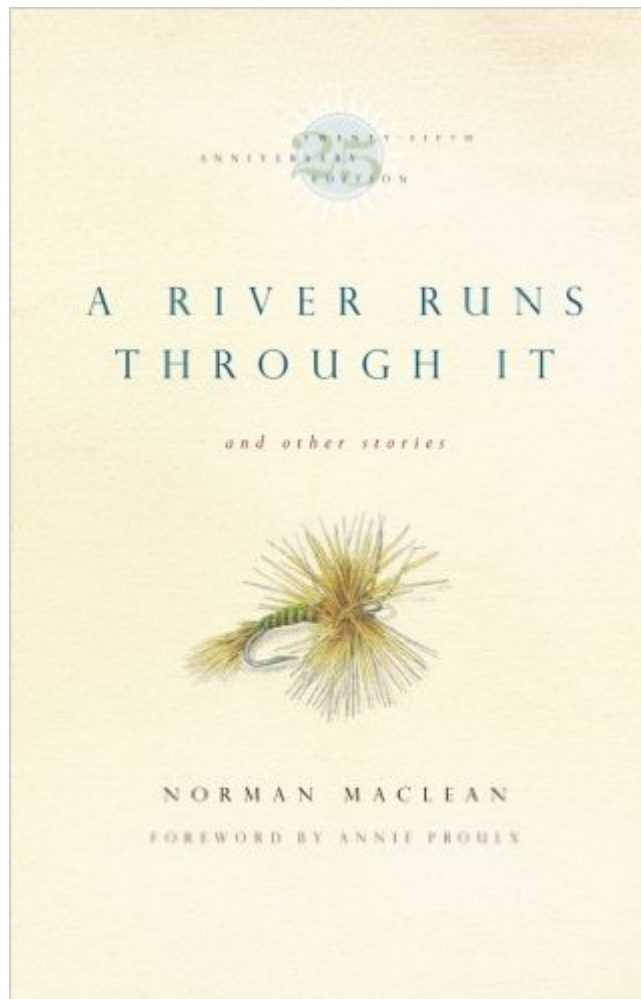


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A River Runs Through It And Other Stories, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

Just as Norman Maclean writes at the end of "A River Runs through It" that he is "haunted by waters," so have readers been haunted by his novella. A retired English professor who began writing fiction at the age of 70, Maclean produced what is now recognized as one of the classic American stories of the twentieth century. Originally published in 1976, *A River Runs through It and Other Stories* now celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, marked by this new edition that includes a foreword by Annie Proulx. Maclean grew up in the western Rocky Mountains in the first decades of the twentieth century. As a young man he worked many summers in logging camps and for the United States Forest Service. The two novellas and short story in this collection are based on his own experiences—the experiences of a young man who found that life was only a step from art in its structures and beauty. The beauty he found was in reality, and so he leaves a careful record of what it was like to work in the woods when it was still a world of horse and hand and foot, without power saws, "cats," or four-wheel drives. Populated with drunks, loggers, card sharks, and whores, and set in the small towns and surrounding trout streams and mountains of western Montana, the stories concern themselves with the complexities of fly fishing, logging, fighting forest fires, playing cribbage, and being a husband, a son, and a father. By turns raunchy, poignant, caustic, and elegiac, these are superb tales which express, in Maclean's own words, "a little of the love I have for the earth as it goes by." A first offering from a 70-year-old writer, the basis of a top-grossing movie, and the first original fiction published by the University of Chicago Press, *A River Runs through It and Other Stories* has sold more than a million copies. As Proulx writes in her foreword to this new edition, "In 1990 Norman Maclean died in body, but for hundreds of thousands of readers he will live as long as fish swim and books are made."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When, several years ago, I started reading a lot of fishing books, one title kept cropping up in other books. Every author seemed to defer to *A River Runs Through It*; it was universally acknowledged to be the greatest fishing story ever written. I dutifully sought it out and read it. I'm sure everyone has seen the movie by now, so I won't be giving anything away when I confess that Paul's death upset me so much that, on that first reading, I hated the book. It was like *Old Yeller* and the *MASH* where Henry died and *Brian's Song* all rolled into one. Returning to it better prepared, I simply enjoyed it for the language and for the bittersweet family story it relates and I learned to love it. Then, in 1992, Robert Redford brought the story to the screen and the beauty of the scenery and some terrific performances, combined with the large chunks of narrative taken directly from the book, resulted in one of the better movies of recent years and cemented the book's place in the pantheon of great American stories. Amazingly, Norman MacLean, who taught English at the University of Chicago for 43 years, did not publish this book until 1976, after retiring from his teaching job in 1973. I don't know whether he had worked on the story throughout his whole life, as was the case with the posthumous book *Young Men and Fire*, but the final product has such beautifully sculpted language, that it would not be hard to believe that it is the end result of four decades of effort. Here is the famous opening: In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing. We lived at the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana, and our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others.

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