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and doesn't belong here. Avery introduces a note of elegy as he contemplates "this place so subtly beautiful and so overlaid with doom. A haunt, a film coating all of it. Killed again and again, and each time, the place rising back on its haunches, diminished, but once more alive." But the mountaintop removal is an ultimate destroyer: "Only this, Avery knows, will finally beat the land for good."

Bant, tough beyond her 15 years, insists on finding out exactly what the locked and well-guarded mine sites hold. When her beloved mountain Yellowroot (colloquial for the healing goldenseal) is being blasted, she trespasses. Finally she views the sickening, barely-describable mountaintop removal site: "the whole top of Yellowroot amputated by blast, and that dragline hacking into the flat part left. . . . how lucky Grandma died, I thought. I thought that then. And past where Yellowroot had been, miles and miles of mountain stumps, limping all the way over to what used to be horizon, and what would you call that now? The ass-end of the world. . . . A flake of the moon's surface fallen to earth, and in that fall, it had kept its color, nickel and beige, kept its craters, its cracks. But then it landed not up, but moonside down."

Lace won't accept elegy, and she moves beyond the sickening shock that is destroying the hills even as you read this. She won't leave when their home becomes more and more in plain, complete peril. "Stay in their way—that's the only language they can hear. We are from here, it says. This is our place, it says. Listen here, it says. We exist."

I daresay this is the most enchanting novel you'll ever read that will also leave you with outrage and grief.

Barbara Kingsolver. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. New York 2007: HarperCollins Publishers. 384 pages. Hardcover. \$26.95.

REVIEWED BY MARNI FOGELSON-TEEL

Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* is a meditation on food and our relationship to it. *Animal, Vegetable,*

Miracle reads like an intimate conversation with a wise, trusted, witty friend. Kingsolver's natural, winding narrative voice guides the reader through humorous anecdotes about a local food columnist with a complete disregard for the seasonality of the ingredients in his recipes, past reflections on motherhood and her daughter's love affair with chickens, and into factual accounts about our society's negligence of the importance of nutrition and mindful eating. She does not boast or push her lifestyle, but her firmness and dedication inspires the reader to ponder it for herself.

Kingsolver's whole family pledges to eat locally for one year and to grow most of the food they do consume themselves. With the exception of a few staples such as flour, everything else is purchased at a farmer's market or directly from local producers. The result of this dedication affects more than their daily menus. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* is Kingsolver's book, but it is undoubtedly a family affair. Kingsolver's husband, Steven L. Hopp, contributes commentary and details on topics including agribusinesses, the Farm Bill, fair trade, and bread making. Camille Kingsolver, the elder daughter, adds seasonal recipes, menu ideas, and insight from the point of view of a teenager (albeit an extremely intelligent, self-aware teenager). Lilly, the younger daughter, does not officially contribute to the book, but her inquisitive nature and endearing comments, as well as her amusing foray into the egg business, provide the reminder that a child who grows and raises her own food is likely to have a deep connection with it.

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle is divided logically into the months of the local food year. Each season brings new challenges and victories, while events such as the arrival of asparagus and the satisfaction of days spent canning and preserving for the winter become celebrations of the yearly cycle of life. Kingsolver doesn't make light of the work her family has dedicated itself to and refers to working on the farm as a second job, but she clearly delights in each month's varied production. While obviously knowledgeable and experienced in gardening and culinary arts, Kingsolver eschews the post of expert and invites the reader along with her on forays into the nature-based unknown, including witnessing the rituals of turkeys mating. Her stories, covering even the most mundane of daily tasks, come alive

as she offers tales of her own personal history as well as grander observations about other cultures.

Kingsolver's food journey does not remain on the farm, and her travel stories offer optimistic evidence that Kingsolver and her family are among the growing numbers of citizens who are recapturing their relationship with food. From visiting a Vermont diner serving local vegetables, eggs, and meats to learning from an elderly Italian farm owner with limited English skills but endless knowledge about his lands, Kingsolver gives hope that anyone can be moved to adopt a more attentive, holistic approach to food.

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle will undeniably inspire countless urban dwellers as well as country folk to frequent farmers' markets and grow their own food, perhaps in search of the peace and satisfaction it obviously has given to Kingsolver's family. More than that, the book will motivate countless more to simply think about where their food comes from and make conscious and conscientious decisions about what to eat. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* is not about food fanaticism or deprivation. It's about celebrating life, finding and creating seasonal culinary treasures, and being mindful about our food choices. While the environmental theme of the book is clear, Kingsolver's argument for eating locally is more personal: reconnecting with the land and its cycles is not an archaic tradition for those who can't afford to eat fish or exotic vegetables flown in from around the globe. Kingsolver's success as a writer of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry is well-known and hardly qualifies her as someone who is eating in this fashion solely to preserve financial resources. Choosing to eat locally and to be a part of that production process is, for Kingsolver and her family, not a statement about their personal financial wealth. It is, however, a testimony of their investment in themselves, in their future, and in the land they are trying to preserve. It is a message of hope.