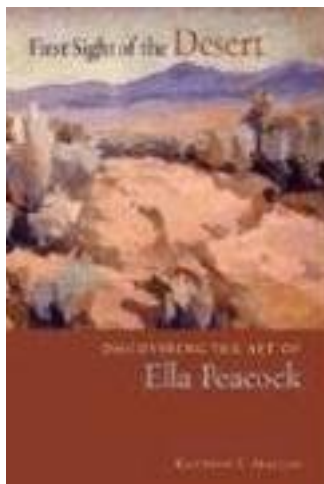


First Sight of the Desert



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Fiercely independent and idiosyncratic--like Georgia O'Keefe, to whom she is often compared--Utah artist Ella Peacock eschewed the limelight and painted in relative obscurity in and around her modest adobe home in Spring City. Her isolation was purposeful as she exulted in the desert landscape and rural setting, rendering the subjects around her in the subtle tonalist style acquired during her formal training at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. Kathryn Abajian was immediately drawn to the eighty-year-old Peacock upon their first meeting, and in 1991 she began to visit and interview the reclusive artist each summer until the latter's death in 1999. During those years Peacock became more than just an intriguing research project to her biographer. As Abajian's life swirled around a divorce and a crisis of faith, she found in Peacock a remarkable role model for a life of voluntary simplicity, devotion to work, and dedication to an uncompromising artistic vision. *First Sight of the Desert* ultimately blends the multiple colors of two women's lives onto a single canvas, illuminating the brush strokes both bold and subtle that draw beauty from even the simplest of subjects.

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