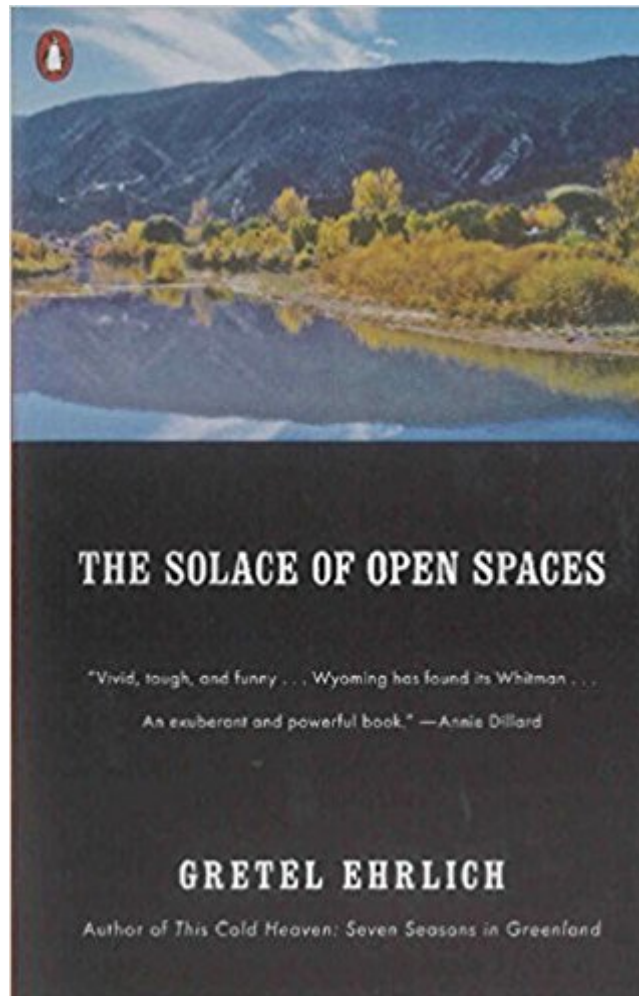


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The Solace Of Open Spaces



Synopsis

A stunning collection of personal observations that uses images of the American West to probe larger concerns in lyrical, evocative prose that is a true celebration of the region.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Everything in nature invites us constantly to be what we are. We are often like rivers: careless and forceful, timid and dangerous, lucid and muddied, eddying, gleaming, still." Whether she's reflecting on nature's teachings, divulging her experiences as a cowpuncher, or painting vivid word portraits of the people she lives and works with, Gretel Ehrlich's observations are lyrical and funny, wise and authentic. After moving from the city to a vast new state, she writes of adjusting to cowboy life, boundless open spaces, and the almost incomprehensible harshness of a Wyoming winter: "When it's fifty below, the mercury bottoms out and jiggles there as if laughing at those of us still above ground. Once I caught myself on tiptoes, peering down into the thermometer as if there were an extension inside inscribed with higher and higher declarations of physical misery: ninety below to the power of ten and so on." After experiencing the isolated life of a sheep herder, she writes, "Keenly observed the world is transformed. The landscape is engorged with detail, every movement on it chillingly sharp. The air between people is charged. Days unfold, bathed in their own music. Nights become hallucinatory; dreams, prescient." Ehrlich's gift is one of subtle precision. She writes beauty into the plainest of thoughts and meaning into the simplest of ideas: "True solace is finding none, which is to say, it is everywhere." --Kathryn True

Like many before her, poet Gretel Ehrlich discovered the therapeutic qualities of the West. In 1976, a time of personal crisis, she moved from the East to a small farm in Wyoming where she ultimately found peace of mind and inspiration. Originally, she had gone west to make a film for PBS; she returned to work with neighbors at cattle- and sheep-ranching, taking pleasure in open spaces. Ehrlich writes with sensitivity and affection about people, the seasons and the landscape. Whether she is enjoying solitude or companionship, her writing evokes the romance and timelessness of the West. November Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

love Love LOVE Gretel's other works. Grew up in New Mexico, so definitely have a few "open space solitude" memories of my own, that informed my mental images while reading this book. Nothing bad to say about it, but there's a lot of jumping around in the stories that challenged me (not pleasantly, sorry) to keep track of while reading. Still, the descriptions of the places and people were WELL worth the price of admission to this narrative. I actually found myself reading sections of the book, as if for inspiration, and then remembering my own life times on the high plains, hiking trails, or mountain bike single tracks of NM. Her descriptions of solace were springboards to my own recollections of solitude and lone-experienced beauty, to which I'm eternally grateful. Definitely read this book if you, too, know of solitary, peaceful times in your life you'd like to recollect. The remembering may be tinged with an edge of melancholy, but that may just be the spice that makes the dish so ultimately palatable. Bon appetit.

The first of this book flows into your mind and heart. It swells your heart and draws your tears. The next quarter runs a bit slow but brings you to the last quarter where the prose flow and completion of the tale is satisfying. Ehrlich made me homesick for the openness of the high plains.

If stream-of-consciousness writing and large words are your thing, this book is a good companion for you. The stories are interesting, but get a bit tiresome after awhile. If you like Wyoming weather and bedraggled characters, read on! I admire the author's stamina, if nothing else! (grin)

Good atmospheric, but the book would be strengthened by a stronger narrative line and a simpler style. Metaphors run wild.

Ehrlich's essays often read like meditative poetry reminiscent of Thoreau and Abbey at their best.

Her work exhibits a "mind of winter" fit for lonesome spaces, rendering an often harsh environment as sublimely beautiful and spiritual.

I first learned of this book from a wizened sheep rancher and shearer discussed in one of Ehrlich's vignettes, and expected a trite outsider's view of this area. (I live not too many miles from where she lived during most of the book). As I feasted on the author's prose, though, I was thrilled to find that I was wrong. This is a spirited, moving, and perceptive portrait of a land that can be both hostile and nurturing, and those people who have become a part of the country. The author relates her responses to the land, tying these reactions to emotional transformations she experienced as she learned the territory and its ways. Yes, the book is good as a travelogue. However, it really excels in its analysis of a land and its people. Ehrlich's book both confirmed and sharpened the impressions I had developed as I learned about my new home. Wherever you live, this is an excellent book for you to read.

From now on, I only read essays. This book is why.

Great reading. Felt like I was right there.

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