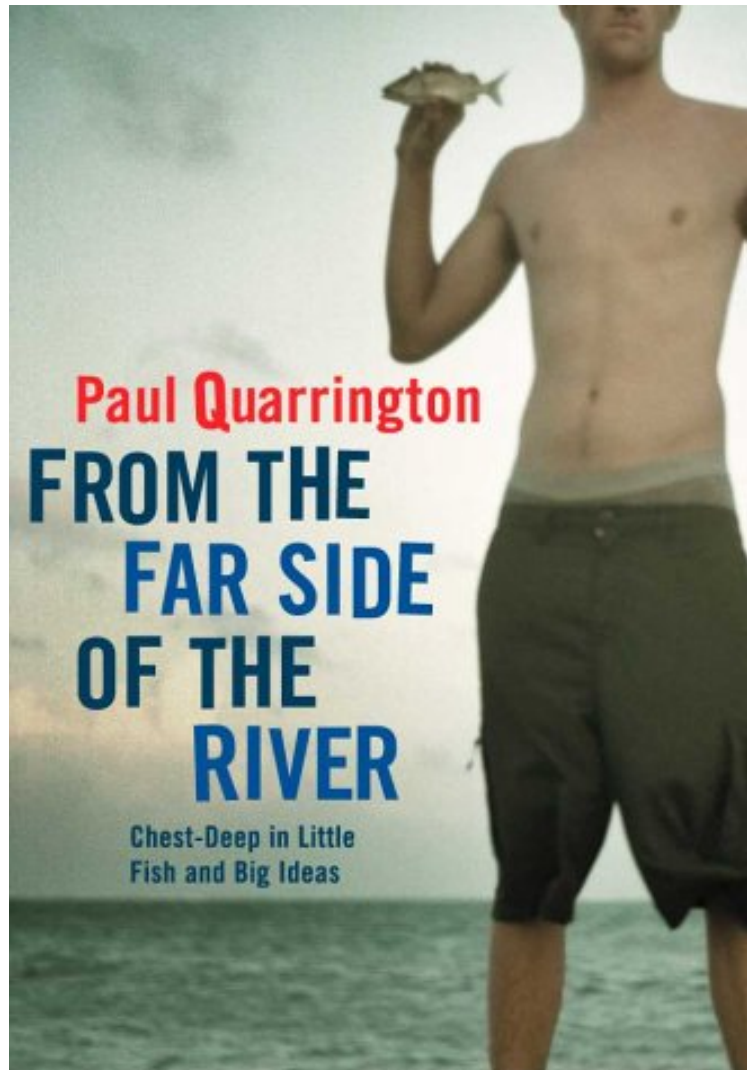


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## From the Far Side of the River: Chest-Deep in Little Fish and Big Ideas

*Paul Quarrington*

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**Paul Quarrington : From the Far Side of the River: Chest-Deep in Little Fish and Big Ideas** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From the Far Side of the River: Chest-Deep in Little Fish and Big Ideas:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Paul's Book of Fish \*By Stephen A. HainesPaul Quarrington's fishing adventures are a delightful read. Almost a sequel to his previous "Fishing With My Old Guy", this work is broader in scope and deeper in insight. Quarrington isn't afraid to examine himself closely while travelling or fishing. The result is a strongly personalised account of who he is and who he relates to in the sport. An avid fisherman, he

makes clear that "Catching", while desirable, is clearly secondary to "fishing" itself. There's obviously far less stress involved in "fishing" than occur when landing a record size is the goal. "Fishing" for itself offers a greater variety of experiences, which he recounts in his jocular style. It's the variety that makes this "Paul's Book of Fish". Beginning with a quest for the majestic Steelhead on Vancouver Island, he crosses the Rockies to the Bow for Rainbow, and the Red River near Winnipeg for the monstrous Catfish found there. An opportunity to examine wider vistas takes him to the Bahamas for the quirky Bonefish. It's difficult to resolve which is more humorous, the antics of the Bonefish or those of the guides he encounters there. As he relates, guides are a major element in fishing away from local waters. Their status is always an issue. When their self-image confronts that of the fisherman's, the clash can be explosive. Fishing, to Quarrington, is not idle time. It can be ideal time, but when introspection intrudes, the result can be serenity or distress. Quarrington was surely almost unique in choosing fishing as a means of coping with the events of 11 September 2001. He confesses it was his form of escape from the "disaster of unexampled order" that had occurred that morning. His personal disasters, a lost marriage and a lost father, further weighted his burdened mind. In the Bow River, well within urban boundaries, he reminds us that Isaak Walton, dean of fishers, declared fishing a "contemplative pursuit". While thus employed Quarrington floats in thoughts "like a shipwrecked man in a sea of debris and sharks". He ponders, for example, what proportional disaster might befall the fish he seeks. By the end of the evening, a small moment of good fortune helps redeem the day. In the final essay, he returns to Vancouver Island. Always a self-effacing man, the Tsunami Lodge, Canada's most up-market fishermen's haven, nearly overwhelms him. He uses devious means to be sent there, knowing it's beyond his reach. He's in constant fear of exposure, but wants to record the extravagance some fishermen will expend in their pursuit. It's a compelling piece, especially given that the article "never got written". Until now. This finale is Quarrington at his finest. His evasive dealings with the lodge owner, his alcoholic ramblings with colleague Jake MacDonald, and, of course, time on the water all provide an image of a man for whom fishing is far more than idle sport. The whole collection provides views of fishing no "outdoors" magazine can offer. [stephen a. haines - Ottawa, Canada]\* With humble apologies to Richard Flanagan

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