

The Nature of Dogs

“Mary Ludington’s work is a gift, a visual poem full of heart. *The Nature of Dogs* is an invitation to see dogs – and simultaneously, ourselves – with the emotional eye of the engaged imagination, which is how we understand the deep affinity and love we humans have for our dogs. There are a lot of good books about dogs, but *this* one, like your own dog, is in a class by itself.”

– Lyn Cowan, PhD, *Portrait of the Blue Lady; The Character of Melancholy*

"*The Nature of Dogs* is an exquisite journey in powerful photographs and beautiful words into the diverse world of dogs. Remarkable images that capture the soulful expression of dogs and evocative essays that explore the human/canine bond make *The Nature of Dogs* a very welcome addition to the bookshelf of anyone who lives with these amazing creatures. I was deeply moved by this book.”

– Jon Katz, Author of *Dog Days; Dispatches from Bedlam Farm*

“Mary Ludington’s affectionate and respectful portraits return us to our richest and most cherished memories, to time when we were so completely accepted by these mysterious and forgiving creatures, or times when they worked alongside us until they had nothing left. The range of their personalities is vast, their virtues legendary, their humor a refuge. But it is that curious way they have of glancing at us, quivering on the edge of language, which lingers long after they’ve wandered off, that opens for us, again, the mystery of our animal being.”

– Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*

"A lovely, warm book proving why doglessness can be a truly diminished existence. My idea of heaven would be to enlarge my backyard and fill it with every curious, leaping, and affectionate breed Mary photographs."

– Keith Carter, *Bones*

The most social and loyal of all animals, dogs are much more than simply pets. Each breed has its own beauty, grace, and purpose. Plus, as the people who love them know, every dog possesses captivating elements of mystery. A gifted photographer with a particular affinity for animal subjects, Mary Ludington has devoted her work over the last 10 years to discovering and capturing “the essence” of man’s and woman’s best friend.

In **THE NATURE OF DOGS** (Simon & Schuster; October 16, 2007; \$35.00 hardcover), Ludington presents her favorite photos of dogs, covering the full spectrum of breeds, including the ten most popular breeds. Exquisitely reproduced in vibrant detail, each stunning photograph stands alone and speaks volumes about its subject’s unique character and behavior. Still, as Ludington acknowledges, it is nearly impossible to observe dogs without any reference to the profound bond they share with people; accompanying Ludington’s photographs are deeply personal, beautifully written essays by a group of remarkable contributors.

MARY LUDINGTON

Grouped together by broad canine categories (*Hounds, Non-Sporting, Terriers, Herding, Sporting, Working, Toys*), photographs spotlight a striking diversity of individual dogs. To compliment the portraits, evocative commentaries shed light on the origins, history, and hallmarks of each featured breed including—*American Foxhound, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Labrador Retriever, French Bulldog, Shiba Inu, Irish Terrier, Miniature Schnauzer, Dachshund, Belgian Tervuren, Australian Shepherd, German Wirehaired Pointer, Golden Retriever, Cocker Spaniel, Doberman Pinscher, Portuguese Water Dog, Italian Greyhound, and Shih Tzu* among them.

For additional insights and perspectives, **THE NATURE OF DOGS** includes a foreword by Patricia Hampl, and five engaging essays from familiar writers and prominent public figures. They include:

- Playwright and humorist **Kevin Kling** on the advantages of embracing a dog's natural ferocity.
- Distinguished scholar and animal welfare activist **Temple Grandin** on getting away from language to think like a dog and help a cherished pet get over a fear.
- **Winona LaDuke**, Native American and two-time Vice Presidential candidate for the Green Party, on the revered spiritual and leadership traditions of rez dogs.
- Renowned psychologist and writer **James Hillman** on the canine psyche and entrenched associations of dogs with the dirty work of life and death.
- Acclaimed novelist and short-story writer **Mary Gaitskill**, a cat woman, and acclaimed memoirist and essayist **Peter Trachtenberg**, a dog man, on the way their outlandish marriage works—as told to an inquisitive dog and curious cat.

Whether irreverent, introspective, or provocative, the essays all touch on the heart of the human connection with dogs. A work of art and revelation wrapped up in an elegant, oversized volume, **THE NATURE OF DOGS** is the perfect gift for every dog lover. After all, as award-winning author **Patricia Hampl** points out: “There is only one dog—mine. Or, of course, yours.”

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER

MARY LUDINGTON started her own photography business specializing in dog portraiture in 1997. She has won many awards for her photographs and is frequently published by the *AKC Gazette*, among other publications.

ABOUT THE BOOK

THE NATURE OF DOGS

Photographs by Mary Ludington

Foreword by Patricia Hampl

Simon & Schuster

October 2, 2007

\$35.00 hardcover

ISBN-10: 1-4165-4287-6; ISBN-13: 978-1-4165-4287-2

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