

About William Alexander

William Alexander, the author of four critically-acclaimed books, currently lives in Washington State, after a lifetime in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Formerly an IT director at a psychiatric research institute, he made his professional writing debut at the age of 53 with the 2006 national best-seller *The \$64 Tomato: How One Man Nearly Lost His Sanity, Spent a Fortune, and Endured an Existential Crisis in the Quest for the Perfect Garden*.

His second book, *52 Loaves: A Half-Baked Adventure*, chronicled, week by week, his year-long quest to bake the perfect loaf of peasant bread — a journey that took him to such wide-flung and unlikely places as a communal oven in Morocco and an abbey in France — as well as into his own backyard to grow, thresh, and winnow wheat.

Alexander's next mission was to become fluent in French, a language that has eluded him all his life. In *Flirting with French: How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me, and Nearly Broke My Heart* he explores every method of instruction from Rosetta Stone to immersion study in France. Does he succeed? The title of his viral *New York Times* op-ed about his experiences perhaps provides a clue: *The Benefits of Failing at French*.

Most recently, he has returned the tomato for his probing microhistory of the world's most popular vegetable, with *Ten Tomatoes That Changed the World*.

Publishing credits

Books

Ten Tomatoes That Changed the World: A History. Grand Central, 2022

52 Loaves: A Half-Baked Adventure. Algonquin, 2010

Flirting with French: How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me, and Nearly Broke My Heart. Algonquin, 2014

The \$64 Tomato: How One Man Nearly Lost His Sanity, Spent a Fortune, and Endured an Existential Crisis in the Quest for the Perfect Garden. Algonquin, 2006

Magazines

American Bread, *Saveur*, May 2012

Op-Eds

Tree's a Crowd (*NY Times*)

The Terrorist To My Left Needs No Introduction (*LA Times*)

The Local Buzz (*NY Times*)
The Garden Ate My Vacation (*LA Times*)
It's Not Easy Being Organic (*NY Times*)
Halfway House and Garden (*NY Times*)
Save a Tree, Don't Plant One (*NY Times*)
Rakers vs. Blowers (*NY Times*)
Go Jump in the River (*NY Times*)
Making it Easier to Eat Local Food (*NY Times*)
Trapped in the Garden, Dreaming of La Mer (*LA Times*)
The Benefits of Failing at French (*NY Times*)
Brush Up on Your French (*LA Times*)
American's Guide to La Tour de France (*Washington Post*)
France Gives in to the Hashtag (*International New York Times*)

Honors:

National Book Festival selection
Quill Book Awards Finalist, Debut Author of the Year
IACP best instructional food writing
NPR Best Summer Reads

Major Media Appearances and Features

NPR Morning Edition
NPR Weekend Edition
Diane Rehm Show
American Public Television's *Cultivating Life*
Marketplace
New York Times Magazine
New York Times
AARP Magazine
Newsweek

What the Critics Say

“His timing and his delivery are flawless” — New York Times Magazine
“One of America's funniest writers” — Counterpunch
“His writing is engaging, well paced and informative” — New York Times Book Review

“The world would be a less interesting place without the William Alexanders who walk among us -- the people who pursue all sorts of Holy Grails and latch like ticks onto particular passions, yet who have the good grace to tell us all about their exploits with humor, rather than with pomposity” — Minneapolis Star Tribune

“Engaging, funny, and down-to-earth” — Entertainment Weekly

“Consistently funny” — The Washington Post

“Alexander's breathless, witty memoir is a joy to read. It's equal parts fact and fun ... Alexander is wildly entertaining on the page” — The Boston Globe