



Poet of the Appetites: The Lives and Loves of M.F.K. Fisher

Joan Reardon

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In more than thirty books, M.F.K. Fisher forever changed the way Americans understood not only the art of eating but the art of living. Whether considering the oyster or describing how to cook a wolf, she addressed the universal needs "for protection, food, love." Readers were instantly drawn into her circle of husbands and lovers, artists and artisans; they felt they knew Fisher herself, whether they encountered her as a child with a fried-egg sandwich in her pocket, a young bride awakening to the glories of French food, or a seductress proffering the first peas of the season.

Oldest child, wife, mother, mistress, self-made career woman, trail-blazing writer--Fisher served up each role with panache. But like many master stylists, she was also a master mythologizer. Her portraits and scenarios were often unrecognizable to those on whom they were based, and her own emotions and experiences remained cloaked in ambiguity.

To retell her story as it really happened is an important enterprise, and Joan Reardon has made the most of her access to Fisher, her family and friends, and her private papers. This multifaceted portrayal of the woman John Updike christened the "poet of the appetites" is no less memorable than the personae Fisher crafted for herself.

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