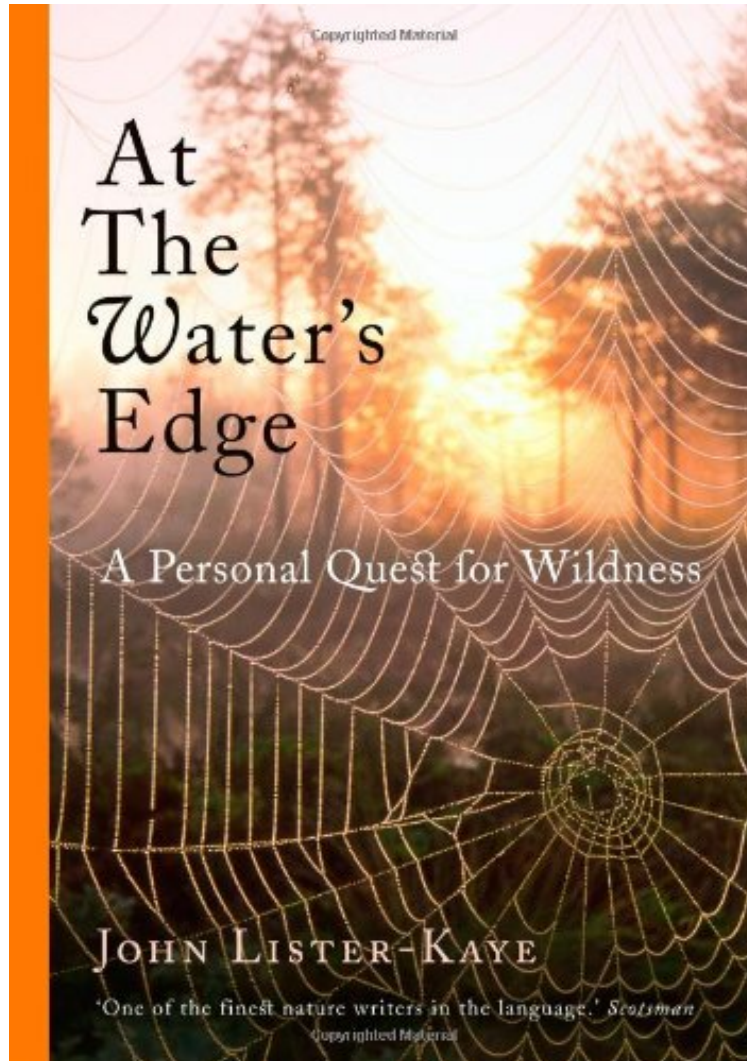


[Ebook pdf] At the Water's Edge: A Personal Quest for Wildness

## At the Water's Edge: A Personal Quest for Wildness

*John Lister-Kaye*

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**John Lister-Kaye : At the Water's Edge: A Personal Quest for Wildness** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At the Water's Edge: A Personal Quest for Wildness:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An excellent nature bookBy Ronnie E. AlffAlthough the author lives in Scotland his observations about nature and his immediate surroundings might describe any country area lucky enough to have four seasons.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful nature bookBy DenzilSix years after his last book, John Lister-Kaye is back with more of the magical and insightful observations that characterised his last two wonderful books: Natures Child and Song of the Rolling Earth.And what observations! A kestrel seizing a slow worm only to end up with a tail in its talons as the slow worm jettisoned its tail and escaped, falling to the floor. A goshawk chasing a wood pigeon and knocking itself out on a fence post. Getting up close and

personal with a magnificent red deer stag after meticulously stalking it. The thrill of watching a wildcat. Every chapter is a treasure; every sentence perfectly crafted. But don't for one instant think the book is full of romanticised musings. Lister-Kaye is very much a 21st century conservationist. He comes down heavily on our society which is drunk with energy lust, with chemical-dependent agricultural systems which expend ten calories of energy to grow and transport to the markets a single calorie of food. He wonders whether mankind has lost its way because we are out of touch with the biorhythms that controlled our lives long ago. In other words, it's a book to enjoy but also a book to shake you up. However, I do have a complaint, and this is aimed not at the author but at the publisher. The cover photo of my version is totally wrong. The book is all about wildness, escaping from civilisation, the open countryside, freedom. But on the cover is a photo of a cute little otter which looks like it's been snapped by a child visiting a zoo. And it appears to have string around its front right leg! Not only is the photo unsuitable, but it directly contradicts the author's own writing: To entice and please our urban majority we are sanitising, taming and domesticating for popular consumption the last of our most precious wild places throughout the globe and frequently trivialising the experience of the wildlife they sustain. A simple evocative photo of the loch that features in the book would have been much more suitable.

For the last 30 years nature writer John Lister-Kaye has taken the same circular walk from his home deep in a Scottish glen up to a small lake. Each day brings a new observation or an unexpected encounter: a fragile spider's web, an osprey struggling to lift a trout from the water, or a woodcock exquisitely camouflaged on her nest and every day, on his return home, he records his thoughts in a journal. Drawing on this lifetime of close observation, John Lister-Kaye encourages a second look at nature and discovery of its wildness. He also forges wonderful connections between the most unlikely subjects, from photosynthesis and the energy cycle to Norse mythology, weasels, and the overpopulation of the planet. At the Waters Edge is a lyrical hymn to wildlife, and a powerful warning to respect and protect it.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . For 30 years, British naturalist Lister-Kaye (*Nature's Child*) has taken the same walk every day from his home in the Scottish Highlands to a nearby loch. In these "rekindled" observations from his field diary, he records the life humming on the "uncompromising" crags; he waxes on the beauty of peregrine falcons roosting on rock ledges, the happy clamor of osprey and otters feasting on trout, the poetry of photosynthesis, and as the seasons turn, he records the new litters, the migrations, and decay. If Lister-Kaye shifts his focus from the Highlands--to marvel at how tropical birds and flowers have evolved together, with "orchids mimicking butterflies and spiders," or sea algae's dependence on chemosynthesis--it's only to return ineluctably to his glen and its particular place in the world. This lyrical and precisely observed book (think Annie Dillard's *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*) is an ode to the wonder of nature, "its sublime design and grim function," the miracle of interspecies friendships, and a *cri de coeur* to find the political will for conservation. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Lister-Kaye channels naturalists from Thoreau to Roger Deakin in this paean to local wild spaces. Combining journal entries that follow the seasons with thoughtful considerations of the very nature of life and wilderness, he writes about everything from otters to goshawks in an elegant, ruminative style. Readers will find the Highlands setting an invigorating counterpart to more familiar locales, and his many trips to a nearby loch in particular will amuse and enlighten. The author deviates from the expected in several instances, however, most notably when he reflects on a discussion with biology students about the environment and when he asks, What have we done to wild the adjective and wild the concept? Rather than record standard and acceptable observations, Lister-Kaye reaches beyond delightful animal encounters to demand more from himself and the reader. Does ecotourism do enough environmental good? What do we lose by forgetting what wild means? Alternately as comfortable as a David Attenborough TV nature special and as challenging as a call to arms, this is new nature writing and a blueprint for many to follow. --Colleen Mondor