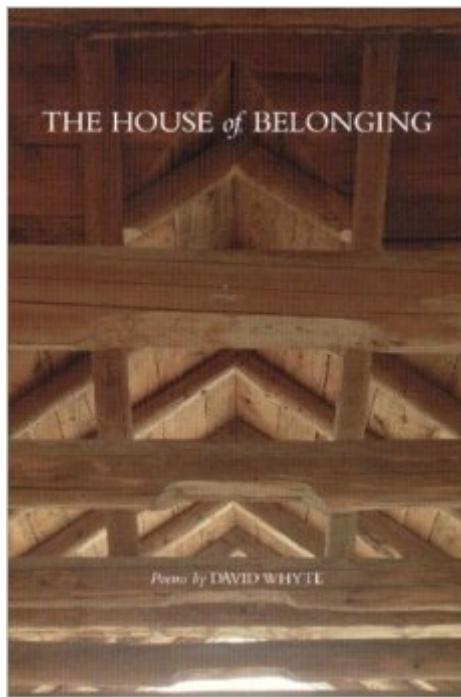


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The House Of Belonging



Synopsis

The House of Belonging by David Whyte

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Experience David Whyte because David Whyte understands. That's what makes him reach me. Until I read "The House of Belonging," I never really thought about the concept. And, oh what a journey he has begun for me. I am looking back over 60 years of life and learning where I lived that was a "house of belonging" and where I lived that was not. Having lived in 30+ places, the journey is most interesting. David encouraged me to look at the concept of belonging and showed me the importance of feeling a sense of belonging where I am in my life. I learned, like David, that a home can give you a sense of belonging even if you are the only person in it. That was a glorious revelation for someone single for 25 years. My journey through the book bubbled forth poems, memories, aha moments, self-understandings and explorations. Wow! I am reading any David Whyte books I can get my hands on and I have read six so far. I invite you to discover David Whyte if you have not yet read his books or heard him on his tapes and to keep on discovering him as he keeps on discovering himself.

Whyte's "House of Belonging" represents everything that should interest today's jaded reading audience. This collection of poems is fresh, frank, and powerful, invoking a few elements of the classic American poetry tradition yet clearly establishing its own thoroughly modern style. Whyte's images are crystal-clear and profound without being tritely symbolic. I especially liked the way he

uses images from nature, almost in the style of Frost or Whitman, but still manages to make them fresh and relevant instead of merely derivative. In this "house of belonging," even simple everyday objects take on new meanings as the author examines the various elements of his life. And he doesn't waste words -- a lot of the impact of these poems comes from the simple, direct language with which he sketches his images. The issues he deals with are issues we all understand in today's society -- particularly our need to feel a sense of belonging, of place. While there is nothing at all preachy about his work, his frank revelations of his own experience express some messages that are painfully relevant in today's world. Whyte reveals his inner self in these lines, in a way that every reader can identify with -- almost as if they are the reader's own feelings. Take your time with these poems; they will speak to you a little differently, and a little more deeply, each time you read them.

We owe a debt of gratitude to David Whyte for work which lacks the obscure, murky, digressive qualities often associated with poetry and which are responsible for turning large segments of the reading public away from quality literature. He writes with exquisite simplicity about life's monumental concerns: love, creativity, aloneness, beauty. These are the very things which, by virtue of their universality, should be easily perceptible, but which we have made endlessly complicated. There is a pervasive, Zen-like aspect to Mr. Whyte's work. By following him back to the wild Yorkshire moors of his youth and forward to the vast potential of the land he adopted in adulthood, we are reminded to take note of each moment, to pay heed to even the most mundane articles of daily existence --- bees, trees, daisies, dishes, kettles --- because they are all facets of the ever-changing whole that is each life. Whether dealing with the fullness of nature's many moods, or the long search for a special connection with another human being, his poems each hold at their core a lustrous pearl of truth. He speaks to a generation now learning to accept the difficult, i.e., that not all dreams are possible but that new hopes can rise to take their place, that there is a continuance of life after what one believed to be an 'only' love, and that solitude can be a genesis site for constructive activity, realization and joy.

This is one of my favorite books of poetry -- ever. Like many other reviewers have noted here, Whyte's poetry lacks that murky and inaccessible quality that so many modern poets seem to strive for, as if they DON'T want us to "get" what they are trying to say. Whyte's poetry, on the other hand, is accessible without being simplistic. These poems celebrate the art and craft of a careful writer and a deeply thoughtful soul -- and they invite us inside. I love this stuff.

David Whyte paints poetic images of wild rivers and migrating geese, as metaphors for the human experience. I come back to these poems again and again, and each time I come away refreshed. A well worn copy is always near by.

A few weeks ago I started listening to David Whyte's Clear Mind Wild Heart. I kept having to stop the playback to think about what he said, and rewind to hear parts again. At times I realized I had already heard one of the six CD's but it had so much depth in it that it was like listening to a new CD. Naturally I wanted to read a book of his poetry (he'd read many of his poems in the CD's). I was not disappointed. Even having heard them, reading them to myself I was surprised that he crystallized and spoke what I was thinking and feeling, seemingly knowing it better than I myself. As the title would suggest its predominant theme is belonging, and of coming to feel belonging by coming to recognize yourself, or the struggle to recognize yourself. His method is not to be obscure but to be observant and put that into language that you ... well I have a quote of his that says, "Poetry is the art of creating language against which there is no defense." He does just that. I am coming to understand more and more how he believes we must all set aside time to write, meditate, pray, or read poetry. They are all variations on the theme of observing who we are, the world around us, and how we can belong in that world and in our own skins. If you are on the journey to find belonging I'd whole heartily recommend the couple hours it takes to read this poetry.

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