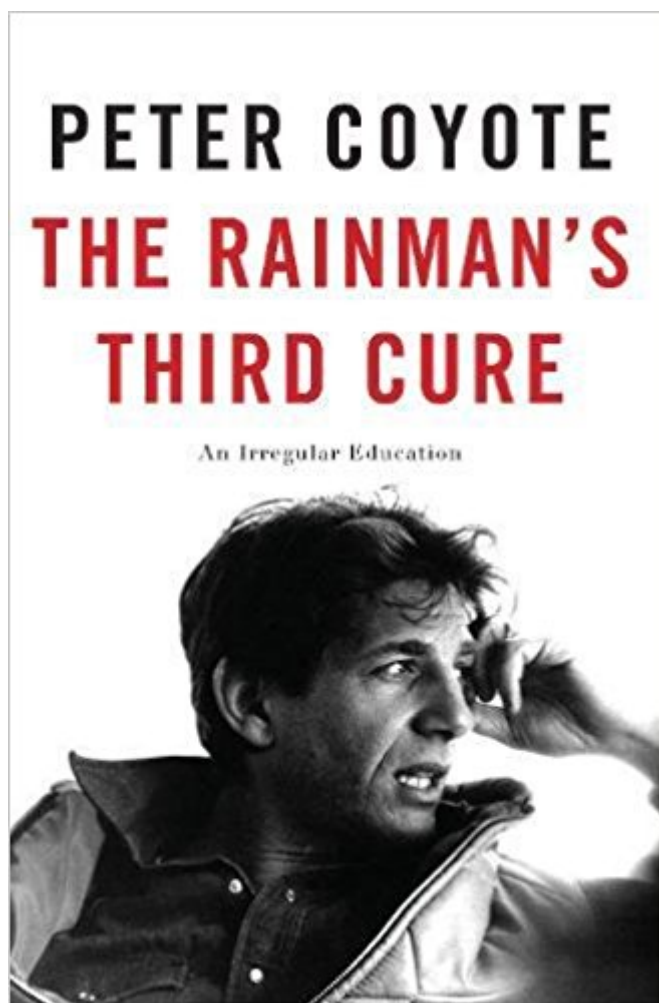


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# The Rainman's Third Cure: An Irregular Education



## Synopsis

"The rainman gave me two cures  
And he said, 'Just jump right in.'  
The one was  
Texas Medicine  
And the other was railroad gin.  
And like a fool I mixed them  
And they strangled up my  
mind  
Now people just get uglier  
And I have no sense of time."  
--Bob Dylan, "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again"

The guiding metaphor in Peter Coyote's new spiritual biography is drawn from a line in an early Bob Dylan song. For Coyote, the twin forces Dylan identifies as Texas Medicine and Railroad Gin represent the competing forces of the transcendental, inclusive, and ecstatic world of love with the competitive, status-seeking world of wealth and power. The Rainman's Third Cure is the tale of a young man caught between these apparently antipodal options and the journey that leads him from the privileged halls of power to Greenwich Village jazz bars, to jail, to the White House, lessons from a man who literally held the power of life and death over others, to government service and international success on stage and screen. Expanding his frame beyond the wild ride through the 1960's counterculture that occupied so much of his lauded debut memoir, *Sleeping Where I Fall*, Coyote provides readers intimate portraits of mentors that shaped him: a violent, intimidating father, a be-bop Bass player who teaches him that life can be improvised, a Mafia consigliere, who demonstrates to him that men can be bought and manipulated, an ex game-warden who initiates him into the laws of nature, a gay dancer in Martha Graham's company who introduces him to Mexico and marijuanas, beat poet Gary Snyder, who introduces him to Zen practice, and finally famed fashion designer Nino Cerruti who made the high-stakes world of haute monde Europe available to him. What begins as a peripatetic flirtation with Zen deepens into a life-long avocation, ordination as a priest, and finally the road to Transmission---acknowledgement from his teacher that he is ready to be an independent teacher. Through Zen, Coyote discovers a third option that offers an alternative to both the worlds of Love and Power's correlatives of status seeking and material wealth. Zen was his portal, but what he discovers on the inside is actually available to all humans. In this energetic, reflective and intelligent memoir, *The Rainman's Third Cure* is the way out of the box. The way that works.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *The Rainman's Third Cure*: "Remarkably forthright and insightful, this memoir may inspire others to add a bit of Zen to their lives." [Library Journal Starred Review](#) "Coyote has emerged, over the past few decades, as the unofficial yet authentic voice of America. His own personal voice echoes across every page of his memoir...As a memoir of one man's adventures, it's appealing because it shows what happened to a generation caught up in sex, drugs and political protest, and who dreamed the dream of the utopian '60s...The archival photos of Coyote's parents, father figures, mentors and friends bring them to life, enhance the prose and help make this memoir unforgettable." [San Francisco Chronicle](#) "[A] descriptively brilliant biographical odyssey....Presented with so many well-defined faces, there's guaranteed to be at least one Coyote, and probably more, that readers enjoy meeting." [Kirkus](#) "Peter's Coyote's new memoir is just plain wonderful--richly textured, beautifully written, sad, sweet, sometimes funny, always wise. It is about childhood losses and joy, growing up, mentors, loyalty, the search for Truth, survival, the sixties, the seventies, transcendence, healing, disasters. It is told by a writer of deep wisdom, self-knowledge and charm, yet I gobbled it up, like a novel." [Anne Lamott](#) "As he showed in *Sleeping Where I Fell*, Peter has lived a life most of us could only dream of. In this insightful and beautifully expressed follow-up, we get a deeper view not only of his own path, but of the currents underlying so much of our own shared histories. Viewed through this prism of three transformational relationships, his story is as moving as it is fascinating. A remarkable book." [Bonnie Raitt](#) Praise for *Sleeping Where I Fall* [Sleeping Where I Fall](#) Chronicles with uncommon honesty a chaotic social movement that aimed to radically reform American society . . . the tales that make the final cut in Coyotes memoir are skillfully rendered, mixing hilarity and tragedy." [The Los Angeles Times](#) "Coyote reflects with maturity on the mistakes he and his peers made, but he affirms that the dream was worth

having. — Washington Post; Coyote not only survived the excesses of the Sixties and Seventies but emerged from years of journeying through the counterculture to achieve success as an actor. Considering the numerous casualties among radicals, who, like Coyote, were heroin junkies living on the edge of society, this is a rare feat. In this frank yet sensitive memoir of those years, Coyote contradicts romantic notions of communes by recalling the discord and petty disagreements typical in his own communal living experiences . . . Coyote's thoughtful, articulate writing displays a compassionate wisdom that puts this chronicle in a class above the typical actor's autobiography. Highly recommended for relevant subject collections in academic as well as public libraries. — Library Journal; Coyote's evolution from callow thespian to revolutionary communitard to seasoned philosopher is fascinating, as much a social and political history as it is a reminiscence. The stories unravel like tender after-dinner tales in prose that captures the rasp and tickle of Coyote's corduroy voice. In the end, *Sleeping Where I Fall* reveals a man as complex and unpredictable as the totem animal from which he takes his name. — L.A. Smith

An ordained practitioner of Zen Buddhism and a politically engaged actor, Peter Coyote began his work in street theater and political organizing in San Francisco. In addition to acting in over 140 films, and working with directors such as Martin Ritt, Steven Spielberg and Roman Polanski, Coyote has won an Emmy for narrating the award-winning documentary *Pacific Century*. He has also narrated *The West*, *The Dust Bowl*, *Prohibition* and *The Roosevelts* for Ken Burns. In 1993 he was awarded a Pushcart Prize for *Carla's Story*, published in *Zyzzyva*. He lives in Mill Valley, California.

Beautiful! Some of the sentences are so well crafted, I find myself reading them over and over again just to savor them. I'm half way through this memoir and I feel as if I've become intimately acquainted with the characters in his story - and what colorful and juicy characters they are! This is a fascinating journey, expertly written with truth and depth. While it is reflective of the times in which the journey took place, the themes of family, personal evolution, and how our stories shape us are profound and universal.

Ok. I don't usually like autobiographies, but I'm making an exception for this one. It's probably because Peter Coyote

personal charm and presence of mind pervade the writing. It might be because he went to my alma mater (Grinnell College) and was my first big interview as a writer. Maybe it's because he has an obvious and particular fondness for the Gold Country in California where I grew up. Regardless, I invite you all to give it a shot; I can absolutely guarantee you'll learn something. That's not to say that you won't need a bit of patience, however. Almost the entire first half of the book is a sort of barely-chronological rambling through Peter's childhood, which, although marginally interesting, is probably more useful as an act of reflection for him than as a subject for his readers. I can only read so much of "my father was distant and aggressive so I grew up with some issues before screaming, especially when I knew there was so much more interesting material for him to cover. Luckily for me, I decided to power through. The second half of the book swept me away into a tale so candid and charmingly self-reflective, I couldn't help seeing a bit of myself in much of what he said. In truth, I think most humans from the United States would be hard-pressed to resist identifying with him in some way. As he once told me, "the Zelig of the counterculture" (referencing Zelig, the Woody Allen film in which a man takes on the characteristics of those around him). I would expand that to say he's the Zelig of post-50's United States. Although he skims over much of his life in the counterculture, referring readers to his first book *Sleeping Where I Fall* (which I couldn't stand, surprisingly), his storytelling ability and raw honesty make one feel as if one was there, beside him, all along. From starting an anarchist, free living commune in the 60's to tenuous and unconventional romantic relationships, from Hollywood to Zen Buddhism, his life covers the spectrum of the idealized American free thinker in a variety of nuanced, unexpected ways. The reader shares in his frustration, his stagnation, and his transformations. By the end of the book, although I myself drifted away from Buddhism long ago, I began to realize that anything that can bring so much clarity to one's perception of self and others may have some secular value after all. As I mentioned before, I was privileged enough to have the opportunity to interview Peter for an article in my alma mater's alumni magazine. He speaks with the same charm and perceptiveness with which he writes, only his humor feels more organic. He's friendly, warm, and has a perspective on life that a young, wandering post-graduate has no choice but to admire and soak up. All this is to say, there seems to be no disconnect between the Peter Coyote revealed in this book and the Peter Coyote that lives and breathes today—a consonance that I had been more than a

little dubious of before meeting him. If this lends some credibility to his book for you, all the better. (If you want to take a look at the interview, you can find it [here](#).) So, whether you're into autobiographies or not, pick this one up. You'll learn something about life, something about intentionality, something about how to reflect on your decisions, and something about how to be a damn good storyteller, all in the span of a few days (the book goes quite fast after you get past his childhood.) It's not as enchanting as a work of fiction might be, and it won't help you escape the challenges you're living with, but believe me, it'll make your reality seem a little more worth it. -Elise Hadden, Under the Heather Books ([www.undertheheatherbooks.com](http://www.undertheheatherbooks.com))

This book swept me away. I appreciated the author's vulnerability, transparency, and the magnitude of the life he led. His humor was brilliant and well-timed. I was especially touched looking through the child's eyes in retrospect. His love for Uncle Harry, and his father vividly showed how the imprinting works, and invites compassion for unsavory characteristics that evolve through our innocent need for love and approval. I felt a little sad after finishing the book, like the author was still trying to compare his life to his father's or some ideal standard of success. I agree with another reviewer that there is another book yet to be written, where the author embodies the spiritual principles he has studied, and shares with us that more evolved life. This was, however, a fun and informative ride.

This book was so wonderfully engaging, funny, creative, innovative, and thought-provoking... truly well-written entertaining! Half-way through the book, I was so floored, I bought 3 more of this same book for my mom, my sister and my brother. They love it as I have. Coyote expresses his life in such captivating twists and unexpected turns, yet, with the familiarity of a good friend. My family and I enjoy discussing various parts of his book together.. which is a very special way for us to bond. I highly recommend this book for anyone. Coyote's words seem to express what I feel, as if they would be my own perspectives of life's mysteries, challenges, follies, vast contrasts, and joys. Coyote's writing is grounded, raw, real, and heart-felt.

Coyote's personal history is interesting and one gains a great deal of context for what follows. In contrast, the time afforded to the Italian designer (?) did not make a lot of sense to me other than an appreciation for detail. I felt the farm had much to do with his perspective and work ethic but it seemed to only be referred to in passing once the place was lost. I would have enjoyed hearing

more about the influence of Gary Snyder and how that relationship grew. I did enjoy his word "smithing" - he turns a nice phrase! A very interesting man.

This is a wonderful book with many incites about Peter. He has had a remarkable life.

Listen to this author's voice and you will hear liberating truth expressed in its absence of malice, self-aggrandizement or blame. It is as adventurous and colorful as any novel romp yet as real as the loss of people we love.

Peter Coyote was an important part of the cultural shift in the sixties, and this book documents a goodly portion of that role, as well as a look at his upbringing. Very well written . . . sent me to my dictionary a few times. Recommended reading, especially if you want an insight into what the title means.

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