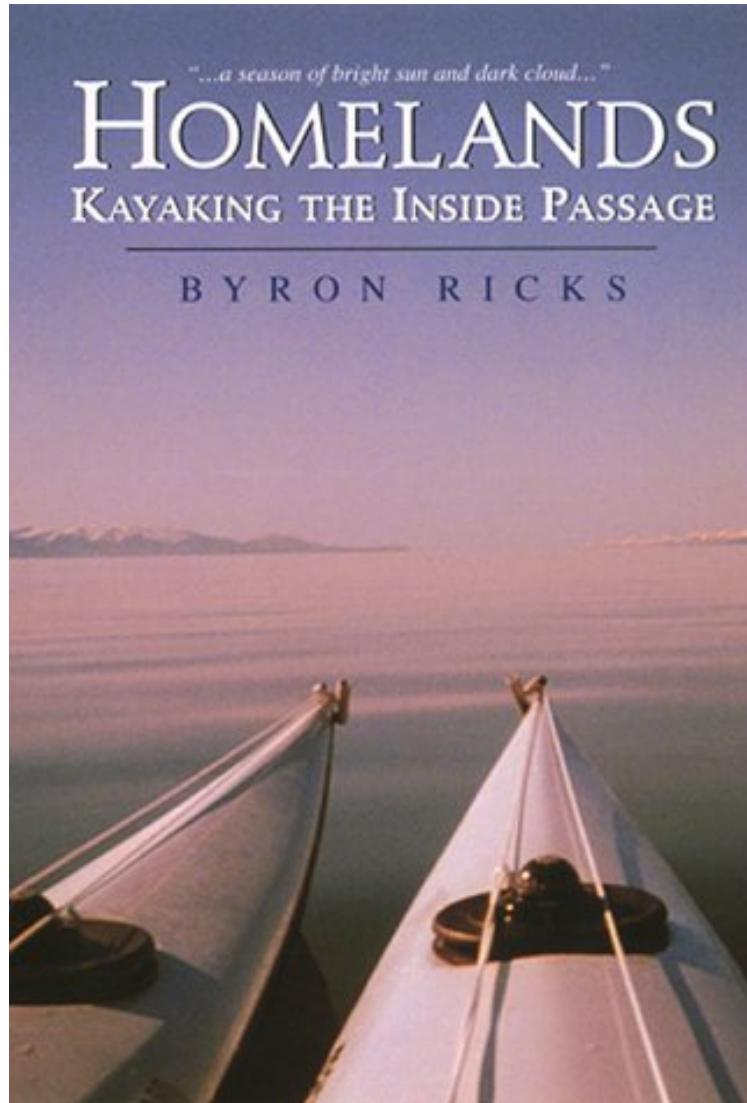


Homelands: Kayaking the Inside Passage

Byron Ricks

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Byron Ricks : Homelands: Kayaking the Inside Passage before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homelands: Kayaking the Inside Passage:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful, meditative journey through the inside passage By tsA wonderful, meditative journey through the inside passage. I read it in preparation for a sailing trip up the Northwest coast, and it increased my enjoyment of the experience and left me yearning to linger much more than I was able to in this incredibly wild place. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The essence of sea kayaking. By A Customer There are many "how to books" on all aspects of sea kayaking. Byron's book captures the why of this mode

of travel. To me it did not matter where the paddle took place but that it re-activated the feelings, the fears, the frustrations, the joy of travels by kayak in wild, almost unpopulated areas. Of walking beaches without human foot print and living day by day with the weather tides; of seeing how little one needs to live. It is the connection with the past and what has been lost. It is this essence that I hold to and try to take with me in my "real" life. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. It wasn't what I expected. By A Customer Byron and Maren sound like wonderful people, and I admire their spirit of adventure and commitment and respect of the land. I think I expected a lot more action in the story. I would have liked this more had they included pictures of the landscape, themselves, some of the people they had met, and a larger map. I understand their desire to protect the places they stopped, but, being an east coaster who "day kayaks" for four or five hours at a time, I wanted a bigger and better glimpse of such a worthy adventure.

"For five months in the spring and summer of 1996, Maren and I traveled the Inside Passage...It was a long and beautiful journey, a season of bright sun and dark cloud, above-average rainfall, and broad shoulders...It was a time before home ownership, before children, an open window and all we had to do was leap through. And we did...The very name, Inside Passage, seemed to carry an intimacy, a knowing. It would be a personal voyage. As much as anything, it would be a journey home."

.com In an era of testosterone-charged adventure tales, Byron Ricks's *Homelands: Kayaking the Inside Passage* is a wonderfully introspective adventure-travel memoir. In 1996 Ricks and his wife, Maren van Nostrand, came close to making an offer on their first house, but instead decided to undertake an adventure of a different kind together--kayaking from Alaska's Glacier Bay down the coast of Western Canada to southern Puget Sound, near their Seattle home. They had no set schedule to keep and for five months lived by nautical charts and the rhythms of the tides, wind, and weather. Their plan was to paddle from the glaciers to the city, exploring a coast in flux and the ways of native peoples such as the Tlinglit, Tsimshian, and Haida--whose ancestors paddled the passage for centuries. The driving question of *Homelands* is this: how does the act of making a very long journey home, in this case by paddle--at an average velocity of a mere three knots--affect one's concept of home? This ocean-size question is fed by smaller tributaries: Do overcoming peril and danger make the rewards of coming home greater? How do native inhabitants encountered along the way relate to their homeland? What do you do when you're camped in a bear's back yard? And what are the issues facing a husband and wife setting out across vast expanses of open water to confront--in the most literal sense--what lies beyond? A journalist with a background in history and anthropology, Ricks is gifted with both a keen eye and a poetic ear. The tale is written in diary form, and its voice originates in the pace of the kayak: tranquil, steady, respectful. An easygoing and astute companion, Ricks is clearly an old soul--with questions well worth asking and some lovely observations to share. --Kimberly Brown From Publishers Weekly In a book that is sometimes invigorating and sometimes maddeningly attenuated, Ricks recounts the five-month journey from Alaska's Glacier Bay to Washington's Puget Sound that he and his wife made by sea kayak. Ricks is obviously as well studied in the geology and the ecology of the terrain as he is blithely realistic about his ability to impose his plans upon it, bandying terms like "bathymetry" and "isostatic rebound" as freely as "ibuprofen." But while Ricks, an outdoors writer who lives in the Northwest, occasionally shows descriptive power worthy of John McPhee, the book's diary-entry structure limits his creativity, prevents inventive shifts in scene and leaves the narrative leaden in spots. Through his talks with people along the route, Ricks comes to an understanding of the term "homeland" not as something static but as a word that "speaks to the kind of relationship a people have with their place." With this interpretation, Ricks tries to find a connection to his own country even as he spends his voyage's last day paddling through a scum of oily water and past an island prison with high walls and razor wire. The book truly conveys the experiences of a long journey through remarkable terrain. Readers will share some of Ricks's elation over natural beauty and hard-won insight. But they will also be frustrated by a narrative that is as unnecessarily arduous as the journey it recounts was inevitably so. (July) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Byron Ricks is a native of the Midwest and a graduate of Grinnell College in Iowa. An outdoor leader, he has written for *Outside* magazine, *Men's Journal* and other publications. He lives with his wife, Maren Van Nostrand, an outdoor educator and environmental planner, near Seattle, Washington.