

'Magdalena Mountain'

A review of Bob Pyle's first novel

By CATE GABLE
FOR COAST WEEKEND

The historical fiction author Molly Gloss, of Oregon, says, "Fans of Robert Michael Pyle's nonfiction will not be surprised to find that his first novel abounds in details of the natural world — lovingly described plant and animal and insect life across the changing of the seasons on a remote Colorado mountain." Yup.

A couple of years ago I had the great good fortune of sitting with Bob in an extended afternoon-evening sipping wine on his front porch and solving the world's problems — which, in case you're wondering, quickly became unsolved again. I noted then that in response to my email about directions to his house, Bob wrote, "I've no idea about GPS ... does that stand for Great Plover Society? Turn right at the giant oak."

This, in a nutshell, tells you all you need to know about our local and national treasure: He's a brilliant student of nature with a quick wit and a whimsical sense of humor — all characteristics clearly evident in his first (and we can only hope not last) novel "Magdalena Mountain."

"Magdalena Mountain"

By Robert Michael Pyle

Counterpoint Press

388 pages

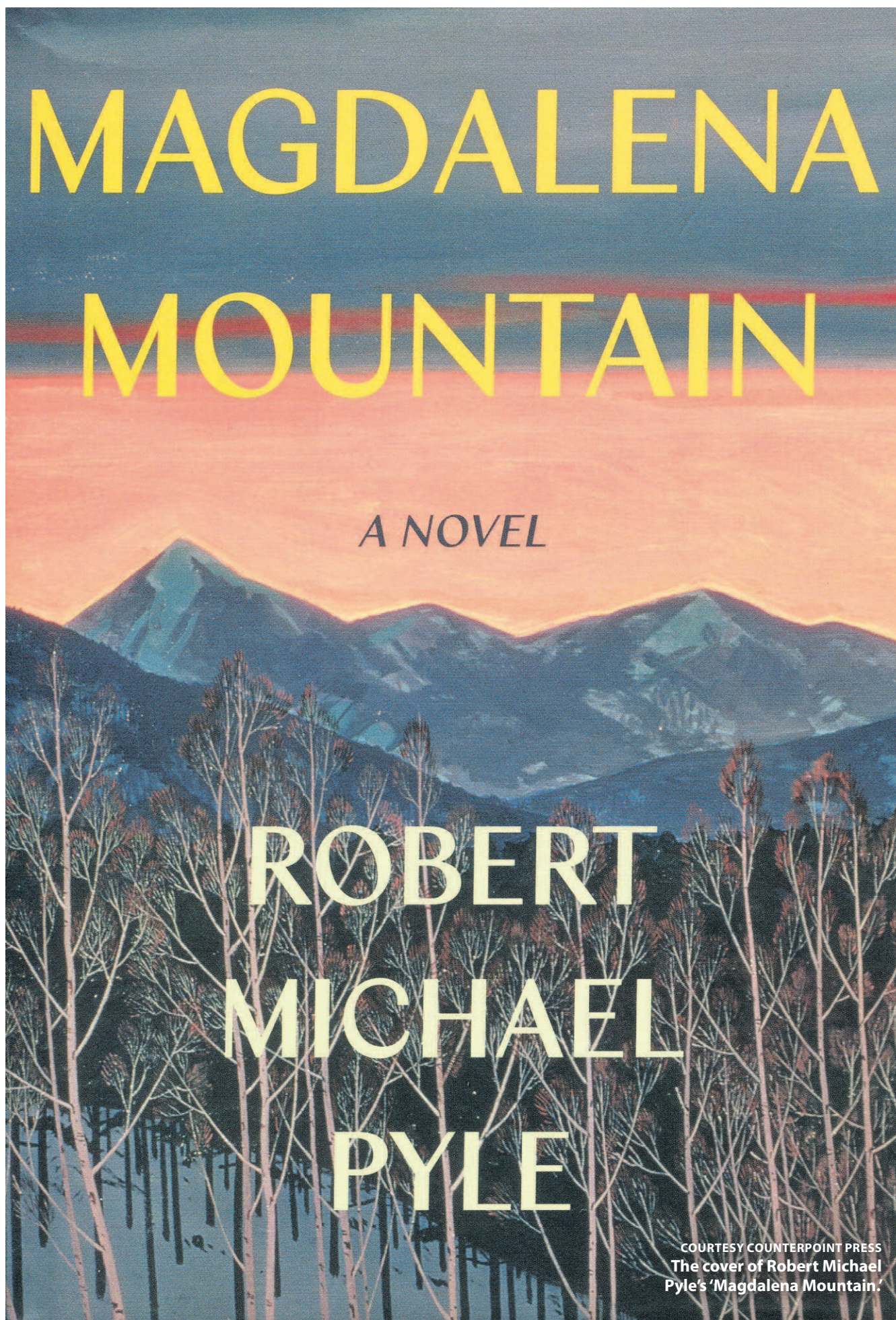
\$16.95

A multi-genre author

When I picked up Bob's recent book, stashed in a secret hidey-hole at the Chinook Observer office, I had some idea of what I might find between its covers. I've read the marvelous, heart-breaking and award-winning "Wintergreen" (Scribner, 1986) describing the devastation of logging to our damaged land; "Sky Time in Grays River" (Houghton Mifflin, 2007) about the season-by-season unfolding of lives of the creatures populating, almost literally, his backyard; and "Mariposa Road: The First Butterfly Big Year" (Houghton Mifflin, 2010) chronicling Bob's travels and misadventures documenting as many butterflies as possible.

His nonfiction prose is lush with detail and emotion, so I expected no less when, in 2014, Bob published his first chapbook of poetry,

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The cover of Robert Michael Pyle's 'Magdalena Mountain.'