



Summoning the Mountains: Pilgrimage into Forty

by Amy Allen

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A story of camaraderie, personal goals, relationship dynamics and communing with nature move this narrative along in such a way, the act of reading it is as enjoyable as finding out how Amy's journey ends. —Salena Lettera, www.salenalettera.com

Amy draws on a wealth of spiritual and life experience for her decision to hike the Appalachian Trail, described by some as nature's cathedral. Her descriptions of an ever changing mix of weather, other hikers, magnificent vistas and intricacies of the hike itself shows how the AT experience mirrors our life journey. People spend much time and money looking for that magic "something" that will bring them into a direct and intimate experience with our cosmos. —Calen Rayne-DMin

Hoping to rekindle the spirit of freedom she once knew, a divorced, single mother sets aside family and society's expectations to seek fulfillment by following a lifelong calling. On the eve of turning forty, Amy reaches for her personal goal of hiking the Appalachian Trail. Accepting the name of "Willow" bestowed by her teenage sons, she settles them into new lives at their father's house and departs on a 2000-mile walk.

Amy journals of walking through storms, injuries, hunger and doubt. Surprised when her sixteen-year old is suspended from school, Willow bends to this new development to find herself mothering on the trail and learning as much from her son as he does from his adventure. When her son returns to school, Willow must find her place within the hiker community and face her fears alone.

Willow transports the reader into the forest, giving the armchair hiker a glimpse into a world of coyotes, butterflies, birds and bears, sharing her determination and frustration as she makes her way from Georgia to Maine on foot. This is a story about what it means to embrace challenge in our lives—a story about change.

Amy Allen holds a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Appalachian State University with a concentration in Anthropology and an English minor and studied at University of Oklahoma's Field School of Ethnography. Amy has been a backpacker for over 28 years living out of her backpack in college and spending a winter living in a tipi. She has journaled her life experiences since age 12 and won the NC Federation of Women's Clubs Literature Scholarship for her poetry at age 16. Her enthusiasm for life is apparent in her eclectic life experiences including logging with a team of draft horses, baling Christmas trees, tapping maples, bottling maple syrup, organic gardening, yoga, sewing, canning and preserving food, baking as well as more conventional work such as customer service, technical support, human resources and data analysis. She lives in Western North Carolina with her family. Her latest adventure has been long haul trucking with her husband. Their trucking blog can be found at www.opnrds.blogspot.com.

Amy continues long-distance hiking and has completed the Foothills Trail and parts of the Benton MacKaye Trail.

<http://amyallenbooks.com/>