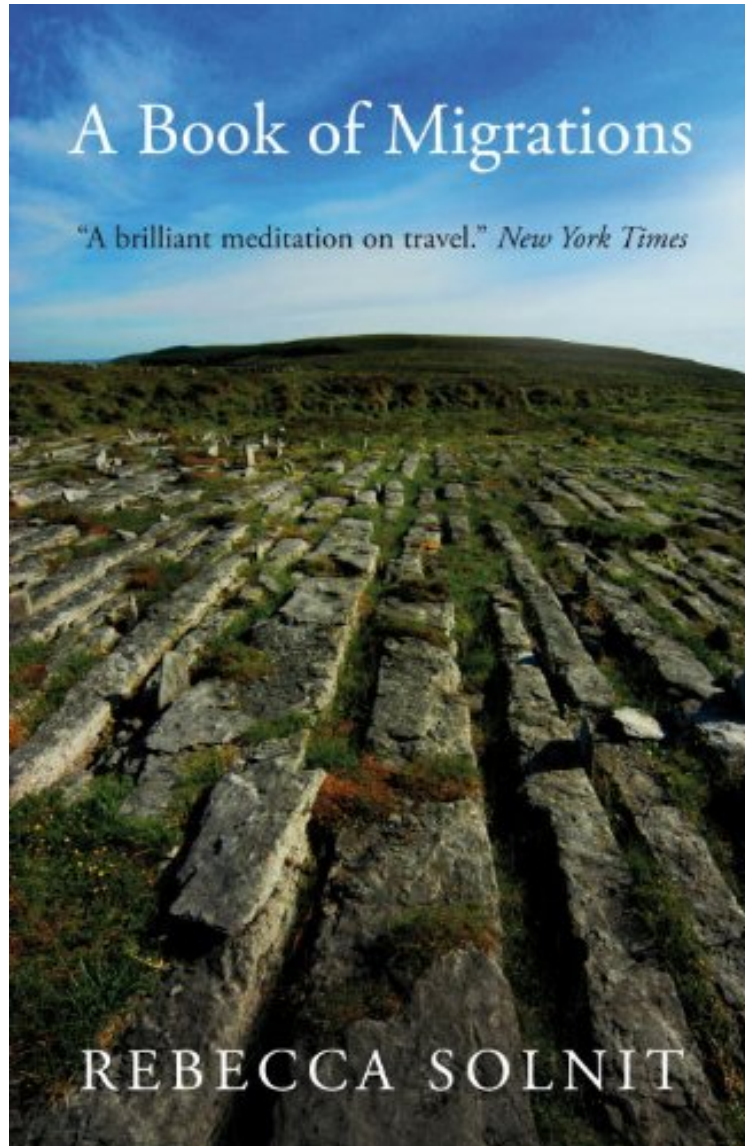


[Free pdf] A Book of Migrations

A Book of Migrations

Rebecca Solnit

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Rebecca Solnit : A Book of Migrations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Book of Migrations:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book to savorBy MizLooHere's my confession: I only read one to four really worthwhile books a year. I love mysteries (golden-age, cozies and female PI's mostly). I read SFF, memoir/biography, some poly-sci, some history, some historical fiction. And once in a while - I dive into something like "The Hare with Amber Eyes" or "The Warmth of Other Suns" or "The Old Ways" or "Hillbilly Elegy." "The Book

of Migrations" was my spend-a-month-reading-it book this summer. And oh what a treat - rambling, discursive -- Solnit writes the way Bill Clinton speaks, going off on tangents and following what seem like random thoughts, until suddenly I see connections I've been looking for. You know the expression "I don't know what I think till I hear myself say it"? There are so many things I did not know I knew till I read what Rebecca Solnit wrote about it. I'm a latecomer to Rebecca Solnit's work, (I only read *Paradise Made in Hell* last year), but what a joy to be able to go to her next book and not need to wait for her to finish writing it!

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. *A Book of Migrations* By Eileen M. Bosshart *A Book of Migrations* is a search for roots in Ireland, even though the author is a mixture of Irish on one side and Jewish on the other. Her ability to paint with words the scenes and places she visited and the descriptions of the Irish people she met along the way during her walks are evidence of the Irish gift of language that is so evident in Irish culture. It is a book, not to be read in a single sitting or two, but to be savored, one chapter at a time, when one has time to appreciate the thoughts and musings of the author. For example, the sight of a butterfly in a museum in Dublin led to a discourse on Roger Casement, who figured so predominantly in the 1916 Easter Rising. He led butterfly expeditions in the Congo before his political life began. The people and places are all woven together with Irish history. As a visitor to Ireland twice, I could appreciate the places she described in such beautiful, descriptive language, although it made me wish I would have been more knowledgeable about Irish writers like Joyce, Swift, Synge, or T.S. Eliot who impacted so much of English literature. I gave it only four stars because some of it went over my head, although that was my defect, not the author's. The notes at the end of the book show a great amount of research into each chapter. The most interesting parts of the book for me were her encounters with the ordinary Irish people as she walked from one town to another. I also learned much about the Travellers, formerly called Tinkers, the Irish nomads who seem to be at the bottom of the social ladder in Ireland. My cousin recently told me that Tinkers had stolen the cherished mantle over the fireplace in my great-grandparents cottage that is still standing near Blarney. The author interviewed a modern Traveller family and gave me a different perspective of these nomadic people who seem to suffer from discrimination, yet want the same rights as the rest of the citizenry. Their horse-drawn wagons have been mostly replaced by modern cars pulling trailers, but still they seem to be a displaced minority that is barely tolerated in Irish society. There is much to learn about Irish history in this book, and much of it is presented with a poet's flair. There is also much to learn by getting away from the tourist route, walking and speaking to the people you meet along the way. They have stories to tell that you won't find in the tourist guides. I'm happy the author shared them with her readers.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. *Insightful but detached travelogue + interrogation of Irish mentalities* By John L. Murphy Solnit knows a lot and wants you to know it too, as well as reminding you that she knows it! The weight of research, speculation, and interpretation she loads upon her ostensible travelogue does make for a dense collection of interrelated essays about her migrations circa 1993. In light of the past decade, her observations that only once in her stint had she seen a "hurried motion" and how the Irish kept their stereotypically casual pace up and flaunted their easygoing nature against the sin of efficiency now make for an epitaph about this vanishing (as is always the case in Ireland's west it seems) way of life--before cellphones, motorways, and yuppies. She blends her own background, neither Irish nor Jewish but just American, and Marin County Californian at that being a rarified species, into her reflections intelligently. I do sense much of the time that as an intellectual rather than the more usual adventure-based travel writer, she tends to look down her nose at the locals and the blow-ins both due to her more elevated level of education and scholarship. This does not weaken the insights she often makes, but it does cast her as rather a cool customer, rather removed from her environs. But such distancing and detachment works to her advantage as she resists the stereotypical itinerary. Tellingly, she makes no effort to visit the Aran Islands, an "indigenous cultural reservation" in her estimation; she eschews the tourist haunts. If you like this, try James Charles Roy's "The Back of Beyond" for another American scholar's account a few but momentously altered years later of his days as a tour guide in the same Irish regions.

In this acclaimed exploration of the culture of others, Rebecca Solnit travels through Ireland, the land of her long-forgotten maternal ancestors. *A Book of Migrations* portrays in microcosm a history made of great human tides of invasion, colonization, emigration, nomadism and tourism. Enriched by cross-cultural comparisons with the history of the American West, *A Book of Migrations* carves a new route through Ireland's history, literature and landscape.

From *Library Journal* Though the scenario is familiar?an American with Irish ancestry travels to Ireland to explore her roots and her identity?this book is not typical. The essays here have a more intellectual bent; the descriptions of the people and the landscape are interspersed with philosophical musings on things such as the use of animal metaphors in our language, the life of Irish patriot Roger Casement, the imagery of blood in discussions of ethnicity, and the reasons why the Travelers (the Irish version of gypsies) are so hated. Solnit (*Savage Dreams*, Sierra Club, 1994), who has written numerous essays in publications such as *Sierra*, writes in an accessible, readable style and displays a thorough knowledge of Irish history and literature. For academic libraries and public libraries with larger travel collections.?Kathleen A. Shanahan, American Univ., Silver Spring, Md. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. Truly exceptional, a paradise for readers. Kirkus s About the Author Rebecca Solnit is author of, among other

books, *Wanderlust*, *A Book of Migrations*, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, the NBCC award-winning *River of Shadows* and *A Paradise Built In Hell*. A contributing editor to *Harpers*, she writes regularly for the *London of Books* and the *Los Angeles Times*. She lives in San Francisco.