

David Ward
Bay of Hope
Five Years in
Newfoundland



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A “come from away” exploring love, loneliness, and adventure in remote Newfoundland

Part memoir, part nature writing, part love story, Bay of Hope is an occasionally comical, often adversarial, and always emotional story about the five years ecologist David Ward lived in an isolated Newfoundland community; of how he ended up there, worked, survived the elements, and coped with loneliness and a lack of intimacy. But this book is also a story about David's 78 McCallum, Newfoundland, neighbors, the unforgiving mountain and wilderness culture they call home, and why their government wishes they were dead.

Creative nonfiction written in the tradition of Farley Mowat's Bay of Spirits, Ward's memoir is also evocative of Michael Crummey's poignant novel Sweetland and Annie Dillard's Pulitzer Prize-winning Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. A book about how great adventure tales do not always have to include dramatic, never-attempted, death-defying feats, Bay of Hope shows us that a person can travel a million miles over the treacherous terrain within their hearts, as long as they're courageous enough to make such an arduous trek.

Bay of Hope: Five Years in Newfoundland Details

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From Reader Review Bay of Hope: Five Years in Newfoundland for online ebook

Harold Walters says

Follow the link to read my column featuring this book:

<https://www.cbncompass.ca/living/book...>

Nicole Beaudry says

I want to preface this review by saying that I did genuinely enjoy this book, and I think that for the right reader, it is an excellent book. I may not be the right reader. David Ward writes, somewhat disjointedly, about his five years living in McCallum, an outpost community in Newfoundland's Southwest Coast. The lives of those 76 residents pepper his own story in vignette-style interludes that punctuate the points he's making, sometimes rather heavily, although generally in a very emotional way. You can't help but want to move to these secluded areas, indulge in a slower life (I read the last 100 pages of this after an exceptionally busy work weekend including a giant literary festival and then an eleven hour day today that included a two hour focus group for a Holocaust exhibition geared towards children), and find a sense of community so often lost in big cities. When he speaks of home existing in two places - telling those in McCallum he's going "home" to Ontario for visits, but then telling those in Ontario he's visiting about his "home" in McCallum, my own heart yawned open as I reflected on my recent, exciting, yearned for, visit "home" to Kelowna (which gets a mention in the memoir, very thrilling), but on how much I missed my "home" of Montreal.

In that way, in a lot of ways, Ward nails it. His language is admittedly vernacular, casual, with a level of intimacy I found occasionally uncomfortable - I don't know you!, I wanted to yell. He draws with an incredible efficiency the complexity of the relocation situation for these outpost communities. I would have liked to know while reading if McCallum were still there three years after the story ends, when this saw publication, but that's nothing a Google search can't solve. I did appreciate the way that he touched on many things relevant to daily life, although I found his overstated dislike of mainlanders unnerving and a bit frustrating, especially as he outlines later why it can be so difficult to maintain a life in these outpost communities, but seemed quite ready to find fault in those who express an interest but are incapable of making the leap. It's a big leap.

I was also very disappointed in the way he talks about women, especially the women in his love life. This is probably what made me "not the right reader" for this book, because perhaps for somebody less sensitive, this could be construed as "part love story" in the romantic sense. I've chosen to read that as part love story in regards to Ward's love for McCallum and its people, because the suggested romance playing out at the end of the book left a bad taste in my mouth, as did his way of talking about his previous lovers, who frequently seemed to be reduced to being "lookers." Surely, Mr. Ward, the women that you maintained such long relationships with deserved better? Anyways. For those who aren't put off by such a dismissive way of touching upon the women he has shared his life with, Ward's book is thoughtful, balanced, and incisive; it forced me to rethink how I conduct my life, and how I perceive the natural consequences of the choices I've made regarding how my life is lived. In that, I'm grateful, because I think it has made me less resentful - I may not like the business of my life, but there is an alternative, and it isn't one I'm willing to take. Perspective is a gift.

Thank you, ECW, for my copy! It most certainly has passages I will revisit in bleak, exhausted moments.

Sue Hart says

This book is an intimate peek into the life of a man that spent 5 years in a small fishing outport in Newfoundland. It's a fast read in many ways but the authors voice has stayed with me much longer than the book lasted. A must read for those interested in an authentic voice! Loved loved loved this book!

Regan says

Recently finished this and was pleasantly surprised. My mother grew up in McCallum and we go back to visit at least once every two years. It was so nice to hear about all my beloved family members whom he also had excellent experiences with. It was great reading about Herman seeing as it's been a while since I've seen him and definitely miss his cheerful smile and leafs talk. Also loved hearing about how amazing Aunt Lin and Uncle Lloyd were to him because their generosity truly couldn't be measured. Really missing some Skip-Bo and rhubarb squares right now. Aside from there being no mention of my grandparents which was a little upsetting yet completely understandable I thoroughly enjoyed.

Lisabeth says

Thanks to Netgalley, the publisher, and the author for allowing me to read and review a digital copy of this book. Part memoir, part nature writing, part love story, Bay of Hope is an occasionally comical, often adversarial, and always an emotional story about the five years ecologist David Ward lived in an isolated Newfoundland community.

Sarah says

A few years ago, I visited Newfoundland and absolutely loved it, so I was very excited to read this memoir of the five year's that the author spent in an outport in southwestern Newfoundland. The book details the life of the residents of McCallum during a time when the government is offering money for the residents to resettle to more urban areas, where public services are easier (cheaper) for the government to provide. "A lot of Newfoundlanders like to live in rural environments, but in no way do they wish to be there alone." This describes the town and residents of McCallum and the stories that are told in this memoir. This is a great read for anyone who has ever wanted to live "almost" off the grid or is interested in stories of rural Newfoundland.

I received a copy of this Advanced Reader Copy via NetGalley and I highly recommend it.

Bonnye Reed says

GNab I loved Sweetland, so had to ask for this memoir as well, to return to Canada's Atlantic islands. Bay of Hope is a memoir of sorts, a journal, and David Ward is very open with his wants and needs at this time of his life. A tenured professor, he retired early to go to his house on Bay of Hope and write full time. At fifty-something he needs to find a 'place', to not to be adrift any longer. He is in love with a way of life that is a dying art - living and fishing on an outport with very few of what we in this day and age consider essentials. Shopping. Malls. Theatres and movie houses and restaurants and bars. Everyone on the island can shop on-line if the internet is working but for the most part they already have everything they need. Or if they don't have it yet they can get it at Fudge's Store on the boardwalk in McCallum. Or they can go on the ferry to actual shops but who wants to shop?

David wants to fish and lobster and hunt moose. And he does all of that and more, and writes and keeps in touch with his outside acquaintances. On a trip home visiting friends and family in Ontario he allows himself to be seduced into buying a new car. There are no cars on McCallum. The ferry is not capable of carrying cars. He only needs a car three or four times a year. But, he tells us, he has a "lifelong love affair with the internal combustion engine", and when around automobiles, the "car-loving little boy in me kicks in and I go shopping". He needed that car. He needs a home. And he needs intimacy. He needs someone to talk with, to walk with, to climb mountains with. He wants to share his life, where ever he lives it. And he will most likely never find his life mate on McCallum. "-while it's population peaked at 284 in the late 1980's it has the same number of residents today - 79 - as it did when Henry was governor." (I am assuming this is Sir Henry Arthur Blake, governor from 1887 - 1889.) There are five school aged children in that count, but most of the population there are late middle aged and senior citizens.

Things are affected dramatically by the Canadian government's 'offer' to buy out the residents on these small islands - but only if 90% of the residents agree to move to more populated mainland communities. This turns want-to-leave neighbors against those not willing to leave, and vice-versa. The more people who do actually leave (or die) without waiting for the majority vote, the harder it is for those holding out for the pay off to get to the crucial 90%. You have to actually live there for two plus years before you can vote.

David loves the life on his island, his neighbors, his work, his recreations. There is only one thing missing. Besides the car.

I received a free electronic copy of this memoir from Netgalley, David Ward, and ECW Press in exchange for an honest review. Thank you all for sharing your hard work with me.

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ECW Press

Magill says

This is a curious little book - part memoir, part social observation, part confessional. And I can't quite say whether it failed or succeeded as I don't think that "success" was the purpose of the book, for the author - at least from what I gleaned from his more philosophical musings.

The author gets right, what many writers do not, capturing a conversational, idiomatic style that, as much as it meanders and seems to digress from various points or observations, feels like a conversation, albeit one-sided since the reader cannot join in. And the narrative has a distinctive cadence and voice that feels natural and unstilted.

Although it seems there is an organizational structure to the book, there is more of a stream-of-consciousness flow to the topics addressed in any particular chapter which, for me anyway, meant that I remained curious as to where I would come out in any one chapter - memoir? political comments? confessional?

Overall, gently written except for some comments about political processes, and clearly written with affection for the people on his island community. If it lacked anything, a little levity would not have gone amiss. The author mocks himself and his limitations in a mild fashion but, given the confessional tone in places, it doesn't lighten the tone; it tells but does not show the delight and joy and qualities of the place and the people, and himself.

In the author's ... defense? His confessions about his past relationships, while highly personal, were about his emotional and mental journey and I did not feel that the women were dismissed in any way (although I am not sure I would want any former relationships to revisit in writing a past relationship with me - lol - or a possible future one, for that matter!) but they were a part of his journey to finding his authentic self. Which is perhaps, what the book is about/for - himself and his story.

I also think it is interesting, especially in the days of #metoo, that the author is willing to expose himself and to choose to define his identity and manhood and what success looks like, on his own terms. To choose to reject some of the standards and expectations of manhood, often toxic, that many men accept unquestioningly while others struggle to survive within its constraints. While it is a bit uncomfortable to read at times, and in some places a bit TMI, the author may be challenging the reader's perceptions, as much as himself...

In all of this, I am not sure that the gov't hates the communities, although I have no doubt that its ineptitude in addressing the challenges and pitting residents against one another is typical idiocy. And it is disappointing and disturbing that the politicians value their land and their identity so poorly that they fail to recognize the immense opportunities in supporting grassroots efforts. And perhaps a deeper exploration of these aspects would have provided a bit more backbone or structure to the book - although it would have required a delicate balance of tone and depth of information - to juxtapose the other aspects without overpowering them - to share the political short-sightedness and the passion of the people for their identity and place.

This book is non-fiction but, beyond that, it is hard to define what exact category it falls into. But being short and small, it doesn't require a major commitment from the reader and is an interesting side-trip into the philosophical untangling of one man's story. And it doesn't hurt to support a Canadian author either :-)

Scott says

A perfect glimpse into the life and politics of the survivors of the village of McCallum and the other existing outpost communities in Newfoundland. Everyone that moves to a remote community from larger cities has a back story. Mr Ward shares his very openly with us which adds layers to an already complex story. Definitely a book that should be read by anyone interested in remote Canadian culture, he captures what looks like a disappearing way of life. Highly recommended.

Lizz says

Oof. A few good parts, but mostly bad parts. For a recollection of five years spent mostly writing, the book struck me as surprisingly unreflective. It's tough to tell what the author actually thinks about many things -- except *finding/caring for a woman* which he clearly thinks is extremely important.

I was immediately turned off by a scene in which the author tries to describe himself as an advocate for "the gays"...Ward's desire to come off in a positive light and his actual attitudes appear in conflict, or at least unexamined.
