



# Encounters with Chinese Writers

*Annie Dillard*

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**Encounters with Chinese Writers** Annie Dillard  
**Winner of the New England Book Show Award**

It's been a pilgrimage for Annie Dillard: from Tinker Creek to the Galapagos Islands, the high Arctic, the Pacific Northwest, the Amazon Jungle--and now, China. This informative narrative is full of fascinating people: Chinese people, mostly writers, who encounter American writers in various bizarre circumstances in both China and the U.S. There is a toasting scene at a Chinese banquet; a portrait of a bitter, flirtatious diplomat at a dance hall; a formal meeting with Chinese writers; a conversation with an American businessman in a hotel lobby; an evening with long-suffering Chinese intellectuals in their house; a scene in the Beijing foreigners' compound with an excited European journalist; and a scene of unwarranted hilarity at the Beijing Library. In the U.S., there is Allen Ginsberg having a bewildering conversation in Disneyland with a Chinese journalist; there is the lovely and controversial writer Zhang Jie suiting abrupt mood changes to a variety of actions; and there is the fiercely spirited Jiange Zilong singing in a Connecticut dining room, eyes closed. These are real stories told with a warm and lively humor, with a keen eye for paradox, and with fresh insight into the human drama.

## Encounters with Chinese Writers Details

Date : Published September 1st 1984 by Wesleyan

ISBN : 9780819561565

Author : Annie Dillard

Format : Paperback 117 pages

Genre : Cultural, China, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Language, Writing, Essays

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## **From Reader Review Encounters with Chinese Writers for online ebook**

### **Jan says**

Quick read, VERY interesting view of Chinese and American writers. A bit dated, I'm sure, since it was published in 1984, but lively and enjoyable.

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### **Ke says**

My bias, but I like how she described the Chinese culture without being judgmental.

Very funny and memorable episodes.

Is it me or she seemed to have a crush on a female writer?

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### **Lance says**

A book that proves that all literary artists are weird. And it's a good thing.

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### **Arun Croll says**

AnnieDillard hung out with some Chinese literary writers. This book is a collection of anecdotes about moments of cultural conflict related to nationalism, filial piety, individualism, communism, perceptions of Americans, and the political functions (and failures) of literature. It's funny and though provoking and short. I liked it.

Quotes:

"In the fall of 1983, the winds will shift again; the Party will launch a new rectification campaign to rid Chinese literature of three evils: humanism, existentialism, and modernism."

"She believes what she is saying. I have no way of knowing what is true; it makes sense to listen carefully to what people say and to look carefully at the people who say it."

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### **Diane says**

A wonderful, interesting look at China, writers, and Communism.

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### **Reyna Eisenstark says**

A tiny little book of essays about a time in 1983 when Dillard and other American writers met with Chinese writers in China and the U.S. A funny little glimpse into a cultural exchange, which briefly includes Allen Ginsberg playing a small accordian-like instrument.

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### **Kitty says**

Short essays in Dillard's inimitable style about travels to China by American authors, Dillard included, and to America by Chinese authors.

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### **Julie says**

I think I've read bits of this... maybe at a bookstore. God bless the comfy chairs at Barnes & Noble.

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### **Vera says**

I love Annie Dillard's writing, and her perceptions about first, her trip to China in the 1970s, and then the visits of Chinese writers to the USA later was enlightening.

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### **Maureen says**

Painless learning about China, with illumination of our own culture at a particular point in time. I'm crazy about Dillard's writing and this did not disappoint.

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### **Matt Moran says**

This is a short book, relatively narrow in its scope, and it does not have the obvious brilliance of 'Pilgrim at Tinker Creek' or 'Holy The Firm.' But I didn't know Annie Dillard could be so straight forward. Delightful.

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### **Charlie Shifflett says**

This was perhaps the first China-related book I ever read. It was part of our assigned reading in a creative nonfiction class during my college years -- probably two years before I moved to Beijing, where I ended up living for six years. It's a spare volume containing beautiful observations about culture, writing and society.

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## Mary says

Lovely read.

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## Erunion says

As other reviewers have remarked, not her best work, but nonetheless thought provoking and enjoyable. She cautions the reader that she is not an expert on China, which is wise, because many of her experiences provoke the need for conclusions. Since this book is more about her interactions with Chinese literati, the Cultural Revolution (and by extension, Maoism) is essentially the topic of this book. One interesting account follows an Italian-born journalist for *Der Spiegel* who remarks on how very bad communism is - though he simultaneously advocated for communism in India - simply because of the repression of journalists. He was deported for a critical review of Beijing architecture, though he suspected there were other reasons.

After reading this book, I began to wonder about the current state of free speech in China; it certainly seems better, but from time to time we hear about various acts of repression that remain troubling. This book connects to an earlier time when there was no doubt that individuals were being beaten and imprisoned solely for their views.

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## Jessica says

I've really enjoyed this author in the past, but this book was a disappointment. Although in her introduction the author acknowledges that the book is not meant to be an in-depth treatment of the subject, its lack of insight was notable enough to make me wonder why she bothered publishing it.

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