An Island Garden by Celia Thaxter

In her introduction to this new edition, the gardener, writer, illustrator, and craftsperson Tasha Tudor explores the space Celia Thaxter made for herself on one of the Isles of Shoals and the place her gentle, commonsense journal has held in the hearts of gardeners and artists for over a hundred years. A popular poet in her day, Thaxter is best remembered for AN ISLAND GARDEN, originally published by Houghton Mifflin in 1894. The book chronicles a year in the life of Thaxter's garden on the island her father had purchased in 1848 and renamed Appledore Island. The hotel he built there was among New England's first offshore summer resorts and attracted writers, musicians, and artists, including the American Impressionist Childe Hassam, whose beautiful paintings of Thaxter's house and garden are reproduced in this book. Considered one of the most delightful examples of horticultural writing, AN ISLAND GARDEN has served as an inspiration for essayists and gardeners alike since its first publication.

My Personal Review:
In the closing years of the Nineteenth Century, Celia Thaxter (1835-94) lived on Appledore, one of the Isles of Shoal off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Contemplating the lovely garden that she had created there, she decided to write down her thoughts and share them with us. Taking the form of a yearlong calendar, she walks us through her experiences in her garden, as she tends it and protects it throughout the year. This is an absolutely wonderful book! Celia obviously loved her garden and all of the green growing things around her. This love shines through the narrative, such as when she wrote, "He who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth is generally considered a fortunate person, but his good fortune is small compared to that of the happy mortal who enters this world with a passion for flowers in his soul." As I said before, this book covers a year in the life of Celia's garden, but is not written as a simple chronology. Instead, the book covers Celia's work and her thoughts, moving from advice to poetry with a wonderful casualness. The boxed edition of this book is handsomely decorated, with Childe Hassam's
illustrations setting just the perfect tone for it. This book makes a wonderful gift for the gardener in your life, and I can't recommend it enough!

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