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Learning to Fall: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life

Philip Simmons

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Now I find myself in late August, with the nights cool and the crickets thick in the fields. Already the first blighted leaves glow scarlet on the red maples. It's a season of fullness and sweet longings made sweeter now by the fact that I can't be sure I'll see this time of the year again....
— from **Learning to Fall**

Philip Simmons was just thirty-five years old in 1993 when he learned that he had ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, and was told he had less than five years to live. As a young husband and father, and at the start of a promising literary career, he suddenly had to learn the art of dying. Nine years later, he has succeeded, against the odds, in learning the art of living.

Now, in this surprisingly joyous and spirit-renewing book, he chronicles his search for peace and his deepening relationship with the mystery of everyday life.

Set amid the rugged New Hampshire mountains he once climbed, and filled with the bustle of family life against the quiet progression of illness, **Learning to Fall** illuminates the journey we all must take — "the work of learning to live richly in the face of loss."

From our first faltering steps, Simmons says, we may fall into disappointment or grief, fall into or out of love, fall from youth or health. And though we have little choice as to the timing or means of our descent, we may, as he affirms, "fall with grace, to grace."

With humor, hard-earned wisdom and a keen eye for life's lessons — whether drawn from great poetry or visits to the town dump — Simmons shares his discovery that even at times of great sorrow we may find profound freedom. And by sharing the wonder of his daily life, he offers us the gift of connecting more deeply and joyously with our own.

From the Hardcover edition.

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