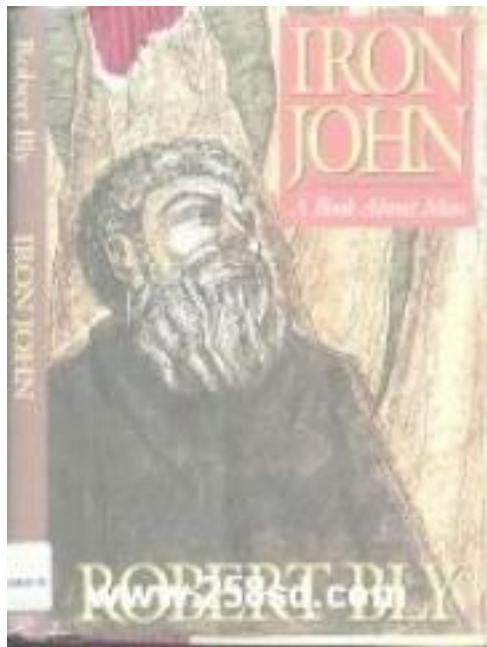


Iron John: A Book About Men



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From Publishers Weekly Today's sensitized male may be in touch with his "feminine" side, but, writes poet Bly, this "soft male" possesses little vitality and is hobbled by grief and anguish. To achieve real masculinity, Bly argues, men must cultivate a fierce tenderness to be found neither in the macho/John Wayne model nor in the "interior feminine." Taking as his starting point the Grimm fairy tale "Iron John," the author sets forth an eight-stage initiatory path whose steps include remembering one's psychic wounds, communion with a mentor or "inner King," becoming a lover, reviving one's inner warriors and receiving a "second heart." Bly avoids cant as he ransacks Jung, Freud and Reich; referents include Greek, Egyptian and Celtic myths, the Parsifal legend, Blake and Amerindian ritual. A wise and healing book full of fresh insights, Bly's odyssey will help men grapple with identity, fatherhood,

relationships and such crises as addiction and divorce. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Bly, a major American poet who won a National Book Award in 1968, appears regularly at workshops for men. The book's title refers to a mentor-like figure in a Grimms fairy tale who serves as Wild Man, initiator, and source of divine energy for a young man. This marvelous folktale of resonant, many-layered meanings is an apt choice for demonstrating the need for men to learn from other men how to honor and reimagine the positive image of their masculinity. Bly has always responded to Blakean and Yeatsian intensities, preferring to travel the path lit by mythic road signs. His intent here is to restore a lost heritage of emotional connection and expose the paltriness of a provisional life. For many men capable of responding imaginatively to allegory and myth this will be an instructive and ultimately exculpating book. Others may regard it as an inscrutable attempt, intuitive at best, to find merit in male developmental anxieties. For all collections emphasizing family or gender studies.- William Abrams, Portland State Univ. Lib., Ore. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews

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