

KIRIBATI

Kiribati is an island nation in the vast blue of the Pacific Ocean. Composed of thirty-two atolls and three groups of islands, Kiribati lies halfway between Hawaii and Australia. The largest and best-known of the many coral islands is Kiritimati, where James Cook landed on December 24, 1777—which is why he called it “Christmas Island.”

In recent years the island world of Kiribati has achieved fame for the wrong reason: climate scientists have calculated that many of these atolls and the outer zones of the coral islands will sink into the ocean when sea levels rise as expected. When Alice Piciocchi and Andrea Angeli heard this, the desire to go there for two months grew. Yet, instead of meeting desperate inhabitants sitting on their packed suitcases, they found people who had no intention of leaving. Their families have been at home here for generations; old traditions are still followed. Like their ancestors, fisher folk still venture out on the ocean. Life still follows the rhythms of ebb and tide. Of course, the days of sporadic contact with the outer world are long gone. Yet, even today people still tell the old legends and celebrate magical rites. For example, there’s a song that’s sung in order to call whales. And anyone who finds a Venus clamshell, they say, has found a treasure.

This book is a special kind of travel journal and a masterpiece of bibliophilism. The authors have succeeded in bringing us closer to the everyday culture and ideas of Kiribati’s people, testifying to their deep connection to the ocean and the universe itself.

Alice Piciocchi and **Andrea Angeli** share a passion for travel. The walls of their apartment are full of maps, the bookshelves with travel books, and their Italian passports contain countless stamps from every country on Earth. What Alice captures in words, Andrea tells in drawings. This young pair of artists presents us with a beautifully illustrated reading experience.

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Texts by Alice Piciocchi, illustrations by Andrea Angeli

Translation by Barbara Holle

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