

# California Blue



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著者:David Klass

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From Publishers Weekly In this beautifully rendered novel, Klass (Wrestling with Honor; A Different Season) transforms an abstract environmental issue into a compelling story of a boy in transition from adolescence to adulthood. The book owes some of its success to how the author sidesteps dogmatism while still making clear his environmentalist point of view. The protagonist, John Rodgers, has to face three troubling facts. First, his father, with whom John has never really gotten along, has been diagnosed with leukemia and is likely to die soon. Second, John has discovered a new species of butterfly and wants to preserve it, but the butterfly lives on land owned by the local mill, and any governmental protection of the area will be bitterly resisted by the entire town, including John's parents. And finally, John has fallen in love with his high school biology teacher, who does not entirely rebuff his attentions. Klass handles these complex situations with grace and subtlety; an unusual and credible inclusion is Miss Merrill's honest acknowledgement to her student that she has strong feelings for him. The absorbing first-person narration rings true, projecting the credible voice of a teenager just beginning to break free from his emotional ties to home, family and friends. The fears, excitement, anger and energy of this awkward psychological time are movingly captured here. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Grade

8-12-John Rodgers, 17, feels alienated from his hard-nosed father and from much of his small, northern California community. Few people in Kiowa, which is totally dependent on the timber industry, share his love of nature, and his father, a former high school football star, preaches winning at all costs and cannot understand John's mediocrity in sports. A series of events-including the diagnosis of his father's cancer and John's discovery of a new species of butterfly-dramatically changes the young man's life. Eventually it is revealed to the community that John found the insect and alerted environmentalists. This makes him the target of the townspeople's fears and fury, forcing him to run away to San Francisco. At the novel's end, he returns to Kiowa. In a touching final scene, he has a quiet talk with his dying father. John knows, however, that he will have to leave again. This is the story of a young man caught up in some large and passionate issues before he is ready to cope with them. His anger, awkwardness, intelligence, and confusion are captured effectively through the first-person narrative. But this novel's strength does not lie simply in its willingness to tackle big issues. Small scenes, such as accounts of John's middle-distance races on the track team, are well done and add to the novel's texture and depth. A thoughtful and fair book that will strike a chord with many YAs. Todd Morning, Schaumburg Township Public Library, ILCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews"

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