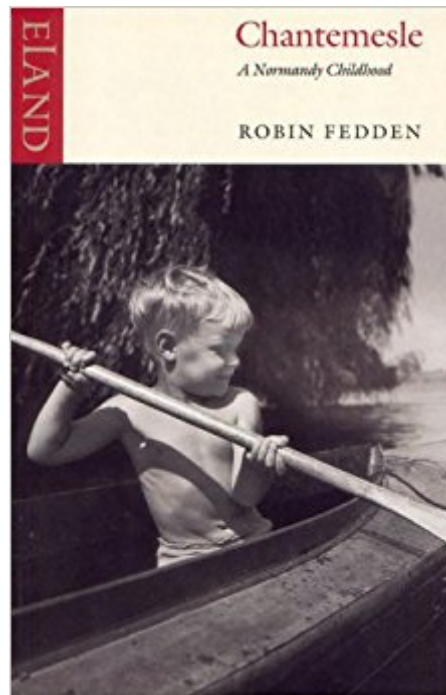




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Chantemesle: A Normandy Childhood



Synopsis

This lyrical evocation of growing up on the banks of the Seine was originally published in 1964. In this minutely observed landscape, where even the wind is a character in its own right, we meet blind Battouflet, the singing hermit of the hillside, solemn Clotilde, the author's first girlfriend who lives in a chateau in the heart of the forest, and a desiccated and disturbing spinster, Mlle. Firman. Fedden writes with preternatural clarity, taking the reader with him into a long-forgotten yet echoingly familiar world. When Fedden finds himself expelled from this realm by his emerging sexuality, he leaves us reeling with nostalgia for that timeless sense of the present that is the magic of childhood.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"a little masterpiece" John Julius Norwich

Robin Fedden was a man of many talents. A considerable amateur scholar of the Middle East, he wrote books about Syria and Egypt, yet it is for his paean to mountains and mountain climbing, *The Enchanted Mountain*, and for this memoir *Chantemesle*, that he is best remembered. Both books are being reprinted this year, and should draw new fans to his "polished, gem-like, poetical" works. By day Robin Fedden worked for the National Trust, as Secretary to the Historic Buildings Committee and as Deputy Director-General.

Chantemesle contains some of the most beautiful, resonating prose I have read in a very long time. This thoughtful, almost haunting memoir of the author's childhood in Normandy allows the reader to

fully experience the atmosphere and events of a childhood in France that could never be duplicated in today's society. A small book whose mental images linger long after the covers are closed.

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