

re: Hazel Heckman

May 16, 1971

Mr. Ted Cuningham
Editor-in-Chief
University of Washington Press
Seattle, Washington 98105

Dear Ted:

ISLAND YEAR, as revised, is even better than ISLAND IN THE SOUND. It is a beautiful book, as refreshing as a visit in the country with a wise and beloved friend. It is full of surprising insights, odd bits of lore, interesting judgments; it is pervaded with a sense of peace and unity with the universe that makes powerfully effective the understated last chapter, where we learn that the island world, like the larger, is much at risk.

It is embarrassing to find I've been able to go through fifty-five years in the northwest with my eyes blank and other senses numb, but if I can never know this land and its spawn with the intensity and appreciation that Hazel, a comparative newcomer, reflects still ISLAND YEAR will add to my pleasure.

I think the book should have a good sale, especially locally, but with a real chance for national attention. Many readers will cherish it, and it will gain a real word-of-mouth reputation. It is a book to turn to, time after time, as I've been doing -- I hate to let the MSS out of my hands. With illustrations and index, and the confidence of print, it should become as indispensable to Puget Sound picnics and cruises as rain gear.

The organization has been changed in some manner that I don't recognize since I read the first draft. The reservations I earlier expressed about repetitiveness are gone, vanished along with the shrillness I detected in the early passages about the despoilations of the developers. I find the present lament moving.

My only quibble -- it is minor and transitory -- concerns a few passages early in the book (for instance, page two, January) where the writing falls into a choppy, lifted-from-journal style, which takes getting used to. Then this mannerism fades away.

But I had to reach for that reservation. This is a triumph of nature writing -- something new in an old vein -- and I can hardly wait to see it in print.

Best,

Murray?