



THE BOOK NOOK

Miscellaneous Travels—some out, some back, and some within
(all books mentioned are at the far end of the hardcover shelves)

Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

“With its blend of Eastern mysticism and Western culture, Hesse's best-known and most autobiographical work is one of literature's most poetic evocations of the soul's journey to liberation. Originally published in English in 1929, *Steppenwolf*'s wisdom continues to speak to our souls and marks it as a classic of modern literature.”

“Harry Haller, a lonely, reclusive, and depressed individual, leaves behind a manuscript that tells of his existence. Dubbing himself a ‘Steppenwolf,’ he explains that he is a man of two (and sometimes more) natures. Much of the novel explores the depths of how these two natures, himself and the ‘beast’ within himself, are continually clashing, seemingly forever at odds with each other within Harry’s conscience. His life changes dramatically when he meets a woman who is his opposite, the carefree and elusive Hermine.”

“For all its savagely articulate descriptions of torment and isolation, it is most eloquent about something less glamorous but far more important: healing.” (*The Guardian*)

Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*

“The story of three generations in twentieth-century China that blends the intimacy of memoir and the panoramic sweep of eyewitness history—a bestselling classic in thirty languages. Few books have had such an impact as *Wild Swans*: a popular best seller and a critically acclaimed history of China that opened up the country to the world. Through the story of three generations of women in her own family—the grandmother given to the warlord as a concubine, the Communist mother, and the daughter herself—Jung Chang reveals the epic history of China's twentieth century. Breathtaking in its scope, unforgettable in its descriptions, this is a masterpiece that is extraordinary in every way.”

Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*: A Memoir

“Beryl Markham's *West with the Night* is a true classic, a book that deserves the same acclaim and readership as the work of her contemporaries Ernest Hemingway, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and Isak Dinesen. If the first responsibility of a memoirist is to lead a life worth writing about, Markham succeeded beyond all measure. Born Beryl Clutterbuck in the middle of England, she and her father moved to Kenya when she was a girl, and she grew up with a zebra for a pet; horses for friends; baboons, lions, and gazelles for neighbors. She made money by scouting elephants from a tiny plane. And she would

spend most of the rest of her life in East Africa as an adventurer, a racehorse trainer, and an aviatrix—she became the first person to fly nonstop from Europe to America, the first woman to fly solo east to west across the Atlantic. Hers was indisputably a life full of adventure and beauty.

And then there is the writing. When Hemingway read Markham's book, he wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins: 'She has written so well, and marvelously well, that I was completely ashamed of myself as a writer . . . [She] can write rings around all of us who consider ourselves as writers . . . It is really a bloody wonderful book.'

T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

"*Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is an unusual and rich work. It encompasses an account of the Arab Revolt against the Turks during the First World War alongside general Middle Eastern and military history, politics, adventure, and drama. It is also a memoir of the soldier known as 'Lawrence of Arabia.' Lawrence is a fascinating and controversial figure and his talent as a vivid and imaginative writer shines through on every page of this, his masterpiece. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* provides a unique portrait of this extraordinary man and an insight into the birth of the Arab nation."

"T.E. Lawrence was born on 16th August 1888 in Tremadog in Wales. He was one of five illegitimate children born to the Seventh Baron of Westmeath. He studied at Jesus College, Oxford where he became interested in the Middle East. He worked for British Intelligence during the First World War, and fought with the Arab forces to defeat the Turks. His exploits earned him the title of 'Lawrence of Arabia' back in Britain. He resigned in 1922 and sought anonymity in the RAF, where he enlisted as John Hume Ross. He later changed his name by deed poll to T.E. Shaw. Shortly after retiring from the RAF, T.E. Lawrence died in a motorcycle accident on 19th May 1935."

Tom Allen, et al, *Greece and Rome: Builders of Our World (The Story of Man Library)* (National Geographic Society)

"Indeed, in so many ways, we are all Greeks and Romans. Let us voyage into the ancient world to find how that came to be . . ."

"This book started me on a lifelong love of classical history. It was and is a great introduction to the uninitiated to a part of the world in which modern culture finds much of its foundations. Great for kids or for adults. The writing, in National Geographic tradition, really communicates the authors' love of the material, combined with award winning photography and excellent supporting art."

Dale Brown, *Wild Alaska: The American Wilderness* (Time Life Books)

"Author Dale Brown made three trips to Alaska in preparation of this book. The opening chapter describes the geography, geology, and climate of Alaska. Chapter Two features Glacier Bay National Park; plant succession is a major topic of this chapter. In Chapter

Three we learn about the geology, botany, and wildlife of Katmai National Park. The ecology of Denali National Park is the subject of Chapter Four. In Chapter Five the author shares with us his journal entries written during his trek through the vast Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The book concludes with a consideration of the challenges facing the Alaskan wilderness such as pollution and the tapping of natural gas and oil reserves. Bears, Dall sheep, caribou, wolves, and mountain goats are among the many animals featured in both text and photographs. A detailed map accompanies each chapter. Thus, *Wild Alaska* focuses on four representative areas of this awe-inspiring state and is one of the most impressive books in this series. The fascinating narrative and numerous photographs make this an excellent book about one of the most majestic places found in the American wilderness.”

David Helvarg, *The Golden Shore: California’s Love Affair with the Sea*

“From the first human settlements to the latest marine explorations, *The Golden Shore* tells the tale of the history, culture, and changing nature of California’s coasts and ocean. David Helvarg takes the reader on both a geographic and literary journey along the state’s 1,100-mile Pacific coastline, from the Oregon border to the San Diego/Tijuana international border fence, and out into its whale-, seal-, and shark-rich offshore seamounts, rock isles, and kelp forests. Part history, part travelogue, part love letter, *The Golden Shore* captures the spirit of the California coast and its mythic place in American culture.