



# Still Points North: One Alaskan Childhood, One Grown-up World, One Long Journey Home

*Leigh Newman*

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Part adventure story, part love story, part homecoming, *Still Points North* is a page-turning memoir that explores the extremes of belonging and exile, and the difference between how to survive and knowing how to truly live.

Growing up in the wilds of Alaska, seven-year-old Leigh Newman spent her time landing silver salmon, hiking glaciers, and flying in a single-prop plane. But her life split in two when her parents unexpectedly divorced, requiring her to spend summers on the tundra with her “Great Alaskan” father and the school year in Baltimore with her more urbane mother.

Navigating the fraught terrain of her family’s unraveling, Newman did what any outdoorsman would do: She adapted. With her father she fished remote rivers, hunted caribou, and packed her own shotgun shells. With her mother she memorized the names of antique furniture, composed proper bread-and-butter notes, and studied Latin poetry at a private girl’s school. Charting her way through these two very different worlds, Newman learned to never get attached to people or places, and to leave others before they left her. As an adult, she explored the most distant reaches of the globe as a travel writer, yet had difficulty navigating the far more foreign landscape of love and marriage.

In vivid, astonishing prose, Newman reveals how a child torn between two homes becomes a woman who both fears and idealizes connection, how a need for independence can morph into isolation, and how even the most guarded heart can still long for understanding. *Still Points North* is a love letter to an unconventional Alaskan childhood of endurance and affection, one that teaches us that no matter where you go in life, the truest tests of courage are the chances you take, not with bears and blizzards, but with other people.

## **Praise for *Still Points North***

“Newman has crafted a vivid exploration of a broken family. . . . Her pain will resonate strongly with readers, and she vividly brings both Alaska and Maryland to life. . . . A natural for book clubs.”—*Booklist*

“Newman’s adult search for her own true home is riveting, as are her worldwide adventures; it’s a joy to be in on the ride.”—*Reader’s Digest*

“What really sets this fearless memoir apart is the heartfelt, riotously funning writing, which will have you reading passages aloud, and rooting for Newman all the way.”—*O: The Oprah Magazine*

“Newman writes so lucidly about bewilderment, so honestly about self-deception, so courageously about fear, so compassionately about insensitivity, so hilariously about suffering and loss. *Still Points North* is a remarkable book: a travel memoir of the mapless, dangerous seas and territories between childhood and adulthood.”—Karen Russell, Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Swamplandia!*

“A wise, refreshing and enjoyable read.”—New York *Daily News*

“[Newman is] at her best bringing to life the chapters on her near-feral Alaskan upbringing. You can practically smell the freshly killed game.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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