

# ENCHANTED FORESTS

## *The Poetic Construction of a World Before Time*

BORIA SAX

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'Put on your hiking boots and prepare for an adrenaline-fueled journey around the world with Boria Sax as your expert guide. Make stops with Gilgamesh at the Cedar Forest of Lebanon, with Dante as he enters a dark forest, and with Joseph Conrad's Marlow as he navigates his way down a river to the Congo. Behold Yggdrasil of Nordic mythologies, the Cosmic Tree that grows in Siberia, or the Waq Waq tree in medieval Arab belief systems. Beauty and wisdom flash out at us on every page of this captivating volume.'

— Maria Tatar, author of *The Heroine with 1001 Faces*

In 1985 Boria Sax inherited an area of forest in New York State that had been purchased by his Russian, Jewish Communist grandparents as a buffer against what they felt was a hostile world. For Sax, in the years following, the woodland came to represent a link with those who lived and had lived there, including Native Americans, settlers, bears, deer, turtles and migrating birds.

In this personal and eloquent account, Sax explores the meanings and cultural history of forests from prehistory to the present, taking in Gilgamesh, Virgil, Dante, the Gawain poet, medieval alchemists, the Brothers Grimm, the Hudson River painters, Latin American folklore, contemporary African novelists and much more. Combining lyricism with contemporary scholarship, Sax opens new emotional, intellectual and environmental perspectives on the storied history of the forest.

Boria Sax teaches at Sing Sing prison and online in the graduate literature programme at Mercy College. He has published many books, which have won awards and been translated into numerous languages. His most recent is *Avian Illuminations: A Cultural History of Birds* (Reaktion, 2021).



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