



The Men in My Country (Sightline Books)

Marilyn Abildskov

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In the early 1990s, at the watershed age of thirty, Marilyn Abildskov decided she needed to start over. She accepted an offer to move from Utah to Matsumoto, Japan, to teach English to junior high school students. “All I knew is that I had to get away and when I stared at my name on the Japanese contract, the squiggles of katakana, my name typed in English sturdily beneath, I liked how it looked. As if it—as if I—were translated, transformed, emerging now as someone new.”

The Men in My Country is the story of an American woman living and loving in Japan. Satisfied at first to observe her exotic surroundings, the woman falls in love with the place, with the light, with the curve of a river, with the smell of bonfires during obon, with blue and white porcelain dishes, with pencil boxes, and with small origami birds. Later, struggling for a deeper connection—“I wanted the country under my skin”—Abildskov meets the three men who will be part of her transformation and the one man with whom she will fall deeply in love.

A travel memoir offering an artful depiction of a very real place, *The Men in My Country* also covers the terrain of a complex emotional journey, tracing a geography of the heart, showing how we move to be moved, how in losing ourselves in a foreign place we can become dangerously—and gloriously—undone.

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