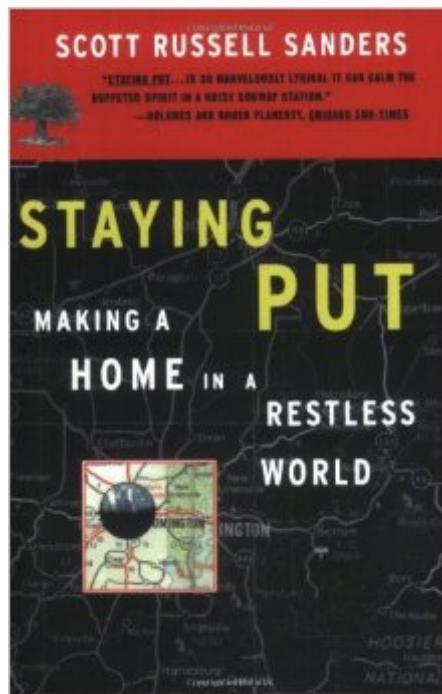


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Staying Put: Making A Home In A Restless World



Synopsis

In the tradition of Wendell Berry, Sanders champions fidelity to place, informed by ecological awareness, arguing that intimacy with one's home region is the grounding for global knowledge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The strength of this collection of interwoven essays lies in Sanders' clear, lucid, often lyrical prose. His strongest moments, particularly "After the Flood" and "Settling Down," are where he focuses on the fundamental idea of his book: the notion that the natural world benefits from people who attach themselves to a place, who reject the idea of "moving on." The chapters about the history of the Ohio River valley are interesting and informative, and his personal memoirs are worthwhile. I did wonder at times why he insists on dealing with the question of whether or not the world is ordered; it didn't seem to me to be important to his main argument. I also at times was overwhelmed and bewildered by the far-flung sources from which he draws quotes: Thomas Berry to Lao-tzu to Salman Rushdie to Wendell Berry. Like John Elder, Sanders suffers perhaps from being too well-read. But if you like Elder's books, or those of Thomas Berry, Ian Marshall, Scott Slovic, and Barry Lopez, this one is well worth reading. It's not too heavy, but meaty anyway.

As with all of his books, Sanders brilliantly explores his feelings, thoughts, and beliefs in a well-researched (despite his claims to the contrary) book. As a fellow resident of Bloomington, Indiana (the home he's making in a restless world), I appreciate the way he describes life here in this quiet part of a quiet state in a quiet region of the country.

An extraordinarily fine stylist, Mr. Sanders reminds us in the very personal essays how important it is to value home and heart. Lives begins at home; life begins when we know where our home is.

I read an interview Sanders in the AWP Chronicle and liked his sensibility. Since I've lived in the same place for 40 years, I thought this would be an interesting read. This is not a book that one tears through. Rather it requires a slow thoughtful approach which is in keeping with Sanders perspective on staying put. It takes time and consideration to make a home in a restless world. Sanders writing and thinking is in keeping with Wendell Berry. Both require the reader to look at place with fresh eyes. The essay entitled the "Force of Moving Water" was meditative, descriptive, informative, and as powerful and soothing and disturbing as it's subject matter, the Ohio River. The piece on Sander's anxious late night wandering, "The Earth's Body," was evocative, highly personal, and deeply intelligent. Take your time with this book; you need to absorb Sanders through skin, breath, and the soles of your feet, in the same way you come to know the place you choose to make your home.

Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World is primarily autobiographical. It is a reflection on the author's home and neighbourhood, where he has lived for the past twenty years, in order to understand his life. It is not in an environment of magnificent splendour or history or nature or beauty. Instead, it is a fine township in farm country Ohio, and the chance of a fresh start with his wife. In the place Scott Russell Sanders calls home, he explores his sense of community and sense of place. He describes the people he is connected to and why, and of his surroundings - the view from the windows, the seasons, the changing landscape, its smells and impressions, and what makes a house a home. From its purchase in 1974 to the traditional settlers, and to the township's development, he writes of the construction of the channel that has made Ohio into a "chain of lakes." He writes of the birth and development of his daughter, to tornado memories, to family, friends and visitors. About half way through the book, he philosophically reflects on some people's need to migrate and some people's need to nest. "I quarrel with [author, Salman] Rushdie because he articulates as eloquently as anyone the orthodoxy that I wish to counter: the belief that movement is inherently good, staying put is bad; that uprooting brings tolerance, while rootedness breeds intolerance; that imaginary homelands are preferable to geographical ones; that to be modern, enlightened, fully of our time is to be displaced." Scott Russell Sanders believes that people who root themselves in places are more likely to know and care for those places than are

people who root themselves in ideas. This view is based upon nurture, durability, sustainability, and ultimately heritage - a place to be passed on to descendants. Scott Russell Sanders discusses itinerant populations and migration routes, the writings of poets, authors, scientists, and philosophers, and the influence of music and the arts. The answers are his personal story, but in reflecting on his sense of place, readers examine their own.

Lyrical and lucid, subtle yet complex. Unlike some of the disparaging reviewers, I found this book to be an honest and humble effort worth every bit of ink on the page. Sanders' mastery of language and style makes for a sophisticated read, better suited for some deep self-reflection than a book-club discussion. "Staying Put" deserves repeated reads. I read once that an author expanded and refined her writing style by retyping her favorite book, one of Hemingway's. She said the exercise helped her understand clarity and grace and style, first his but ultimately hers. If I were to type someone else's book, I would choose "Staying Put."

Someone who has inspired me greatly wholeheartedly believes "it's the landscape you learn before you retreat inside the illusion of your own skin" and I have faith in him and those words.

Very nice book. Can in used, but good condition. If you are interested in a little history about the Ohio river its a good read. A little nostalgic, but worth the time to read it.

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