

in their proper order—a product of the animals having been quickly buried in volcanic ash. KIM BARNES

fourteener

A mountain peak whose summit exceeds 14,000 feet above sea level. The name has been used for many years in Colorado, a state with fifty-four or so fourteeners—more than any other. Climbers and hikers speak of “bagging fourteeners” and collect them like destination badges tacked to an alpenstock. Individual fourteeners have their particular lore, such as when a climbing party from New Haven built a cairn atop Mount Yale (14,196 feet) in Colorado’s Collegiate Range so that it overtopped nearby Mount Princeton (14,197 feet). Pikes Peak (14,110 feet), easily the most famous fourteener, and Mount Evans west of Denver (14,264 feet) have automobile roads to their summits. In the Pikes Peak summit house, flatlanders find souvenirs, postcards, coffee and donuts, and oxygen masks. ROBERT MICHAEL PYLE

freshet

A freshet is a species of flood—a relatively sudden surge, brought on by heavy rainfall, rapid snowmelt, or the two together, that sends streams and small rivers over their banks. Spate and flush suggest the same phenomenon. Around the term’s usage area—chiefly the mountainous Atlantic states and the northern tier of the United States—the definition of freshet varies locally. In the maritime Northwest, it is as Robert Michael Pyle writes in *Wintergreen*: “Big, long rains on a warm west wind that really raise the rivers and bring superhigh tides, the two together deeply flooding everything in reach for a few days.” Henry Thoreau, in *Walden*, speaks of freshets as signs of the inexhaustible vigor of Nature. The word may still be uttered here and there in an older sense, to mean a stream of fresh water, and a related meaning was probably important to nervous European explorers poking at the margins of North America—a region of fresh water beyond the mouth of a seagoing stream. JOHN DANIEL

freshwater lens

The aquifer beneath south Florida is called the Biscayne Aquifer and is one of the most permeable in the world. Rainwater entering it is rapidly discharged into surrounding coastal waters. The Florida Keys consist, for the most part, of porous limestone, remnants of an ancient coral reef. However, on the large islands of the Lower Keys—Key West, Sugarloaf,

*And my heart rose like a
freshet,
And it swept me on before,
Giddy as a whirling stick,
Till I felt the earth once more.*

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY,
“The Blue-flag in the Bog”