

Leaving Before the Rains Come



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If you're read Fuller's first two memoirs you know that 1. Her family drinks a lot 2. Is a tad dysfunctional 3. But everyone loves each other and also madly loves the people, wildlife, landscape of southern Africa.

In this book, Fuller (whose nickname is Bobo) recounts picking up stakes, giving up her [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 29, 2015

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While You're Waiting...Pioneer Girl

Pioneer Girl type Those of us who read the Little House on the Prairie Series as children have been eagerly awaiting Laura Ingalls Wilder's posthumous autobiography *Pioneer Girl*. The unedited, previously unpublished draft of the autobiography was originally written in 1929 served as the foundation for the Little House series after it was rejected for publication. A columnist and editor, Wilder wrote about the 16 years her family moved through the mid-West, heavily describing the land and the work. Unfortunately, the wait for this fantastic annotated autobiography is long, so here are some read alikes the work through while you're waiting.

Little House in the Ozarks: The Rediscovered Writings by Laura Ingalls Wilder

This compilation contains over 140 articles that Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote from 1911-1929 and mostly published in Farmers Week. They describe life on a Missouri Farm and of a much simpler life. If what drew you to *Prairie Girl* was the nonfiction writing of Wilder; then *Little House in the Ozarks* is sure to please.

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Pioneer Girl by Bich Minh Nguyen

Ultra educated but unemployed, Lee Lien returns home to help her Vietnamese immigrant parents run their restaurant. Fascinated since childhood by her mother's broach, Lee imagined it once belonged to Laura Ingalls Wilder-left in Saigon by Wilder's daughter, Rose. One day, Lee's brother disappears suddenly, with a cryptic message attached to the broach. Lee begins to wonder, and then obsess over if there's any truth to her fantasy. Her clues lead her to interesting parallels between Laura and Rose and her and her own mother. If you're interested in Laura Ingalls Wilder in a less academic sense, this engaging and character driven novel will delight.

Posted by Jacoba W. on March 23, 2015

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Butterflies in November



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All stories, the saying goes, fit into one of seven basic categories: overcoming the monster, a rebirth, rags to riches, a journey, etc.

This quirky and funny novel combines the last two of these element in an Icelandic travelogue that is utterly delightful.

A young woman's husband leaves her for his work colleague, not only that but the two lovers are expecting a child any day, but the soon-to-be ex keeps coming back to his wife for more of their joint property and yet another bedroom tryst.

The narrator (the characters are mostly unnamed) works as a translator of 35 languages. She is fine with these end-of-marriage conjugal visits although she finds them rather odd, and when she runs over a goose, she decides that she must make her departing husband a last grand meal. Creatively, she concocts a sauce to hide the tread marks. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 16, 2015

[Butterflies in November](#)

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Guy in Real Life, Steve Brezenoff



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Guy in Real Life by Steve Brezenoff is the story of two wonderfully weird teenagers who (literally) crash into each other's lives. Lana is a quiet, creative Dungeon Master who's entire social calendar revolves around the high school Gaming Club and Lesh is a sullen, metalhead who's recent grounding has led to a newfound love of MMORPG. They probably shouldn't be friends, they definitely shouldn't be *together*, but they just can't stay apart.

This book was a refreshing YA romance. The characters are real and interesting. Both Lesh and Lana were very sympathetic and I was rooting for both of them throughout the whole book. I definitely want to hang out with Lana and embroider some cool stuff on skirts or tote bags. I don't know if I'd want to hang out with Lesh IRL, but I'd probably go on a quest with him. He is a pretty decent healer.

If you enjoy realistic fiction, romance, gaming, snark, embroidery, D&D, or heavy metal, you should check out *Guy in Real Life*.

Happy Reading!

Posted by Becky F. on March 12, 2015

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Tales from Gombe



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If you're fascinated by some of our closest animal relatives, the chimpanzee, this delightful collection of photographs will delight and inspire you.

Gombe National Park in Tanzania is where Richard Leakey and Jane Goodall first studied these fascinating primates over fifty years ago.

The married photographer pair, Shah and Rogers, made many trips over a period of ten plus years to the park. What makes this book special is to see how individual chimps changed over the years, from babyhood to young adult, to young adult to mature, from mature to old.

The photos show the chimps doing daily activities, hunting, food-gathering eating, grooming, nursing and taking care of their young, even displaying as powerful males and females do to show who is boss and on top of the hierarchy.

What I liked most were the family portraits, a line of chimps in a row, siblings and one or both parents. For many years, scientists have named all the chimps in one family with names beginning with the same consonants for instance: Frodo, Freud, Fanni, Flossi, Faustino, etc. Representing the G family are Galahad, Gaia, Gizmo, and Google, among others.

It's amazing how distinct the chimp's faces are, just as distinct as those of humans. Also, how intelligent and expressive their eyes are. The book's text describes the struggle for power in each community and how certain chimps are loners, while others go off and join other communities.

It also describes how they help each other, how siblings look after their younger family members, how even adults stay close to their parents.

Several photos document tool use by chimps, including the famous termite-foraging with long grasses that Dr. Goodall first discovered in November, 1960 that amazed scientists around the world.

This is a very beautiful book that will also fill you in on some of the latest chimp research in Gombe. For more on Goodall's fascinating work and life, try [Jane Goodall: a Twentieth Century Life](#) by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen.

Posted by Dory L. on March 10, 2015

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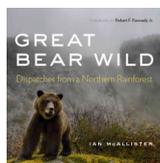
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Great Bear Wild: Dispatches from a Northern Rainforest



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If one area of our continent calls to me more than any other it's the Northwest, that region of coastal rain

forests that extends from northern California to Alaska.

This magnificent book of photographs covers one of the few unspoiled areas left there, the Great Bear Rainforest.

It's located on the mainland slightly north of Vancouver and extends past Prince Rupert to the border with Alaska. Talk about wild: salmon, bear, wolves, sea lions, great Douglas firs and hundred-year-old cedars all thrive there.

Ian McAllister, who lives nearby and works as an ecologist, has taken many incredible photographs of the wildlife and the plants. He also photographed the native people, including a few of the matriarchs of the Gitga'at clan.

The photos are thrilling including some of spirit bears—a bear I was not familiar with. They are white black bears (yes, that's right) produced by a recessive gene. They are not albinos, so a spirit bear could have black-furred bear mother and siblings. Francis Kermode, a museum curator, first named them.

The chapter on sea wolves shows how tough making a daily living is for the wolves who have bred on this coastal area for centuries. They must swim between islands to find food, and one young male, ostracized by his family is shown swimming away from all that he has known after his family boots him away because they cannot feed him.

In one charming photo, tens of curious stellar sea lion bob on the Pacific's surface—only their heads showing. They stare straight at the photographer. McAllister reports that these wonderfully intelligent and agile creatures are making a comeback in the waters off the Great Bear.

If you've ever seen the starfish in the Northwest, you know that these echinoderms are huge and often bright orange. McAllister also takes incredible photographs of colorful underwater creatures: purple urchins and striking rose anemones. Some interesting shots focus on both above-water and below-water life in the same shot.

Like many pristine landscapes left in the world, McAllister reports that the area of the Great Bear Rainforest is under threat from oil drilling. Additionally, there are plans to create a large port in seas that are often stormy and dangerous. This motivated McAllister to publish these beautiful photographs. But the text of the book also provides much information about the creatures of the region. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on March 3, 2015

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