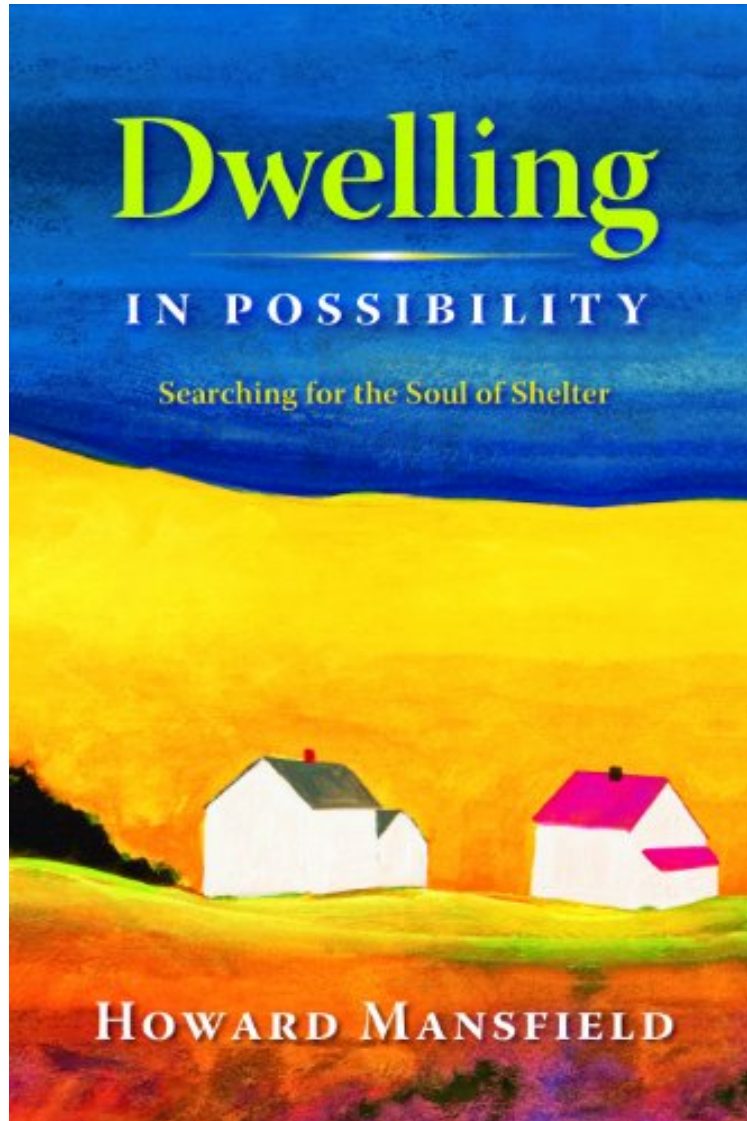


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## Dwelling in Possibility: Searching for the Soul of Shelter

*Howard Mansfield*

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**Howard Mansfield : Dwelling in Possibility: Searching for the Soul of Shelter** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dwelling in Possibility: Searching for the Soul of Shelter:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Nicely done, as usualBy WDX2BBI really should read more of Howard Mansfield's writing. It would do me good."Dwelling in Possibility" is only the second book by Mansfield that I've read (he has several others), but it's another winner. His last effort was "Turn and Jump," which was excellent, and this follows that pattern.Mansfield likes little corners of lives and give a nice, leisurely examination of them. In this

case, he starts with the word "dwelling," which has a different feel than "house" or "home." Like "Turn and Jump," this is a series of loosely connected essays on the subject of dwelling. It might be the only place where you'll read about ice storms in New Hampshire and bombings of German cities, all within two covers. The ice storm in question opens the book nicely, as Mansfield points out how it doesn't take much to cut off our electricity and turn our homes into something resembling the way people did in the 1700s - concerned with the basics such as staying warm and finding food a day at a time. From there we sail into what's in our houses, the footpaths that connect them (a classic New England small town discussion) before getting to the World War II stuff. While I was vaguely aware of the bombing of German and Japanese cities in an effort to set them on fire, Mansfield's research reveals this to be quite interesting - full of moral trap doors. A chapter on Katrina's damage to the Gulf Coast also shows Mansfield at good form, going along for the ride as he watches that region rebuild months and months after the hurricane struck. And a chapter about the author's time as a census taker is quite charming. If you are wondering about why four stars and not five, a couple of sections weren't quite as fascinating. The second half of the World War II chapter takes on an academic and philosophic side that was a little deeper and less interesting to me (important distinction). An essay on the various types of sheds also didn't grab me - perhaps because I haven't spent enough time in rural New England. I have the feeling that my reaction is more my fault than Mansfield's. No big deal. This book has gotten a lot of good reviews, here and elsewhere, and I can certainly understand why. Most of us don't have the time to sit back and reflect on what's going on around us; we're too busy running our lives, or so we think. I appreciate the way Mansfield forces me to think about those things usually found in the recesses of the day's thoughts. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Star By Marcia matthews Beautiful cover. Tedious book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book. I love Howard Mansfield's writing and the ... By SS Great book. I love Howard Mansfield's writing and the oeuvre in which he works. I wish superb writing like this was read by more people.

The mystery that attracts Howard Mansfield's attention is that some houses have life here, are dwellings, and others aren't. Dwelling, he says, is an old-fashioned word that we've misplaced. When we live heart and soul, we dwell. When we belong to a place, we dwell. Possession, they say, is nine-tenths of the law, but it is also what too many houses and towns lack. We are not possessed by our home places. This lost quality of dwelling the soul of buildings haunts most of our houses and our landscape. Dwelling in Possibility is a search for the ordinary qualities that make some houses a home, and some public places welcoming.

I was only halfway through this book when I began to quote from it. It is strong stuff and goes deep. It should be on every thoughtful citizen's must-read list. Karen Dahood, BookPleasures.com