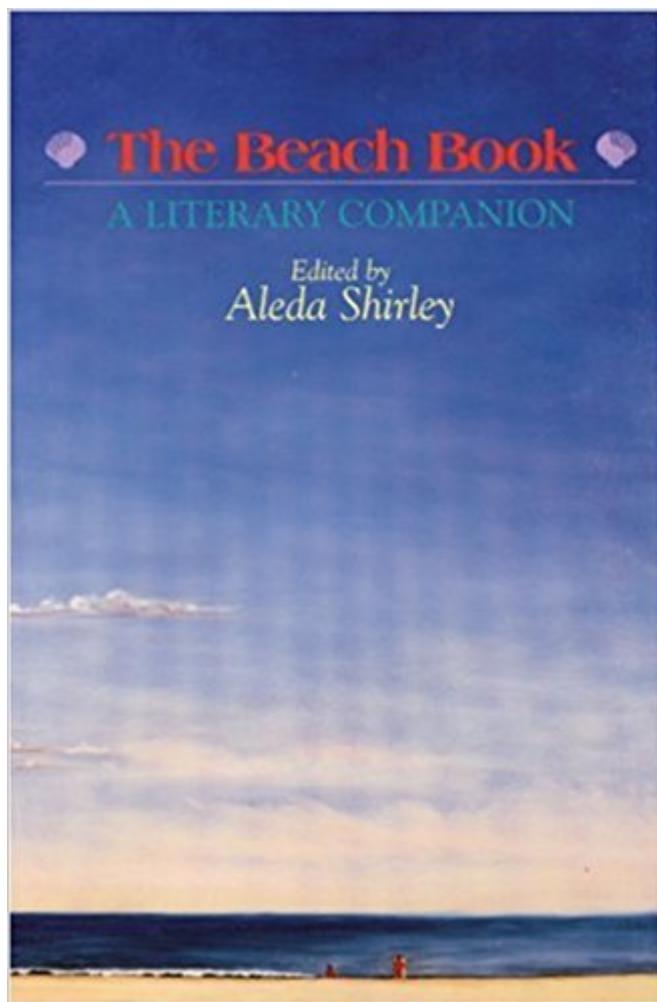


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The Beach Book: A Literary Companion



Synopsis

Well established writers such as Peter Matthiessen, Amy Hempel, Mark Richard, Lucille Clifton, Yusef Komunyakaa, Susan Minot, and others are assembled in *The Beach Book* to offer discerning readers an enjoyable alternative to pulp romances and stock thrillers. Whether hailing from Costa Rica or Newport Beach, New Jersey beaches or the shores of Belize, these stories, essays, and poems explore the endless variations of life at the beach. The pleasure of personal discovery that compels the writers in this volume is one readers will relish and share-as guilt-free beach reading or as an armchair vacation. Here in abundant variety are the unique characters of coastal life-diamondback terrapins, ospreys, moray eels, and rockfish, as well as crabbers, fishermen, and "summer people"-all forms of life are described by diction that is deliciously specific, informed by both experience and passion. This is an anthology of deep feeling for the relationships among humans as well as our relationship to nature. In "Off Season," by Sallie Bingham, a young mistress plays hostess in Key West to her new lover's wife, visiting from Chicago. In Peter Cameron's story, "Nuptials & Heathens," New Yorkers weekend on the coast of Maine. Poems by Gray Jacobik, Chase Twitchell, Kathleen Halme, and others are lyrical surrenders to the shore's seductive allure. Peter Matthiessen recounts his experiences as captain of the *Merlin*, a charter fishing boat, off Montauk, Long Island. And though there's a lot to celebrate in these pages, the conscience has not taken a vacation. Yusef Komunyakaa's poems dramatize racism at Newport Beach and depict the perspective of Thai fishermen limited by class circumstances. Literary essays by Jennifer Ackerman and Tom Horton are impassioned testaments to the need for ecological awareness. If ever there were SOS messages in bottles, sent adrift with the desperate prayer that they would reach someone, somewhere-messages on which lives depend-here they are:

uncorked. Contributors: Jennifer Ackerman, Ralph Angel, Emma April, Sallie Bingham, Peter Cameron, Lucille Clifton, Charles D'Ambrosio, Jr., Maria Flook, Terri Ford, Debora Greger, Kathleen Halme, James Harms

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Customer Reviews

The sounds and the smells of the seashore and summer vacation wash over the reader in this delightful collection compiled as the ultimate in reading material for those yearning for the beach. Shirley, the author of two poetry collections of her own, has made careful selections of poems, stories, and essays that reflect the drama surrounding life at the shore. Her choices provide an intense experience for the armchair traveler and a relaxing read for the beach. Cape Cod, Sausalito, Cape Fear, Newport Beach, Montauk, and Key West pulsate with the breath of life from the land, the sea, and the infinite possibilities of nature. Each piece in this anthology focuses on the people for whom life on the edge of the ocean is a reality and not just two weeks of escape during summer vacation. Shirley's collection also defines the relationship between people and the coastal environment. Recommended for all public libraries. ACynde Bloom Lahey, New Canaan Lib., CT

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