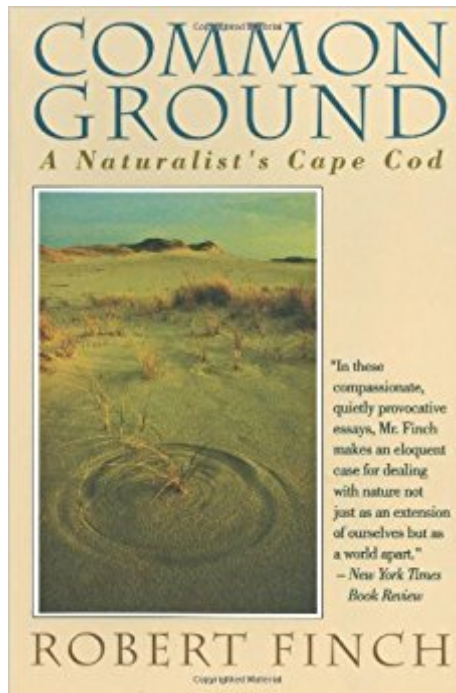


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Common Ground: A Naturalist's Cape Cod



Synopsis

"In these compassionate, quietly evocative essays, Mr. Finch makes an eloquent case for dealing with nature not just as an extension of ourselves but as a world apart." -- New York Times Book Review When *Common Ground* was first published, Annie Dillard praised Robert Finch's essays for "their strength, subtlety, and above all their geniality." New readers will have a chance to discover that Finch's Cape Cod is indeed a wonderful place. The birds, fish, and animals that share the cape's fragile ecology on any given summer day with the human residents are described with the fresh eye of a first-rate nature writer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a book about beginnings, or landfalls, in a place by the sea that has been explored, settled, visited, studied, and written about more than almost any other stretch of the North American coastline. The focus of these essays is a personal response to the changing face of this curved peninsula, keeping in touch with the place where one lives.

Robert Finch has lived on Cape Cod for more than forty years, currently in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. He is the author of seven collections of essays, most recently of his radio scripts for his weekly radio broadcast, *Cape Cod Notebook*, on the Cape and Islands NPR station, WCAI.

Perhaps it is not really accurate to say that this book is a continuation of Thoreau's journey, as Mr.

Finch actually lives in the Cape year-round. Perhaps it is, at least in spirit. Regardless I like to think that way as I always wanted to find more books about Cape Cod after reading Thoreau's volume. Now the search is over. Mr. Finch is a fine writer and gives us such beautiful as well as powerful essays, and I find myself exceedingly enjoying his writing. For these are indeed a naturalist's essays. The writing is delicate and sophisticated but not overly flowery, they are reflective yet do not give one any sense of being preached at. The reflections usually come naturally after describing some natural phenomenon with intricate details. The book slowly unrolls the texture, color and sometime smell (the salty air and sometimes the stench of a dead whale) of the Cape in front of you, it makes you feel like walking along the Cape with a knowledgeable companion. Some of my favorites are: "Foxes on the Marsh", "Very Like a Whale" as they let me ponder the relationship between man and nature and other species, and "Tide Fingers" as it gives me a striking sense of the vastness of the ocean and earth and the insignificance of us humans. Mr. Finch wrote a few other books about Cape Cod, if they are all as good (I have no doubt they are), I would read all of them (in fact I just ordered "The Primal Place" and "Outlands" today). It really takes a lifetime to know a place like Cape Cod (as Edward Abbey once said, you can write a whole book about a single juniper tree). And even then, you can really never fully comprehend it. But Mr. Finch has lived in Cape Cod for many years and has intimate knowledge about its natural environment as well as human history. We are lucky to have him to give us such delightful books to read. I have only one slight gripe about this book: there are fine illustrations for each essay, but they are rendered so unnecessarily tiny (just in the space before the opening paragraph). But I am still reluctant to deduct any points for such a small blemish.

HE'S A GREAT WRITER YA THINK YA KNOW WHERE HE IS STOPPING BY. BY HIS OBSERVATION ARE JUST SO SPOT ON U JUST WANT TO BE THERE WHERE HE PAINTS THE VIEW OF HIS WORDS.

Great read!

Common ground, a naturalist's Cape Cod by Finch_ Robert We visit the area every 5 years or so and have enjoyed our stays. Essays of interesting subjects: snowy white owls, beach erosion and things found on the seashores. It's about the same where we live in RI, down the coast a bit. Loved hearing of the 1978 blizzard as we got married that weekend in RI and shut down our state for over a week so to hear the damage on the cape is meaningful to me. I received this book from National

Library Service for my BARD (Braille Audio Reading Device).

I grew up in Wellfleet on Cape Cod and only recently discovered Robert Finch. His writing is elegant! Beautifully crafted, with wording that paints pictures without obscuring the message. His musings on nature are delightful, and he has a knack for connecting the birds, insects, foxes or plants to our human experience.

This, Robert Finch's first book, is a collection of essays about the wildlife, ecology, and "nature" of Cape Cod. It is pure delight -- the kind of book you might want to read at the end of a perfect day, with a glass of sherry following a good meal. The essays are short and conversational, always literate and almost always insightful. This is not specialized nature-lore, but intelligent musing on the world of Cape Cod -- ants, foxes, broken-down houses, getting lost at night. After you've read it, put it on the nightstand in the guest bedroom.

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