



Still Life with Bread Crumbs, by Anna Quindlen
Reviewed by Cindy Kennedy, December 2014

When Anna Quindlen wrote a column for the *New York Times*, she was admired for her sensitive insight into the human condition. Now a fiction writer, she infuses her books with the same wit and wisdom. Her latest novel, *Still Life with Bread Crumbs*, is true to form.

As the story begins, Rebecca Winter, a once lucrative photographer, looks for a fresh start. With a failed marriage behind her, Rebecca sublets her Manhattan apartment and rents an upstate cabin, complete with a resident raccoon in the attic.

Longing for some solitude to sort things out, Rebecca keeps her distance from the locals. Soon she relents and calls roofer Jim Bates, a man of few words, to get rid of the pesky raccoon. Rebecca then meets a disparate group of characters at the Tea for Two Café. A homeless dog wanders over to her cottage and stays put. Despite herself, Rebecca becomes part of the community.

However, the royalties from Rebecca's Kitchen Counter photography series, including her iconic photo "Still Life with Bread Crumbs," are dwindling. And with aging parents and an underemployed son to help support, she has to find an interesting subject matter to revive her flagging photography career.

Walking through the woods with her camera, Rebecca begins snapping pictures of stone walls, aiming to sell them as a collection. But on her daily walk, she comes across little wooden crosses here and there. Intrigued, Rebecca decides to photograph the wooden crosses instead of stone walls. And as she discovers who put the crosses there—and why, she learns a lot about herself, too.