

The Art of the Wasted Day A spirited inquiry into the lost value of leisure and daydream The Art of the Wasted Day is a picaresque travelogue of leisure written from a lifelong enchantment with solitude. Patricia Hampl visits the homes of historic exemplars of ease who made repose a goal, even an art form. She begins with two celebrated eighteenth-century Irish ladies who ran off to live a life of "retirement" in rural Wales. Her search then leads to Moravia to consider the monk-geneticist, Gregor Mendel, and finally to Bordeaux for Michel Montaigne—the hero of this book—who retreated from court life to sit in his chateau tower and write about whatever passed through his mind, thus inventing the personal essay. Hampl's own life winds through these pilgrimages, from childhood days lazing under a neighbor's beechnut tree, to a fascination with monastic life, and then to love—and the loss of that love which forms this book's silver thread of inquiry. Finally, a remembered journey down the Mississippi near home in an old cabin cruiser with her husband turns out, after all her international quests, to be the great adventure of her life. The real job of being human, Hampl finds, is getting lost in thought, something only leisure can provide. The Art of the Wasted Day is a compelling celebration of the purpose and appeal of letting go. ...more The Art of the Wasted Day PDF ebook

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