



The Sibling Society: An Impassioned Call for the Rediscovery of Adulthood

By Robert Bly

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Where have all the grownups gone? In answering that question with the same freewheeling erudition and intuitive brilliance that made *Iron John* a national bestseller, poet, storyteller and translator Robert Bly tells us that we live in a "sibling society," in which adults have regressed into adolescence and adolescents refuse to grow up.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Poet and storyteller Robert Bly takes the baby boomers to task in this highly charged exposure of midlifers' values. Having become jaded by the abuses of authority, the boomers of North America have torn down the traditional hierarchy within their families and within their communities. What's left is a "cultural flatness," says Bly, where adults cling to self-absorbed adolescent values, television talk shows have more clout than elders, children are spiritually abandoned to fend for themselves, and in the place of community we have built shopping malls. As always, Bly relies on mythology, legends, and poetry to illustrate the morals of his stories. Ultimately this is a hopeful piece of work, nudging midlifers to take on the responsibilities (and therefore the rewards) of adulthood.

From Publishers Weekly

When Bly's *Iron John* shot onto the bestseller lists in the early '90s, it looked as if the men's movement it helped spawn might become a cultural force equal to the women's movement. This hasn't happened, Bly intimates in his new book, because the adults needed to bring the movement to fruition aren't available. The uninitiated and un-mentored have taken over our culture, he says, and with no "parents" around to referee our squabbling, we're caught in the throes of "sibling" rivalry. Adolescents can be cruel-hence, Bly avers, our current cutthroat competitiveness in businesses that feel no responsibility to the community, environment or their employees, and hence the rise of viciousness in the media and on the street. Bly rounds up many of the usual suspects: TV, latchkey (or day-care) children, excessive political correctness, violent rap lyrics and so on. True to his life's work, he incorporates fairy tale and myth to bolster his analysis, devoting, for example, a chapter to "Jack and the Beanstalk"; to Bly, "Jack represents all men and women who live in a fatherless and, increasingly, motherless society." The text rambles at times, but Bly's central metaphor of a sibling society could catch on with those concerned about a lack of maturity in our consumer culture. First serial to *Utne Reader*; BOMC, QPB and One-Spirit Book Club selections; audio rights sold to Random.

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From Library Journal

Elaborating on a series of culturally diverse stories and poems, interwoven with observations of societal change and regression, Bly here makes an impassioned plea to stop the increasing emphasis on media-driven consumerism, the deconstruction of all authority, and the neglect and abuse of children worldwide. The poet and author of the best-selling *Iron John* (LJ 11/15/90) highlights these three tenets throughout and supports them with insightful inferences drawn from a tapestry of traditional and modern literature, e.g., the Hindu myth of Ganesha, the poetry of William Stafford, and Jane Healy's *Endangered Minds* (LJ 10/15/90). One of the most poignant themes is that of "elaborated language"?the concept that children require complex language stimulation for the development of intelligence, a need that is increasingly unmet. Highly recommended as a readable presentation of important ideas.?Terry McMaster, Syracuse, N.Y.

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