

Quiet People in a Noisy World

5 Reviews

Barbara Nebon:

Each of the essays in the book, *Quiet People in a Noisy World*, gives the reader a fresh glimpse into a world that is so far removed from most people's lives in the 21st Century that it nearly takes your breath away. How can this family live without most of the conveniences that we take for granted, and that by choice!

Imagine cutting enough blocks of ice from a frozen river, cold, arduous work-- to last through the summer-- snugged away in your barn to serve duty as your only refrigerator. Or picking enough mushrooms high in the mountains to pay for a much-needed pair of boots. Then there were the weeks during the coldest part of the winter when Jon kept the boss's diesel tractor in his barn. In order for it to start in the morning, he needed to get up several times each night and run the engine for about half an hour so that it would be function the next morning.

Most of us would consider those necessities deal breakers, but there were a host of lovely compensations. The book is filled with carefully observed and minutely described encounters with the flora and fauna that surrounded the family, the 40 swallows that had attached their nests to the Remmerdes' home, a dragonfly that Jon rescued from a lake, whose wings were too waterlogged to fly.

But even more meaningful, as you make your way through the 72 essays, they form a picture of the unfolding lives of father, mother and two daughters living in a way that is unique and firmly grounded in tenderness and affection for one another. As Jon points out, the girls didn't have all the things that many young people expect and can't imagine living without. But they were immeasurably enriched by the environment in which they lived and the thoughtful attention bestowed on them by their parents. What a lot we can learn from the way in which these people have chosen to construct meaningful lives.

Patt Saunders:

Stepping onto the pages of *Quiet People in a Noisy World* and *Somewhere in an Oregon Valley*, I sensed something significant. These books are brimming with authenticity, values realized and a commitment to ideals. Each story illustrates conscious choice, and a core awareness of and reverence for the grand design. Remmerde's eloquent words are offered with humility, humor and intelligence. His writing mirrors his life; it has all the essentials clarity, beauty, and substance - nothing frivolous or trivial. Environmentalism, higher education, self-reliance and hard work reveal handpicked and practiced values. This style of living is not for the faint of

heart or body, but for those with determination, strength and resolve.

One of my favorite chapters is “Wildflower Fire Watch” in *Quiet People in a Noisy World*. The author illustrates his keen awareness of the grand scheme of things and his aim to honor nature’s sacred gifts. I could feel and sense the region he’s describing; it’s painted with vibrancy, affection, familiarity, and hope.

In our frenzied world today, we often hear about progress and the development of fresh ideas. This remarkable family elects to simply and gently steward each other and their environment. Their approach is one of reverence, wonder and gratitude. Mindless choices are easy; life portrayed in these pages is anything but. Integrity, love and joy are naturally woven into every fiber of this family’s being.

Reading these books left me with questions. How conscious am I? Do I share my light? Have I made a difference? Am I leaving things any better? Remmerde’s words whisper, “Be true to yourself”

Barbara Kelso:

A comfortable, calm book to remind us of another world to experience. An antidote to the strident and sometime violent environment many of us live in daily. In short bursts we are reminded that many of our “necessities” do not have to determine our lives-- in fact, are not really necessities at all.

Many of the interactions with the natural world reminded me of my own experiences in the high, wild places. Jon caught the essence of those encounters and touched a familiar chord in my being.

It is not a book to sit and read cover to cover in one great gulp. It is, rather, a book to carry around and read in short sips and then think about as we go about living life as it is handed to us.

There are small moralistic comments included that are probably open for discussion, but reflect the author's right to literary license. The chapter describing the girls' adjustment to the “outside” world was particularly interesting. Would others do as well in adjusting and what influences contributed to this?

This is an account by a man, husband and father, who is in complete harmony with a life in the out-of-the-way places. Are his interpretations of his wife's and children's reactions a reflection of his own contentment or really the attitudes of the whole family?

Jack Richards:

He sure knows how to spin a tale. I've been in some of that Oregon country he writes about. When I read these two books (*Quiet People in a Noisy World* and *Somewhere in an Oregon Valley*), sometimes I felt like I was there again. I met him and his wife and girls up in that country, but it was before I knew he wrote books, and we just talked about living up there.

I read both his books twice, maybe three years apart. I dreamed about some of this stuff when I was reading these books, it got in my head that much. I'll read both of them again, another year or so goes by. I usually don't read books twice or more except Louis L'Amour. Not saying he's as good as Louis L'Amour, I don't know about that, they write about way different stuff from each other, but he holds me to the story until I get it finished like Louis L'Amour does, and I feel like I've read something worth reading when I finish.

(Titles of books in parentheses added by the author for clarity)

Glenda Jones:

This book of 72 essays is quietly but powerfully spoken, a thoughtful perception of life. I loved the descriptive essays, such a variety of personal experiences told with humor and positiveness. Jon, in sharing the lessons learned in his family's daily life, has produced a manual on how to treat children and animals with respect.

After hearing so much lately about how children are consumed by the internet and the myriad of gadgets associated with it, it is indeed refreshing to read about his daughters and their interactions with the natural world. It is delightful to watch how imaginations, given the proper grounding, can grow.