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Marrying & Burying: Rites of Passage in a Man's Life

Ronald L. Grimes

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Significant life passages are marked by ritual in virtually every culture. Weddings and funerals are only two of the most obvious ones. A wide variety of rites, both traditional and invented, also mark birth and coming of age. However, many major transitions remain unmarked. Marrying & Burying tells an intensely personal story about the role of ritual in Ron Grimes's own rich and sometimes difficult life. His critique of ritual impoverishment in North America reveals the extraordinary potential that ritualizing holds for negotiating and enriching transitions, both exalted and mundane. Always aware that no two people's experiences are alike, he encourages readers to think critically and creatively about the role of ritual in their own lives. Grimes generous and unsentimental but also unflinchingly honest, so he offers no easy answers. Using an impressive array of genres, he examines the problems of ritualizing in ways that can stitch together the torn pieces of a man's life. Fiction, poetry, journal, and essay create a multivocal text, a symphonic portrayal of the mysterious and intransigent human need to ritualize. This is a book for anyone committed to untangling the meaning of life as actually lived. It offers the student of contemporary North American spirituality and culture a rare opportunity to glimpse the humanity behind a scholar's analysis of ritual.

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