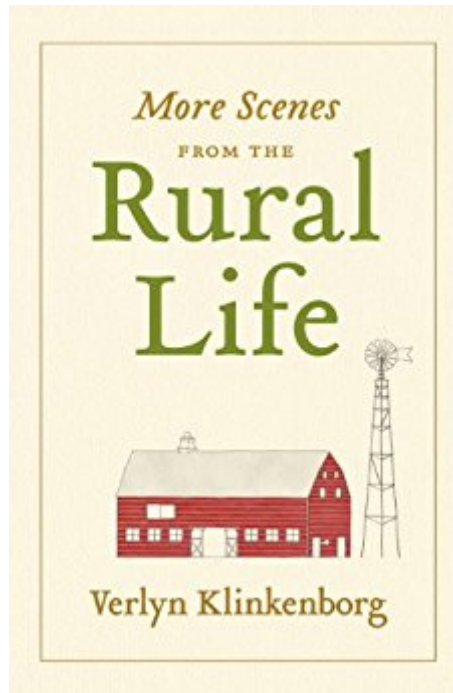




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More Scenes From The Rural Life



Synopsis

Verlyn Klinkenborg's regular column, *The Rural Life*, is one of the most read and beloved in the *New York Times*. Since 1997, he has written eloquently on every aspect, large and small, of life on his upstate New York farm, including his animals, the weather and landscape, and the trials and rewards of physical labor, as well as broader issues about agriculture and land use behind farming today. Klinkenborg's pieces are admired as much for their poetic writing as for their insight: peonies are "the sheepdog of flowers," dry snow "tumbles off the angled end of the plow-blade as if each crystal were completely independent, almost charged with static electricity," and land is most valuable "for its silence, its freedom from language."

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Customer Reviews

I hadn't heard of this author but was casting around for something different to read. The idea of reading someone's collected essays about life on a farm in upstate New York sounded just the thing, almost like an adult version of the Laura Ingalls Wilder tales I always loved as a child. It was definitely the right choice as I have been enchanted by the beauty of Verlyn Klinkenborg's prose,

the strength of his understanding of nature and animals, and in the vivid images which make me feel as if I am there in the country. It is almost as good as taking a vacation. I find myself deliberately slowing down, savoring the writing, and simply relaxing. There is a section in the middle of the book called Interludes wherein are included more direct commentary on subjects like genetically engineered crops, big farming, and so forth. I read the first couple but, frankly, I found nothing that I hadn't picked up already in the more lyrical journal style writing from the rest of the book. One may agree with him or not in these more opinionated pieces and I found that about 90% of the time I did agree. However, as I say, I lost nothing in briefly skimming most of them and moving on. The essays which make up the main part of the book are more thoughtful and reflective and often make the same points in a gentler way which is more tied to the land. Therefore, I found these pointed pieces to be overkill. Your mileage may vary. If it were not for these, I'd give the book five stars. Despite the Interlude, this book is a rare find for me and one that I will enjoy rereading over the years.

A quiet and thoughtful account of the author's life on a small (lifestyle) farm in the northeast of the US. Presented as diary entries every month or so over many years, with his thoughts about other issues (and travels across America) included from time to time. The most moving parts are when he talks about feeding his horses, scratching his pigs, driving his tractor, watching the birds, mending his fences, preparing for the next storm, etc etc. He just (artfully) lets slip little details about his personal life from time to time. I love this book and I will read it again.

If you enjoy fine writing you'll not be disappointed with Verlyn Klinkenborg's latest fresh, crisp, and insightful book. Klinkenborg writes from the periphery of earn-a-living-at-it farmers, yet still speaks from a rural viewpoint. And it's evident with his proximity to farming that he has worked to familiarize himself with agriculture. His observations are true and thoughtful from his vantage point...that of a rural hobby farmer. And it would take another E. B. White to out-write him. I have a problem, however, with Klinkenborg's jarring "Interlude." He went beyond his small farm (and otherwise limited experience) to bale up hay, fenceline, and laundry flapping on the line in that part of the book. The result was an overly-broad set of opinions about modern agriculture. While some of that was true enough, he has failed to account for the variety, complexity, and continuing conflicts within modern agriculture. As a result, those in agriculture who are trying to do right got little credit for having done so.

A++++

That's the best word I can come up with. I think it is accurate. The writing is absolutely top notch. There's no plot, of course, unless you consider life a plot. It is a pleasure to savor this collection of articles. I like some more than others, but I'm sure everyone will. Beautiful writing and a great book to read and re-read. Or read to your kids at bedtime. Or your lover or spouse (or both). The stories sound great when read aloud. Excellent job!

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I read it at night and I found it soothing. The author has a wonderful talent to take the most basic aspects of our daily lives and consider their meaning and place. I felt like I knew his farm and his land. I was transported to the rural life and felt as if the author was a friend. It slowed me down and offered me a chance to enjoy what otherwise is so easily overlooked.

Verlyn Klinkenborg is a favorite writer who used to do a weekly column for the newspaper. He successfully captures the beauty and serenity of nature in his essays. Excellent writer!

A gifted writer. His way with words is amazing. But "The Last Fine Time" is probably his best work, a classic social history of Buffalo after WWII.

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