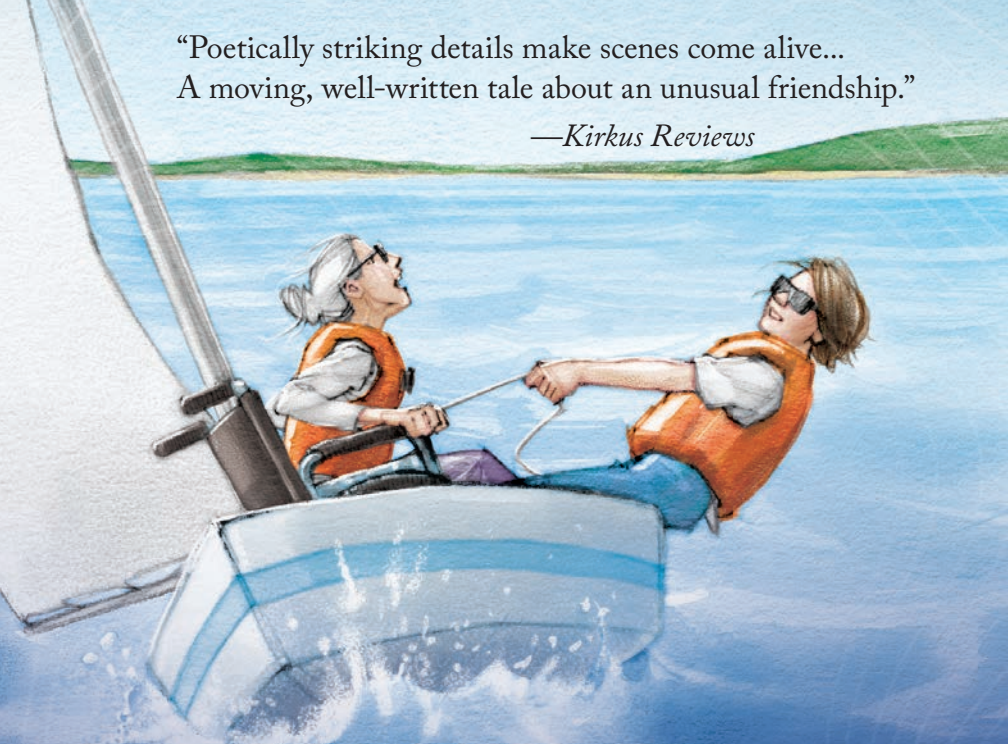


“Poetically striking details make scenes come alive...  
A moving, well-written tale about an unusual friendship.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*



INTO

THE

WIND

WILLIAM LOIZEAUX

**I N T O**  
**T H E**  
**W I N D**



# INTO THE WIND



**WILLIAM LOIZEAUX**  
with illustrations by **Laura Jacobsen**



Egremont, Massachusetts



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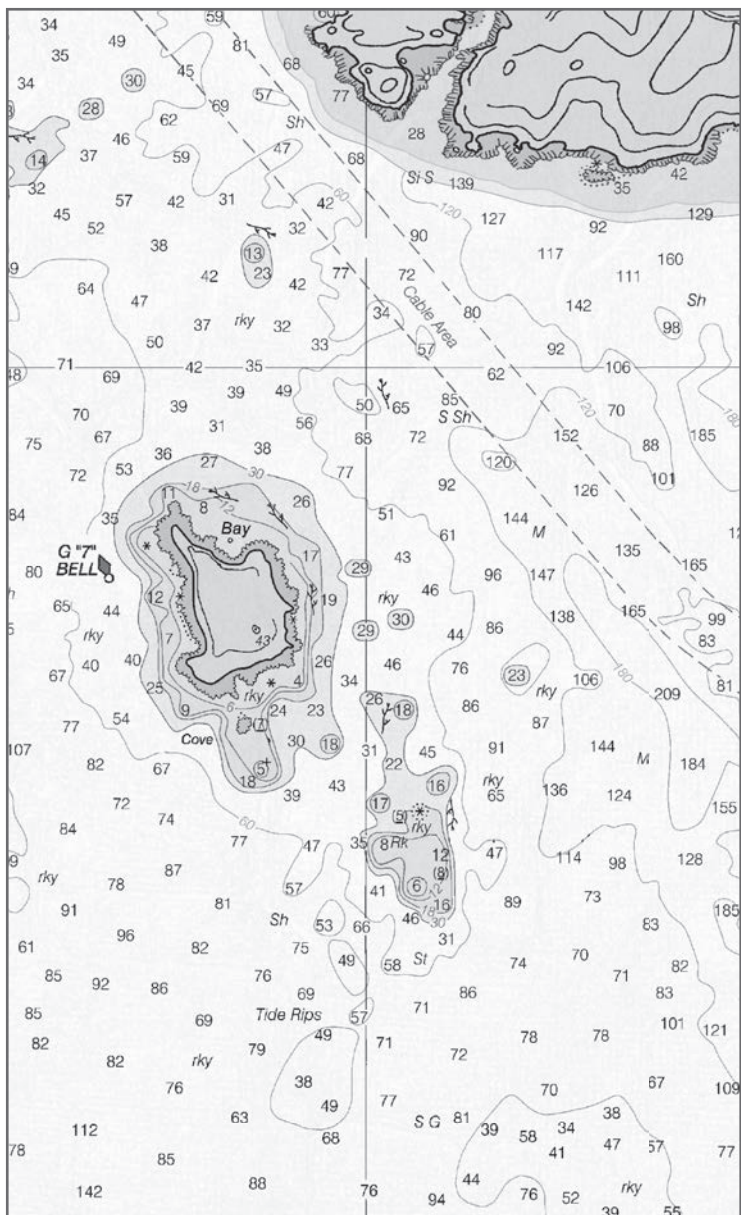
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*For Beth, Emma, Chester, Meg, and Chris*



## CHAPTER 1

# Hazel

“Hey, kid!” a gravelly voice called from behind me.

Startled, I turned from bailing the afternoon’s rain out of my sailboat and saw this creepy old lady about fifteen feet away on the dock, not far from where I’d left my bike. She was sitting in a wheelchair and looking straight at me.

“Kid!” she called again, rolling right up to my boat and touching it with the toes of her rubber-soled shoes. “This boat, is it yours?”

I recognized her, though I didn’t know her name. She owned the Art Barn, a tiny garage on Main Street, where she sold her paintings of the beach and the bay to the vacationers who take the ferry to our island from the mainland. “Yes,” I said. And I almost said *Would you get your feet off my boat?*

“Will you take me out in it?” she asked. Up close like that, she looked scary, her pink scalp showing

beneath her wiry white hair, her hands knobby, her chin whiskery, her face wrinkly and gray as driftwood. She wore a baggy blue sweat suit. “Will you take me sailing?”

Mom and Dad have always told my sister Lizzy and me to be “nice” to old people, and Lizzy, being so smart and perfect *at everything*, would have found some nice way to get out of this situation. But I just looked down at my soaked sneakers and hoped this old lady would roll herself back down the dock and let me get on with my work.

She didn’t move. “Kid, will you take me?”

I tried to put her off: “Maybe. Sometime.”

“Why not now?”

Was she kidding? My boat is an old catboat, beat-up but beautiful. It isn’t much bigger than a rowboat, so even if I wanted to take her sailing, how in the world would I get her and her wheelchair aboard? Couldn’t she see that the boat was still full of water? “Look,” I said, “my sail’s all rolled up. When I’m done bailing, I have to go.”

She cocked her head like a seagull. “Where?”

“I have things to do.”

“Oh?” One of her wispy eyebrows shot up. “Like what?”

“Things... Like homework. Math.”

At this, she cracked up laughing, a kind of cackling sound, throwing back her white head, so I saw that some of her back teeth were missing. “Homework? Ha! On a beautiful afternoon like this? In the *summer*?”

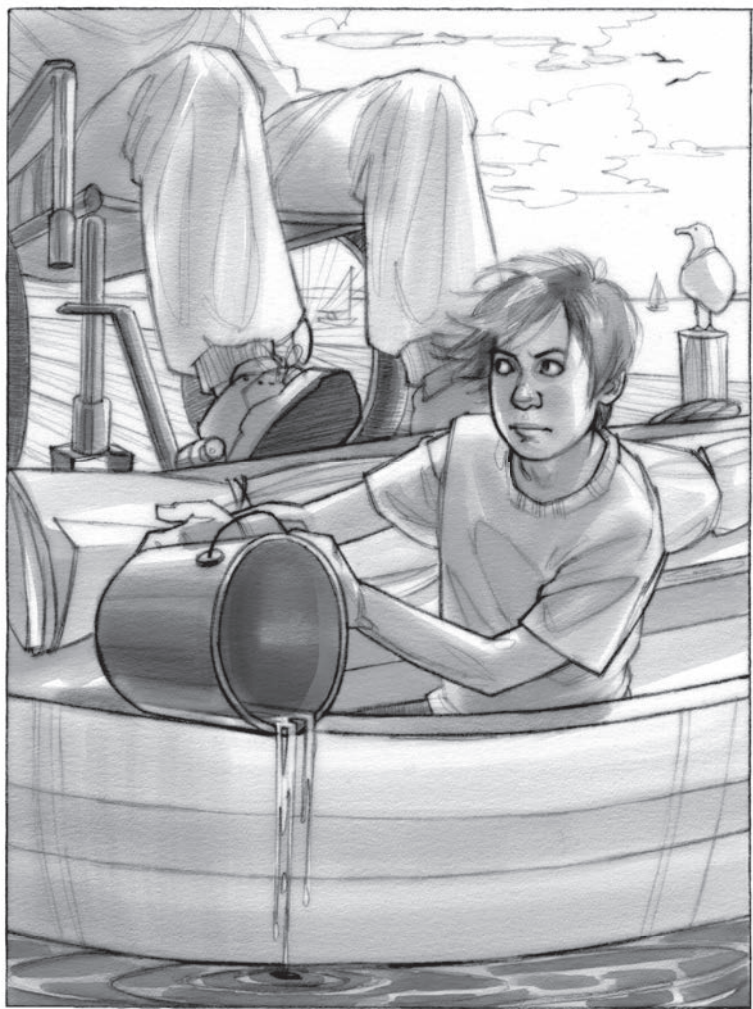
Unfortunately, it was true. I *did* have homework—usually. I’d failed math a few weeks before, after it got hard to concentrate on anything. So now I had to go to summer school, and I had to pass the course to start sixth grade with the rest of my class in September. It was also true that on that particular day, the day after the Fourth of July, I didn’t actually have any homework.

Now the lady was shaking her head slowly in disbelief, like I didn’t even know how to tell a good lie.

“Look, I don’t know why you’re asking me all these questions,” I said. “I hardly know you.”

“I’ve seen you around,” she replied, not laughing anymore. “And every now and then your mom comes into my shop, just to look around.” She paused, thinking. The wrinkles on her forehead tightened. “But I haven’t seen her for a while.”

What did *she* know about my mom? And how was



it any of *her* business? I looked across the dark blue of the bay and the darker blue of the sound toward the mainland, a thin green line, like a thread, on the horizon. Trying to focus again on bailing, I started scooping and pouring, faster and faster, scooping and pouring, scooping and pouring... In my boat there are always things like this that I can do, things I can fix, things I can take care of—unlike some of the other things that I couldn't do anything about.

Like she had nothing better to do, the old lady just sat there and watched me bail. Along with the scooping and pouring, there was the rocking of the low waves, the *squinch* of the rubber fenders against the dock, the screams of the gulls, the sticky, salty smell of the breeze, and the late-afternoon sun baking my back. Ten minutes later, she still hadn't moved, and it was getting more and more creepy, her sitting there, just watching me like that.

"You know," I said, looking up, "my name isn't Kid."

She leaned forward in her wheelchair. "What is it?" Her shoulders were sloped, but she held her chin high. Her eyes were gray but gleaming. "No, really. I want to know. You remind me of someone." Her eyes stayed glued on me, and for a second I had the sense

that if she was closer, she might have reached out and touched my arm.

“Rusty,” I answered. “My name’s Rusty.”

She nodded. “Okay. Then Rusty, will you take me sailing? Please? I’m done with work for the day. I’d love to go. I haven’t been in years. By the way, *my* name is Hazel. Like the color.”

Without waiting for an answer, she went right on. “See those boards over there?” She glanced toward the end of the dock and a small stack of 2×6 inch boards, each about four feet long, that Jack, the maintenance man at the marina, was using for repairs. “If we bring some of them over here,” she said, “we can make a ramp for my wheelchair. We’ll put the boards side by side. We’ll set the ends of each on the edge of the dock, and the other ends in the middle of your boat. Then I’ll do the rest.”

She had this way of using the word *we*, as if she and I were on some team together—*her* team—and I had the feeling that she’d thought all this out before she’d even asked me. But it was totally crazy. No way was she getting into my boat.

“That’s not going to work,” I said. “Plus, I have to get home for supper.”

“It could be a short sail. Just a half hour. Why don’t we sail out to Half-tide Rock and back? The weather’s perfect. It’d be grand!”

Why was she being like this? If I wasn’t standing in my boat, I’d have just walked away from her. I shook my head. “No.”

She gave me a long, hurt, disappointed look, as if to say, *I expected so much more of you. Where is your sense of adventure?*

At last, she seemed to give in. “Oh, well.” She let out a sigh, her shoulders lifting and falling. “I tried.” Then she brightened a bit. “But at least you said you’d take me *sometime*. So I suppose that could be tomorrow, or the day after, or even next week. But *sometime* we’ll go sailing. Right, kid?”

So much for giving in. She turned and rolled herself back down the dock, her elbows sticking out like chicken wings, her narrow tires *thunk-thunking* over the planks. Twenty feet away, she stopped and seesawed her wheels, so that before she’d go on her way, she could peer at me over her shoulder. Her eyes twinkled in a way that held your own eyes on hers. “*Sometime*, Rusty. I’ll remember that!”

## CHAPTER 2

# An Extra Spoon

Even when the summer people are here, life on our island is a lot slower and more old-fashioned than on the mainland, which I guess is why they all come. Fishermen still go out in wooden boats called dories. You get your hair cut at Mickey's barber shop. Some of our streets are made of cobblestones. And it's easiest to get around town by walking—or by riding your bike, which is what I was doing about a half hour after I'd finished bailing. According to the six o'clock whistle from the fire house, once again I was late for supper, not because the bailing had taken so long, but because I didn't much feel like sitting at our table. I pedaled slowly out of the marina, passed the beach, the summer people's big houses, the ferry slip, and then turned right on 3rd Street, where I came to the old bungalows like ours. I parked and trudged up the porch stairs.

“You okay, Russ?” Dad said when I came into the kitchen. In his wrinkled khaki pants and blue True Value shirt that he wears to work at the hardware store, he was already eating at the table with Lizzy. Across from her, my chair was empty, and as it’d been for exactly twenty days in a row, Mom’s chair, across from Dad, was empty too.

“I’m fine,” I said in a way that probably didn’t sound all that fine. Spaghetti and sauce were already on my plate, so I went to sit down.

“Go wash your hands,” Lizzy said, disgusted. “You’re a mess!” She had recently finished eighth grade—just three years ahead of me—but since Mom had gone, you’d have thought she was a lot older, in charge of everything, like she was running a camp.

“Take it easy,” Dad said to her and puffed out a breath. He was trying not to lose his patience. “Russ, you can warm up your food if you want.”

“If it’s cold, it serves him right!” Lizzy said, and turning to me with her dark, dagger eyes: “Can’t you tell time? Don’t they teach you that in...?” Grimacing, like she had soap in her mouth, she trailed off without adding “summer school,” while letting me know that for such a brilliant, straight-A student like herself, *summer school* was a dirty word meant for kids who

*weren't too bright.* "You know, I cooked this meal, and I cooked it to be eaten on time!" she went on. "The least you could do is..."

"It's delicious," Dad cut in. "The best spaghetti I've ever had. Thanks, Lizzy. Could you pass the Parmesan cheese? Russ, go wash your hands."

At the kitchen sink, I washed my hands, while I tried not to listen to Lizzy, who kept hammering away. "So Rusty, I rang the bell, but you still didn't come, and you left your phone at home again. How are we supposed to keep track of you? You didn't set the table tonight!"

"Easy," Dad said again. "It's not a crime. Russ, you can avoid the firing squad by cleaning up after we're done. Come, have a seat. You want to warm that spaghetti?"

"No. It doesn't matter." I sat down. "Any mail today?" I tried to sound like it was no big deal.

"Nothing but bills." He shot me a glance. "Sorry about that."

For a while, Lizzy talked and talked, which is what she always does when she's riled and there's a lot of quiet to fill up. She told Dad about her day at Leadership Camp and how she was earning her Community Service badge. She told me to get my

elbows off the table and not to suck my spaghetti “like a fish.” Turning back to Dad, she talked about how she was voted Camper of the Week... Until Dad turned to me and asked, “So were you down at the dock this afternoon?”

This lit Lizzy’s fuse again. “Of course he was!” She rolled her eyes. “Every afternoon he’s either out sailing or messing around with that precious boat of his. That’s all he ever does! That and read his sailing books whenever he’s home.”

“Lizzy,” Dad said, “get off your high horse. Until you have something constructive to say, please keep your mouth shut.”

“Mmmmmmm,” she said, her lips clamped. She shook her head, her long black hair shivering, as if she’d been gagged—which, come to think of it, wouldn’t have been a bad idea.

Ignoring her, Dad turned to me again. “Anything interesting happen today?”

Lately, he’d been trying to get me to talk more during supper, but I didn’t feel like it. What could be interesting about multiplying and dividing fractions in a summer school class with four other guys slumped at their desks, all of them interested in big motor boats, and not at all interested in a boat like mine, a

“dinky sailboat, that bathtub toy,” they called it. And I sure wasn’t going to say anything about that weird old lady and how she’d appeared out of nowhere and kept asking me to take her sailing. Lizzy would’ve just loved to know about that! “Nothing special,” I said. “I just bailed out my boat.”

“Well, at least that sounds productive,” Dad said, working hard to keep the conversation upbeat. “As for me, here’s some real excitement: Today I sold a toilet plunger, some shovels, and I sawed a dozen 2x4s into ten foot lengths—the Dickinsons are framing in their porch. Lizzy, do you have anything else to add about your day?”

“Mmmmmmm,” she said again, meaning that bound, gagged, and forever insulted, she’d never speak with us again. “I cooked and cooked and cooked!” she said, not mentioning that she’d been at camp until about an hour before.

“I didn’t realize spaghetti from a box and sauce from a jar was so complicated,” Dad replied.

“I also straightened up *his* room!”

“You’ve got no business in there!” I said.

“Hey, you take it easy, too,” Dad said to me.

Lizzy flung her hair over her shoulder and kept talking to Dad like I didn’t exist. “His room, it was

a disaster area! His clothes were all over the place. Same with his stupid sailing books.”

“You keep your hands off those!” I yelled.

“You didn’t have to do all that,” Dad said to her sharply.

“Well, who else was gonna straighten his room? Or *make* him do it?”

We all got quiet now. Suddenly I could see Mom walking into my room in her sandals, jeans, and a loose sweater with the sleeves pushed up her narrow arms to her elbows. She’d look around the room calmly and nod, as if there was something she didn’t like but understood. She wouldn’t be mad. She might even give me her soft, teasing smile. *I’ll bet you an extra dollar allowance that I can finish the dishes before you’ve cleaned up this place.* Before I could answer, down to the kitchen she’d go, her sandals clicking on the stairs.

In silence, we finished our spaghetti. Then, clearing the table, Dad said, “Hey, I brought home some ice cream for dessert! Mint chocolate chip. Three bowls coming up! And chocolate sauce all around! Russ, would you get some spoons?”

I went to the drawer and, without thinking, grabbed four spoons to put around the table. As I

was putting down the fourth at Mom's usual place, I stopped, took it back, but not before Lizzy saw me.

"What's wrong with you?!" she screamed, so furious that I thought she might explode. "Why do you keep doing these things? Can't you get it through your thick head? Don't you understand? SHE... ISN'T... HERE!"

"I KNOW THAT!" I screamed back at her. "DO YOU THINK I'M BLIND!? LEAVE ME ALONE!!"

Dad put his hands out in front of him, sort of patting the air in a steadying way. "Let's everybody take a step back. Hang on. We're all in the same boat here, for goodness sakes."

I slammed the spoon back in the drawer.

Where Mom *was*, as Dad had told us, was at some place called Woodhaven, where she was supposed to be getting better. Neither Lizzy nor I had been there—it was over two hundred miles beyond the ferry pier on the mainland. It was supposed to have fields and woods around it, with walking paths, a stable of horses, and a clinic with nice nurses and doctors. "A place for healing," Dad had called it.

But why exactly did Mom need healing? What was she healing *from*? How long would she be

there? Why couldn't we see her? Why was only Dad allowed to call her, and only once a week? Why were Lizzy and I only allowed to write her letters? I'd written three of them in pen on special paper that Dad had given us. But she hadn't answered.

Why? And why had she gotten sick, or whatever it was, in the first place?

"Come. Sit down. Have some ice cream," Dad said in that way of his, as if he knew exactly what kept pounding and pounding in my head.

# Glossary of Nautical\* Terms

**Beam reach** Sailing with the wind coming from the side.

**Bow** The most forward part of a boat (the opposite end or rear of the boat is the **stern**).

**Bow handle** A metal handle on the bow of a boat.

**Broad reach** Sailing with the wind coming over the rear corner of the boat.

**Buoy** An anchored float that warns boats away from hazards or serves as a mooring.

**Catboat** A boat, like Rusty's, with a single mast close to the bow, and only one sail.

**Centerboard** A board that can be lowered through the bottom of a sailboat to reduce sideways movement. Instead of a centerboard, Rusty's boat has a keel.

**Chock** A metal fixture, usually on a boat's deck, with an opening that a rope can pass through.

**Cleat** A metal fixture, often on a dock, with two horns around which a rope can be wound and tied.

**Close-hauled** Sailing as close as possible to the wind coming from forward.

**Fender** A bumper to keep boats from banging into docks or each other.

**Grommet** A metal ring, in the corner of a sail, through which a rope can pass.

**Halyard** A rope that raises a sail.

**Heel** The lean of a boat to one side or the other. It has nothing to do with your shoe.

**Jibing** Turning the stern of a boat through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other. This is very tricky.

**Knot** A measure of speed. A knot is one nautical mile per hour, a little faster than one mile per hour.

**Leeward** The direction opposite to the way the wind is blowing.

**Line** Any rope used on a boat.

**Luffing** The flapping of a sail that is no longer filled with wind.

**Marina** A place where boats are docked.

**Mooring** An anchored buoy to which a boat is attached by a rope. To **moor** a boat is to attach it to a buoy or post.

**\*Nautical** Having anything to do with sailors, boats, and sailing.

**Nautical mile** A measure of distance on water. A nautical mile is exactly 1,852 meters or approximately 6,076 feet. That's 796 feet longer than the sort of mile you're used to on land.

**Port** The left-hand side of a boat when you're facing forward.

**Rigging** All the lines and masts on a boat. To **rig** anything is to properly connect all its parts so it works.

**Running** Sailing with the wind directly behind you.

**Shackle** A U-shaped metal device for attaching ropes to sails.

**Shoal** Very shallow water. If you're in a boat, stay away from it!

**Slip** A place for a boat to moor, often between two docks.

**Sound** A wide body of water that separates an island or islands from the coastline.

**Starboard** The right side of a boat when facing forward.

**Tacking** Turning the bow of a boat through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other.

**Trim** To adjust a sail.

**Wing-and-wing** With sails extended on both sides of a boat. Your boat looks a bird with spread wings.

## About the Author

William Loizeaux's childhood friendship with a feisty aunt who loved painting and sailing inspired him to write *Into the Wind*. He is an award-winning author of books for young readers and adults, as well as a writer of stories and essays. His children's novel *Wings* received the 2006 ASPCA Henry Bergh Award and was the 2006 Golden Kite Honor Book for Fiction.



photo by B. Tyroler

His memoir *Anna: A Daughter's Life* was a *New York Times* Notable Book, and his novel *The Tumble Inn* was the grand prize winner at the 2015 New York Book Festival. Loizeaux has been writer-in-residence at Johns Hopkins and Boston University. He lives with his wife in Boston, Massachusetts. You can learn more about him and his books at [www.williamloizeaux.com](http://www.williamloizeaux.com)



## Also by William Loizeaux

### For Young Readers:

*Wings*

*Clarence Cochran, A Human Boy*

### For Adult Readers:

*Anna, A Daughter's Life*

*The Shooting of Rabbit Wells*

*The Tumble Inn*

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT INTO THE WIND

“What keeps INTO THE WIND sailing along from the opening chapter until the last? Tenderness. It’s at the center of this powerful story. [Into the Wind] left me feeling buoyed and deeply satisfied.”

—*Esther Ehrlich, best-selling author of Nest*

“INTO THE WIND is a real treasure, a book that grabs your attention on the first page and doesn’t let go until the last paragraph, when you just might decide to read it all over again. This is the story of Rusty, an island boy trying to fix up an old catboat and teach himself how to sail during the worst summer of his life. Into the midst of this comes a strange old lady who wants him to take her sailing. An unexpected friendship develops and over the days and weeks of that difficult summer Rusty learns not only how to care for his boat and sail it, but also how to navigate his own tough times and troubled waters at home, until at last he is sailing with the wind.”

—*Reeve Lindbergh, Vermont-based author of Two Lives and more than two dozen books for adults and children*

