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# Temperance Creek: A Memoir



## Synopsis

In the early seventies, some of us were shot like stars from our parents' homes. This was an act of nature, bigger than ourselves. In the austere beauty and natural reality of Hell's Canyon of Eastern Oregon, one hundred miles from pavement, Pam, unable to identify with her parents' world and looking for deeper pathways has a chance encounter with returning Vietnam warrior Skip Royes. Skip, looking for a bridge from survival back to connection, introduces Pam to the vanishing culture of the wandering shepherd and together they embark on a four-year sojourn into the wilderness. From the back of a horse, Pam leads her packstring of readers from overlook to water crossing, down trails two thousand years old, and from the vantages she chooses for us, we feel the edges of our own experiences. It is a memoir of falling in love with a place and a man and the price extracted for that love. Written with deep lyricism, *Temperance Creek* is a work of haunting beauty, fresh and irreverent and rooted in the grit and pleasure of daily life. This is Pam's story, but the courage and truth in the telling is part of our human experience. Seen through a slower more primary mirror, one not so crowded with objectivity, Pam's memoir, is a kind of home-coming, a family reunion for shooting stars.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Watching Royes find her way, not only in nature but through difficult personal decisions, makes for compelling, enduring reading." [The Washington Post](#); Heartfelt and brimming with lyrical appreciation for nature and personal freedom, this is not only the account of a woman who

followed the stirrings of a restless heart. It is also a kind of elegy to the youthful rebels and dreamers of the late 1960s and early '70s in search of new ways of being and belonging. A modern frontier adventure for nature lovers and armchair travelers alike."#151;Kirkus"Pam Royes has written a grand story, overflowing with hunger and beauty and pluck. Held within her tale is an exquisite gift: the chance to see a woman and a man shaped and sculpted #150; and in the end, made more gloriously human #150; by having merged their lives with one of the wildest, most spectacular landscapes on Earth."#151;Gary Ferguson, author of *The Carry Home: Lessons from the American Wilderness*"What's going to happen to a girl child from a sedate household who names her bicycle Dynamite? By this book's lights, her trajectory veers from home into a feral thirst for a different life made from scratch in the mountains. Temperance Creek takes you back to the land in the company of a sensitive, wise, and zesty woman and her chosen man. She'll guide you into remote corners of Oregon and Idaho to herd sheep, lust for the horizontal vertigo of full gallop, ponder the outback ways of men and women, suffer a lost brother, champion a warrior's search for peace, and roll a smoke on horseback as the storm gathers overhead. By reading, it's not too late to live this life. This is a book you will savor, and give to the lucky among your friends."#151;Kim Stafford, author of *100 Tricks Every Boy Can Do: How My Brother Disappeared*"Temperance Creek is a great adventure in a great place. And maybe most of all a great love story. North Dakota girl with wanderlust meets Oregon vet hiding out in remote Hells Canyon of the Snake River with horses. In a flash, throws in her lot, and the two begin a journey through outrageous terrain and sheep camps, learning to live with and off the land, and with each other. There are plenty of Vietnam vet stories out there, and accounts of midcentury music, drugs, and community. Theirs is a different journey, one a few might have guessed at, but fewer would have dared."#151;Rich Wandschneider, Director, Josephine Library of Western History and Culture"There's more true magic in this book than many I've read in years. Pam Royes' voice is clear and sinewy, supremely honest, humble, brave, and funny, and her love story, set in the wilderness in a time of profound cultural transition, is incandescently vivid, earthy and real. Temperance Creek is compulsively readable, and refreshing as a plunge in a deep clear swimming hole."#151;Karen Fisher, author of *A Sudden Country*"Temperance Creek is a compelling memoir about love, courage, and transformation. Pamela Royes deftly chronicles her journey from a suburban college student to a "wild woman," from hippie to shepherdess to outlaw. Her trail starts at the University of Oregon and finishes in wild and remote Hell's Canyon on the Snake River. Along the way, she bravely confronts rattlesnakes, cougars, bears, and a bullet wound to her thigh, while learning the complex tasks of sheepherding from her partner, the intrepid Skip. On another level, the

book honors the legacy of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce people who first occupied the beautiful landscapes the author traverses. This is a wonderful book. Readers will want to put on a pair of comfortable hiking boots and follow the paths the author cherishes."#151;Craig Lesley, author of *Winterkill* and *River Song*"As a young woman, Pam Royes had the guts and grace to do what the rest of us only dream of:~ ~ she ditched convention and lit out for the territory#151;in her case the spectacularly austere territory of Hells Canyon.~ ~ Riding ever deeper into this radiant outback, Pam fell in love #150; first with a landscape, then with a man and finally with a way of life that was fast disappearing before their eyes.~ ~ Pam~¢~ ~¢s memoir of this time and place made me shiver, it made me laugh, it made me wonder#151;and above all it made me see with new eyes a place I thought I knew.~ ~ This is a wise woman~¢~ ~¢s coming of age story#151;what a story, what an age, what a woman!"#151;David Laskin, author of *The Children*~¢~ ~¢s *Blizzard* and *The Family*"Pamela Royes' dramatic history has fascinated me for years. Her life seems a miracle in so many ways, but it is her brave heart, her endurance, her belief in the land, and her capacity for love that has brought her to this place of lyrical contemplation. Like Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, *Temperance Creek* is part adventure story, part cautionary tale, and, finally, a meditation on marriage#151;a fearless reckoning with the decisions that have shaped one woman's life."#151;Kim Barnes, author of *In the Wilderness: Coming of Age in Unknown Country* and *In the Kingdom of Men*If Edward Abbey~¢~ ~¢s *Desert Solitaire* made you wish you could go back in time to be a park ranger in the '60s, *Temperance Creek* may make you wish you could be a shepherd in the early '70s of Eastern Oregon . . . Reminiscent of the best of Pam Houston and Rick Bass, Royes has penned a memoir worthy of repeated reading. ~¢~ ~¢Bend Magazine

Pamela Royes and her husband raise cattle and hay. They have two children and three grandchildren. She is currently working on a book of fiction. They live in Joseph, Oregon.Teresa Jordan is an artist and author who grew up in a house full of books on an isolated ranch in Wyoming where the love of learning she acquired in the local one-room school carried her to Yale and into a lifetime of inquiry. Her books include the memoir *Riding the White Horse Home* and two illustrated journals, *Field Notes from Yosemite: Apprentice to Place*, and *Field Notes from the Grand Canyon: Raging River, Quiet Mind*. Her first book, *Cowgirls: Women of the American West*, was one of the earliest books to give voice to contemporary women working on the land. With her husband, Hal Cannon, she created the series #147;The Open Road~¢~ ~¢ about the outback American West for public radio~¢~ ~¢s "The Savvy Traveler." She now lives in southern Utah near Zion National Park.

Horses, pack horses and mules, rugged country, ornery loner bachelor sheep herders, sour dough starter, dogs, sheep, and more sheep, privileged city dude guests at Red's, and the challenges of such rugged, beautiful and wild country. I am ever so thankful she shared her story of this time of wildness that has pretty much disappeared in this day and age. Wow. Thank you Pamela. I made this book last as long as I could. Like I do with a good bar of dark chocolate. And I kept finding the creeks, homesteads, view points and marking them on my map of the Willows and Hells Canyon. I also gave this book as a Christmas present to my mom, who was born to a homesteading family who were also sheep herders in SE Idaho.

This is one of the best, if not the best memoir I've read, ranking up there with *The Glass Castle* and *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. Pam's willingness to so openly share her feelings and very personal experiences of her young life, reflect the honest, good, and true person she is. So determined, brave, patient, loyal, and hard-working! What an amazing, beautiful, woman.

How many of us ever ran away from home? How many of us were once rebellious teenagers? Who among us were hippies? If you answer yes to those questions, then you have a tiny glimpse of life on the outside of society. To be able to write with such vivid descriptions of nature and openness in human relationships as Pamela Royse does in her first book, *Temperance Creek*. Pamela grew up in North Dakota in a respected and dignified pillar of the community family who had very traditional expectations of themselves, their children and, of course, of others in the community. Fast forward to, oh say, the 70s, to Wallowa County Oregon where Pam, a young woman entranced by a hippie sheep herder, tends sheep at Temperance Creek. Pamela describes how it is to live freely and confidently in the wilderness with the man she loves. Her joy in living in this untamed land experiencing day by day trials and successes, makes this reader wonder, "Could I do that?"

The author is a dear friend of mine, yet that notwithstanding, it is simply one of the best books I have ever read. I couldn't put it down, and didn't want it to end, so I took a week to read the last chapter. She and her husband are the finest of people, with depth that you don't find very often in the modern world. I have a lot of fun with them, meeting once a month at a writer's group a few miles down the road from where I live. So read this book and tell your friends.

I was the District Wildlife Biologist for all Forest Service lands in Wallowa County from 1999-2003. I hiked the Eagle Caps and the Seven Devils, and Hells Canyon; and whenever I would come across an old sheep-herder cabin or some other artifact from this region's past, I would often pause and wonder what had it been like before. Thanks to Ms. Royes, now I know... Excellent read!

OK folks, let's saddle up. We'll pack up our bedrolls, camp coffee pot, cast iron skillet, sourdough starter, and our pocket knives. We'll ride with Pam and Skip and Puss and Pearl and Candy and Hinny into the far, far reaches of the Snake River country, where we'll camp under a star-full sky. We'll keep our eyes peeled for rattlers, cougars, and bears. We'll herd sheep, shoe horses, spend the winter in a tent. Skip has all the skills; Pam learns them too. We'll share their uphill and downhill work of cementing a partnership of romance and respect, truth and trust, work and play. We'll wash up in the icy creek, and maybe do a little 'rastlin'. So mount up, and let's head out. You won't be sorry that you came along.

Having recently hiked the Snake River Trail in Hells Canyon, I could relate to meet of the mentioned places and scenery. Helped my imagination to fit the story. The land is not beautiful to me so it's great to see it through someone else's eyes.

I loved this book. We have been to many of the places she writes about. Very enchanting and absolutely beautiful and rugged. I admire her spirit and courage!

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