

ABOUT THE BOOK

A BRILLIANT, SOULFUL, AND TIMELY PORTRAIT OF A TWO-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD CRABBING COMMUNITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AS IT FACES EXTINCTION FROM RISING SEA LEVELS—PART NATURAL HISTORY OF AN EXTRAORDINARY ECOSYSTEM, STARRING THE BELOVED BLUE CRAB; PART PAEAN TO A VANISHING WAY OF LIFE; AND PART MEDITATION ON MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT—FROM THE ACCLAIMED AUTHOR WHO REPORTED THIS STORY FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS

Tangier Island, Virginia, is a community unique on the American landscape. Mapped by John Smith in 1608, settled during the American Revolution, the tiny sliver of mud is home to 470 hardy people who live an isolated and challenging existence, with one foot in the 21st century and another in times long passed. They are separated from their countrymen by the nation's largest estuary, and a twelve-mile boat trip across often tempestuous water—the same water that for generations has made Tangier's fleet of small fishing boats a chief source for the rightly prized Chesapeake Bay blue crab, and has lent the island its claim to fame as the softshell crab capital of the world.

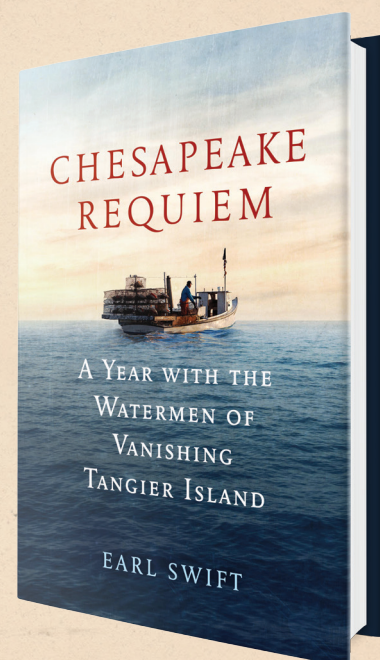
Yet for all of its long history, and despite its tenacity, Tangier is disappearing. The very water that has long sustained it is erasing the island day by day, wave by wave. It has lost two-thirds of its land since 1850, and still its shoreline retreats by fifteen feet a year—meaning this storied place will likely succumb first among U.S. towns to the effects of climate change. Experts reckon that, barring heroic intervention by the federal government, islanders could be forced to abandon their home within twenty-five years. Meanwhile, the graves of their forebears are being sprung open by encroaching tides, and the conservative and deeply religious Tangiermen ponder the end times.

Chesapeake Requiem is an intimate look at the island's past, present, and tenuous future by an acclaimed journalist who spent much of the past two years living among Tangier's people, crabbing and oystering with its watermen, and observing its long traditions and odd ways. What emerges is the poignant tale of a world that has, quite nearly, gone by—and a leading-edge report on the coming fate of countless coastal communities.

MARKETING CAMPAIGN

- National Broadcast & Print Media Campaign
- National Online Media Campaign
- Radio Satellite Tour
- Major ARE Distribution
- Digital Galley on Edelweiss
- Advertising Campaign
- Outreach to climate change experts
- Wildlife and fishing websites outreach
- Book Club Promotion

- Library Marketing, Including Galley Mailings
- Academic Marketing, with Educator Outreach
- Featured in HCP Newsletter
- Featured in Bookperk Newsletter
- Promotion on Dey Street social media networks
- Targeted Email Marketing Based on Consumer Browsing and Category Interests
- Official Author Website: <http://www.earlswift.com/>
- Official Author Twitter: [Twitter.com/earlswift1](https://twitter.com/earlswift1)



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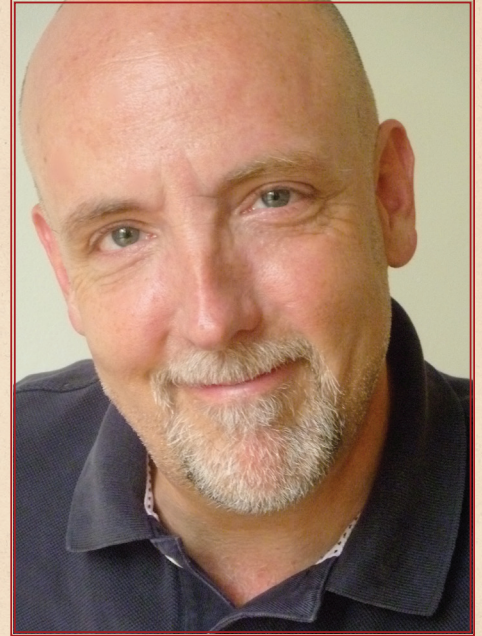
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MEET EARL SWIFT

Journalist Earl Swift has earned a reputation for deeply immersive reporting, vivid storytelling, accuracy, and fairness in a career spanning more than thirty years. As a reporter, columnist, and editor for newspapers in St. Louis, Anchorage, and Norfolk, he tackled subjects ranging from naval deployments to backwoods murder to bridal fashions, and he's demonstrated similar range in major stories for *Outside*, *Parade*, *Popular Mechanics*, and other magazines.

Swift's seven books include *Auto Biography: A Classic Car*, *An Outlaw Motorhead*, and *57 Years of the American Dream* (Dey Street, 2014), in which he crafted a portrait of postwar America through the lens of a single old car and the fourteen people who owned it.

A former Fulbright fellow in New Zealand, Swift has been a residential fellow of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Virginia since 2012. He lives in Crozet, Virginia, where he hikes almost daily on the Appalachian Trail, and he is engaged to Amy Walton of Virginia Beach.



PRAISE FOR *AUTO BIOGRAPHY*

"The best contemporary book I've read about automobiles."

—**MATT HARDIGREE**, *Jalopnik*

"If cars can be classics, so can books, and from the opening paragraphs of Earl Swift's tour de force, you know you are in the hands of a formidable talent. What Bill Bryson did for the Appalachian Trail, Earl Swift does for used car lots everywhere, showing us the mystery, the magic, and the longing, as embodied by Tommy Arney, the most improbable hero you will ever meet. Fasten your seat belts and enjoy the ride, as raucous as it is memorable."

—**MADELEINE BLAIS**, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing; professor of journalism, UMass Amherst

"*Auto Biography* is exuberant, big-spirited, and more than occasionally profound."

—**TRACY KIDDER**, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*

PRAISE FOR *THE BIG ROADS*

"A joy ride. Earl Swift has written the best kind of popular history—one that paints vivid portraits, debunks myths, and brings to life the fascinating and appalling stories behind the creation of that massive mixed blessing known as America's interstate highways."

—**BILL MORRIS**, author of *Motor City*

"Swift has added texture and nuance, as well as narrative economy, to a story containing volumes, and he makes for an ideal traveling companion."

—**NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW**

MEET TANGIER ISLAND



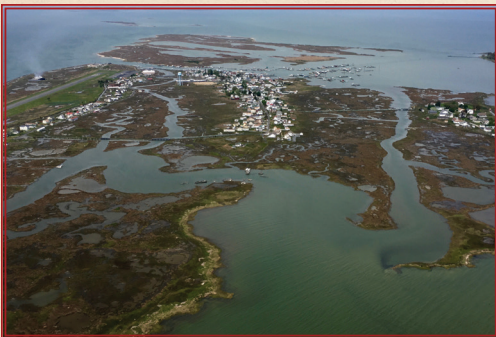
James "Ooker" Eskridge, **TANGIER'S MAYOR AND A LIFELONG CRABBER**, checks a pot for peelers off the island's beach in June 2016.

The **GRAVESTONE COMMEMORATING MARGARET A. PRUITT**, who died in 1901, lies at the water's edge at Canaan, a once-thriving hamlet on Tangier that has been erased—along with its cemetery—by the rising Chesapeake Bay.



Tangierman Lonnie Moore, right, steers his *Alona Rahab* through a crowd of oystering boats while **DREDGING FOR THE BIVALVE ON VIRGINIA'S RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER** in November 2016, as members of his crew cull the catch.

OOKER ESKRIDGE CLEANS HIS BOAT after a long day of crabbing in May 2016, while the island's mailboat pulls into the harbor on its daily run.



An April 2017 **AERIAL VIEW OF TANGIER PROPER**, showing the low-lying, marshy island's three population centers—West Ridge at left, Main Ridge at center, and Canton on the right. Fast-eroding Uppards, uninhabited but a vital shield against northerly winds and waves, is visible at the top.

A **ROADSIDE CHRISTMAS DISPLAY** rises from marshy ground at the south end of West Ridge, December 2016.



TRIM TO 8.5 X 10.25"

LETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

DEAR READER,

Perhaps, like me, you had not previously heard of Tangier Island. And in twenty years, there may not be anything left to prove to you it even existed beyond photos, stories, and old maps.

You see, Tangier Island is disappearing.

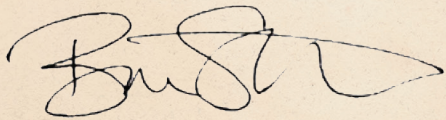
Day in, day out, the island's edges erode and the tides rise, at a rate that in a scant few years will swamp Tangier and devastate the crabbing industry that has nurtured and sustained its residents for centuries. It will become our nation's first climate casualty.

Chesapeake Requiem tells the story. This is veteran journalist Earl Swift's narrative account of life on a 1.3-square-mile wisp of mud and marsh in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay, nearly an hour by boat from the nearest mainland port and—though less than 100 miles from Washington, D.C.—one of the most remote towns in the Lower 48. Life in Tangier is dictated by the surrounding waters. It is the water that provides its residents' livelihood, especially the famous blue crab we all know and love. But it is this same water that threatens their way of life.

With prose that at times evokes the old English dialect the natives still use, Swift transports the reader to the dark early mornings on the crabbing boats, offers cinematic scenes of a fully submerged graveyard as bones float by, describes the sweet, tender deliciousness of a freshly fried softshell crab as it melts in his mouth, and carries us back through more than two centuries of often surprising island history. All the while, Swift expertly weaves the thread of the island's current dilemma, supposing that humanity often refuses to believe a truth that may be staring directly in its face.

This is much more than a climate change book. This is a little person big picture story, told through the people of a small fishing village imperiled by the very thing that has brought them life. It's about what happens when everything you know and own and care about is stolen from you—swept away not in a flash, but in slivers and chunks year after year, before your eyes, in a process as unstoppable as the tides themselves.

I truly hope you enjoy this book as much as I do.



Ben Steinberg
Associate Publisher, Dey Street Books