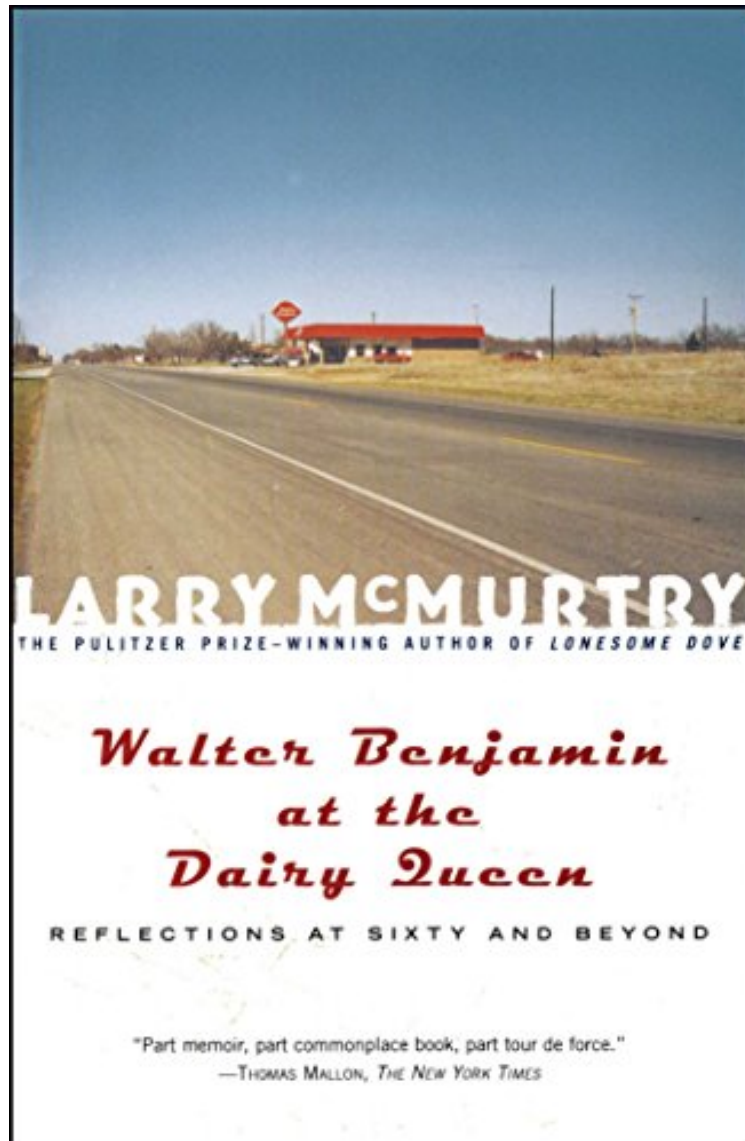


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Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections on Sixty and Beyond (English Edition)

Von Larry McMurtry

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Von Larry McMurtry : **Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections on Sixty and Beyond (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections on Sixty and Beyond (English Edition):

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The

frontier of Larry McMurtry Von Ron Franscell, Author of 'Morgue: A Life in Death' After more than 60 years of life and almost two dozen novels exploring man's various frontiers, Larry McMurtry truly understands that past is prologue, even if it hasn't always been clear *how.* But now, in a collection of essays that amount to a modest memoir, he explores a frontier of his own: How a man's roots -- and his ghosts -- affect his storytelling. "Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen" is about the frontier called Larry McMurtry, and this self-portrait is likely to be the closest thing to an autobiography we'll ever see out of tiny Archer City, Texas. He extols the virtues of everything from a lime Dr. Pepper to rodeo queens, laments the decline of oral storytelling and cowboys, and paints a portrait of a landscape so vast and empty that it hardly seems possible that it could be filled to the brim with the spirit of its inhabitants. McMurtry writes poignantly -- occasionally humorously -- about his own cloistered childhood, spent largely in fear of shrubbery and poultry, and his surprising distaste for the cowboy life. He is most eloquent when writing about his own passion for reading and books, two entirely different subjects for a man who is not only a prolific writer and reader, but also a rare book dealer and collector. In the end, "Walter Benjamin ..." is about growing up and growing old. McMurtry slyly weaves his personal story with the story of a ripening frontier that has been washed by repeated waves of people, ideas and industries, but survived. The Western small town -- whether it's the fictional Thalia or his real hometown of Archer City, or any of a thousand others -- is losing some of its dreams, but goes to sleep each night hoping for new dreams to come along. For those towns and their people, the future is a frontier all its own, with its own vagaries and vicissitudes. For McMurtry, too.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The man behind the words Von Ein Kunde Ever since reading my first McMurtry novel, I've felt much more than mild curiosity about the man behind the words. Information gleaned from media interviews has served only to heighten that curiosity, so this offering of himself is one of the most satisfying books I've read in recent memory. At roughly the same time Mr. McMurtry's grandparents were trying to carve a spot for themselves on the Texas flatlands, my great-grandparents were doing the same on the Kansas prairie. His observations on what life was like for them and for himself resonate with memory for me. But even if one had never set foot on the high plains, his musings would be still be equally compelling. Especially poignant is a chapter setting forth McMurtry's experience with heart bypass surgery and the subsequent loss of self he suffered. I have read other accounts by persons having a similar experience, but didn't come as close to understanding as this brought me. Juxtaposed throughout the book are the decline of book-collecting, as it was -- decades ago -- done on grand scale, and cowboying. The cavalcade of great authors mentioned might spur the casual reader, of which I am one, to dig a little deeper into the vast amount of literature available once one knows where to look. Maybe I'll give Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf another try. There is a tantalizing sentence near the end of the book. It reads, "Of mother, wives, lady loves, and amities amoureuuses--well, that's another book." Well, all right. I'm waiting.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Master Story Teller Von K. J. Presley It is next to impossible for me to be objective about this writer--and particularly about this exquisite collection of essays. So much of his experience parallels mine--Scots-Irish pioneer ancestors, growing up in the "bitterly beautiful" southwest during the forties--in an impoverished environment where books (and readers) were not valued. Like Mr. McMurtry, I developed an insatiable appetite for books when an older cousin gave me his "liberry." Like him, I became a book collector on a shoe string. I especially related to his essay on the tension between reading and writing/herding words. (The latter won out in his life; the former has triumphed in mine.) Mr. McMurtry is far too modest about his work; he is a master storyteller by Benjamin's or anyone's standards. HORSEMAN, PASS BY, is one of the most teachable books, one of the best "rites of passage" books I've worked with. LONESOME DOVE is one of the ten "best reads" I've had in nearly 60 years of heavy reading. Even in my least favorites of his books, such as MOVING ON, there are memorable characters and descriptions that stick in my head. For example, the vast silence of the southwest makes Patsy aware of her isolation: . . . and the sense was heightened when she stepped out on the front porch for a minute. . . the stillness, the moonlight and the stars over the plains gave the night a cleanness and a clarity that were tangible. . . . The night was so beautifully clear that it was disturbing. . . . Like many others, this passage resonates with the joys and sorrows of the human condition, especially in the dry barren vistas of my own "home place." Mr. McMurtry is uniquely equipped to weave the tapestry of the Southwest with all its flaws, its grandeur and stark beauty, its anguish, joy, richness, and its barren, impoverished lives. I love to think of his returning to Archer City--and especially love his bringing all those books home to Texas with him. I believe/pray his best work may be yet to come. God bless him!

Kurzbeschreibung In a lucid, brilliant work of nonfiction -- as close to an autobiography as his readers are likely to get -- Larry McMurtry has written a family portrait that also serves as a larger portrait of Texas itself, as it was and as it has become. Using as a springboard an essay by the German literary critic Walter Benjamin that he first read in Archer City's Dairy Queen, McMurtry examines the small-town way of life that big oil and big ranching have nearly destroyed. He praises the virtues of everything from a lime Dr. Pepper to the lost art of oral storytelling, and describes the brutal effect of the sheer vastness and emptiness of the Texas landscape on Texans, the decline of the cowboy, and

the reality and the myth of the frontier. McMurtry writes frankly and with deep feeling about his own experiences as a writer, a parent, and a heart patient, and he deftly lays bare the raw material that helped shape his life's work: the creation of a vast, ambitious, fictional panorama of Texas in the past and the present. Throughout, McMurtry leaves his readers with constant reminders of his all-encompassing, boundless love of literature and books. Do you really want to listen to a cranky old man ramble on about his childhood, his heart surgery, his hobbies, his son, and the way things, in general, aren't what they used to be? It turns out you do. In *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*, Larry McMurtry comes the old pardner, and the result is a powerful elegy for the lost spaces in American life. He takes as his starting point an afternoon he spent at the Dairy Queen in Archer City, Texas, reading the penses of early 20th-century German philosopher Walter Benjamin. At the time Benjamin was writing, McMurtry's grandparents were settling dusty reaches of west Texas, and McMurtry crosscuts neatly between Benjamin's spent, smoky Europe and his own grandparents' America: "While my grandparents were dealing with almost absolute emptiness, both social and cultural, Europe was approaching an absolute (and perhaps intolerable) density." McMurtry demonstrates a confidence almost bordering on naivet in the way he appropriates the great thinking of Europe and applies it to his own history. He apologizes neither to the highfalutin Europeans nor to the down-home Americans, but makes them lie down together any way he sees fit. This brio makes *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen* a thrilling read. McMurtry's book-length essay loops outward from Archer City to encompass a polemic against computers, a foray into the world of book collecting, a family biography, an account of his soul-loss after heart surgery, and finally an elegy for the cowboy. This last lament casts a shadow back over what we've read. Not just over this book, but over McMurtry's whole body of work. A man who's lived his whole life in print gives us a glimpse of what has fed him, and, strangely, it's loss. "Because of when and where I grew up, on the Great Plains just as the herding tradition was beginning to lose its vitality, I have been interested all my life in vanishing breeds." The master of storytelling is finally revealed as a master of melancholy. --Claire Dederer *Pressestimmen* Thomas Mallon *The New York Times* Part memoir, part commonplace book, part tour de force. William Murchison *The Washington Times* The kind of long, deep wisdom found between these covers should occasion long, deep thought, suitable for the Dairy Queen or for that matter anywhere. Bill Bell *New York Daily News* A love story about books...[*Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*] is a sweeping, thoughtful summation, as comfortable as old boots...Richly satisfying.