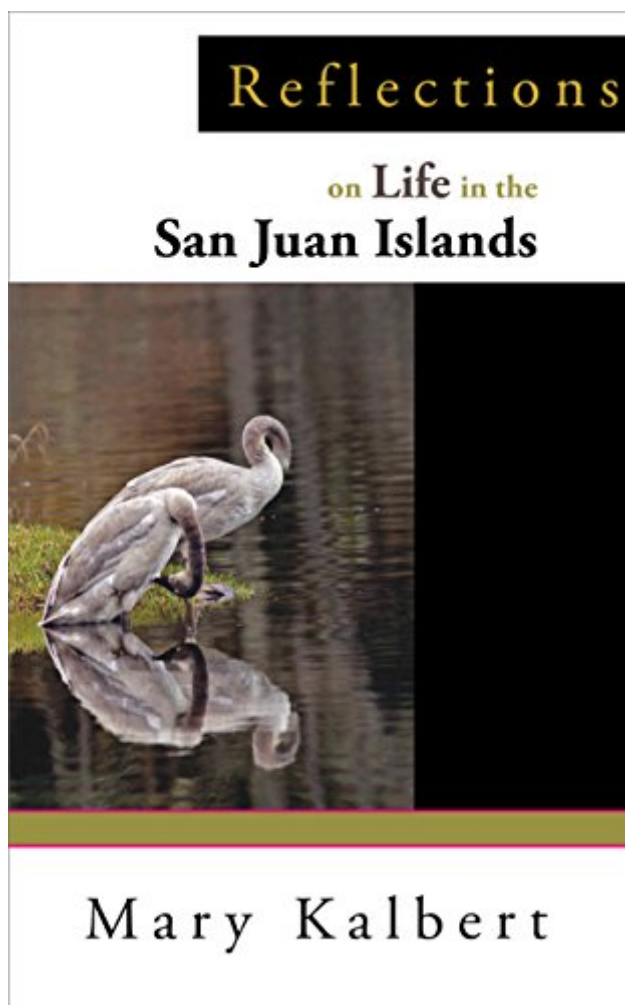


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Reflections On Life In The San Juan Islands



Synopsis

Reflections on Life in the San Juan Islands is a series of essays on island living in the Pacific Northwest. They are wistful, introspective and laugh-out-loud funny. Admirers of The New York Timesâ™ Verlyn Klinkenborg will find a kindred voice in Kalbertâ™s natural instinct for the telling detail. A winter day begins with "the wind howls down the chimney like a hungry cat." A summer filled with spotted fawns, plate sized crabs, boating and flying begins when "long days have grown into dazzling stalks of sunlight." The Trumpeter swans that arrive each November are a gentle reminder that to all things there is a time and a season. Reflections on Life in the San Juan Islands is a must read for those who want a glimpse of island life from the inside.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

So you're deciding whether to buy Mary Kalbert's Reflections on Life in the San Juan Islands. Don't think you're going to sit down and read it cover to cover in one session. Very unlikely! You'll most likely be like me; read one or two of the thirty-six essays,

and set the book down while you digest the visions the author has word-painted on the canvas of your mind. Maybe go make some tea and come back for more. Or perhaps just wait for another day when you find a little spare time, and flip to the bookmark for the next essay. Then you read it, maybe a second essay, then go about your day doing your own reflecting, and perhaps wondering whether you might just like to escape the modern hustle and bustle, and move to that peaceful island someday. The author labors to make her reader visualize, even feel, the joys and daily delight she experiences living on her island in the Pacific Northwest. She distinguishes herself from other writers that may treat living there with mundane words. One of these may pen: "The winter storm brought high winds that night." Another writer who relies on power words may instead type: "The screaming wind violently shook the shutters." But Kalbert portrays: "The wind howls down the chimney like a hungry cat." She animates the inanimate, such as "Mother Nature drapes us in her favorite wrap," or "School has gasped its last breath, and kids fling their books and backpacks into the corner to fight it out with dust bunnies for another summer." Or my favorite, "In town, seaplanes roar a warning as they take off over Brown Island, and ferries disgorge day-trippers who mill about like bees, collecting souvenir pollen to take home to their respective hives." It becomes clear that the author lives each moment of life deliciously, sensing everything in her sight or hearing, whether fauna moving, flora displaying, or just grey rocks sitting in strange formation. I loved reading the book, and recommend every one of the authors detailing words.

I know Mary personally, but that doesn't mean this review is bias! She is a bubbly, gregarious lady, maybe even a little rough around the edges personality-wise, so I was pleasantly surprised by the elegant, insightful writing in "Reflections." I've lived on San Juan Island for over four decades so I know the blood-pulse of island life, yet while reading her book I felt twinges of envy at her ability to morph into the island's persona and pull out the essence of our insular lives. Buy her book, snuggle up with (or without) a purring cat, and enjoy the best 'reflections' I've ever read about San Juan Island. Don't, however, do so with the thought of moving here! We're suffering the same fate of Martha Vineyard's over-crowding, so I can testify that the best way to enjoy the islands is to park your car at the ferry landing in Anacortes, walk on the ferry, spend a day or two with a rental car (cheaper, easier, and more fun than bringing your own) take a bunch of photographs, buy a few souvenirs, and make happy memories. You'll get the essence of the island, build memories, and leave it more pristine without the clutter and clang of one more resident. Thank you Mary for expressing what's in my heart. Well done!

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