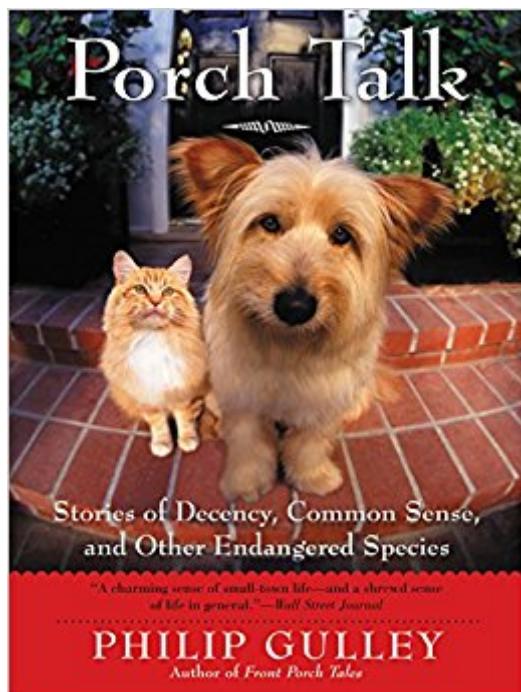


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# Porch Talk: Stories Of Decency, Common Sense, And Other Endangered Species



## **Synopsis**

Evoking a time when life revolved around the front porch, where friends gathered, stories were told, and small moments took on larger meaning, in today's hurry-up world, Philip Gulley's essays remind us of the world we once shared—and can share again. When Philip Gulley began writing newsletter essays for the members of his Quaker meeting in Indiana, he had no idea one of the essays would find its way to radio commentator Paul Harvey Jr. and be read on the air to 24 million people. Fourteen books later, with more than one million copies in print, Gulley still entertains as well as inspires from his small-town front porch.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

It is no insult to this occasionally moralizing humorist and Quaker pastor to say that he is a smalltown raconteur who writes tales tailor-made for readers who would never dream of living in one. In the compilation of anecdotes, recollections, riffs and barely disguised homilies that constitute his 14th book, Gulley, best known for his *Harmony* novels as well as theological ruminations like *If Grace Is True*, skillfully mines his personal history and that of his neighbors for inspirational morsels. Family, friends, faith, community and even current events figure in meditations that span such topics as the architecture of his home, the virtues of intellectual inconsistency, his wife's passion for exercise and healthy eating, and whether it is indeed possible to have too many friends. While not afraid to be provocative on controversial subjects like creationism or politics, Gulley's general tone is straightforward, whimsical and irenic. One often wishes that he would spend more time with a

particular topic, instead of giving it glancing attention before moving on. But urban readers who imbibe their literature with their lattes will find him as refreshing as do those who actually create the tapestry of homespun life Gulley so unpretentiously chronicles. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Gulley's little pieces aren't stories. They're old-fashioned personal essays, conversational, calmly opinionated, and comfortable. Since Gulley's a Christian pastor, trying to live good rather than just well informs every piece. Since Gulley's a Quaker pastor, and since Quakers believe every person capable of and obliged to practice ministry, he never preaches or cites scripture (that would be too presumptuous), which makes him nonthreatening to the Christ-averse and especially safe for those who like Garrison Keillor, Annie Dillard, Wendell Berry, and Kathleen Norris, even if they are "that way." He shares such writers' concern for family, neighbors, people one sees and interacts with often, old houses, country stores, venerable ways of doing things; like them, he doesn't have a neocon bone in his body. He writes as cleanly as they, and perhaps with greater range, encompassing the tooth fairy, cheap shoes, middle-age spread, chairs, and simplicity. He is a terrific buffoon when he wants to be, and his piece about sitting in a Quaker meeting may be the best this side of John Greenleaf Whittier. Ray OlsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I admit, I was a little disappointed. I have the impression that the author is trying too hard to be clever. He's a good writer. He just needs to concentrate on writing, not a barrage of almost-witticisms.

Quaker Pastor and author, Phillip Gulley, is one of my favorite theologians, along with Rob Bell and Marcus Borg. In his view, God loves us, shows us this in many different simple ways, and wants little more than for us to treat others well and love Him back. In neglecting the complex formula of original sin, blood sacrifice, and redemption, he angers many more traditional Christian teachers, but for many of us common folk, his view is very comforting. And this is a comforting book: wittily told simple stories of small town life in the Midwest that make me think at times of Garrison Keillor. Gulley is always on the verge of pulling our leg, and sometimes takes it too far to the point of being ridiculous, as in "I weigh 160, which seems fine until you realize that am only four feet tall." But we forgive him, because about the time we begin thinking he is just silly old man, he throws a surprise

sharp jab at the officious religiosity, hypocrisy, intolerance, and lack of love that characterizes too much of our present day behavior. Phillip Gulley may not be for everyone, but I enjoy him, and this is another typical example of his work.

A read that gently takes you through middle America, their values that sadly seem to be disappearing in this the 21st century. No blood, no violence and not much sex. Just gentle love. Enjoyed immensely. Nice for a rainy day with a warm chocolate drink and chippy biscuit. to accompany you. I recommend this book.

Love the essays in this book! They bring back memories of by-gone days and make one nostalgic. This book is a relaxing read and nearly every essay will put a smile on your face.

Philip Gulley makes common day to day life funny. However I liked his book "Home to Harmony" better. "Harmony" let me laugh and just enjoy a well written book about ordinary people.

I took this book out of the public library and then purchased it for my father, I loved it so much. Gulley is a great story teller. His anecdotes are brief, familiar, and well written. He has a knack for taking common experiences and weaving them into an engaging tale. That, and his subtle self-deprecating sense of humor makes for a very readable book. There are morals to the stories that he tells, and he does speak a bit about politics. I did not find this book to be overwhelmingly political in the ways that other reviewers did - it seemed more subtle to me. This will be a book I reread.

I've bought this book after purchasing the whole Harmony series by Philip Gulley. I found each one of the novels brilliant and extremely hilarious. Gulley has a razor-sharp wit and sense of humor which combined with his exceptional gift of observation makes his books a real feast for every ardent book lover. It's small American town fiction but all the characters are so real they reminded me of many church members from my previous baptist church. The author portrays human nature in a very compelling realistic way. I shared my discovery of Gulley's talent with my husband and mother-in-law and they found his stories funny and involving too. "Porch talk" consists of short essays written in first person - these are funny, witty observations and reflections on life. Each touches different topic and I find reading them light, easy and relaxing but intelligent and intellectually stimulating at the same time.

delightful...

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