FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Mystery

But This Is Different
Mary Walker Baron
Steel cut Press
978-1-936380-00-8
(December 31, 2011)

"How could you expect me to become someone else and return to a world so changed that it no longer has a place for me? …You have no right to summon me," Mere cries from her secret island home. Yet, her heart compels her on a journey to find out how much she is willing to risk, and lose, for the one dearest to her.

In *But This is Different*, Mary Walker Baron creates a speculative history that explores one of the twentieth century's greatest mysteries. She asks how much one should sacrifice for the sake of love. And she highlights the importance of being true to your commitments, demonstrates the grounding that comes from spirituality, and celebrates the beauty in those who see life (and sometimes even reality) differently.

The novel follows Mere, who has lived hidden on an almost unknown island for forty years, as she responds to a plea to return to civilization. But for Mere, whose true identity and location has been kept secret, the trip isn't simple. The one who calls her is dying, the same person who also deeply wounded her. And returning to civilization risks revealing what they sacrificed everything to hide. It also threatens the very sanity of Mere, who knows nothing of what the world has become. Drawn by her heart, Mere discovers more deeply what it means to die…and to live.

Baron, a clinical social worker, co-wrote the novel *Contrary Creek*, but launches out on her own in this latest work. Her writing is lyrical and compelling, and her story captivates with gentle mystery. The reader feels the heart behind the story and, after a somewhat slow start, immerses himself completely into Mere's world. In spots, Mere's confusion and helplessness in modern society doesn't seem to fit a character who should, in all other ways, be capable of tackling such a challenge, despite the difficulty. Yet one can overlook this and discover sympathy for those struggling with mental challenges of one sort or another.

The book would suit those interested in alternative or speculative history. And those who

appreciate a more lyrical style of prose will enjoy it. It should also be noted that lesbian themes are woven into the story. Otherwise, it’s a quiet story of love and mystery with a great deal of heart.

Diane Gardner