

SWIFT RIVER

R.C. Binstock

Illustrated by Katarzyna Maciak

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R.C. Binstock is the author of:
Tree of Heaven (Soho Press 1995),
The Soldier (Soho Press 1996)
The Light of Home (Atheneum 1992)

R.C. Binstock Books

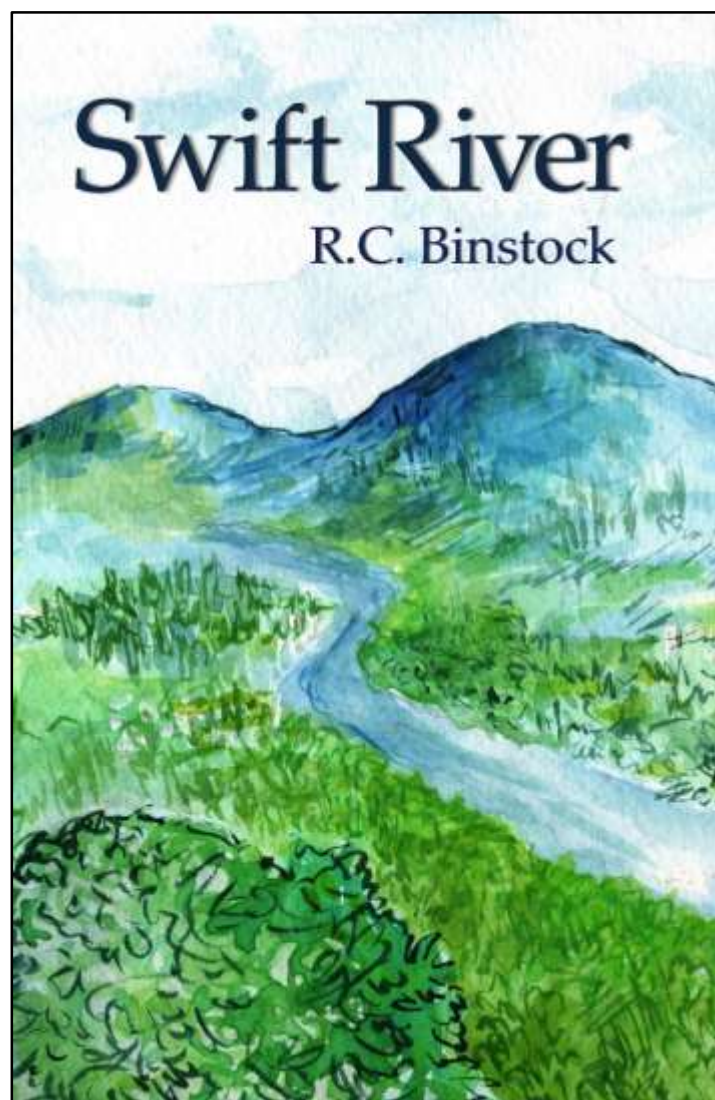
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Boston needs water. The engineers know where to find it. But four towns stand in their way ...

"I am entirely a creature of my life's sad events, committed to patience now, to endurance if nothing else. I am a part of my surroundings and they are all contained in me. Girl expecting the water." — Polly McPhee, Greenwich, Massachusetts, 1934

Swift River is the story of Polly McPhee, a native of Greenwich, a small central Massachusetts town condemned with three others in 1927 to create a permanent supply of clean water for the people of Boston. One of the most successful and cost-effective civil engineering projects in history, the Quabbin Reservoir secured fresh water for millions by drowning the Swift River Valley, once home to the Nipmuc and then to generations of farmers, merchants, artisans, and mill workers.

At the start of this intimate yet far-reaching novel, Polly is a 12 year-old girl who sees the reservoir project as an especially unfair aspect of an adult world that rarely makes sense to her anyway. As she matures, discovering new joys and suffering profound losses, Polly comes to understand that ultimately all of our pasts and memories must be drowned and erased from sight, just as Greenwich will be. Over time the project assumes an ever more complex and significant role in Polly's life and universe, ultimately becoming a dangerous but powerful ally in her path to survival and redemption.

Praise for *Swift River*:

R.C. Binstock writes with great immediacy, and his characters dazzle in the light of their inherent, sometimes unexpected eloquence. It's never easy to create a character who knows, simultaneously, more and less than you do – but in creating the wonderful character of Polly, the writer has done just that. *Swift River* is fascinating, forthright, sometimes lyrical, its story always held gently in the author's capable hands. It is, above all, an eloquent, cautionary tale whose lesson we have not yet learned. – **Ann Beattie**

I find myself renewed, reinvigorated, when I lose myself in the novels of R.C. Binstock. His work is tense, engaging, and immediate. *Swift River* swims with power and feeling. – **Gregory Maguire**

... stunning, unforgettable, and captivating.... Unreservedly I add *Swift River* to my pantheon of masterpieces. Take it up! – **Luke Sherwood**, *Basso Profundo*

With its lyrical passages, powerful psychological insights and evocative text, *Swift River* will carry readers on an unexpected journey of amazing discoveries packed with philosophical reflection and observations about life's meaning. — **Diane Donovan**, *Midwest Book Review*

Praise for R.C. Binstock's work:

Tree of Heaven

This beautifully written novel explores the universal parameters of trust and fear, coercion and choice, guilt and forgiveness.... Binstock's stunning account of a doomed affair is wholly convincing both in its historical details and in its meticulous exploration of love, obsession and loss. —*Publishers Weekly*

The Soldier

Binstock writes masterful duets: intricate, knowing, and suspenseful *The Soldier* portrays a cast of seemingly isolated characters who find themselves caught in a dangerous web of desire.... Ultimately, Binstock's subtly gothic tale reminds us of the fragility of reason and the fleetingness of peace. —*Booklist*

The Light of Home

Binstock notes the many small gestures and shifting emotions of characters in direct, precise language.... there are intimate glimpses of men and women, often shrouded in anxiety, fear, joy, desire, or some combination thereof. This debut collection expresses the particular tenor of our time in a myriad of contemporary situations. —*Booklist*

