

## Changing Planes

By Kathy Scott, 2008; Alder Creek Publishing; hardcover; \$24.95

You may not have heard that Michigan is a State of Grace. Maine too, apparently; also Labrador, although Canadians call it something provincial. They all have grace, captured by Kathy Scott (*Moose in the Water/Bamboo on the Bench; Headwaters Fall as Snow*) in this new book of lyrical wanders, a journal steered, as it were, by the author's determination to build her first split-cane rod. This is a solo project, sort of; Scott's mentored by husband David Van Burgel, a master of the craft, attended by a fine dog, Kodiak, then pups; also by a company of friends, and a generous community passionate about planing grass. Each step in the process receives Scott's careful attention. She weighs options, makes choices, examines results, begins again or proceeds. Meanwhile, seasons pass closely observed, from a cabin beside a stream, in woods. What have the beavers done *now*?

Scott shares sense and sensibility. She celebrates small sounds and silences of land and water, whispers of spring, smoky hissing of a pond drained by a dam break. Always, she returns to splits of Tonkin cane, to peer down edges aligned just so.

If you're anything like me you'll also wonder how the hell such a gentle world survives anywhere near your own continent, this place and time where a rod made by your hands is just a brilliant stop on a journey well-traveled. Also excellent: Kim Mellema's illustrations. I especially like the mostly pencil sketches, where she adds her own edges to an image in flux. ■

Seth Norman is the author of *Meanderings of a Fly-Fisherman* and other books.