

Steve Zikman

心灵鸡汤

---亲近太自然

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE NATURE LOVER'S SOUL

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Steve Zikman



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Introduction

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, Places to play in and pray in, Where nature may heal and Give strength to body and soul alike.

John Muir

Nature has always been my sanctuary. A couple of summers ago, I was desperate for a break and decided to head up to Canada where I grew up. I thought carefully about what I wanted to do and came up with the perfect three-pronged prescription.

First stop: Algonquin Park, three hours north of Toronto . It's the quintessential Canadian experience — 5,000 square kilometers of remote lakes, linked by often-grueling portages.

Rob and I picked up our gear at Algonquin Outfitters. Bill Swift started the business in the early '70s, and the sign in his office said it all: "If you are grouchy, irritable or just plain mean, there will be a \$10 charge for putting up with you." It was actually an apt description of old Bill himself, who had

recently passed away and whose son Rich was now running the shop along with his wife, his mom and a battalion of outdoor enthusiasts. They decked us out with everything we would need for our five-day trip: food, tents, sleeping bags and, of course, a lightweight Kevlar canoe.

While I had been paddling since I was a boy, it was Rob's first canoe adventure. We put in at Canoe Lake and, with each stroke, forged a watery path into the wilderness, cutting our ties to the stresses of everyday life. At the far end of the lake, we carried the canoe and our packs on the first of many portages from one body of water to the next—ten lakes in all, plus myriad creeks and swamps with names like Otterslide Creek, Big Trout Lake and Grassy Bog. By day, we steered past blue heron, beaver dams and bullfrogs. At night, we slept under shooting stars and the Big Dipper. We endured rain, cold, mud and mosquitoes, but by the time we made it back to the shores of Canoe Lake, we were refreshed and revitalized. Nature does that.

Our next stop was Killarney Mountain Lodge on the uppermost tip of Georgian Bay in northern Ontario. Our hosts, Jennifer East and her parents, Maury and Annabelle, built this easygoing retreat in the 1960s and have managed to retain its rustic charm. We spent three days at Killarney, enjoying the surrounding natural beauty at a much more relaxed pace.

With Captain Bob and his wife Diane, we sailed on the forty-six-foot yacht, *Stormy Night*, taking in views of Killarney Ridge and the spectacular La Cloche Range of rugged, pink granite and shining, white quartzite. We were told that this is the only place on Earth where one can find striped maple trees.

We disembarked on Philip Edward Island in West Des-







jardins Bay where we hiked the Chickinishing Trail and painted watercolors of the windswept pine trees that grace the landscape. In the boat's guest book, I read an entry from a woman named Susan: "Ran from civilization and found true

beauty here. "Nature does that.

Our final stop was Toronto where we explored the city's wide array of green space: ravines replete with raccoons, birds and squirrels, a fresh herb garden on the roof of the seventy-five-year-old Fairmont Royal York Hotel, and the forty-acre waterfront Music Garden opened by Yo-Yo Ma and inspired by undulating riverscapes, wildflower meadows and forest groves of wandering trails. Nature does that.

Nature presents itself in a variety of forms, and we can connect with its many wonders in myriad ways. From the serene to the very extreme, each story in this book is about that essential connection. Whether you are scaling a summit, camping with friends, floating peacefully along the river's edge or resting in a hammock in your own backyard, nature offers incomparable moments of exhilaration and adventure, beauty and awe, serenity and healing.

As you read each story in this book, we hope that you too will be inspired to get out there and savor all that Mother Nature presents.

Steve Zikman



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POWERFUL PLACES

If we can somehow retain places where we can always sense the mystery of the unknown, our lives will be richer.

Sigurd F.Olson

