

# The Pilgrim At Pinker Creek

Read by

Annie Dillard.

Author . (April 30, 1945)

→ American author, best known for her narrative prose in both fiction and nonfiction.

→ Her essays of contemplation on the world of nature made this American author extremely popular.

→ Dillard's books have been translated into at least 10 languages.

## Major Works

\* The Living

\* Total Eclipse

\* Pilgrim at Pinker Creek

\* Fox the Time Being.

\* Tickets for a Prayer Wheel. etc.

## Pilgrim at Tinker Creek - Summary.

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek published in 1994, is a nonfiction work that defies categorization. The book is a series of internal monologues and reflections spoken by an unnamed narrator. Over the course of a year, she walks alone through the land surrounding Tinker Creek, located in the Blue Ridge mountains near Roanoke, Virginia. As she observes the changing of the seasons and the corresponding behaviors of plants and animals around her, she reflects on the nature of the world and of the God who set it in. The narrator is determined to present the natural world as it truly is, not sentimentally or selectively. Therefore, she is as likely to reflect on a frog being sucked

dry by an insect as on the blent  
of light ~~that~~ strikes a certain  
springtime tree. Whether the images  
are cruel or lovely, the language  
is beautiful and poetic, and insistently  
celebratory.

# Themes

## Isolation

It doesn't get much more isolated than living alone in a cabin in the woods. Taking the cue from Thoreau, in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Dillard nestles up to the creek to, as she says "see what I could see". Who needs human companionship when you have insects? The author spent up to sixteen hours a day alone in her cabin, writing and reading lots of books about nature.

## Man and the Natural World.

At its heart *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is a meditation on Thoreau's ability to live in harmony with nature. She can only watch so

many insects cannibalize each other before she starts question the wisdom of her Pilgrimage. The introduction of species Dilaud witnesses during the year at Tinker Creek reveals deeper truths about beauty, spirituality, death and the essence of seeing.

### Mortality

The brutal truth is that if you're an insect, muskrat, or fish, the odds are against you - there are all kinds of parasites just waiting to feast on your innards. Interspersed with stories of horse hair worms and leeches in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, are tales of ancient Israeli sacrifices, sewing needles made of bone, & Eskimo children using seal pelt as sleds. ♀

## Spirituality

Tinker Creek is a kind of church  
if you don't mind your church  
being full of muskrats and predatory  
insects. and Dillard asks lot of big  
questions about God in Pilgrim at  
Tinker Creek. She cites a number  
of religious leaders and rituals  
in an effort to understand whether  
or not the creator has any  
love for his creations.

## Symbols in

## Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.

### 1. Tinker Creek.

Tinker creek is her Physical and  
Spiritual anchor. It serves simultaneously  
as both an avenue towards something

good and can escape from something bad.

## ② Bloody Tomcat

The fighting tomcat "Sinking of blood and wire" opens the book in chapter 1 and ends it to a close in chapter 15. Dilard says she wanted to begin with a visceral image of blood as a symbol of death & sacrifice - but also of spiritual rebirth.

## ③ Dying Frog

The horrific death of the frog is also a symbol. She encounters the frog at Pinker Creek and wonders why it doesn't leap away as she approaches. While she watches, the frog succumbs to death in a matter

of minutes, its skull and skin  
collapsing as a giant water bug  
literally sucks its insides out  
after first dissolving them with  
poison.