



Alongshore

Professor John R. Stilgoe

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Along the shore are fishing boats and lighthouses, wharves and piers, resorts and shipwrecks - picturesque vistas that are visited and photographed but have never before been scrutinized from a historical or cultural perspective. In this enchanting book, John R. Stilgoe takes us on a tour of the seacoast, evoking its sights, sounds, and textures, and showing how it illuminates issues of landscape and of American culture. Drawing on sources as diverse as Thoreau and Kate Chopin, agricultural newspapers and the Hardy Boys, and always emphasizing his own hikes and small-boat passages along the coast, Stilgoe provides a guidebook for anyone intrigued by the seacoast, "the last place in which adult Americans walk barefoot." He describes guzzles (configurations of sand), gunkholes (unfrequented harbors), and loomings (optical phenomena on the horizon). He explains why watchtowers stand guard all along the Atlantic coast; why wharves are perennially decaying; the different ways that pirates have been perceived through the centuries; and why local women of the shore towns wear bikinis. Like the sea itself, Stilgoe's Alongshore invigorates and exhilarates, drawing us back to its pleasures again and again.

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