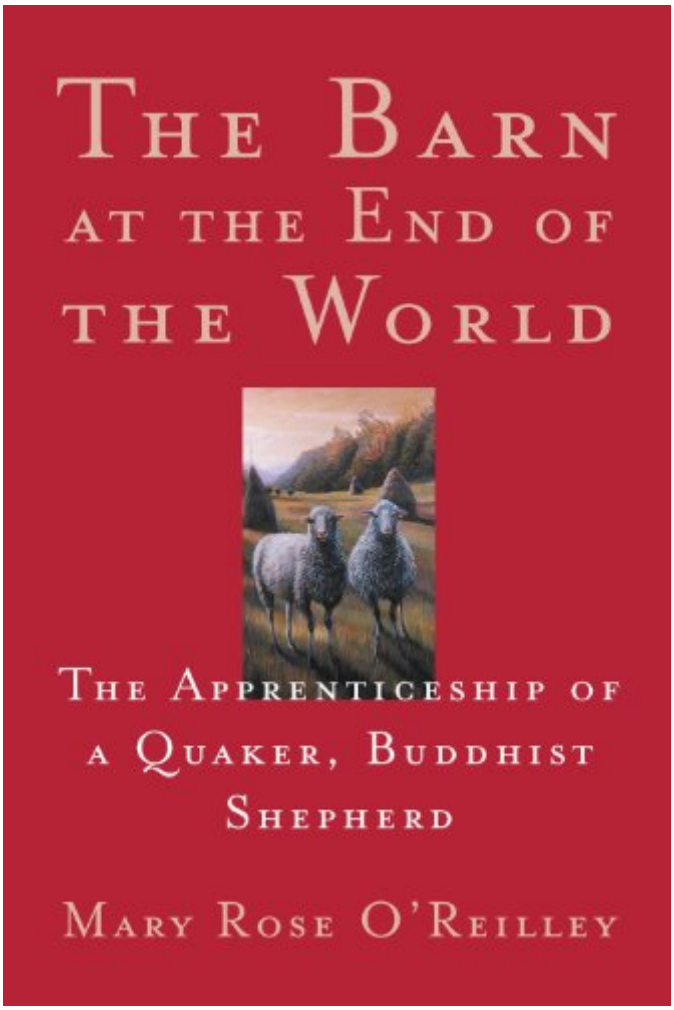
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The Barn At The End Of The World: The Apprenticeship Of A Quaker, Buddhist Shepherd (The World As Home)



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Synopsis

Deciding that her life was insufficiently grounded in real-world experience, Mary Rose O'Reilley, a Quaker reared as a Catholic, embarked on a year of tending sheep. In this often hilarious book, O'Reilley describes her work in an agricultural barn and her extended visit to a Buddhist monastery in France, where she studied with Thich N'hat Hanh. She seeks, in both barn and monastery, a spirituality based not in "climbing out of the body" but rather in existing fully in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Loaned out my original copy and despaired of ever getting it back, so I bought another one. This is one of my favorite books of all time. But I can relate to a lot of her adventures and appreciate her attitude and good humor. I especially loved her account of her experiences on retreat.

I looked for this book for awhile at my local 2d hand bookstore when I buy most of my books but it never showed up. I finally bought it and - WOW! - it's one of the best books I've read this year. I'm

buying copies for gifts for my closest friends. Not a new book - where has it been? If I hadn’t seen it reviewed in a relatively obscure magazine, I never would’ve heard of it.Very readable. Very thought-provoking. Very funny in parts.It appeals to the spiritual side, the rebellious side and the practical side in each of us.Fascinating to read about a down-to-earth person’s choices for alternative lifestyles.This book has inspired me to follow my dreams.

I got this book because it sounded interesting and was amazed to follow her journey from caring for sheep to studying with Thich Nhat Hahn in Plum Village in France. Then back to the U.S., where she took training for spiritual companionship and decided what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. Her section on life at Plum Village gave me insights into the way Thich Nhat Hahn teaches. I’ve reread this book several times.

THIS is a HOOT! Especially if you like animals and the crazy people who love them too! I would LOVE to meet this lady!

I requested and received this book as a gift 2 years ago. I read about 40 pages and then for some reason I left it on the night stand with a bookmark in the place where I had stopped. I picked it up again recently when I was down with a respiratory infection and feeling sorry for myself.I’ve enjoyed Mary Rose O’Reilley as an author who can nudge me out of such a place. Her book Radical Presence got me over a bad attitude about teaching. Her book of poems Half Wild saw me through the year before I retired when I was half in and half out of a professional mind. Now The Barn at the End of World has offered up pages of wisdom and load of notes about things I want to remember.Here is a favorite line: "My religious nature is omnivorous. I can worship anything that occupies a certain slant of light." I listened differently after reading this: "We habitually ignore impulses in our lives that don’t fit the cultural script." I volunteered to help a friend on a llama farm after following O’Reilley’s adventures in the sheep barn--not romantically but ready to shovel shit with a purpose. Her honest report about her time at Plum Village gave me hope! Those retreats are a hell that have taught me much but more importantly she reminded me that "The universe is such an efficient school." I don’t have to go to a retreat to learn. Best of all is learning the meditation hug: "Go deeply inside yourself and say: ’breathing deeply I open like a flower.’ Then hug. Three times." I’m so glad I dusted this book and kept reading.

In the past 15 years, I’ve read two, "personal memoir"-type books by women writers that totally blew

my doors off: Terry Tempest Williams' "Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place" and Mary Rose O'Reilly's "The Barn at the End of the World: The Apprenticeship of a Quaker, Buddhist Shepherd." Very different books, at the end of the day, but both women think and write from deep religious traditions in their lives. Likewise, both have an abiding love for "the land," concretely and metaphorically, so what you hear at the end of that same day are calm but passonate voices that make you listen, make you want to listen hard to the observations, but with sense of deep fulfillment for the experience of it.As for "Barn," I am neither a Quaker, a Buddhist, a farmer, a teacher nor an "older, adventurous woman" (as one reviewer suggested would be the type of person who would enjoy "Barn"). SO WHAT! "Barn" is a truly a banquet of wise and penetrating insights into the essence work (and working with and caring for animals in particular), of friendship, love, responsibility, accountability to yourself and to others, silence, mediation, the sacred, and, ultimately living honestly. There is much humor, gentleness, and "character" (for want of a better word to describe her inner strength) in the 90-odd "chapters" (some as short as 1 page) that are more like mini-essays on discrete but interrelated topics, so much so that I found myself going back, often, re-reading passages, savoring her prose and her insights, shutting the book, just letting the writing sink in. "Barn," resonated with me (an "semi-older, adventurous man") on more levels than I could ever have predicted. I'm a big fan of Thich Nhat Hanh's work, so the chapters recounting her experience at Plum Village and Thay's "dharma talks" were an added "bonus." Give it a shot, and take your time reading it; it's worth it.

Mary Rose O'Reilly weaves her catholic, Buddhist, Quaker, and general spiritual journey in her day to day life in a barn with sheep.

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