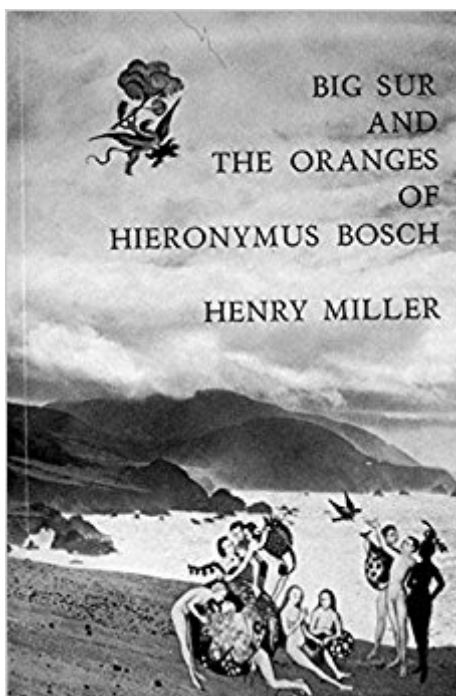


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Big Sur And The Oranges Of Hieronymus Bosch



Synopsis

In his great triptych "The Millennium," Bosch used oranges and other fruits to symbolize the delights of Paradise. Whence Henry Miller's title for this, one of his most appealing books; first published in 1957, it tells the story of Miller's life on the Big Sur, a section of California coast where he lived for fifteen years. Big Sur is the portrait of a place – one of the most colorful in the U.S. – and of the extraordinary people Miller knew there: writers (& writers who didn't write), mystics seeking truth in meditation (& the not-so-saintly looking for sex-cults or celebrity), sophisticated children & adult innocents; geniuses, cranks & the unclassifiable. Henry Miller writes with a buoyancy & brimming energy that are infectious. He has a fine touch for comedy. But this is also a serious book – the testament of a free spirit who has broken through the restraints & clichés of modern life to find within himself his own kind of paradise.

Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: New Directions; 2nd edition (January 17, 1957)

Language: English

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Customer Reviews

"... a large scale book written with the skill in essay/fictional writing that will help it remain a classic for years to come." - Innovative Fiction Magazine
"The only imaginative prose-writer of the slightest value who has appeared among the English-speaking races for some years past." - George Orwell

Henry Miller (1891–1980) was one of the most controversial American novelists during his lifetime. His book, *The Tropic of Cancer*, was banned in some U.S. states before being

overruled by the Supreme Court. New Directions publishes several of his books.

I first read *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* in my early twenties, soon after moving to California from the East Coast. During that first reading, I came to know a Henry Miller I'd never known from his fiction; I was impressed, and inspired. I also met a lot of people that I'd never heard of previously (can you imagine, never having heard of Robinson Jeffers? An east coast woman of 21 years had not!). It was a great read at that time. Many years later (I'm not going to say how many), I've decided to reread it. Once again, I am enjoying this book, and I'm discovering new things (or perhaps rediscovering things I'd forgotten) this time around. It's a ramble, however. There is no plot, there is no consistent train of thought, and there is nothing essentially sensational about it. If you're looking for the Henry Miller of the "Tropics," or any of his other fictional writings, don't look here. This book is broadly philosophical, filled with anecdotes and personal revelations. Quotes that I feel summarize the theme of *Big Sur* and perhaps Henry Miller's motivation for living there are the following: "Surely every one realizes, at some point along the way, that he is capable of living a far better life than the one he has chosen." "We create our fate everyday." If you're a Henry Miller fan, this is the book to read to come to understand the man and the writer. He also draws a vivid picture of *Big Sur* era before it became heavily trafficked and overpopulated to the north of it. Definitely worth the time it'll take to read it.

First off there can be a perceivable gap between 'good' and 'great' writing and although Miller's writing may not be 'great' when actually aligned with the greats of literature, it certainly is very good. He is a perfect writer for describing the 'colony' of *Big Sur* in its early stages. Primarily enjoyable because of the context Miller gives the experience. Bravo!

Absolutely wonderful memoir of Miller's days in *Big Sur*, California, way back when before it became a tourist stop on the map. Beautiful descriptions, funny stories, poignant reflections on a world that no longer exists. Personally, I enjoy Henry Miller's non-fiction works more than his novels. He is one of the greatest American writers, and this is one of his best books. It's been a long time since I passed through *Big Sur*; reading Miller's memoir made me nostalgic for all those golden days spent in California.

If you love Henry Miller, you have to read this book. Even if you've never heard of Henry Miller, pick up this book and enjoy it. He paints a picture of paradise in a little place called *Big Sur* and if you are

anything like me, you'll be planning a trip there just to see what he's talking about. You have to read this book!

I have read this book about 5 times, having it always on my Kindle is a real treat. This book, I feel is one of Henry Miller's best. The time he spent in Big Sur in the 40's and 50's when it was really an artist's colony. Some of the character studies are so well written that you feel you know the person as a friend by the time you are through reading it. For anyone interested in Big Sur and its history, this is a great book to read, or if you just want something relaxing to venture into...

Bought this book for my husband and it has made him fall in love with Henry Miller's writing.

Love Big Sur. Henry Miller? Not so much.

Miller doesn't rush anything in "Big Sur..." and in the end, I appreciated this quality of the book. Made me think generally, made me reflect personally, and made me reconsider how I was living and could be living. Miller is good for that.

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