



# The Solace of Open Spaces

By Gretel Ehrlich

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A stunning collection of personal observations that uses images of the American West to probe larger concerns in lyrical, evocative prose that is a true celebration of the region.

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## The Solace of Open Spaces By Gretel Ehrlich Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #53614 in Books
- Brand: Penguin Books
- Published on: 1986-12-02
- Released on: 1986-12-02
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Format: Deckle Edge
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.70" h x .40" w x 5.10" l, .26 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 144 pages

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

"Everything in nature invites us constantly to be what we are. We are often like rivers: careless and forceful, timid and dangerous, lucid and muddied, eddying, gleaming, still." Whether she's reflecting on nature's teachings, divulging her experiences as a cowpuncher, or painting vivid word portraits of the people she lives and works with, Gretel Ehrlich's observations are lyrical and funny, wise and authentic. After moving from the city to a vast new state, she writes of adjusting to cowboy life, boundless open spaces, and the almost incomprehensible harshness of a Wyoming winter:

"When it's fifty below, the mercury bottoms out and jiggles there as if laughing at those of us still above ground. Once I caught myself on tiptoes, peering down into the thermometer as if there were an extension inside inscribed with higher and higher declarations of physical misery: ninety below to the power of ten and so on."

After experiencing the isolated life of a sheep herder, she writes, "Keenly observed the world is transformed. The landscape is engorged with detail, every movement on it chillingly sharp. The air between people is charged. Days unfold, bathed in their own music. Nights become hallucinatory; dreams, prescient."

Ehrlich's gift is one of subtle precision. She writes beauty into the plainest of thoughts and meaning into the simplest of ideas: "True solace is finding none, which is to say, it is everywhere." --*Kathryn True*

### From Publishers Weekly

Like many before her, poet Gretel Ehrlich discovered the therapeutic qualities of the West. In 1976, a time of personal crisis, she moved from the East to a small farm in Wyoming where she ultimately found peace of mind and inspiration. Originally, she had gone west to make a film for PBS; she returned to work with neighbors at cattle- and sheep-ranching, taking pleasure in open spaces. Ehrlich writes with sensitivity and affection about people, the seasons and the landscape. Whether she is enjoying solitude or companionship, her writing evokes the romance and timelessness of the West. November  
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### From Library Journal

Many urbanites sojourn in the West to commune with nature in the wide-open spaces, but few have related their experiences, or so fully captured the essence of Wyoming, as well as this author. She was sent from New York to the Big Horn region in 1976 to make a film about sheepherders. To recover from the death of a loved one, she wandered near and far for two years before returning to northern Wyoming, where she finally found solace. The vivid descriptions of the physical aspects of her surroundings are more than balanced by her poetic commentaries on the nature of the sheepherders, cowpokes, and Native Americans who inhabit the area. This paean to Wyoming should find a place in all special collections on the West and would be a fine addition to general collections. Sondra Brunhumer, Western Mich. Univ. Libs., Kalamazoo  
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**Ken Martin:**

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**Curt Hall:**

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