



The Unsettlers: In Search of the Good Life in Today's America

Mark Sundeen

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The radical search for the simple life in today's America.

In the dead of winter, a former marine biologist and his pregnant wife, a classically trained opera singer, disembark an Amtrak train in La Plata, Missouri, assemble two bikes, and pedal off into the night, bound for a homestead they've purchased, sight unseen. Meanwhile, in Detroit, a horticulturist, daughter of the city and descendant of Mississippi sharecroppers, and her husband, a disillusioned public school teacher, have turned to urban farming to revitalize the blighted city they both love. And near Missoula, Montana, a couple who have been at the forefront of organic farming for decades navigate what it means to live and raise a family ethically.

More than ever, we seem to be yearning for "the simple life." We want to reconnect with the land and the environment in a deeper way that can assuage modern ills. We seek a livelihood that exercises body and mind without taking a toll on the planet. We long to nurture spirit and community instead of distracting and isolating ourselves with electronics. We even dream utopian dreams of discovering ways of life that model for others answers to the question of how we can live more sustainably, peacefully, authentically. A work of immersive journalism steeped in a distinctively American social history and sparked by a personal quest, *The Unsettlers* traces the search for the simple life not only through the stories of those three very different couples, but through the visionaries, ascetics, and artists that inspired each of them to walk away from the life they knew in order to find (or create) a better existence. Captivating and clear-eyed, it dares us to imagine what a sustainable, ethical, authentic future might actually look like.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Ben Papenfuss:

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