



Klee Wyck Journal

Lou McKee

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Klee Wyck Journal beautifully chronicles the building of a cabin on the coast of the Pacific Northwest through the yearly diary of author and artist Lou McKee. Decades of travels to and from the retreat off Vancouver Island are poetically and pragmatically recorded, and accompanied by wonderful sketches of the flora and fauna unique to the region.

A passion for kayaking and camping along the British Columbia coast put McKee, and her family and friends, in place to be entranced by a particularly captivating curve of beach. McKee dreamed of building a small cabin there. Eventually, thoughts became sketches and sketches became a structure, one built up more and more each summer. Soon the little building even had a name: the Klee Wyck Cabin, in honor of Canadian artist Emily Carr.

In *Klee Wyck Journal*, McKee's admirable quest to live within nature is well detailed. To build their cabin, McKee and her fellow sojourners used found wood from the surrounding area, taking each piece respectfully and with gratitude. The décor and furnishings were appropriately rustic—so much so that bears, mice, voles, and ravens felt comfortable enough to be a continuing and occasionally intrusive part of the Klee Wyck experience.

McKee's journal and drawings finely depict the vast and gorgeous wildness of the Pacific Northwest. Beyond lush forests of cedar and fir lies powerful water, where otters, salmon, eagles, seals, and orca whales can be frequently seen. There are relentless bouts of rain, and McKee and her party need to rely upon the local cargo ship for supplies or for a sea-sprayed ride back to "civilization." McKee relates being part of the happy group at Klee Wyck as well as bravely spending reflective time on her own at the isolated cabin.

Klee Wyck Journal is a memorable account of collective accomplishment and learning from nature, and a testament to the glory of the Pacific Northwest. McKee's artistic eye combined with a general purposefulness are also inspiring for anyone's everyday life, to look more closely at our own individual landscapes and celebrate their unique beauty.

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