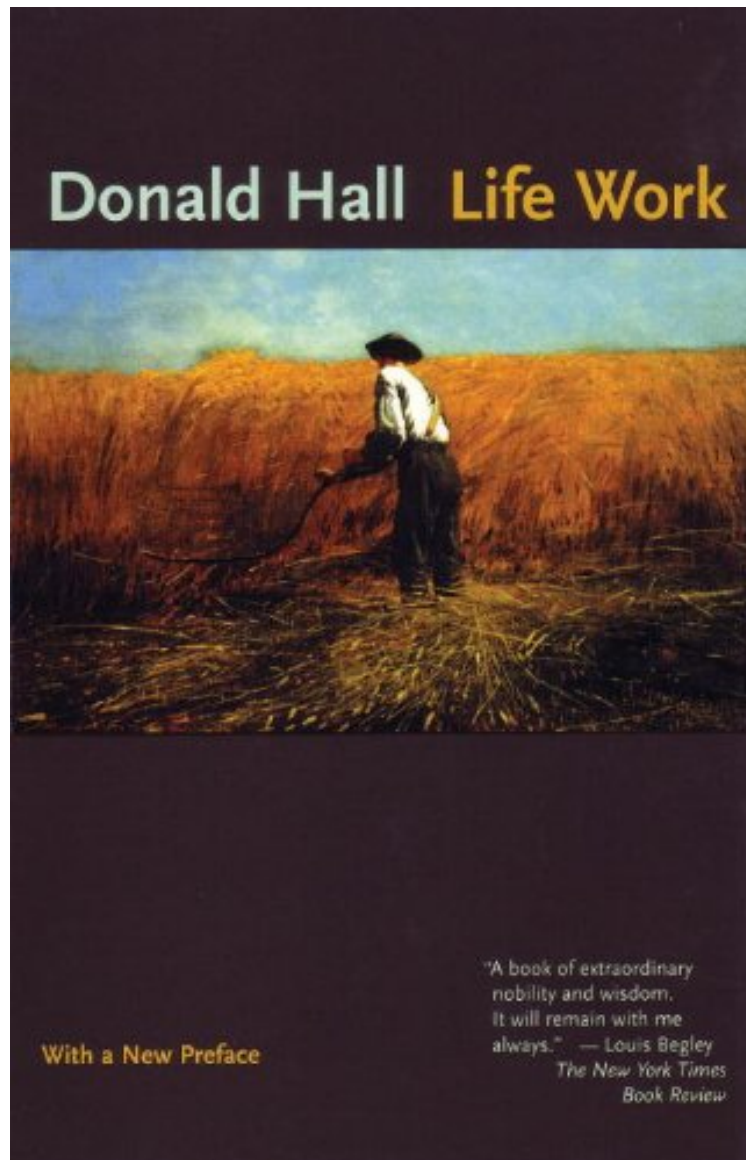


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Life Work

Von Donald Hall

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Von Donald Hall : Life Work before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life Work:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Sense of Time, Place and SelfVon James CarragherReading this book is work -- in the Donald Hall definition, for to read it is to become absorbed in each word to the exclusion of all else. Hall writes of his ancestors, of the rocky farms of New England, a small dairy, his father's early death, his wife's gardening, and then quite suddenly as his colon cancer

recurs, of the possible end to life and the very prosaic tasks of cancelling readings, putting papers in order for survivors. Throughout, he achieves a sense of time, place and self which crosses generations. He charts both the constants and the increasing changes of the farm which has been in his family for more than a hundred years and the country around it. Hall, like God, love and grace--all of which are found in abundance in this book, abides.

Kurzbeschreibung Distinguished poet Donald Hall reflects on the meaning of work, solitude, and love "The best new book I have read this year, of extraordinary nobility and wisdom. It will remain with me always." Louis Begley, *The New York Times* "A sustained meditation on work as the key to personal happiness. . . . *Life Work* reads most of all like a first-person psychological novel with a poet named Donald Hall as its protagonist. . . . Hall's particular talents ultimately [are] for the memoir, a genre in which he has few living equals. In his hands the memoir is only partially an autobiographical genre. He pours both his full critical intelligence and poetic sensibility into the form." Dana Gioia, *Los Angeles Times* "Hall . . . here offers a meditative look at his life as a writer in a spare and beautifully crafted memoir. Devoted to his art, Hall can barely wait for the sun to rise each morning so that he can begin the task of shaping words." *Publishers Weekly* (starred review) "I [am] delighted and moved by Donald Hall's *Life Work*, his autobiographical tribute to sheer work--as distinguished from labor--as the most satisfying and ennobling of activities, whether one is writing, canning vegetables or playing a dung fork on a New Hampshire farm." Paul Fussell, *The Boston Globe* Donald Hall's *Life Work* has been strangely gripping, what with his daily to do lists, his ruminations on the sublimating power of work. Hall has written so much about that house in New Hampshire where he lives that I'm beginning to think of it less as a place than a state of mind. I find it odd that a creative mind can work with such Spartan organization (he describes waiting for the alarm to go off at 4:45 AM, so eager is he to get to his desk) at such a mysterious activity (making a poem work) without getting in the way of itself. John Freeman's blog (National Book Critics Circle Board President) From Kirkus sFrom well-known poet and memoirist Hall (*Their Ancient Glittering Eyes*, 1992, etc.), a meditation-memoir on the theme of work that becomes something much more when, midway through the writing, the author learns he has cancer. At 63, Hall is mightily productive in poetry, memoir, essay, letter, story, and review, and he sets out to devote part of each working day (for Hall, there are seven of these a week) to writing this book, its title bespeaking its theme. In 1975, we learn, Hall gave up teaching and became a full-time writer, retiring to the farm in Vermont that had once belonged to his grandparents. As the book begins, Hall mourns the recent death of a close friend, preacher, and hard worker; settles on a definition of productive work as a state of "absorbedness"; touches on history, family, his own literary output, his great love of the work he does, the number of revisions he puts poems through, what time he gets up, what he eats for breakfast and lunch, even when he walks the dog and drops manuscripts off with the typist. A phone call changes the tone of all of this when a routine blood test shows a recurrence of cancer and sends the poet into surgery. A couple of weeks later, facing both chemotherapy and newly diminished odds for living more than another few years, Hall picks up his narrative and--keeps going. Under the deepened shadow of mortality, he writes with eloquent simplicity about the old-fashioned working farm-life of his Vermont grandparents, the declining health of his aging mother, and--with a consummate and moving poise--his father's unhappiness in his own work, and his early death from cancer. History, life, work, art, dedication, love, and courage--all without becoming saccharine or smug or maudlin, in a treasureable small book, poetic in its plainness, about how to live well. (First printing of 25,000) -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From *Library Journal* Trust a poet to write a memoir that is not a memoir but a series of reflections organized around a theme--in this case, the pleasures of work. Hall, a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and author most recently of *The Museum of Clear Ideas* (LJ 2/1/93), opens by making a distinction between jobs, chores, and work. He then explains himself by detailing the dedicated lives of his sturdy New England ancestors, his decision to leave the security of teaching for full-time writing, and his struggle with recurrent cancer--most annoying because it keeps him from the "absorbedness" that working on a poem allows. Along the way, we learn something of the poet's creative processes, which are nourished by a disciplined and almost overfull work schedule. Hall writes cleanly, crisply, and with a gentle conviction that will push readers out of their easy chairs and set them to working, too. He inspires such absorbedness that the task of reading is done in an instant. Highly recommended.- Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal" Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.