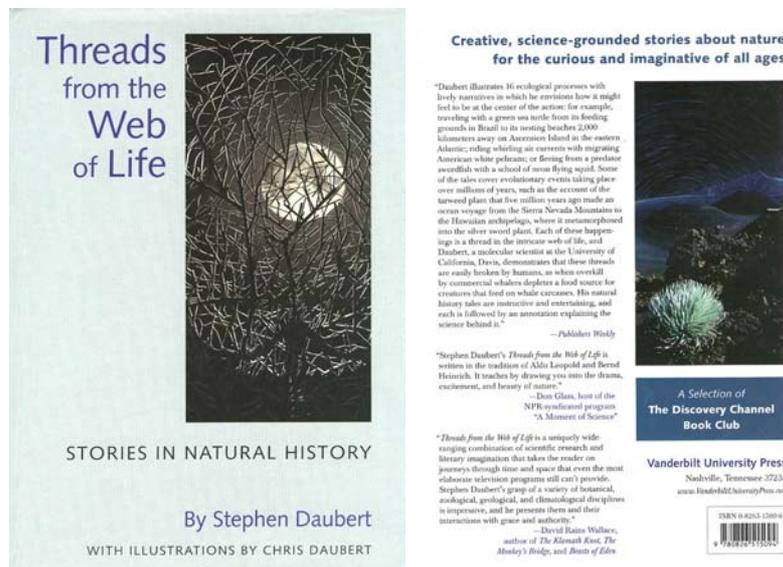


**Daubert, S. & C. Daubert. 2006. Threads from the web of life. Stories in natural history. – Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press**

Book review by A.J. Veldmeijer



When the marketing manager of Vanderbilt University Press mailed me saying this was one of her most favourite books she ever published, I was rather sceptical. But, although perhaps not one of my favourites (this is of course a highly personal thing anyway), it certainly is a good book to read. I have read it with much joy and I certainly understand why people say it is one of their favourites. 'Threads from the web of life' is written by two brothers. The writer, Stephen Daubert, 'has pursued science on the molecular level [...] at the University of California, Davis (cover) and his brother, Chris Daubert, is professor of art of Sacramento City College.

The book is unique as it presents literary stories in natural history based on facts which "allows us to predict what we will find in times and places not yet seen" (p. viii). The facts, as the writer explains, anchor the stories to reality (see below for a citation). What truly makes the book special is that the writers inserted scientific notes on the topic at the end of the stories, allowing to reader to interpret the romantic stories.

The book is divided in four sections, which deals with a specific topic ('Strands from the ocean', 'Tendrils in the forest', 'Lines of migration' and 'Perspective of the eyewitness'). Each of these sections is divided into several chapters. The following citation is from the chapter 'Sea Green. The broadening of Sister Falls Lake' (p. 85), from the section 'Lines of migration' and is "about an injured Green sea turtle, forced far from her traditional migration track, founding a new nesting ground and eventually a new subspecies of turtle" (Book News Vanderbilt University Press): "The turtle poked up her head and labored for breath, struggling, for breath, struggling through the chop. The dawn had come only as a lightening of the overcast. She was in mid-ocean, pursuing her odyssey to the northeast nesting grounds a month out from the feeding grounds, halfway there, and she was in trouble".

As stated, the book is a joy to read, but I found the text sometimes a bit too poetic and the English rather difficult. But 'Threads from the web of life' provided with me with another important thing: it reminded me how inventive and complex, but at the same time how fragile life and evolution is; a realisation which is, I think, very important for everyone in general but certainly, on scientific level, especially for those working in the field of evolution, like palaeontologists and biologists. I recommend this book to all. Hopefully it will make humans realise, at least a little bit more, to cherish nature, which they themselves are after all part off, rather than destroying it as happens now.

Daubert, S. & C. Daubert. 2006. Threads from the web of life. Stories in natural history. – Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press. 162 pp. ISBN 0-8265-1509-6. Price \$ 24.95 (hardback).