



Aama in America: A Pilgrimage of the Heart

Broughton Coburn

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Vishnu Maya, called Aama (Mother) by everyone in her tiny Nepalese village, was living high in the Himalayas when she befriended American Peace Corps worker Broughton Coburn in 1974. In 1988, Aama came to visit him—on a trip prescribed by village priests as a way for the eighty-four-year-old, four-foot-eight woman to earn merit by making a difficult journey late in life.

Aama in America is a vivid chronicle of what became a twenty-five-state, coast-to-coast adventure. Guided by the perpetual curiosity and deeply spiritual orientation of their ingenious, unpredictable travel companion, Coburn and his fiancée gradually began to view their country from an entirely new perspective. "Beneath the uniform, commercial, man-made epidermis of our country," Coburn writes, "Aama found a culture and landscape that was alive and sacred, and she steered us toward it."

Aama in America is on one level an offbeat American travelogue. But on another it is a profound exploration of beliefs, values, and lost spirituality, a rediscovery of the spiritual that lies beneath the surface of America, and a singular account of the meeting of two widely divergent cultures.

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