Q & A

Q: Why did you decide to write this book?

A) So that writers of any stripe—from travelers, to bloggers, to journal-keepers, to memoirists, essayists, and journalists—will know just what to note down so as to paint rich and vivid pictures of people and places, and create a lively record of their experiences in and responses to the world.

Q: What were some of the most surprising things you learned while writing/researching the book?

A) The writing of the book allowed me to put on all my hats—literary journalist, anthropologist, memoirist, essayist, journal-keeper, and traveler—and draw together in one place all that I have learned, from those various fields, about keeping a lively field notebook.

A) Writing the book let me re-live the pleasure of field-notebook keeping and also offer the prodigious pleasure of the habit to others. It is a way to get to live your life twice.

Q: What is new about your book/research that sets it apart from other books in the field?

A) It is a compact, handy, and useful guide, straightforward and uniquely simple to use—and a pleasure to read.

A lovely collection of people and place writing from the finest writers in the English language.

It is a clear and simple guide to keeping a rich record of life experience and lively, colorful notes on the world.

It is also uniquely attractive, graced as it is with lovely illustrations that will whet the reader’s appetite to explore and relish all the offerings of the world.

Q: How do you envision the lasting impact of your book?

A) This could become a classic of notebook-keeping. Something akin to Lamott’s Bird by Bird, but for the writer’s notebook.

Q: What do you hope people will take away from reading your book?

A) sense of exhilaration—to stride out into the world, to experience it fully and observe it closely, and then to write about that world with all the richness and color they can muster.