



The Shelf Life of Ashes: A Memoir

Hollis Giammatteo

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When Hollis Giammatteo sought a job working with the elderly, she did so with the intention of finding models of healthy aging. And she failed. In *The Shelf Life of Ashes*, Giammatteo chronicles her experiences with her wards, as well as the trip she embarks upon when her mother, who is convinced she is dying, entreats her to come home. Trips back, traumas triggered, identity in crisis, equanimity gained this quasi-comic, concentrated journey engages the reader in the process of naming and facing the tasks involved in growing old, while asking a simple but weighted question: Can aging be done well?"

The Shelf Life of Ashes: A Memoir Details

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Author : Hollis Giammatteo

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Diana Paul says

Giammatteo, Hollis—The Shelf Life of Ashes: A Memoir

Giammatteo invites the reader to leap into the reservoir of the heart with both profound insight and engaging humor. “The Shelf Life of Ashes” is a journey into identity, family aging, and death with an infusion of Buddhist compassion. The author also deals with adoption and the challenges of personal identity: p.12 “...forever pounding my issues like meat, forever working to solve “the adoption problem”, as if I were masticating gristle.

Raised a Christian Scientist, Giammatteo became Buddhist and reflects on mpermanence and meditation as she is getting older. A unique perspective and an important one, The Shelf Life of Ashes is a glimpse into the mind of the author who has experienced both religions.

Ann says

The Shelf Life of Ashes is Hollis Giammatteo's fresh, funny, essential take on how caring for aging people-- both professionally and, later, her own parents-- shaped her views of the world and of herself. Giammatteo writes in a distinctly dry, sometimes droll yet also frequently poetic, honest, self-deprecating voice about caring for her adoptive mother in her final years after a lifetime of fraught and frustrating attempts at love. Unflinching, insightful, with a power that sneaks up on the reader.

Kathy says

This memoir is an honest, perceptive and realistic look at the aging process and how end-of-life plans can go awry.

Is there a Map or Plan that works? Hollis does her best to try and find one.

Reviewed at: <http://pennyformythoughts-nona.blogspot...>