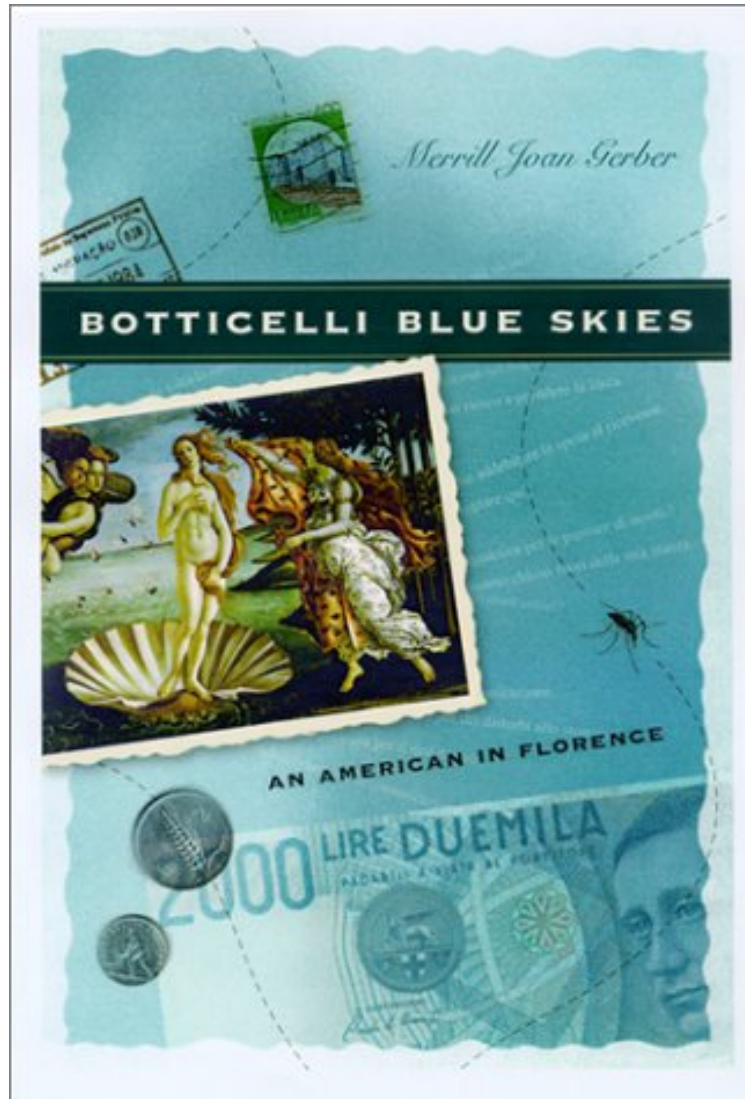


(Read now) Botticelli Blue Skies: An American in Florence

## Botticelli Blue Skies: An American in Florence

*Merrill Joan Gerber*

*ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#4861917 in Books 2002-11-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, 1.18 #File Name: 0299180204264 pages | File size: 72.Mb

**Merrill Joan Gerber : Botticelli Blue Skies: An American in Florence** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Botticelli Blue Skies: An American in Florence:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful city, unattractive narratorBy CateWhen Merrill Joan Gerber's husband is offered a semester's teaching in Florence, together with his full salary and a rent-free apartment -- she doesn't want to go. She agrees, but she doesn't like it and she doesn't want to like it. The idea of the reluctant tourist is an interesting one, and I suppose I could be glad she tried it. But she comes across as being so negative and so abrasive that the humor gets lost, as does the reader's patience. She looks at the Forum in Rome and pronounces it a pit

full of rubbish. She walks out of St. Peter's (her feet hurt, or something like that) and ends up missing an appearance by the Pope, which is probably a metaphor for her whole Italian experience: she's so busy fretting about buses and stairs and the things that inconvenience her that she misses out on just about everything. She's not impressed by the artwork that makes Florence famous (the rooms are too dark; she can't see; her feet hurt; there are too many stairs) although she does appropriate a papier-mache set of genitalia someone has attached to a wall. She refuses to even try to learn Italian; she takes pictures in places where photographs are prohibited. I don't know what she's like in person, but in this book she comes across as the sort of American other U.S. tourists don't want to be associated with. At the end, she expresses a pang about leaving Florence, but it's too little too late. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Book was in perfect condition! Thank you By Lynda Emery Really haven't finished it but I am enjoying it. Book was in perfect condition! Thank you. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth every penny of the \$2 I paid for it By Charles Nichols Bought this in a second hand store, hoping for a pleasant read. The whining and complaining author ruined most of the book, but she improves a bit by the end. She's the star example of the spoiled American tourist. How this person got to be a creative writing teacher at Caltech is beyond me as I didn't find her writing very engaging, interesting, or funny.

When writer Merrill Joan Gerber is invited to join her husband, a history professor, as he takes a class of American college students to study in Florence, Italy, she feels terrified at the idea of leaving her comforts, her friends, and her aged mother in California. Her husband tries to assure her that her fear of Italy and her lack of knowledge of the Italian language will be offset by the discoveries of travel. "I can't tell you exactly what will happen, but something will. And it will all be new and interesting." *Botticelli Blue Skies* is the tale of a woman who readily admits to fear of travel, a fear that many experience but are embarrassed to admit. When finally she plunges into the new adventure, she describes her experiences in Florence with wit, humor, and energy. Instead of sticking to the conventional tourist path, Gerber follows her instincts. She makes discoveries without tour guides droning in her ear and reclaims the travel experience as her own, taking time to shop in a thrift shop, eat in a Chinese restaurant that serves "Dragon chips," make friends with her landlady who turns out to be a Countess, and visit the class of a professor at the university. She discovers a Florence that is not all museums and wine. With newfound patience and growing confidence, Gerber makes her way around Florence, Venice, and Rome. She visits famous places and discovers obscure ones in the end embracing all that is Italian. *Botticelli Blue Skies* (accompanied by the author's own photographs) is an honest, lyrical, touching account of the sometimes exhausting, often threatening, but always enriching physical and emotional challenge that is travel.

From Publishers Weekly There's a subgroup in the memoir category in which Americans open themselves to the thrills and minor discomforts of unfamiliar countries, and sometimes pen insightful riffs on what it means to travel. Gerber, a creative writing professor at the California Institute of Technology, here adds her experiences to this genre, but doesn't find new ground on which to tread. She does stand out in one way: she's a reluctant traveler, following her professor husband, who's taken on an assignment in Florence. After a long discussion of how she hates to leave her home's comforts, Gerber finally arrives in Italy. She details her activities, including eating at a Chinese restaurant, buying milk in boxes and getting her geographic bearings. Although one can imagine how difficult this must be and therefore gain some sympathy for her at every wrong turn and misjudged grocery purchase, Gerber's "poor me" attitude wears thin. She doesn't learn any Italian before the trip, and in fact barely prepares herself for the journey. Prosaic happenings, such as a student accused of taking a hotel towel, are common and lead to other, similar moments that, when added together, seem like a neighbor's long vacation slide show. Gerber's lightness does lend itself well to funnier moments, and her memoir will comfort those who find themselves having to live in Europe briefly. However, the lack of emotional depth and unwillingness to fully examine a foreign locale prevent the book from rising in the expatriate canon. Photos. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Gerber (creative writing, California Inst. of Technology), an author of seven novels and four volumes of short stories, was not pleased when her husband was invited to teach in Florence, Italy, for three months. She feared leaving behind her family, friends, and home. Filled with humor and honest emotion, this lively tale describes Gerber's initial reluctance to move to a country whose language she did not speak, her eventual acceptance of her fear of travel, and her varied adventures in Florence, which ranged from losing her underwear over the balcony to the surprises of her first grocery shopping trip. Gerber, no traditional traveler, does not shy away from describing her exhaustion during sightseeing trips and her boredom with tour guides. She often seeks out the familiar, purchasing American peanut butter and celebrating the Jewish New Year with an Italian family. The American students studying with her husband also add color to the narrative, with convoluted romantic involvements and relationship angst. An absorbing account of life in another country; recommended for larger public libraries. Alison Hopkins, Brantford P.L., Ont. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Novelist and short story writer Gerber presents an absolutely delightful travel memoir. Reluctantly accompanying her professor husband and a group of college students for a semester of study in Florence, the author joins the burgeoning ranks of Americans chronicling their experiences abroad. Though she initially

struggles with language and cultural issues, she soon surrenders to the irresistible beauty and sweetness of the Italian way of life. Refusing to adopt a tourist mind-set, she travels off the beaten path, approaching each new day and each new discovery as an adventure of the soul. With a writer's eye for detail and a keen sense of appreciation for unexpected gifts and pleasures, she records her daily impressions with grace, wit, and humor. This charming travelogue will draw readers into the leisurely rhythms of daily life in Florence. Margaret FlanaganCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved