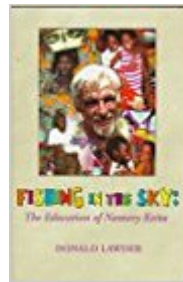




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Fishing In The Sky: The Education Of Namory Keita



Synopsis

What distinguishes this remarkable narrative from other accounts of personal growth is not just its vivid and intimate picture of West African life, but the fact that its author embarked on his adventure at an age when most men and women are resigned to life in a rocking chair. At age sixty-six, after the break-up of a stormy marriage, Donald Lawder begins a new life as a volunteer teacher for the Peace Corps in the impoverished country of Mali, in West Africa. He is adopted by a Moslem family, given a Malian name, and learns to pray in the village mosque. As "Professor of English" at the state teacher's college in Mali's capital city of Bamako, he teaches Debate, Black American History, and the philosophy of Emerson and Thoreau to French-speaking African students and becomes deeply involved with a Moslem student less than one third his age. Later, after a two-year job hunt in the U.S. convinces him that America is no country for old men, he returns to Bamako for good, as chief of an African family of six children ranging in age from three to twenty-three years. He arrives in time to witness his unarmed students' heroic overthrow of the brutal dictator Moussa Traore and their confused efforts to establish one of the first democracies in West Africa. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1983, Lawder (*The Wild Bird and Other Poems*) volunteered for the Peace Corps at the age of 66 and was assigned to teach English in Bamako, the capital of Mali. This arresting memoir of the new life he experienced in West Africa more than makes up for the occasional passages of stilted prose. Lawder's involvement in the lives of the often impoverished people he met was heartfelt, and the

Maliens reciprocated by accepting him into their society. On a "name day" he was inducted into the Keita clan, one of whose leading ancestors was Namory of the subtitle. During his first three-year tenure, Lawder formed close ties with an extended Muslim family he met through a woman who cooked for him. He provides vivid portraits of the students he taught in debate and African American literature classes and describes his love affair with a young Malian woman that almost resulted in marriage. After two years in the U.S. Lawder returned to Bamako permanently, where, at the age of 78, he now lives with his adopted family of six African children, two of whom he rescued from the traditional custom of female genital excision. Photos. Copyright 1997 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

I loved reading this book and the adventure that I shared. I really felt like I was there with the author. What also made this book particularly interesting is that the author was older when he joined the Peace Corps, so he had a more mature way of looking at life and people. Though the man is not a perfect man and I think sometimes just a bit naive, he really was a nice man sharing his very human experience and perceptions. This book really is worth the time, and I was sad to see it come to an end. I highly recommend it.

I liked this biography which tells about life in Mali (in western Africa) and a 68 year old Peace Corp teacher's relations with local families. The author keeps this story interesting and well paced. This is his second book. The first was a book of poetry (also enjoyable) called the "Wild Bird".

Accurate and well-written account of a Peace Corps experience in Mali West Africa, during the 1980s.

I was in Don Lawder's Peace Corps group and got to know him only superficially during our 3-months of training. Reading this book 21 years later, I now realize what a complex person he was. This is a great book if you are considering Peace Corps service. No two people have the same experience, so don't expect your two years to be just like his, but this will help you appreciate that you will be sent there to interact with people, not necessarily change them. Like Don, you will be changed much more than they.

Lawder writes beautifully of his life as an older Peace Corps volunteer in Africa. Rather than present himself as the savior of these impoverished people, he shows how he is, in a sense, saved.

Adopted by a Malian family, he makes a life for himself with them, becoming a de facto grandfather. He portrays the Malians as an intelligent, warm, hard-working people living under difficult circumstances, and it's interesting to "meet" them through this absorbing book.

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