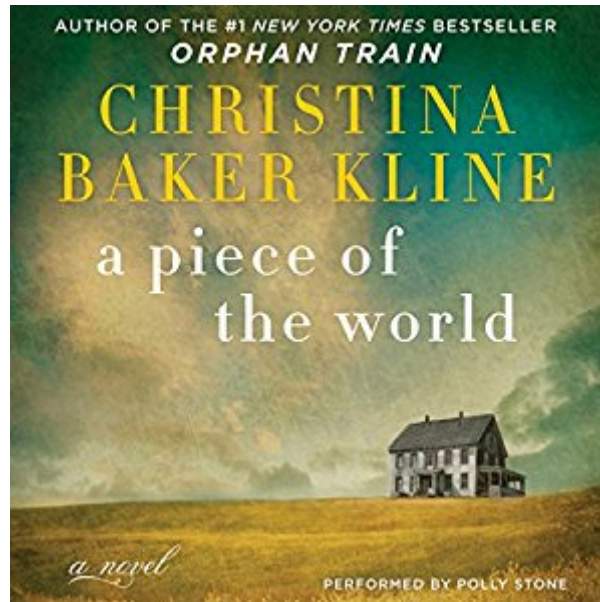




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# A Piece Of The World: A Novel



## Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of the smash best seller *Orphan Train*, a stunning and atmospheric novel of friendship, passion, and art, inspired by Andrew Wyeth's mysterious and iconic painting *Christina's World*. "Later he told me that he'd been afraid to show me the painting. He thought I wouldn't like the way he portrayed me: dragging myself across the field, fingers clutching dirt, my legs twisted behind. The arid moonscape of wheatgrass and timothy. That dilapidated house in the distance, looming up like a secret that won't stay hidden." To Christina Olson, the entire world was her family's remote farm in the small coastal town of Cushing, Maine. Born in the home her family had lived in for generations, and increasingly incapacitated by illness, Christina seemed destined for a small life. Instead, for more than 20 years, she was host to and inspiration for the artist Andrew Wyeth and became the subject of one of the best known American paintings of the 20th century. As she did in her beloved smash best seller *Orphan Train*, Christina Baker Kline interweaves fact and fiction in a powerful novel that illuminates a little-known part of America's history. Bringing into focus the flesh-and-blood woman behind the portrait, she vividly imagines the life of a woman with a complicated relationship to her family and her past and a special bond with one of our greatest modern artists. Told in evocative and lucid prose, *A Piece of the World* is a story about the burdens and blessings of family history and how artist and muse can come together to forge a new and timeless legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At our book club meeting last night, a question was posed about how we view ourselves through

other people's eyes. I once wrote about labels and how obsessed our society is about confining us to our assumed roles and identities. We even put ourselves in debt trying to fit into these assumptions by driving the "best" cars, and making sure we were in a "better" neighborhood, and ensuring our children have the "best" education by enrolling them only in the "highly esteemed" private schools. Labels follow us where we are in life. Christina Olson had labels following her: a sick child, the dutiful daughter, the spinster. I'm sure there are other "colorful" labels that I can put on her but one thing about this woman, and her seemingly sad existence were her choices (or lack thereof) that led up to a fateful meeting with artist Andrew Wyeth. In our life, we demand a few things, and one of them is to be known. It doesn't necessarily have to be to the world, but to be known to the people around us. In our everyday, we put up fences around ourselves, and pretend we're better than we believe, and cast on different roles to change the labels people already had assigned us. What if someone takes all of our pretentiousness, or looks past at our ordinary and sees us. Sees us the way we can only hope to be. And in Andrew, Christina becomes one thing - a story; a painting with layers of wisdom, hurts, regrets, suffering. Her life isn't a blank canvas as much as it's a history lesson. I've never read any of Christina Baker Kline's work but after this, I'm going to pick up a few more. This was moving, and in her descriptions, I was there at the farm, looking on at the sky, the dilapidated house, the sea, the woman with her back turned to me. In her words, I walk into the Olson home, see the lessons written in pictures, in old chests, in seashells, and forget about the labels I put on this woman in the famous painting, but take in all that is her. Through both Kline and Wyeth's eyes, Christina is not only seen and known, but we, the reader and art patrons, are given a glimpse and a piece of (her) world.

I first encountered a print of this painting in my aunt's and uncle's home. I loved it as a child and was always mesmerized by it. It's hauntingly beautiful and sadly mysterious. I had heard the story behind the woman in the painting in an art history class in college. Nearly thirty-three years later, the painting now resonates newly for me because of Ms. Baker Kline's painterly, layered, rich, textural storytelling - much like a painting itself. The painting will never be just a poster in every dorm room; thanks to Ms. Baker Kline, it will continue to be an allegory of struggle, strength, perseverance, beauty, and grace. A must read for lovers of art history, teachers of art, and museum goers all.

This was a beautifully written book about someone who spent their entire life in one small piece of the world but left a legacy that has been seen all over the world. Christina Olson is born and lives her entire life in a farmhouse in Cushing, Maine. When she was young, the house was full of her

brothers, her parents and her grandmother. It was a working farm and there were always chores to be done and mischief to get into with her brothers. When she was about 10, she got very sick and was never able to walk well again. Even though her disease was never diagnosed in the book, it appeared to be some type of muscular weakness that progressively got worse. She loved school but when she got to 8th grade, her parents decided that it was time for her to stay home and help with the house. With no electricity or running water, her work was difficult and tedious. When Christina is much older and only she and her brother remain at the farmhouse, which is now run down. Andrew Wyeth, the famous American painter comes to town to visit friends and decided that he want to paint at the farm house. He spends the next 20+ summers painting at the farmhouse in Cushing Maine and the farmhouse and Christine become his muse. She becomes his model for his famous painting "Christina's World". This book is so well written and tells a story about someone that I never knew existed despite the fact that I have seen the painting. Christina's life was centered on her family and her farmhouse and her life of chores despite the constant pain she was in. She was a wonderful well written character and one that I won't soon forget.

This was a book that I undertook as part of my March book club reading. I don't think I would have purchased this novel had it not been this month's selection. I would have missed out. Christina Baker Kline, the author, has written a moving story about Christina the Maine-based muse for Andrew Wyeth. The story's protagonist suffers greatly in miserable obscurity in life yet lives forever as the subject in a very famous painting. Sometimes we can make our lives a prison full of regret and bitterness. And so it goes for the Christina of this book who can't escape the limitations of her sickly body, her bitter soul, and her unfulfilled life. I really like this book and it is amazing to me that so many people have different opinions on the novel. As for me, A Piece of the World was excellent. Four solid stars. #read #books #book #bookstagram #andrewwyeth #art #life #love #dreams #reader #reading @annebogel #mmdbookclubIG: @bookbimbo

I really enjoyed reading this story about Christina Olson, the subject of Andrew Wyeth's famous painting "Christina's World". The author, Christina Baker Kline, has done much research, including many historical facts in this work of fiction, introducing the reader to Christina Olson who was a friend of Andrew Wyeth. It is a story of her life and is very heartwarming. Christina Olson was a cripple with a degenerative disease and had a very hard life, but was very independent. You had to admire her spirit and feel for her as a person. I would highly recommend this book.

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