

# ***Annie Dillard***

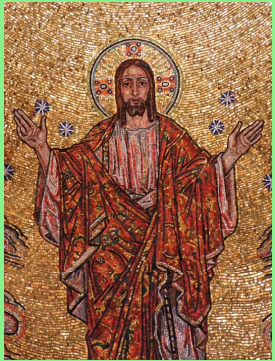
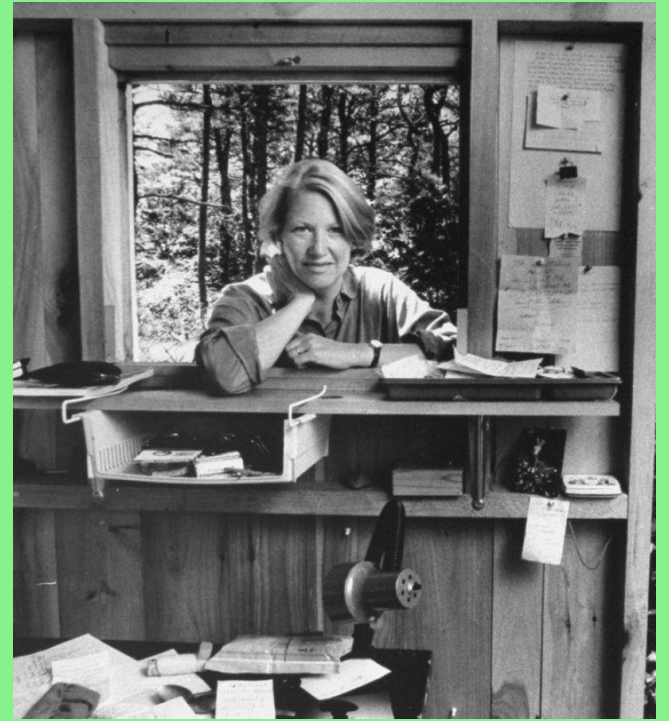
***(April 30, 1945 – \_\_\_\_\_)***

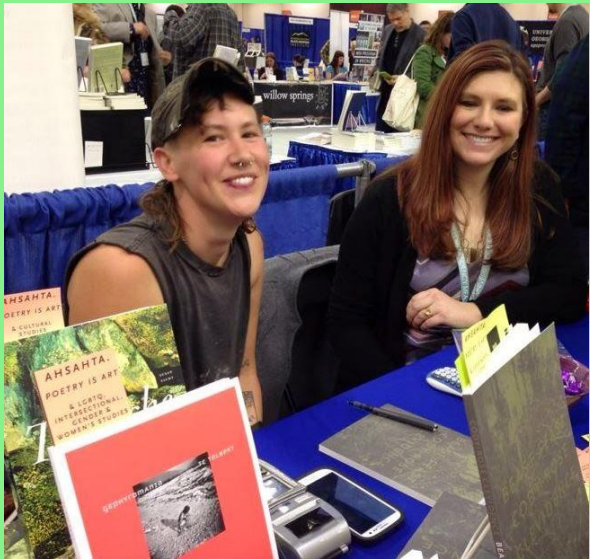


# Timeline

**April 30, 1945**, born Meta Ann Doak in Pittsburgh, PA, oldest of 3 daughters of Pam Lambert Doak & Frank Doak; attends fundamentalist church camp  
**1955**, enters Ellis School; rebels against affluent, country club upbringing, as interests shift toward poetry; quits Shadyside Presbyterian Church because of “hypocrisy,” but returns when the minister lures her back with a well-thought-out argument based on the works of C.S. Lewis  
**1963**, enters Hollins College, Roanoke, VA  
**June 5, 1965**, marries her writing teacher, poet and novelist Richard Dillard  
**1967**, BA, Hollins College  
**1968**, MA, Hollins College (thesis on Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden; or Life in the Woods*); dabbles in Sufisim, Buddhism, Eskimo systems, Hasidic Judaism; Episcopal Church, converts to Catholicism

**1971**, endures a near fatal attack of pneumonia  
**1974**, first book of poems, **Tickets for a Prayer Wheel** and **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek** are published  
**1975**, **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek** receives Pulitzer Prize; divorces Dillard, and retreats to Waldron Island, WA  
**1975-1979**, Scholar-in-Residence, W. Washington U.  
**1979-2000**, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT  
**April 12, 1980**, marries Gary Clevidence  
**1982**, visits China (along with Norman Cousins) as part of State Dept. delegation  
**1984**, daughter Cody Rose is born  
**1988**, divorces Clevidence; marries Robert D. Richardson, Jr.  
**September, 10, 2014**, President Obama awards her a National Medal for the Arts and Humanities  
**2016**, ***The Abundance: Narrative Essays Old & New***  
**June 16, 2020**, husband, Robert D. Richardson, dies after complications suffered from a fall on Cape Cod

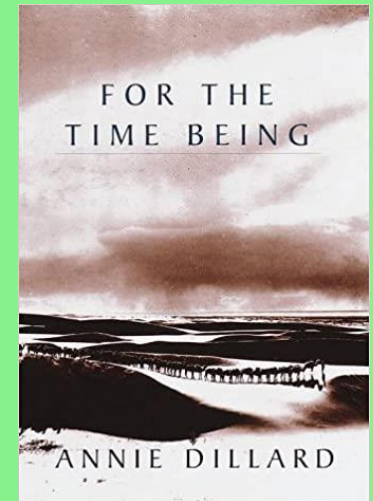
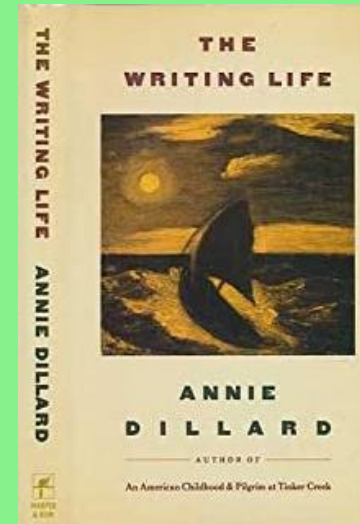
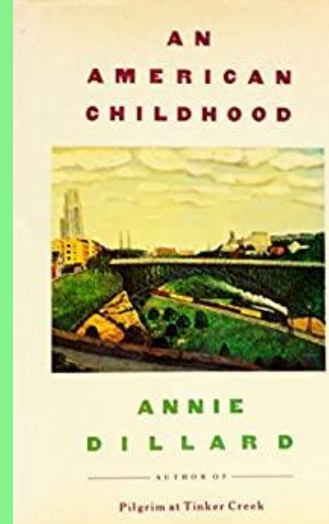
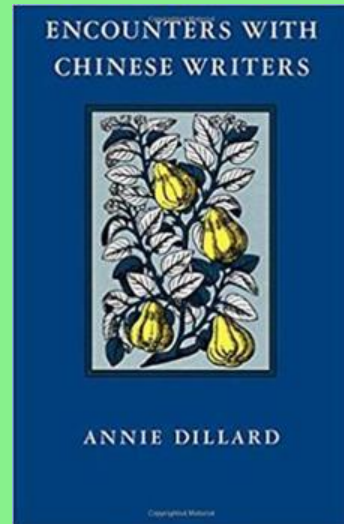
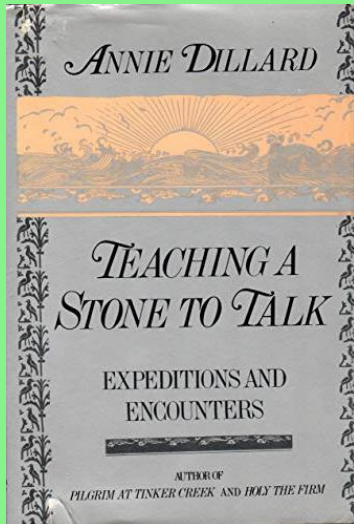
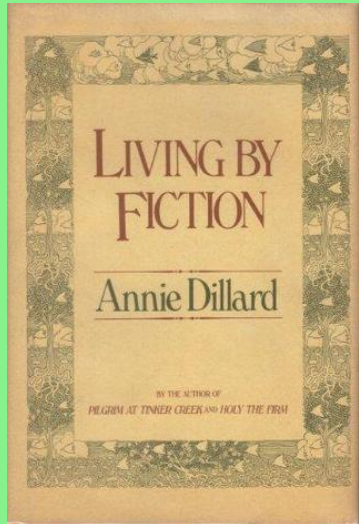
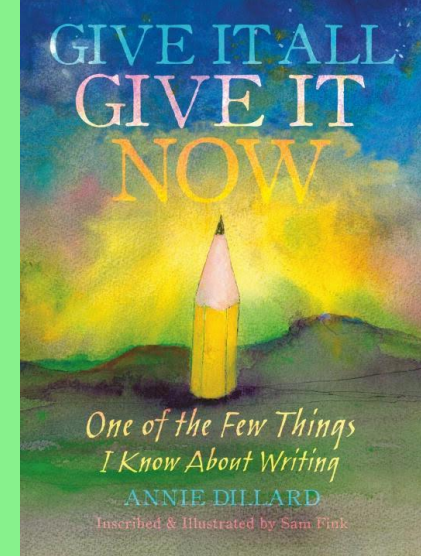
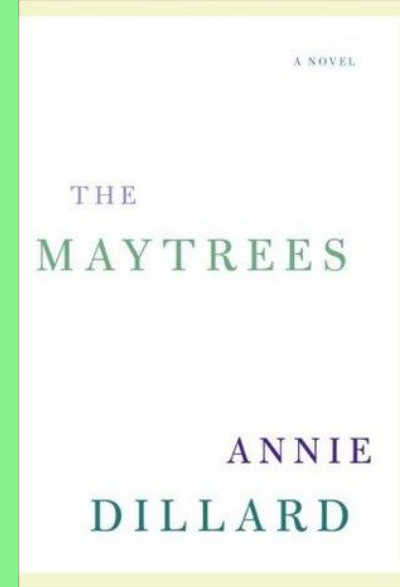
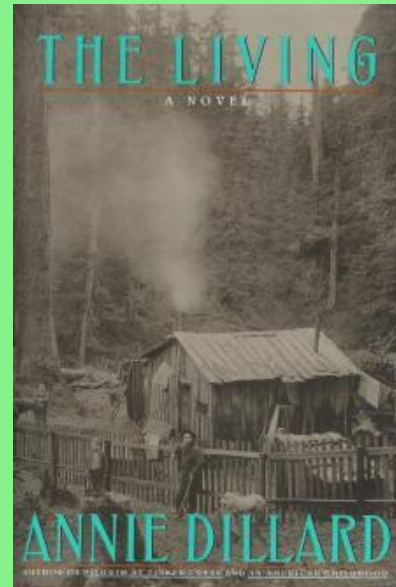
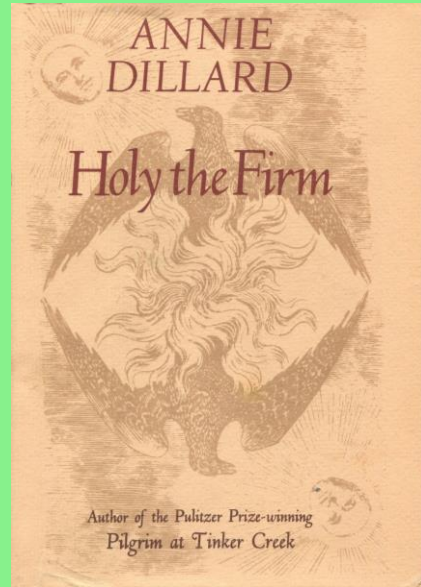
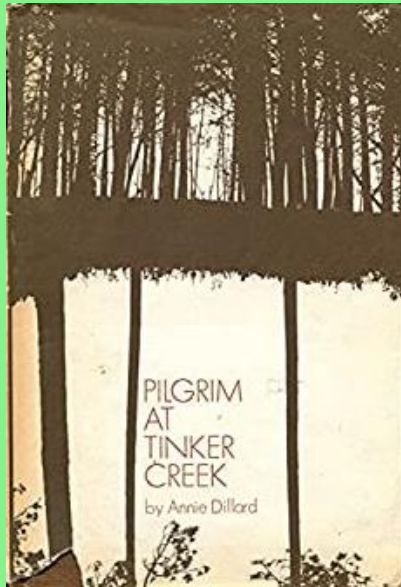
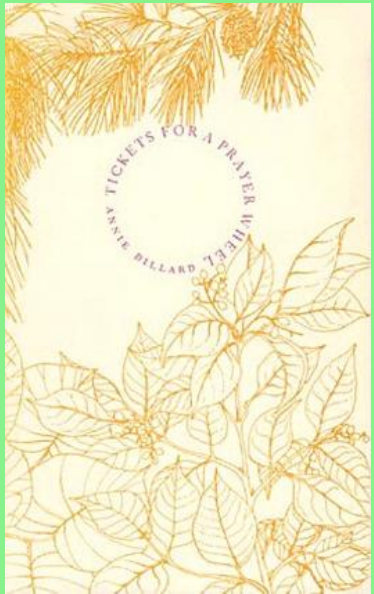








# Where to start??



# About the writing life

“One of the things I know about writing is this: spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it, all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for a later place in the book or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now. The impulse to save something good for a better place later is the signal to spend it now. Something more will arise for later, something better. These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water. Similarly, the impulse to keep to yourself what you have learned is not only shameful, it is destructive. Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you. You open your safe and find ashes.” -- A.D. *The Writing Life*



# Internet Resources

- ✓ **Official Annie Dillard Website (as of 2019)**

<https://www.anniedillard.com/> & <http://www.anniedillard.com/drawings-paintings-2.html>

- ✓ **“Annie Dillard: With Her Eyes Open” by Eugene Peterson (posted April 13, 2009)**

[Excerpted from *Theology Today*, July 1986, Volume: 43, Issue: 2, Pages: 178-191.]

<http://adrawerforitall.blogspot.com/2009/04/annie-dillard-seeing-eugene-petersen.html>

- ✓ **“Contemplating the Infinite with Annie Dillard” by John Freeman  
*Poets & Writers*, March 2016 -- Posted @ *Literary Hub*, March 10, 2016**

<https://lithub.com/contemplating-the-infinite-with-annie-dillard/>

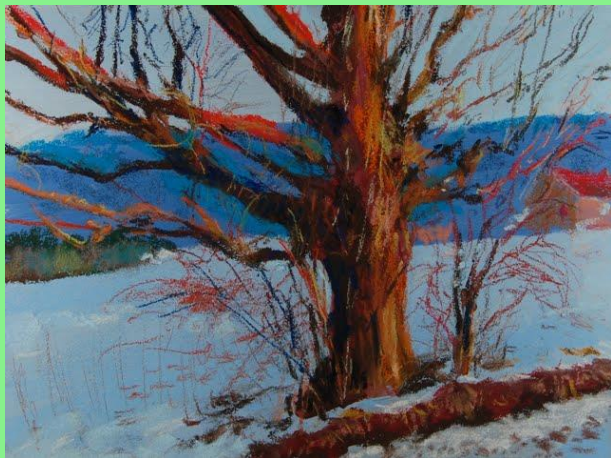
**“Notes for Young Writers,” by Annie Dillard, *Image*, No. 16 1997**

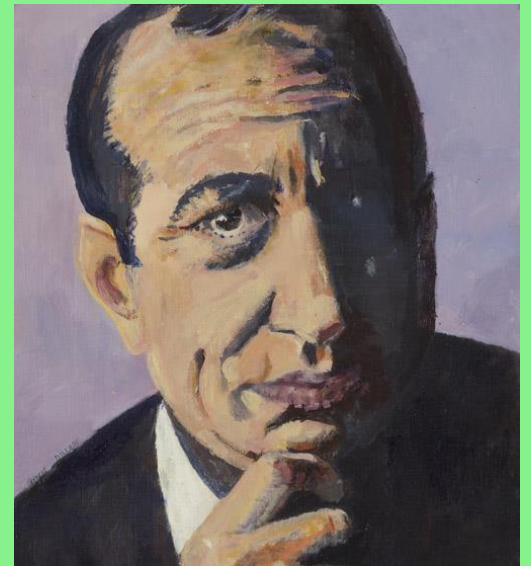
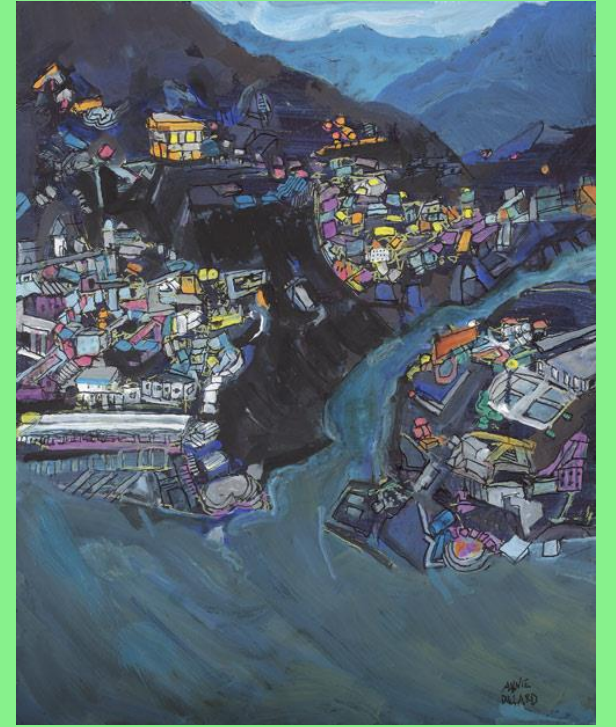
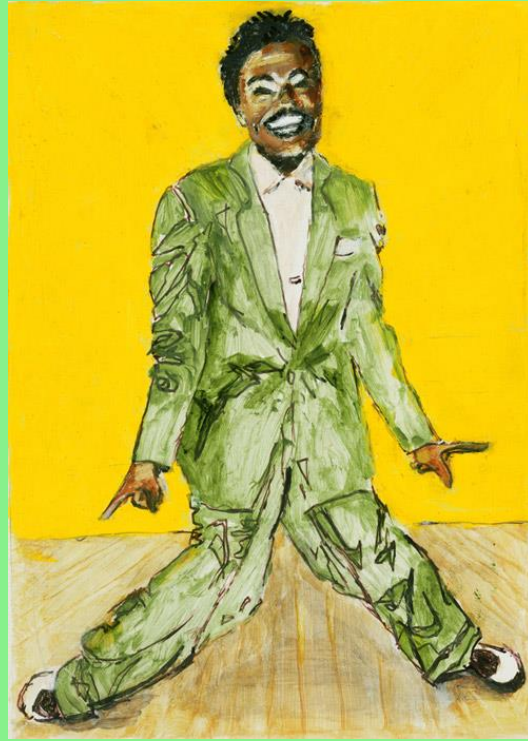
<https://imagejournal.org/article/notes-for-young-writers/>

“Do not read this crap.” – Annie Dillard (from her website)

**“Where Have You Gone, Annie Dillard?” by William Deresiewicz  
*The Atlantic*, March 2016 (review of *The Abundance*)**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/03/where-have-you-gone-annie-dillard/426843/>





# What's So Special About Annie Dillard?

- **Illuminating tensions between “profane” and “sacred”**
  - ... mystical and scientific
  - ... elusive of categorization and embracing of tradition
- **Colloquial language for ultimate realities, the vernacular to describe the spiritual.**
  - ... She's as lyrical as a lily and as blunt as a two-by-four
- **Unabashed and unhindered in her brute frankness regarding fleeting, mutable character of human existence.**

# What's So Special . . . . continued

- Adroit combination of **deep reverence** for God's immanence and **awe (and sometimes terror)** in the face of **God's transcendence**
- **Persistent struggle with the most ancient of theological puzzles, namely theodicy:** *How can there be a good God in a world so punctuated with evil, natural calamity and moral turpitude?* (See *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, *Holy the Firm*, and *For the Time Being*.)
- **Enthralled by nature, enraptured by nature's God**

# Dillard's approach to the world & her faith ....

Consistently evades all attempts to be pinned down about specific religious commitments. While obviously steeped in the multivalent riches of the Christian way, she remains wide open to revelations about mystery from all traditions.

## **Her identity and purposes:**

*"I am no scientist.... I am an explorer... I am also a stalker, or the instrument of the hunt itself."*

## **Christ's message:**

*"Week after week Christ washes the disciples -- dirty feet, handles their very toes, and repeats, It is all right -- believe it or not -- to be people."*

# Dillard's approach . . . . continued

**Aghast at how blithely anyone,  
but especially church people,  
can speak about and give homage to God:**



*“Why do we people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute? .... Does anyone have the foggiest idea of what sort of power we so blithely invoke? .... Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews.”*

# Dillard's approach . . . . continued

## Confronting the end of life:

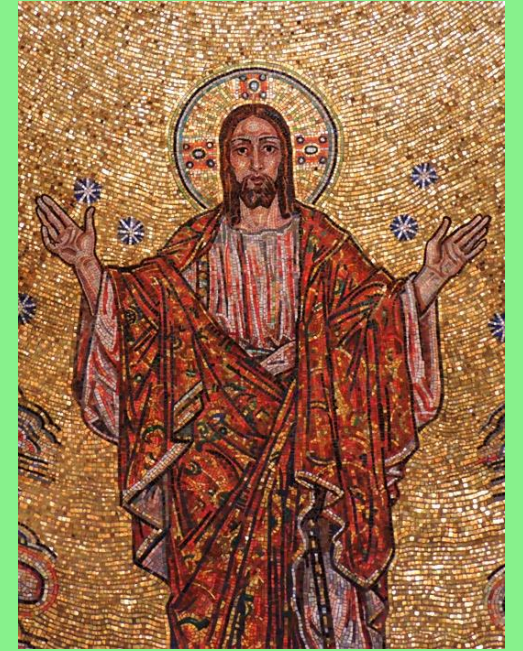
*I think that the dying  
pray at the last  
not "please"  
but "thank you"  
as a guest thanks his host at the door.*



# Dillard's approach . . . . continued

About the duty of praying:

*In Luke eleven  
and again in Luke eighteen,  
Christ demands  
importunate prayer,  
prayer that does not faint.  
Fatigare deos,  
wearing God out.*



# Dillard's approach . . . continued



## A benediction:

*“And ...I go my way...and my left foot says ‘Glory,’ and my right foot says ‘Amen” . . . upstream and down, exultant, in a daze, dancing, to the twin silver trumpets of praise.”*

**TIME's YOURS . . . .**

**Q & A . . . .**

**Discussion . . . .**

**Musings . . . .**

