



Susan Cerulean is a writer and activist based in Tallahassee, Florida. Her many books include *Tracking Desire: A Journey after Swallow-tailed Kites* (Georgia), *UnspOiled: Writers Speak for Florida's Coast*, coedited with Janisse Ray and A. James Wohlpart, and the award-winning *Coming to Pass: Florida's Coastal Islands in a Gulf of Change* (also Georgia). She was a founding member and former director of the Red Hills Writers Project and was named Environmental Educator of the Year by the Governor's Council for a Sustainable Florida.

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A WORMSLOE FOUNDATION NATURE BOOK

A memoir that explores the poignant parallels between natural and human life

I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird

A Daughter's Memoir

SUSAN CERULEAN

"A beautiful and significant book. *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird* offers a lament for the precious things that have passed, an elegy for the fragile beauty that remains, and a recognition of the inseparable Nature of all living things. With compassion, keen insights, and elegant prose, Susan Cerulean celebrates our inherent and intractable relationship with the natural world and explores the strange paradox of humanity's disconnections."

—**Joe Hutto**, award-winning author of *Illumination in the Flatwoods*, *The Light in High Places*, and *Touching the Wild*

"With astonishing grace, insight, and power, Susan Cerulean has written a memoir of such delicate balance and wisdom that it will forever have a hallowed place on your bookshelf. Daughter, wife, environmentalist, explorer, caretaker of humans and seashores, Cerulean offers vital truths just when we need them most."

—**Connie May Fowler**, author of *A Million Fragile Bones*

"Our task is to watch over the world with such care,?" writes Susan Cerulean, and she does exactly this with each beautiful sentence of this wise and prescient book. She also lovingly acts and responds to her father living with dementia and as a steward to shorebirds she knows intimately by name on the coast of Florida. *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird* is an elegant memoir of devotion and imagination inviting us with graceful determination to extend our compassion and sense of family to all species on this beautiful, broken planet we call home. This book is an awakening."

—**Terry Tempest Williams**, author of *Erosion: Essays of Undoing*

Susan Cerulean's memoir trains a naturalist's eye and a daughter's heart on the lingering death of a beloved parent from dementia. At the same time, the book explores an activist's lifelong search to be of service to the embattled natural world. During the years she cared for her father, Cerulean also volunteered as a steward of wild shorebirds along the Florida coast. Her territory was a tiny island just south of the Apalachicola bridge where she located and protected nesting shorebirds, including least terns and American oystercatchers. *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird* weaves together intimate facets of adult caregiving and the consolation of nature, detailing Cerulean's experiences of tending to both.

The natural world is the "sustaining body" into which we are born. In similar ways, we face not only a crisis in numbers of people diagnosed with dementia but also the crisis of the human-caused degradation of the planet itself, a type of cultural dementia. With *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird*, Cerulean reminds us of the loving, necessary toil of tending to one place, one bird, one being at a time.



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