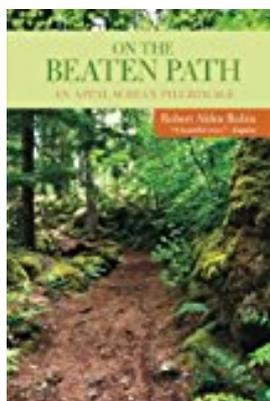


[PDF] On The Beaten Path: An Appalachian Pilgrimage

Robert Alden Rubin - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

Why have we quit our jobs, left our wives, our husbands, our children, left school, interrupted perfectly good retirements, put off promising careers? Why come to the woods for half a year of rodents and rain?

On April Fool's Day 1997, 38-year-old Robert Alden Rubin leaves his puzzled wife and a burnt-out career to become a pilgrim named Rhymin' Worm on the Appalachian Trail, joining a couple

thousand other "thruhikers" on the way. Through 2,160 miles of shin splints, feet turned to hamburger, muscle revolt, intestinal distress, hantavirus, freezing and broiling weather, malnutrition, missing spouses and children, bear and bull-moose encounters, and serious injuries, he and his fellow travelers--a motley subculture if ever there was one--endure, even thrive.

To the very end, Rubin is not sure why he's made this journey. But the combination of getting away from the "normal" world of work, commuting, suburbs, and capitalist culture and joining a group of outsiders in pursuit of a single goal seems to fill the space in his soul that the normal world carved out over the years. He emerges at the end of the trail, in Vermont, with an inkling of why he's on the path:

We've walked this crooked trail to mend the crazing of our lives; we reek of sweat and smoke, wear Gore-Tex shells to turn the storm away, take on new names, our talk all aches, and boots, and food; and yet we yearn to strip the armor from our hearts, to wash ourselves in mountain rain and air until, like the wild columbine and black cohosh, we can be merely what we are, until out of the stone-strewn ground we bloom again, until the weathered sign on Baxter Peak points along the path to where we've been.

On the Beaten Path is by turns somber, silly, philosophical, historical, even mundane, but mostly, it's touching. Alden's courage to rescue his life from what could have been a featureless future is inspiring, and his honesty about his shortcomings makes his inner world accessible to readers who may not share his demons. --*Stefanie Durbin* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly In the thick of a midlife crisis, 38-year-old book editor Rubin decided to quit his job and hike the entire Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine. Rubin is the first to point out the selfishness of his whim, which very likely cost him his career and his marriage. Not to mention that Alden was at least 75 pounds overweight at the beginning of his 2,000-plus-mile hike, "an athlete gone to seed." Nonetheless, the author set out, stubbornly walking off years of stress and confusion. Over the past 30 years, hiking the Appalachian trail has become something of a counterculture ritual, and Rubin both mocks and reveres his cohorts. He has plenty of vitriol for weekend RV adventurers who "would never get any closer to the wilderness than the blacktop out of town," for college kids who blow their trail money on beer and pot and for hikers whose "fastidiousness, organization, unceasing questions, discussion and analysis began driving [him] quietly nuts." The author is no less critical of himself, documenting his own unglamorous moments, which include foul moods, falls along the trail and a bathroom "accident" along the trail. Yet Rubin also cherishes the trail, and his honest, fast-paced account should inspire others to try hiking "the beaten path." (Apr.)

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