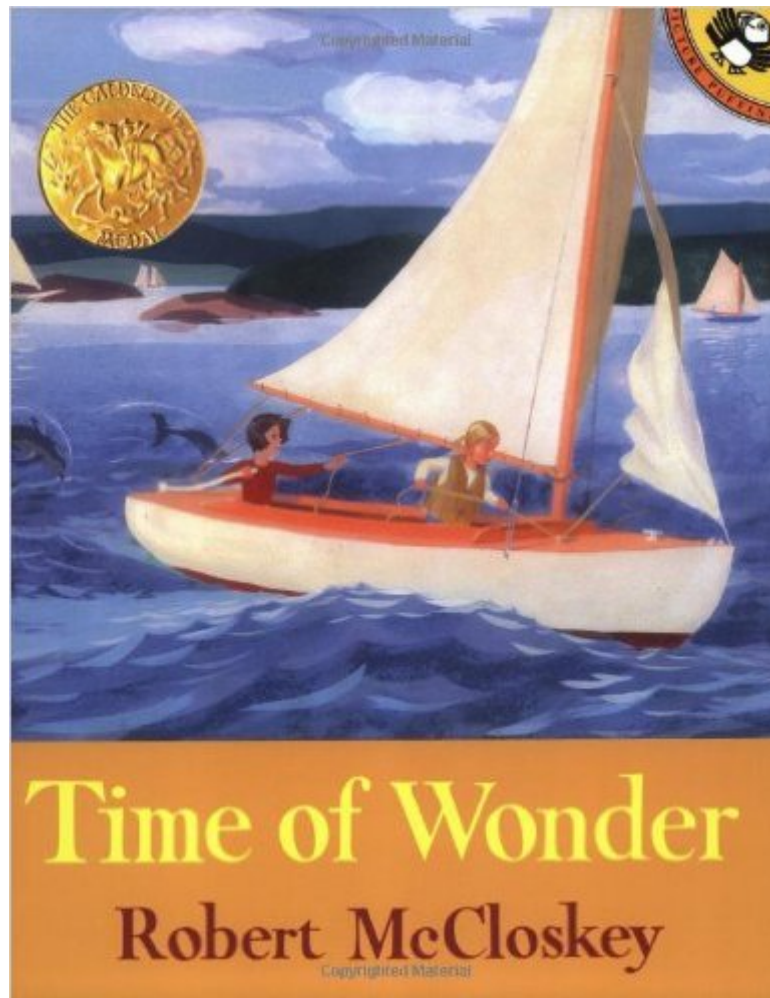


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# Time Of Wonder (Picture Puffins)



## Synopsis

"Out on the islands that poke their rocky shores above the waters of Penobscot Bay, you can watch the time of the world go by, from minute to minute, hour to hour, from day to day..." So begins McCloskey's classic story of one summer on a Maine island. The spell of rain, the gulls and a foggy morning, the excitement of sailing, the quiet of the night, the sudden terror of a hurricane, and, in the end, the peace of the island as the family packs up to leave are shown in poetic language and vibrant, evocative pictures.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0940 (What's this?)

Series: Picture Puffins

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; 7th Printing edition (June 15, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140502017

ISBN-13: 978-0140502015

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (52 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #55,401 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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#17031 in [Books > Reference](#)

Age Range: 3 and up

Grade Level: [Preschool - 2](#)

## Customer Reviews

Robert McCloskey's "Time of Wonder" is just that--an examination of a wondrous summer spent in Maine. He follows two sisters (and nominally, their parents and friends) as they spend their days sailing, swimming, battening down for a big storm, and so on. Nothing of great import happens, but McCloskey has a lovely, calming way of relating their story so that we feel the sisters' closeness, their connection to their environment, and their childlike ability to find beauty and interest in nearly everything. McCloskey's book was first published in 1957, and the illustrations show this--no life vests in a lot of the boating pictures, children swimming without being watched over by a lifeguard or adult, and so on. Still, that's not a bad thing--it shows the protective, exclusionary nature of

childhood and the risks children take without even being fully aware that they ARE taking risks. The illustrations are lovely. These paintings depict Maine as being beautiful without neglecting to show the dangerous side of coastal life as well (witness the storm scenes towards the end of the book). There is a caressing, rhythmic feel to the text which subtly imitates the tidal pull of the ocean. What a perfect gift for anyone who vacations in Maine--or wants to.

I received this book from my parents in about 1970. I finally visited Maine in 1997 and I cried because the images Mr. McCloskey painted of spring, summer, and fall in Maine, that I'd read so many years before, were so accurate. Rarely has an author captured natural beauty and people's enjoyment of it so eloquently and so clearly. I grew up with the Ducklings and Sal, but this book is the best. It is one I hope to grow old with, and I hope my 4 month old son will enjoy it as much as I did and still do. BUY IT!

(...)The story, such as it is, follows a family in their summer home on an island in the ocean. Mostly following the children, the story reflects on the wonders of nature itself. The kids walk out into the mist on warm summery mornings. They leap from high ocean rocks, and sun themselves as the rocks grow warm. They sail a boat at night (they've fairly trusting parents, I'd wager) to spy on deep water crabs. Eventually, a hurricane comes to batter the family in their sturdy little home. In the end, the family must return to their real house/life/school and wait to return to the island another year. As they leave, the narrator opines that such moments as these make living a real time of wonder. A time for pondering things like, "I wonder where hummingbirds go in a hurricane". Working in a medium unlike his usual pencils and inks, McCloskey seemed to draw the images in this book from a very private source. Though you may never have been in a summer home such as this or experienced moments like the ones the children go through, you feel the nostalgia embedded in this story. I may not have ever summered in places where I could make forts out of huge sea stones, but after reading this book I know what it would be like. People may say books such as this don't move quickly enough for kids today. Don't believe it. Kids are kids and good books are good books. The child that appreciates Elmo's World is still going to feel a sense of (for lack of a better word) wonder when they stare at the picture of the hurricane blowing the house's inhabitants in all directions. Kids interested in technical ship jargon and the process of buying supplies before a big storm will be fascinated by this tale as well. Some stories do not age. Others, age in such a way that they become deep and full-bodied like a good fine wine. "A Time of Wonder" falls into the latter category. Take a moment to enjoy it fully.

Time of Wonder is Robert McCloskey's lyrical tribute to the joys of being young in the summertime. The setting is his beloved Maine coast, on Penobscot Bay. The story builds around the approach of the rain, the cycle of the summer, the transition from morning to dark in a single day, and a hurricane. As wonderful as the story is, the illustrations are the highlight of this delightful book. They capture stunning panoramas, wind-swept moments, and gay times in the sun equally well in free flowing watercolors that are as fluid as the wind or the ocean. This book was awarded the Caldecott Medal for the outstanding quality of its illustrations in 1958. Two unnamed girls are overlooking Penobscot Bay, watching the rain form in the distance . . . until they themselves are drenched! Next, a full day evolves from the typical summer fog with sidelights about porpoises, lobstering, gulls, cormorants, the forest and its trees and fiddle-head ferns. Finally, the fog burns off and the scene shifts to bees, hummingbirds, other birds singing, sail boats, fishing boats, seals, the beach, rocks and children playing. Then, as dusk settles in, an owl, a heron, eider ducks, fishhawks, a crab, a rowboat, a flashlight and the stars frame the experience. At each moment, nature holds great adventures and mysteries for the girls to explore and exult in. A seaplane symbolizes the coming and going from the area. The bulk of the people and animals are summer visitors. Suddenly, everyone realizes a big storm is coming. "We're going to have some weather. It's a-coming! She's gonna blow. With the next shift of the tide." There are boats to get ready. Windows need to be secured. People have to go inside. Once there, the rain and wind can still blow their way in. Eventually, the storm ends and the full moon reigns. The next day, the girls inspect the damage and find an old Indian shell heap that probably predates the first European visitors. Then the girls have to help prepare for the next year. They get seaweed to put on as fertilizer for their garden. They pack up. As they leave, they are "A little bit sad about the place you are leaving, a little bit glad about the place you are going." One last thought hits them. "Where do hummingbirds go in a hurricane?" This story does a marvelous job of helping children understand their connection to nature and to the powerful forces around them. Whether they are watching the wind, using it to push their sailboat, or riding out a hurricane, they know that they are a small part of a great scheme. If your child has yet to see many of these animals or scenes, you can use the illustrations to explain them. You will smile when you see the porpoises playing in the wake of the girls' sailboat. A good application of this book is to think of a place where you and your child can go on a regular basis to observe and enjoy nature. It may be a near-by park. It may be a family vacation home. It may be a public beach. Take your child there. Take her by the hand, and show her the easy-to-miss wonders all around. And remember to visit in the fog, rain, and winds, as well as on sunny days. You can take pictures, draw

sketches of what you see, and make a scrapbook that contains your thoughts and observations. See beauty and harmony in the balance around you.

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