



Weeds in Bloom: Autobiography of an Ordinary Man

By Robert Newton Peck

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With over 60 books published, including the breathtaking *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Robert Newton Peck has had an illustrious writing career. Now, in an autobiography as unique as he is, Peck tells his story by writing about the people who have meant the most to him throughout his life. From his roots as a poor Vermont farmer's son to his years as a soldier in World War II, from his term slogging away in a paper mill to his semi-retirement in Florida, Peck shows us people most never see—the desperately poor, the hopelessly uneducated. People Rob considers "weeds in bloom."

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—A veteran author creates his autobiography in an atypical fashion, by spotlighting people (and a few dogs) who have had an impact on his life. Thus he provides readers with a series of essays or character sketches in which he plays a supporting role. Some of the players in the first of three sections, "Vermont Boyhood," will ring bells with fans of Peck's "Soup" stories (Random). In "Early Manhood," he looks into his time in the army and his work experiences, including stints in a paper mill and in advertising. "Florida Years" features interesting personalities—an old man living in a shack in the woods with his dog, a waitress at a small diner, Jamaicans in the sugar-cane fields of Florida. These are folks to whom life has often been less than generous, but Peck has found in them wisdom, tenacity, and tenderness. The final chapter, "Just As I Am," is a compilation of Peck's words to live by. There is humor, as one might expect, and a good deal of near-heartbreaking pain, along with a dollop of hokum here and there. Because Peck has not written of his life as a writer, these essays are as likely to appeal to readers who have never heard of him. Perhaps they are more likely to appeal to adults than to teen readers who may not yet have lived long enough to see the strength required to live an "ordinary life."—*Coop Renner, Hillside Elementary, El Paso, TX*
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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 8-11. Peck's exquisite autobiographical novel *A Day No Pigs Would Die* (1972) is a classic, though its sequel and many of the author's other books were far less successful. Now in his 70s, Peck uses a series of essays to look back on his childhood and coming-of-age in rural Vermont, and then at his semiretirement in Florida. The nostalgia is often heavy, and Peck's audience is more likely to be elderly adults than teens--though even grown-ups may tire of his message: the farm boy is not into "literature" or things "fancy or fine"; "nothing uppity" for Peck. There are a few great selections though, mostly spare, hard accounts about work--laboring in the paper mill, in the sawmill, and as a sugarcane cutter. And readers of all ages will be moved by Peck's bond with animals; his restrained description of putting down his beloved blind dog is, well, literature. *Hazel Rochman*
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About the Author

Robert Newton Peck grew up on a farm in rural Vermont. He has written over 60 books, including the Soup series, for which he won the Mark Twain Award. He lives in Longwood, Florida.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nicole Marcil:

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Stephen Beatty:

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