



The Confluence: Fly-Fishing & Friendship in the Dartmouth College Grant

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Outdoorsmen (and women), fishing enthusiasts, and fans of nature writing will want to visit this book at will.

This collection of essays, sketches, and tall tales centered on fishing is well worth getting reeled into.

The contributors in *Fly-Fishing and Friendship* are jovial Ivy Leaguers who refer to themselves as “The Boys,” even into their 50s, and who plan their years around their guys-only trip to the north woods of New Hampshire. They meet at the confluence on the Grant, land granted to Dartmouth College long ago.

But their fishing trips aren’t so much about catching fish as they are about renewing friendships. “All of us are trying to re-energize ourselves by unplugging our computers and iPhones and plugging into nature,” one puts it. “The Grant trip is really about sharing our lives,” writes another.

Male bonding factors in as well. The guys in the collection prove to be a close-knit family. When they aren’t fishing, they enjoy sitting around drinking beer, or wine nowadays, reminiscing, discussing art and literature, and trying to figure out what is going on under the surface of life, like the hidden trout holding down low. There is some witty wordplay throughout—in “Thinking on the Fly,” for instance, in which each of the Boys weighs in on the One Fly question: “there is nothing quite like a dry fly that rides high in the water bristling with spiky fur and the suggestion of gossamer wings.” There’s also a good piece on the ancient Japanese method of fly fishing, tenkara, that lets you “spend more time fishing and less time fussing with strike indicators, selecting flies, or worrying about how much weight to add to the line.”

This collection is best approached with the catch-and-release ethic that the Boys practice: outdoorsmen (and women), fishing enthusiasts, and fans of nature writing will want to visit these sections at will before returning the title to the shelf from whence it came.

TRINA CARTER (Summer 2016)

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