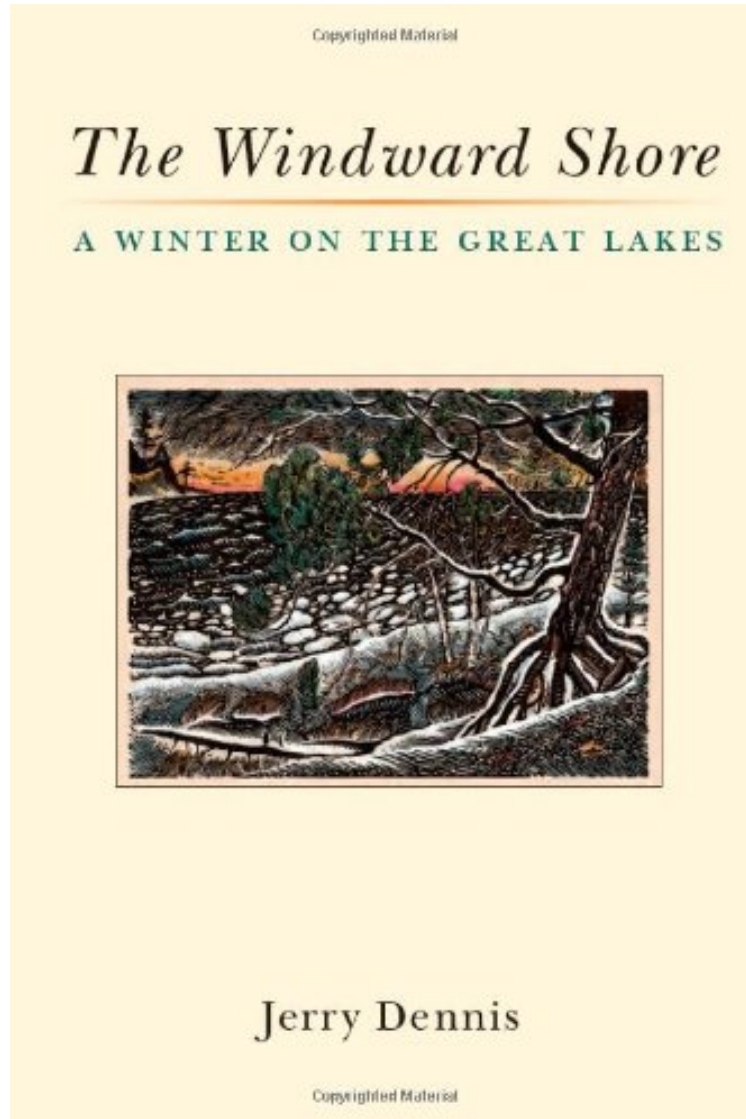


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The Windward Shore: A Winter on the Great Lakes

Jerry Dennis

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Jerry Dennis : The Windward Shore: A Winter on the Great Lakes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Windward Shore: A Winter on the Great Lakes:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An early encounter with WinterBy Corinne H. SmithAfter I read The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Seas in 2009, I contacted author Jerry Dennis to ask for his assistance with a portion of my own forthcoming book. He was kind enough to reply, and his input was crucial. He helped me understand the dynamics of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. At one point in our e-mail exchange, he

mentioned that he would soon "be in seclusion the month of January finishing a book." My first thought was Wow, what a great idea! I was quickly envious, wishing that I was able to go somewhere else and write uninterrupted at a four-week stretch. Then my brain kicked in, and I wondered: Wait a minute. In January? In northern Michigan? For a whole month? Really? How would that work? Well, the answer lies in these pages. Here Jerry shares with us various episodes of his own winter seclusion, living not far from the shorelines of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and Grand Traverse Bay. While he addresses the general seasonal topics of snow, ice, wind, and cold-weather critters, he provides a bit of the history of this part of the world. We join him as he examines the coastlines, fields, and former orchards during the cold months, until such time as the snow eases up and the air changes. This is the season that ends, not with the turn of a calendar page, but with the sound of sugar water dripping from maple branches. Jerry is among the few who witnesses the changes and writes eloquently about them. The long, dark hours are perfect for deliberate contemplation. The author can't help but do a lot of thinking. He nibbles at the edge of the idea of what it means to truly "know" a place, and what might make that place a "home." He considers the relationship between Man and Nature. "We can't exist without it. But it gets along fine without us." He talks of "living room" subjects, like books, language, and the myth of the natives having a hundred different words for snow. Underlying all of his observations is his matter-of-fact advocacy for Great Lakes conservation. "Can they ever be the way they were? And where would WE be?" As tied as Jerry is to the nuances of the natural world and to life in the northern half of the northern hemisphere, for him, the main focus must be the lakes. During a time of year when many folks assume that Nature is all about silence and death or dormancy, Jerry Dennis teaches us that the Great Lakes are always alive. Even in winter, their waters can be seen and heard and felt and tasted, if only you are on hand to pay attention. Personal vignettes create his chapters, but they don't read like a collection of separate essays. Assembled in succession, they make for the kind of natural history narrative that you can learn from, without ever intending to. Glenn Wolff's accompanying bw illustrations are reminiscent of the work of Canada's Group of Seven: artists who were also familiar with northern landscapes and who weren't afraid to document their scenery during that fourth season. The inclusion of a general map of Michigan would have been helpful to the readers. I dug out my own from time to time to get my geographical bearings. Otherwise, this slim volume should appeal to a wide northern audience who will nod their heads and laugh a lot, and to others who may wonder how there can be people who actually enjoy living with the snow and the cold. Readers who want more books about the season, perhaps away from Michigan, would do well to pick up Bernd Heinrich's *Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival* (New England), Diane Kappel-Smith's *Wintering* (Vermont), Marcia Bonta's *Appalachian Winter* (Pennsylvania), or the anthology *Winter: A Spiritual Biography of the Season*. As for me, I think I'll re-read this book in a few months, whenever we're preparing for our first big snowstorm of the year. Then I might follow Jerry's example and go out for a walk in it. Alas, the tiny Mill Brook on our hillside will have to stand in for one of his favorite larger bodies of water.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **TRHE WINDWARD SHORE: A WINTER ON THE GREAT LAKES** By Robert With the publication of **THE WINDWARD SHORE**, Jerry Dennis earns the right to sit at the table with the likes of Thoreau, Olson, Doug Peacock, Rick Bass, Dan Gerber, and other fine "nature" writers. This slender book achieves the right balance between introspection and retrospection. It moves gracefully between a close look at observed details, such as waves breaking over the ice, pebbles on the beach, birds in the sand dunes, or ice build ups, and meaningful, insightful philosophical discussions about time or the end of life or our relationship to nature or the future of this world. Although the Great Lakes are the setting for the musings by Dennis, you sense that such musings would emerge in the Rockies, along the ocean coasts, in the dessert, or even in a city. Dennis has a natural, easy-to-read style, often poetic and often profound. Of course, the etchings in the book by the excellent artist, Glenn Wolff, add to the charm of this book. It's a wonderful read, and I recommend it highly.

Robert Van Dellen, Ph.D., Former Literature Professor, Dean, Chief Academic Officer, and College President.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **Windward Shore** is a gentle read By DebP Jerry Dennis is a very good writer and his books have some great information about Michigan's Great Lakes. In my opinion, not one of his better books. I loved *The Living Great Lakes* and that is why I chose to read this one. *Windward shore* seemed more of a soulful writing, walks on the beach ...thoughts while gazing out over the lake, and not much adventure.

"Our country is lucky to have Jerry Dennis. A conservationist with the soul of a poet whose beat is Wild Michigan, Dennis is a kindred spirit of Aldo Leopold and Sigurd Olson. *The Windward Shore*---his newest effort---is a beautifully written and elegiac memoir of outdoor discovery. Highly recommended!"---Douglas Brinkley, author of *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* "Come for a journey; stay for an awakening. Jerry Dennis loves the Great Lakes, the swell of every wave, the curve of every rock. He wants you to love them too before our collective trashing of them wipes out all traces of their original character. Through his eyes, you will treasure the hidden secrets that reveal themselves only to those who linger and long. Elegant and sad at the same time, *The Windward Shore* is a love song for the Great Lakes and a gentle call to action to save them."---Maude Barlow, author of *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water* "In prose as clear as the lines in a Drer etching, Jerry Dennis maps his home ground, which ranges outward from the back door of

his farmhouse to encompass the region of vast inland seas at the heart of our continent. Along the way, inspired by the company of water in all its guises---ice, snow, frost, clouds, rain, shore-lapping waves---he meditates on the ancient questions about mind and matter, time and attention, wildness and wonder. As in the best American nature writing---a tradition that Dennis knows well---here the place and the explorer come together in brilliant conversation."---Scott Russell Sanders, author of *A Conservationist Manifesto* If you have been enchanted by Jerry Dennis's earlier work on sailing the Great Lakes, canoeing, angling, and the natural wonders of water and sky or you have not yet been lucky enough to enjoy his engaging prose you will want to immerse yourself in his powerful and insightful new book on winter in Great Lakes country. Grounded by a knee injury, Dennis learns to live at a slower pace while staying in houses ranging from a log cabin on Lake Superior's Keweenaw Peninsula to a \$20 million mansion on the northern shore of Lake Michigan. While walking on beaches and exploring nearby woods and villages, he muses on the nature of time, weather, waves, agates, books, words for snow and ice, our complex relationship with nature, and much more. From the introduction: I wanted to present a true picture of a complex region, part of my continuing project to learn at least one place on earth reasonably well, and trusted that it would appear gradually and accumulatively and not as a conventional portrait, but as a mosaic that included the sounds and scents and textures of the place and some of the plants, animals, and its inhabitants. Bolstered by the notion that a book is a journey that author and reader walk together, I would search for promising trails and follow them as far as my reconstructed knee would allow.

"A truly wonderful read by a favorite author." Dave Richey *Outdoors* (Dave Richey *Outdoors* 2011-12-21) About the Author Jerry Dennis is the author of many literary and popular works about nature, science, and outdoor recreation. His essays and stories in *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Audubon*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, and many other publications have won numerous awards and are frequently anthologized. His books are widely acclaimed and have been translated into German, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, and Czech. In 1999 the Michigan Library Association named Dennis the Michigan Author of the Year. He and his wife, Gail, live near the shore of Lake Michigan not far from Traverse City, Michigan. jerrydennis.net