



The Penny Poet of Portsmouth: A Memoir Of Place, Solitude, and Friendship

By Katherine Towler

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The Penny Poet of Portsmouth is a memoir of the author's friendship with Robert Dunn, a brilliant poet who spent most of his life off the grid in downtown Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The book is as well an elegy for a time and place—the New England seaport city of the early 1990s that has been lost to development and gentrification, capturing the life Robert was able to make in a place rougher around the edges than it is today. It is a meditation on what writing asks of those who practice it and on the nature of solitude in a culture filled with noise and clutter.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth*

"Katie Towler's lovely memoir is beautifully written, keenly observed, and conveys better than any book I've read the necessary and even urgent solitude of the writing life."—Alan Lightman, author of *Einstein's Dreams*

"This subdued memoir is suffused with a benign calm, like a breath of tranquility from a world parallel to our own." —Madison Smartt Bell

"A beautifully observed, honest ode to the literary life, the deep connections between writers, the power of solitude, and the work of creation; *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth* is a lovely poem to the incalculable power of words." —Karen Bender, author of *Refund*, finalist for the National Book Award

"*The Penny Poet of Portsmouth* is one of the most beautiful and touching books I've read in a long time. It is more than just the portrait of the author's unlikely friendship with Robert Dunn, a fabulously talented, wise, eccentric, and mysterious local poet; it is also the portrait of a small city in the midst of change, and of the art of poetry as it vitally and movingly exists outside the academy and the official avenues of recognition. And most of all, it's a portrait of the solitude and fellowship all artists need and seldom find. This book deserves a wide and enthusiastic audience." —Alan Shapiro, author of *Night of the Republic*, a Finalist for the National Book Award

"*The Penny Poet of Portsmouth* is a love song to the mysteries of art and friendship. In language that is as sharp as a crystalline winter morning in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the village that serves as the backdrop of the memoir, Towler chronicles the burgeoning of a friendship as it coincides with her own appreciation of what it means to be a friend. This memoir is an exploration of the human condition and the beautiful, maddening desire to get it all down on the page." —Wiley Cash, *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Land More Kind Than Home*

"More than just an elegy for an exuberant and elusive soul, this graceful book is a meditation on success and dying, and finally, a love letter to the immortal written word." —Mark Sundeen, author of *The Man Who Quit Money*

"Katherine Towler's *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth* is a book about a New England town, and yes a book about the friendship of two writers in that wildly populated landscape of solitude, but it is also, in the end, a book that educates us on how to be human living in the world's most awkward empire, how to love life, love it even in our strangest of centuries, love it even when one has no stomach for it, love it in our neighbors, our streets, our solitudes, our antagonists who are (often) ourselves." —Ilya Kaminsky, author of *Dancing in Odessa*

"Thanks so very much for the arc of *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth*. It's rare these days but I stayed up half the night that very night reading it, finishing it over breakfast the next day. I've already sent in my Indie Next nomination and will make it a staff pick in March when it releases." —Dale, Porter Square Books, Inc.

"A gorgeous meditation on friendship and place, writing and life, and —of course—the Poet of Portsmouth. I loved every beautiful word." —Ann Hood, author of *The Red Thread*

Praise for *Snow Island*

Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers Pick

"Luminous and moving." —*The Boston Globe*

"An evocative tale... The carefully chosen, and ultimately spare, language of *Snow Island* belies its quiet emotional wallop." —*The Denver Post*

"An elegant novel... Katherine Towler creates an engrossing atmosphere that feels true to its time and place." —*Sun-Sentinel*

"Lovely... This is the perfect novel to curl up with on a winter's night... and then share with a friend." —Ann LaFarge, syndicated reviewer

"Captures the complicated emotions of falling in love for the first time." —*The Dallas Morning News*

"Slow cooking shows in the plausibility of the story, the vividness of the scenes, the depth of her characters, and the poetry of her language... a really fine novel." —*The Portsmouth Herald*

"..graceful...Towler's strength is her deft rendering of time and place. Lyrical and gentle, Alice's wartime coming-of-age and the island itself continues to resonate after the last page." —*Publishers Weekly*

"A small New England island in the early 1940s is the setting for this lovely first novel...beautifully written —life on the remote island is easy to visualize and the two stories are smoothly linked." —*Library Journal*

"Towler's first novel adeptly personifies loneliness in the self-imposed exile of George Tibbits and the circumstantial solitude of Alice Daggett, both of whom are bonded by a common need for the isolated shores of *Snow Island*." —*Booklist*

"[A] sensitive debut novel...a well-crafted tale, subtle and memorable, that should have a broad appeal." —*Kirkus Reviews*

Evening Ferry

"Readers familiar with *Snow Island*, Katherine Towler's fine first novel, will be further delighted by her return to those hardscrabble New England waterfolk in *Evening Ferry*: a strong and deeply satisfying tale of the islanders' lives, loves, and losses from the Great Depression of the 1930s to America's war in Vietnam. Readers new to Towler's fiction have a happy discovery awaiting them." — John Barth, author of *The Sot-Weed Factor* and *The Book of Ten Nights and a Night*

"[Towler] imagines characters and an island life that feel remarkably real. Inner quandaries over love, sex, memories, dreams, and codes of duty are rendered with a light but vivid elegance... by intertwining each era's history and cultural shifts with the stories of individual islanders, Towler is creating a memorable regional trilogy." —*The Providence Journal*

"When one is held in place by the past, the only way to move life forward is to find a way to break those chains. It is such a journey that Katherine Towler places at the center of *Evening Ferry*. *Evening Ferry* succeeds in part because the characters tell an interesting story, but also because of the way the novel takes the reader to a world far removed from present experience." —*The Denver Post*

"Towler's two books, with their overlapping characters and philosophies, interlock neatly, like pieces of a larger jigsaw already fully imagined... a compelling achievement." —*Boston Globe*

"Poignant... In a country deeply divided by the Vietnam conflict, *Evening Ferry* is the calm before the storm." —Curledup.com

"As with the first installment, Towler succeeds in bringing the small island community to vivid life, and the introspective characters are sympathetic...it is gracefully written, and the subtleties of family life should keep readers interested in the continuing saga." —*Publishers Weekly*

"The unhurried pace, simple and recognizable characters, and lyrical descriptions will draw readers into this Vietnam War-era novel." —*Booklist*

"*Evening Ferry* grips readers, beginning to end, with a gradual revealing of hard and sometimes redeeming truths about characters we truly care about." —*The Concord Monitor*

"The arc of the main characters' lives provide puzzles and also the pieces you need, in the end, to find closure. *Evening Ferry* has strong characters and surprises. Its sense of place is seductive." —*Fosters Daily Democrat*

"*Evening Ferry* offers readers a luminous and deeply moving journey back to the fictional Snow Island, the title of Towler's first book... a rich and satisfying foray into another world." —*The Cape Codder*

"Towler brings a strong sense of place, exquisite pacing and deft characterization to the quahoggers and others whose isolated lives depend on the sea." —*Mystic River Press*

Island Light

"Towler's characters are as complex and contradictory as those with whom we live our lives...[she] accomplishes the higher art of bringing us to see the drama in the commonplace, the demands of the ordinary, the conflicts and decisions made by people living the lives we discover in our families, our neighbors, ourselves." —*The Boston Globe*

"Towler succeeds in bringing the small island community to vivid life, and the introspective characters are sympathetic...gracefully written, and the subtleties of family life should keep readers interested in the continuing saga." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Inner quandaries over love, sex, memories, dreams, and codes of duty are rendered with a light but vivid elegance...by intertwining each year's history and cultural shifts with the stories of individual islanders, Towler is creating a memorable regional trilogy." —*Providence Journal*

"A lyrical, passionate, nuanced tale of life on the tiny island... Those familiar with the first two volumes will enjoy re-engaging with the island people, and newcomers will find themselves beguiled with Towler's characters and her thoughtful themes of war, isolation and family." —*Portsmouth Herald*

About the Author

KATHERINE TOWLER is author of the novels *Snow Island*, *Evening Ferry*, and *Island Light*, and co-editor with Ilya Kaminsky of *A God in the House: Poets Talk About Faith*. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan and graduate degrees in writing and literature at Johns Hopkins and Middlebury College. She has been awarded fellowships by Yaddo, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, and served as the Bennett Fellow at Phillips Exeter Academy. She teaches in the MFA Program in Writing at Southern New Hampshire University and lives in Portsmouth with her husband.

Users Review

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Leigh Grayer:

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The particular book *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth: A Memoir Of Place, Solitude, and Friendship* has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was written by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This book very easy to read you may get the point easily after scanning this book.

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The book untitled *The Penny Poet of Portsmouth: A Memoir Of Place, Solitude, and Friendship* contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your ex idea with easy way. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was published by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can available their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice go through.

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