Buckets from an English Sea: 1832 and the Making of Charles Darwin. By Louis B. Rosenblatt. Oxford: Oxford University Press. $34.95. ix + 185 p.; ill.; references; index. ISBN: 9780190654405 (hc). 2018.

This is not, by any stretch, an ordinary book about Darwin. The man himself does not appear prominently until around three-fourths of the way through the volume. In what sense, then, does Rosenblatt propose to describe for us the "making of Charles Darwin"? A number of authors – perhaps foremost among them Michael Ruse and Jon Hodge – have argued that the correct way to frame our understanding of Darwin is to embed him into his English context. Darwin is, after all, a mid-nineteenth century English naturalist. It this picture of Darwin, then, to which Rosenblatt contributes, by situating Darwin's formation within the broader cultural and scientific currents of his time.

The work focuses on the single year of 1832 – offering us a number of "buckets," or vignettes, which taken together are to give us an idea of what the environment was really like in mid-nineteenth century England, and, in turn, what features of this environment might have led Darwin to pick up an evolutionary picture of the history of life where and when he did. Rosenblatt weaves together discussions of the Reform Bill (which reallocated seats in Parliament to cities and away from elite landowners), the changing nature of historical criticism (via discussions of Thirlwall and Grote's approaches to Greek mythology), and revisions to the status quo in geological research (comparing the work of Sedgwick and Lyell, along with some insightful discussion of the broader character of Victorian science).

These strands provide us an idea of the cultural climate in which, he argues (echoing Desmond and Moore), the crucial event in Darwin's formation of an evolutionary world-view occurs: his encounter (also in the same pivotal year of 1832) with the natives of Tierra del Fuego. Their apparent brutality shook Darwin's belief in the fundamental goodness of humanity, a trauma which, Rosenblatt claims, could only eventually be resolved in the detailed evolutionary narrative of the *Descent of Man*.

One should not, then, look here for an extensive biography of Darwin, nor even a primary-source laden reconstruction of the events of 1832 in Darwin's life. The picture is taken with a much wider angle; we see the ways in which Darwin's political and social context resonated with his developing scientific work and his future advocacy for common descent and natural selection – with parallels between the reconstruction of Greek mythology, geological strata, and the course of human evolutionary history. The work certainly lacks the kind of laser-like focus that is (perhaps too) common in contemporary historical research. But such breadth means that even seasoned veterans of the Darwin literature will likely find many drops from these buckets to be unexpected and novel, and the story which Rosenblatt weaves from them is a pleasurable read, sure to increase one's appreciation for Darwin and his cultural milieu.

Charles H. Pence, *Institut supérieur de philosophie, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium*