



DAVID GUTERSON

author of *SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS*

The Other

David Guterson

[Download now](#)

[Read Online ➔](#)

The Other

David Guterson

The Other David Guterson

From the author of the bestselling *Snow Falling on Cedars* comes a compelling new novel about youth and idealism, adulthood and its compromises, and two powerfully different visions of what it means to live a good life.

The Other Details

Date : Published June 3rd 2008 by Alfred A. Knopf (first published 2008)

ISBN : 9780307263155

Author : David Guterson

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Fiction, Literature, Literary Fiction

 [Download The Other ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Other ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Other David Guterson

From Reader Review The Other for online ebook

Ann says

I slogged through this book, wishing the author had given me more white space on the pages, and that so much of it wasn't flashback retelling. I didn't like any of the characters and while other reviewers extol this book for its "deep friendship" between two men, I just saw them both as pathetic. For me, the narrator was more problematic than his wacko/visionary reclusive friend because 1) I could not see why he stayed in the relationship (which at times was borderline abusive, verbally), 2) he was co-dependent with an unstable acquaintance who didn't offer much in return in the friendship, 3) he didn't seem to have many other friends or make that effort, 4) the way he described his "real life" (teaching, wife, kids), it was his relationship with "the other" that formed the deep parts of his life.

Maybe this is a "guy book" that I just don't get, but not even the writing captured me even though I had liked SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS. (Didn't like OUR LADY OF THE FOREST as much, but that story at least kept me wanting to read more.)

Chaz says

O.k Where to begin? This book in many ways parallels "into the wild" and began with a bang. I was really drawn to the characters in the first pages. Introspective, pot smoking, wilderness junkies are always fun to read about and so Neil countrymen and his friend John William were intriguing.

Neil becomes an English teacher and John William chisels out a cave in the wild and lives there for the next seven years or so. I thought the story had a lot of potential, and the focus of the author should have been more on their relationship. That's what made the novel breathe at all -- I hate to be a mean reviewer since I probably couldn't write a novel, but it needed serious editing.

There is no doubt that -- David Guttermann is a intellectual, he's incredibly bright and must have used most all the GRE words on that top 100 that you need to know list. He went a little over the top by mentioning over 30 or 40 different titles of books he must've enjoyed reading.

not bad-- but not good.

Basilia says

It was good, some beautiful writing, so beautiful I wanted to write it down... a good plot, complex characters, but it was the end that really grabbed me. I wanted to call up the author and say....you nailed it!!!

Laura says

Good writing, enjoyed this. From author of *Snow Falling on Cedars*. About two boys who become friends, one is rich and eccentric. He becomes a hermit living in the Hoh forest and the other watches out for him and leads his own life, getting married, becoming a teacher. Then his friend dies and leaves him a multi-millionaire. The story keeps going back and forth, with too little detail in some parts and too much in others.

Kevin says

"Snow Falling on Snoozers..."

Save yourself four hours and just take two Ambien instead.

This tale holds promise but turns out to be a plodding bore-fest. The narrator protagonist tells the story of his eccentric buddy John William Barry.

The latter is a trust fund kid who determines to embark into the woods and live (and eventually die) like a hermit.

Long after the death, the protagonist learns that his friend has willed his \$400+ million fortune to the narrator.

I loved "East of the Mountains" and thought "Snow Falling on Cedars" was good but thought this plodding tale was a dud. For example, there are multiple points where a single paragraph runs on for a page, a page and a half.

That alone does not earn the novel my critique, but suggests the degree of tedium that lies in store for the intrepid reader.

jillian says

David Guterson writes books that aren't just shaped by my native Pacific Northwest: they are the Northwest. His narratives wouldn't happen anywhere but the Northwest, as the geography defines the stories. Whether it is the nature of the island in *Snow Falling on Cedars*, or the incessant rain in *Our Lady of the Forest*, these stories are born out of Seattle and the areas within a hundred miles of it. Each of his books contains dozens of details that explain Washington State, while reminding us of how short Seattle's memory really is.

In this tale of two friends, Neil and John, there are a lot of aspects of Seattle memory that are unique to that place. The wealth of early Boeing, and the ultra-rich of the neighborhoods on Lake Washington. Neil Countryman is not from that wealth, but his friend John William Barry is. Both boys share an affinity for survivalist-style expeditions in the rainforests of the Northwest, but that overlapping facet of their personalities narrows as time goes on. Neil settles into his life in Seattle with his wife, and moves from his blue collar background to teaching. John William, however, becomes a mountain man of the Olympic Peninsula, existing mostly off the land, his survival aided by the supplies Neil brings him. In exchange for this, John William leaves Neil the contents of his trust fund, leaving Neil on a scale of wealth associated with

early Microsoft employees. Neil has no choice but to accept his friend's gift, but he still struggles to understand John William's strange brilliance, his genius, and his decision to live and die in the rainforest.

After working the tourboats through the waterways in Seattle for a year, I have a different view of the city than I did when I lived and worked on the Eastside. Seattle is a blue collar town. The wealthy weren't the super-rich spawned by the software era, or even on a scale with the wealthy classes of the mid-century East Coast. The money in the area was from Boeing, from the small scale Pacific Northwest banks, from trade with Alaska. When I lived there ten years ago, the money from Microsoft had become ridiculous, and Amazon and Starbucks stock was making the situation worse. Seattle was becoming less isolated, less dependent on the trades that had kept it going for a century. Logging had died years ago, fishing was slowing down, and grunge was long since dead. In "The Other", Guterson takes the reader back to that smaller scale Seattle, and compares it against the Seattle of today. It is a story of Neil Countryman's quest to understand his strange friend, but it is also a testament to a Washington that is rapidly changing.

Buchdoktor says

David Guterson schreibt über den pazifischen Nordwesten der USA, eine Gegend, in der er selbst lebt – darum haben seine Bücher bei mir von vornherein einen Stein im Brett. „Der Andere“ hat mich zunächst zögern lassen, weil es nach Thoreaus „Walden“ in der Literatur bereits einige kauzige Einzelgänger gab, die sich aus der Zivilisation zurückziehen.

Den Ichherzähler Neil Countryman und John William Barry verbindet eine ungewöhnliche Freundschaft. Die beiden wachsen in Gesellschaftsschichten Seattles auf, die nicht unterschiedlicher sein könnten und selten Kontakt miteinander haben. Neils irisch-stämmiger Familien-Clan arbeitet in Handwerksberufen, während John Williams Vater ein hohes Tier bei Boeing ist und seine Vorfahren zu den Gründern der Stadt gehörten. Die beiden Jungen lernen sich als 16-Jährige zufällig beim Laufen kennen. Ihre Wege sind vorgezeichnet, John wird die Elite-Uni Lakeside besuchen und dort karrieredienliche Kontakte knüpfen, Neil als erster seiner Familie ein Studium abschließen und es selbst finanzieren. Als Neil als Mittfünfziger seine Erinnerungen an seine Freundschaft mit John niederschreibt, hat er ein Berufsleben als Lehrer hinter sich und mehr als einen Roman geschrieben, ohne sich unter Druck zum Veröffentlichen zu fühlen. Er scheint mit sich und seinem Leben im Einklang zu stehen. Vor kurzem hat Neil unerwartet ein unvorstellbar hohes Vermögen geerbt und ist durch seine Freundschaft zum „Eremiten von Hoh“ unfreiwillig berühmt geworden.

John William war schon als Jugendlicher anstrengend für seine Mitmenschen. Ohne den bekannten Familiennamen im Hintergrund hätte man seine Entwicklung zum Soziopathen und späteren Straftäter befürchten können. Ich habe mich auch gefragt, welche Aussichten ein Junge aus Johns Verhältnissen gehabt hätte, der sein Leben lang im Schatten des erfolgreichen Vaters stehen würde. Die Lust, seine körperlichen Grenzen auszutesten, verbindet John mit Neil; gemeinsam besteigen die beiden alle Gipfel der Olympic Mountains. Während Neil studiert, zieht John in einen Wohnwagenanhänger am Fluss Hoh, der nach einem Indianerstamm benannt ist. Schließlich setzt John noch eins drauf, zieht in eine abgelegene Höhle im Nationalpark und verwischt mit Johns Hilfe endgültig seine Spuren. Das Projekt wirkt amerikanisch-bizar, denn John ernährt sich nicht etwa von Tieren und Früchten des Waldes, sondern schichtet einen üppigen Vorrat an Toilettenpapier in seiner Höhle auf, sowie eine mannshohe Wand aus Lebensmittel-Konserven. John bleibt auf Gedeih und Verderb von Neil als Botengänger abhängig, der ihn mit praktischen Dingen der zivilisierten Welt versorgt.

Neil hat damals bereits darüber nachgedacht, ob Johns Rückzug Symptom einer psychischen Erkrankung

sein könnte. Er entscheidet sich jedoch gegen den Verrat seines Freundes an die Parkverwaltung und lässt John in den undurchdringlichen Wäldern zurück im Bewusstsein, dass sein Freund und Blutsbruder im Fall von Krankheit oder Unfall dort keine Überlebenschance hat. Schließlich durchqueren junge Männer ihres Alters Wüsten mit dem Fahrrad, ohne dass jemand an deren Geisteszustand zweifelt, sagt sich Neil.

Guterson analysiert eine ungewöhnliche Männerfreundschaft, die ein aufsehenerregendes Ende nimmt. Sein zutiefst philosophischer Roman verknüpft mehrere Zeitebenen, die nicht immer sofort klar voneinander zu trennen sind. Der inzwischen gealterte Neil baut in seine Geschichte Ansichten seiner Frau Jamie über John ein, Auskünfte einer Jugendfreundin Johns und befragt schließlich Johns betagten Vater über die Familie. Mehrere Handlungsstränge spielen zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten in Neils Leben. Eine lineare Erzählung hätte dem Reiz der Geschichte meiner Ansicht nach nicht geschadet. Ich habe den Roman mit Gewinn gelesen, empfehle ihn jedoch aufgrund des verschachtelten Plots mit einiger Skepsis.

Zitat

“Aus irgendeinem Grund ließen sich die Karten manchmal nur schwer von der Tischplatte aufnehmen, so dass Jamie sie mit ihrem Fingernagel anhob. Sie mischte, indem sie die beiden Hälften des Staps mit den ihr zugewandten Ecken gegeneinander schob, und sie teilte mit flotten Würfen aus. Wenn man mit jemandem Karten spielt, beobachtet man beinahe automatisch seine Hände und die Bewegungen seiner Finger, und so fiel mir auf, dass Jamie manchmal eine Karte zinkte, indem sie sie zwischen der Kuppe ihres Mittelfingers und dem Nagel ihres Zeigefingers eindrückte, was mir ungewöhnlich vorkam. Ich wurde mir auch bewusst, wie grobschlächtig meine eigenen Hände waren. Es sind Countryman-Hände, gut, um Holz zuzuschneiden und widerstandsfähig gegen Kälte, aber unbestritten klobige Tischlerpfoten, bis hin zu den breiten Nägeln und knotigen Fingergelenken, den knochigen Auswüchsen am Handgelenk und den kräftigen Mittelhandknochen mit den dazwischen liegenden tiefen Furchen. Meine Hände sind echte Pranken, und wenn ich damit vor meinen Schülern gestikuliere, um etwas zu unterstreichen, fällt mir manchmal auf, dass sie jegliche Anmut vermissen lassen, und genau das gleiche empfand ich in der Wirtsstube am Monte Stella beim Kartenspiel mit Jamie.“ (S. 84)

Cher says

3.5 stars - It was really good.

Really enjoyed the beautiful descriptions of the Pacific Northwest setting, which just so happens to be my favorite American region.

I read in an author interview that this book has its roots in Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken." The premise is centered around a wealthy young man that turns his back on his fortune and society, heads out to live in the woods where he eventually dies alone. This is reminiscent of Into the Wild, though this author has a much more mature and contemplative writing style. I really enjoy books that tackle misanthropic or minimalist ideologies, and this one was no exception.

The pacing of this one was slow in places, but it was an interesting and thought provoking read. I look forward to reading more of his works.

The Hoh River (mentioned many times in the book):

Favorite Quote: You've been kidding yourself about yourself for so long, you're someone else. Your you is just a fragile fabrication. Every morning, you have to wake up, assemble this busy, dissembling monster, and get him or her on his or her feet again for another round of fantasy.

First Sentence: I attended Roosevelt (the Teddies, Teds, or Roughriders), a public high school in North Seattle, while my friend John William Barry was a student at Lakeside, our city's version of an East Coast private academy like Phillips Exeter or Deerfield.

RH Walters says

What can society offer a vigorous young animal compared to the woods? How do our friendships keep us alive? I can imagine Guterson splitting himself in half to create Neil and John to explore these questions. He's obviously writing about the things he loves best -- Pacific Northwest forests, books, tools -- and he does so with offhand grace and humor. I'd recommend this beautiful tragic book for anyone who loves the outdoors but lives inside.

Denise says

When I read Snow Falling on Cedars by Guterson I remember writing down beautiful sentences that I carried in my purse for years until the paper disintegrated. That's why I picked this book to read... I wanted beautiful sentences.

Note: the second book in a row to mention Kerouac's season on Desolation Peak as a fire watcher.

*A week after finishing *The Other* - I could easily change this review to five stars based on the thoughts it has roused in me since finishing. The main premise, as I see it, is about allowing someone you care about to live the life they choose, and what role you play as an enabler in allowing them to continue on that path.*

Charissa says

This book reminded me of what it was like to be out in wilderness all those years with the boys I grew up with. Remote, scrabbling around in the underbrush wondering where the hell we were exactly, reading topo maps, reveling in the small ecstasies of just a bite of food, made so much more special by the fact that we had toted it on our backs for miles, and know there will be nothing else until we tramp back out again.

It also reminded me of the passions of a misanthropic and dissatisfied youth. Hours on end of stoned diatribes, railing against the confines of Western Civilization, picking apart the philosophical underpinnings of our upbringings, extolling the virtues of tuning in, turning on, dropping out. We had friends who went to live in trees, or teepees, or wandered around the woods in the Sierras for months at a time. Until snows came and drove them indoors.

A few of us died out there, at the dicey edge of things. Slick roads, avalanche, a stray rock. most of us

survived, and settled into sedate lives by comparison. Children, or not; careers, or not; happy, or not.

This story turns in its hands expertly those elements, and others: madness, history, friendship, love, survival, chance. It is quiet like the forests of the Hoh River, where it is mostly set. It travels to the core, like the damp there. It is folded back upon itself, with care and precision, like the folding of an origami crane. Watching his hands work you don't know what beauty will emerge, but are not entirely surprised when, later, it lifts its wings suddenly and flies.

Alissa says

This book was like a really smart kid in an English class who has tons of potential but just sits in the back, all slumped over. Then, when he finally writes something, you're intermittently struck by his genius, but mainly frustrated that he didn't put more effort and editing time into it.

The story of this book is incredibly interesting -- I mean, who doesn't want to read about extreme camping and a rich dude eschewing society to become a hermit in the Hoh Rain Forest? I live in Washington, so it was really cool to read about the area, although Guterson does like to talk about specific places in Seattle...mostly to appeal to other Seattle-ites. Great, I know where Dick's drive-in is too, get on with it.

Guterson gives away all his secrets in the beginning. There are no plot surprises, and the novel would have been well served by them. There's also a lot of pretentious literary name-dropping (great, you read esoteric Chinese literature and pretentious beat poetry, let's get on with it, Graham Greene).

Good idea + bad execution = mostly frustration

Sheila says

We talked about unreliable narrators in our writing group a little while ago, and even tried an exercise using an unreliable point of view. Afterwards I tried to think of books that might illustrate the technique. Though I couldn't remember particular ones, I knew I'd read passages, maybe even whole books, written from the point of view of a self-absorbed beauty who thinks everyone loves her, a nervous investigator who thinks he'll never succeed, a religious preacher who's totally convinced of his own point of view... but I couldn't recall reading any literary fiction where the unreliable narrator told the whole tale. Then I read *The Other*, by David Guterson.

I love *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Our Lady of the Forest*, so I was expecting to find *The Other* would be similarly delightful. Instead I found something that read much more slowly and didactically, and a narrator who seems to totally miss the cues of normal human interaction.

For a while, the story carries the narration. The detailed references to recent history and culture are fascinating. The scenery of Washington's backcountry is beautifully rendered. And the mysterious John William is sufficiently odd that we want to know what has happened / will happen to him. But it's when the narrator meets his future wife that the turning point is reached. Do we want to read more from this strange point of view—the details certainly entice—or do we simply not believe the story anymore? At this point, Neil Countryman, narrator, becomes something different from the everyman we might have imagined. His

point of view is consistently odd, his loyalty prodigious, his diligent observation truly intriguing, but his assumptions about the thoughts and behavior of others almost deliberately miss the mark.

The scenery's stunning. The forest is alive. The characters are real and wonderful—yes even Neil. And the story is one that stays after the last page is read, leaving readers to wonder, just what was it about Neal that drew them in, in spite of disbelief, and which person is the “other” of the title, tragic John or incurious Neal?

I might not have finished the book were it not our book group's choice for last month. But I'm very glad I did. It's a slow, fascinating, absorbing read, with a perfectly rendered narrator who's wholly reliable and true to himself, but beautifully illustrates the power of unreliable narration.

Disclosure: I bought this book in a bookstore because we'd chosen it for our group to read.

Tim A says

I picked up David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* around 1996, simply due to the cover art and the fact it had a gold sticker on it proclaiming it as a national book award winner. I brought it home and put it in a pile of books to be read. Shortly thereafter, a thoroughly forgettable movie was made of the book, and my purchased copy got moved from the stack of bedside books to the bookcase which is reserved for read books and those that may get read far in the future.

Guterson's *The Other* crossed the circulation desk the other day and I guess the cover art grabbed me. It prompted me to read the book's abstract, and I brought it home and started it that evening. I devoured this book. Guterson's eloquent prose and lush descriptions of things often overlooked reminded me of what a well written book should feel like... brighter greens, the intricate veins of leaves, and the smell of the earth. This rare book details a friendship between two men, one is raised in a blue collar family who grows up and subscribes to middle class values and the other, raised in an elite family but despises materialism, “normal” social values, and subscribes to Gnosticism. These two men on divergent paths in life remain friends despite their differences and shape each other's world view. It is a tale about a hermit and a school teacher... or is the hermit the teacher and the teacher the hermit?

I found myself thinking often about this book and reevaluating considerations which I haven't thought about for a long time. I enjoyed this book so much that I am now reading another Guterson novel, *Our Lady of the Forest*... and I have dusted off my copy of *Snow Falling on Cedars*, it's next.

Lori says

I'm not certain how to rate this book. It was tedious for me at times, filled with tangents and interwoven timelines, and often made me feel off balance as a reader.

However, the book also compelled me to consider several interesting questions:

Is it ethical to assist a friend if your assistance might result in his suffering? What if his choice of existence only constitutes suffering in the eyes of others and to him is the epitome of happiness and fulfillment? Does

the fact that he might be mentally ill change the equation?

David says

A few writers somehow flout the "show, don't tell rule," taught in MFA programs everywhere. Conventional wisdom says readers need evocative detail, sensory clues to place them in a particular place and time, unmediated depictions that erase the border between life and imagination. Yet, some authors—whatever they've been taught—seem bent on testing the limits, relying on a storyteller's voice and placing faith in readers' appreciation of a quirky outlook.

David Guterson's *The Other* feels like an experiment in telling, how many pages he can write without dialogue—or paragraph breaks—as we listen to the narrator Neil Countryman describing his own life and his friend John William Worthington Barry's estrangement from "the cheeseburger world" and withdrawal from John William's blue-blood lineage. Neil seems so small in comparison to his subject, dramatic, yet secondary.

It's a bold approach. Though Guterson gives readers plenty of sensory detail through the writerly exertions of Neil Countryman, those descriptions often seem deliberately excessive and designed to establish Neil as an actually rather ordinary companion, more high school English teacher than unrealized author.

As the "other," John William makes a fascinating study well worth exploring, and, as in his other novels, Guterson juggles time deftly as aspects of the past comment on the present, the storyteller's decisions, and the narrator's and other's experience. Anyone who's lived will recognize the way we make sense of our histories and struggle to account for this place we find ourselves.

Neil Countryman's telling—because it is so lost as it tries to locate exactly what made John William who he was—seems more moving than showing might be. There are excesses here—no one need to hear Rand Barry, John William's father, elaborate their tortured family life or to read the tortured poems of John William's mother Ginny. The last 50 pages could be 25, particularly as they diminish the momentum the novel achieves by that point.

Still, errors of ambition are perhaps the easiest of forgive. Maybe Guterson meant to test readers' listening patience. Listening, in the tragic story of John William Worthington Barry, seems a prominent deficit and the motor driving this telling—not showing—story.

Susan says

I find myself thinking about this book a lot. It's an existential mystery, which I love, set partly in the 70's, in Western Washington and at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon. It poses the question 'how can idealism and absolutes exist in the world?' and I can't say that the answer is very upbeat.

The part set at Reed, an odd, exhilarating and inarticulate college romance, told from the point of view of the Hermit of the Hoh's college girlfriend, was one of the best parts of the book for me. Admittedly, it was fun to read the portrayal of Reed a few years before my time there. But it was also a feminine perspective in an otherwise very male story and I think contains some of the best writing in the book.

It did remind me of 'Into the Wild', which I will now have to read. I've seen the film. That association kind of crept up on me.

I did find the characterization of the narrator's Irish working class background kind of weird for a story set in Seattle. The 'white ethnic' thing seemed false for the period and the place, like it was grafted on from some East Coast city. I guess the Scandinavians aren't associated (as much) with poetry and ritual.

Craig Dube says

I believe the title of this book is the answer to a question many may have had leading up to choosing this book. When faced between having to read this book or another one, choose the other.

spoilers below

I found this book boring, pretentious, long-winded and meandering. The author certainly has a good vocabulary and he's not afraid to use it. My nook got plenty of work looking up words as I read along. The story goes on and on and nothing really happens. The plot can be summarized in just a few sentences: a rich boy meets a middle class boy in high school and they become friends. The rich kid becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the world and wants to abandon it. Eventually he does live, living in a remote part of the Northwest, occasionally visited by his friend who brings supplies. The rich kid dies, the friend tells no one but his fiancee. That secret lives on for some 20 more years, when the body is found. The deceased willed his \$440M fortune to the friend. The friend continues to visit old bookstores.

There's a little bit more to it (friend meets woman who will be his wife, rich kid has crazy and somewhat uncaring parents) but it is so long in the telling that I could never find myself caring about anyone. A perfect example of this comes in the later chapter when the friend is speaking with his long-deceased friend's father and the father is recalling how awful he and his wife were as parents. You immediately get a sense of where the story is going but the telling goes on for the entire chapter. Nothing of interest happens and yet the story goes on.

I read this book b/c it was selected as our book club's pick for the month. One of the advocates for this book, proclaimed it was real literature unlike past selections. I'm grinning now just thinking about how that discussion will turn next week...

Blyden says

I just finished reading this book, but I am still working out what it is about. The protagonist, Neil Countryman, represents Guterson himself, and John William Barry, the Hermit of the Hoh, is an alter ego, and thus the significance of the story lies in the relationship between the two men with their respective mindsets and lifestyles. But what, ultimately, are we to make of it?

The hermit represents a set of ideals about which Countryman/Guterson feels some guilt for failing to live by. He internalizes these in small ways but the greater part of him is tied to the comfortable, American way of life. He feels guilty about compromising himself, but ultimately happier being comfortable, buying into the mainstream "hamburger" culture. This tension is, I think, characteristic of a great many Americans.

However it is the hermit who is portrayed more critically. Guterson explains his lifestyle as emerging from a wealthy, dysfunctional, neglectful family background and a tortured psyche, suggesting that these ideals, or at least the willingness and ability to embrace them so fully, comes from the pathological parts of our lives. John William is socially inept and self-destructive. Do well-adjusted people from good families have no such tensions? His life in the approximate state of nature is Hobbesian: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". Does Guterson mean it as a caution against the dangers of non-compromise?

The book is a little over-written, but not badly so, and the characters, story, and described life events are intrinsically interesting. I'm the kind of person who will readily abandon a book I'm reading if it doesn't keep my interest. There is little danger of that with this book. That said, the interactions between the characters, while basically believable, don't always feel entirely true to life. In particular I feel the John William Barry character is underdeveloped. Guterson often takes the shortcut of describing rather than bringing the hermit to life as richly as he might.

On a purely personal note, it was interesting to me that hermit's setting was on the Hoh River in the Olympic Peninsula and that Forks, Washington is of some significance in the story. In the Fall of 1934 and Spring of 1935 my Grandfather served with an Army engineering unit that was surveying the Olympic Peninsula and stationed just outside of Forks. I have his diaries, and at one point he spent about half a month camped at a survey tower at a place called Hoh Station, and hiked in and out along the Hoh River in what is presumably the same area in which Guterson has Neil Countryman hiking to and from John William Barry's hermitage, possibly the same trails.

Carol says

I was anxious to read another book by this author because I loved "Snow Falling on Cedars" and "East of the Mountains", but.....I could not finish this one where there was precious little plot, no detail too trivial to be mentioned, and the descriptions plodded on for pages on end. Sorry, Mr. Guterson, but it seemed as though you have become too enamored of your own words and I just lost my patience.

I guess my rating (since I didn't finish it) would be one star?
