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## Preface

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I was born and raised on the upper west side of Manhattan—in a nice old 1930s building, had apartments on the lower east side, lived on an island near Seattle, in rural Pennsylvania, in downtown Seattle, and, for six years, in a Paris apartment in the Marais. From there, I got to Sag Harbor, and Sag Harbor got to me.

A village turned out to be my perfect place—I explain to friends, “I go to the post office and I’m there for fifteen minutes.” Ditto Schiavoni’s wonderful grocery store. The time spent talking, saying hello, and it occurs to me now that I know, a little or a lot, dozens of people.

This is not paradise. In the summertime, the lawn mowers and the leaf blowers never quit. I once ran to the window in a fury at the sound of lawn mowers. Mowing, as it happened, my lawn. Deer eat your plants, And, May 31 to Labor Day, *people*. My parking strategies here are better than the ones I used in Paris, but sometimes it looks like you just have to go back to your house without whatever it was.

Still, I’m home. The custom here is to hold doors, and when one person says “Thank-you” the other always answers “You’re welcome.” That’s everybody: artists, contractors, the guys who mow the lawns, the nuns from the convent. So, I’m hooked, here for life, and I think the following pages will give you some idea why.

—Alan Furst