

Pilgrimage

Posted on Aug 27, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

I have just written, in an email to a close friend to whom I had recommended a book, "If you don't cry at the ending, then our friendship is over."

The book is called THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRY ... a first novel by Rachel Joyce.

It had been recommended to me by my friend Tom, and Tom happened to be visiting this weekend, so he was here when I concluded my reading, and we had a chance to talk about it. In part we talked about the use of the word "pilgrimage"...such a perfect choice. The author could have used the word "journey", of course...but *pilgrimage*...perfect.

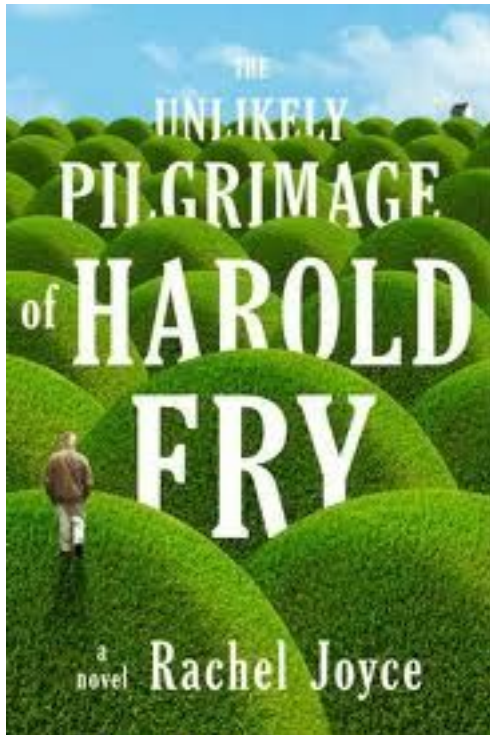
I am a fast reader but I took my time with this one, savoring each paragraph.

(In contrast I picked up another new book last night: THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS, perceived in the first pages that it was not savorable, at least not by me, so I zipped through it and finished it in one sitting and won't even bother recommending it to friends. But Harold Fry? Oh yes.)

Tom called it a novel about *redemption*. He is a retired priest so knows what he is talking about when he uses such terminology: redemption; pilgrimage. I myself am not at all religious but one doesn't need to be to appreciate those words and what they mean in this book. It is a book about being human. About making mistakes. About grief and loss and making up for things done wrong. It concludes with two people laughing and laughing, even as the reader is snuffling into a Kleenex.

This morning I looked up the definition of the word "pilgrimage" and found: A **pilgrimage** is a

journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. It occurs to me that many (most)? memorable pieces of literature involve a journey of that sort...sometimes actual geographic journeys; always a quest for meaning.



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