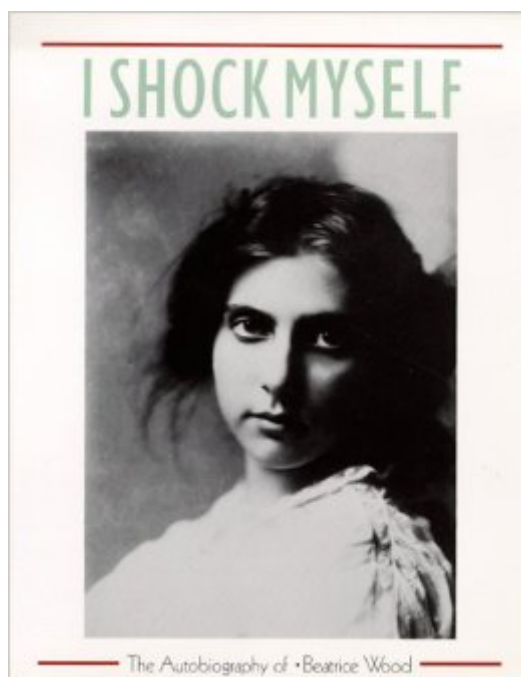


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I Shock Myself: The Autobiography Of Beatrice Wood



Synopsis

Beatrice Wood's Life has been extraordinary in every way, from earliest childhood, when her dominating Victorian mother realized she "wasn't like the rest of them," to her productive life at ninety-five in California's Ojai Valley. Rebellious, radical and romantic, Beatrice Wood was determined to be an artist. She fled to Paris for several bohemian seasons as a painter and actress, then returned to New York where she fell into the loving clutches of two Frenchmen: Henri-Pierre Roche, the author of *Jules and Jim*, and Marcel Duchamp, the iconoclastic Dadaist. Her promising youth was followed by a disastrous marriage, financial woes and a debilitating physical affliction; but in 1933, at the age of forty, she discovered the passion that would change her life: pottery. Now one of America's acclaimed ceramicists, Beatrice Wood shares the intriguing details of her unconventional life in *I Shock Myself*. With candor and insight, she recollects nearly ten decades of world shaking events, heart breaking romances, and artistic achievement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am going to be honest and say what this autobiography meant to me.... Starting with her early days as an artist to an actress breaking from her mother's shell. To her associations with Duchamp, Roche, Varese, Reginald Pole, Krishnumarti and other well-known men. And it tells of the struggles she went through in paying the price to learn of life and her amazing stories in India, France..etc; were very interesting to read. I enjoyed her stories with the beloved Arensbergs' for they were very important in her life. Before this book I didn't have knowledge of most of the

artists in her life. She has opened new doors! I laughed hysterically at her descriptions of her years with Pole and Steve. She is a riot! An amazing woman really. This book will remain with me forever and I will read it again and again. For someone like myself can't believe there is so much adventure in life. She died this spring at 105, in her heart 32. I would have loved to meet her. All I can do now is remember her and try to learn more about her life and art. I loved her and she is an inspiration to all humanity with her marvelous statements on the facts of life. After all, she lived 105 years and paid the price. A definite book to add to a collection for any Beato fan or curious book reader!

As a potter, I'd hoped to learn more about her art. However, there were some gems to be found in the text. I really enjoyed the stories about several other famous people in her life. She is brutally honest in her opinions and I like that. On the downside... it was a bit too "socially conscious" in places, for my own taste. Overall, I enjoyed the book and will read more by her. I wrote a personal letter to her, regarding her book and she answered me promptly... twice! Great lady! Wonderful clay-artist! :-) An interesting read, for sure.

Being a potter and a Beato fan, I truly enjoyed the time I spent with this autobiography. I was fascinated by how her life unfolded from her relationships with those in art to her own creation of art. How her world which was largely centered around the men she knew, changed as she found herself in clay. I loved how this story unfolded and I was sad when it ended.

There are few stories about women who step out of the roles dictated to them by tradition and culture. Beatrice had an open mind and heart that guided her every choice, even making bad decisions that as time went on, were less wrong and more about being teaching her to wake up and be at attention. To be a woman in the late 1800s and early 1900s has always been painted as a lifetime of restriction, modesty, austerity, and dependency. It was a time where America was either at war or developing new technologies that would change the world. It was a time for men, by men. And yet, here is the story of a woman who desperately desired to experience Life and feel it within every cell of her being. I am not an artist. The names of her friends, the Avant Garde art movement she helped pioneer and terms like "Mama of Dada" are areas in which I don't have the education to appreciate the value of and yet that did nothing to deter from my joy at reading her autobiography. The black and white photos and selections from 85 years of written journals and letters add to the charm of her book. She lived through the deaths of her friends and kept her kiln going the whole time. She spent her last days in a house built for her, on land she

helped build and nurture and today it is dedicated in her name. She could watch the sun rise and set over a nearby mountain and fuss over the cactus she planted. She valued her caregivers who made sure her makeup was perfect for guests who came to call on her. She read. I imagine that she chose the precise moment in which to leave this world, 6 days after her 105 birthday. Inspiration comes when and where you may least expect it. I had the book for a year before I finally picked it up off the coffee table to read. From the first chapter, I was transported backwards by 100 years to find a woman with the spunk and courage to show me how to live today.

I love the work of Beatrice Wood and was hoping that this book would give me some insight into her as a person. My interest was more toward her work and how she decided to pursue her art, but the book seems to delve mostly into her love life and her history as a rebel. It was interesting, but not what I was hopping for.

Highly recommended, artist Beatrice Wood's autobiography, "I Shock Myself" gives the reader a glimpse into her illustrious life and art. I could not put this book down

I knew Beatrice Wood, and lived in her guest apartment one summer in the early Seventies. Her charisma and perseverance will always inspire me to an uplifted existence. Beatrice's "I Shock Myself" and "Playing Chess with the Heart" truly reflect her personality. And regarding her revealed secret to longevity, I do believe she had it right. I recommend these books for any individual's library. Sincerely, Michael C. Pennington
Aurora Wolf Literary Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy[...]

What a wonderful, endearing Beatrice Wood was. This is a rags to riches to rags story, but Beatrice didn't let it get to her head. Throughout all of her difficulties she kept stretching and searching for a spiritual truth that I believe maintained an innocence about her, despite her avant-garde/bohemian life style. How she became the great potter and sculptor is a great story. Her courage and sometimes lack of such is inspiring, as is her tender heart. She persevered with her art despite all sort of odds thrown at her and came out triumphant in the end. She was always searching for a sense of self and spirituality that you see from the beginning of the book she always had, she, like Dorothy and the shoes had to only believe. This book was referred to me over two decades ago by one of my best and dearest friends, Jan McIntyre, and amazing animal sculptor in her own right. Before Jan passed from breast cancer in 1990, she said that someday I might need to

read the book when I was ready. Well, I understand what she meant now. It is inspiring, teaching, a great roller coaster ride, and I can say almost an early version in some ways of "Eat, Pray, Love". Her writing style makes you feel like she is sitting before you with a cup of tea telling you her story. Simply amazing!

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