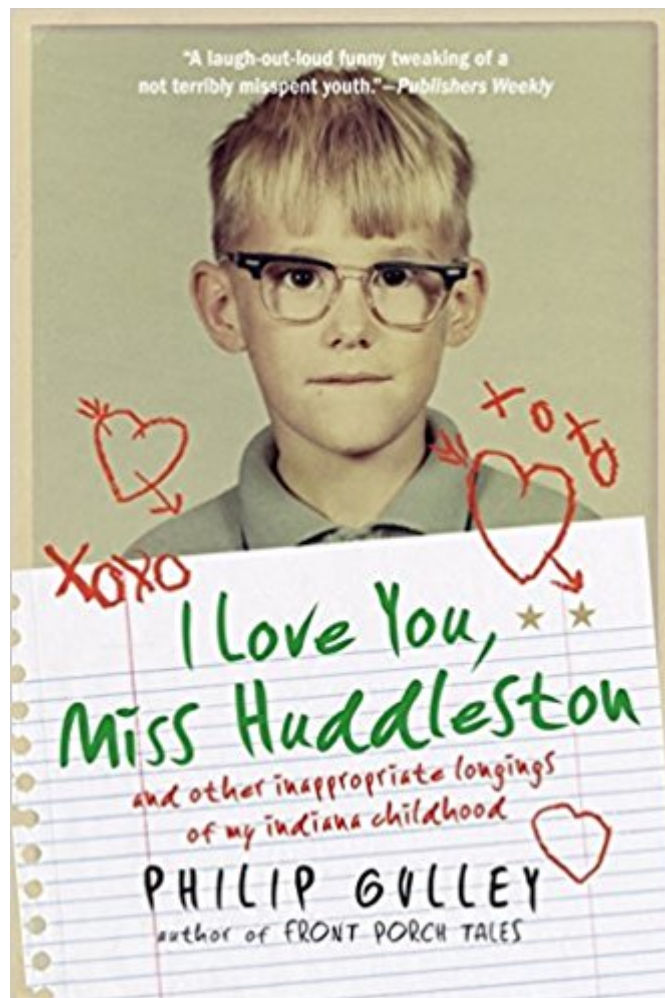




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# I Love You, Miss Huddleston: And Other Inappropriate Longings Of My Indiana Childhood



## Synopsis

In the vein of Bill Bryson's *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*, with a dash of some of the homegrown nostalgia of *The Dangerous Book for Boys* and *A Prairie Home Companion*, humorist Philip Gulley (*Front Porch Tales*, *Home to Harmony*) tells of his coming of age in small-town Indiana.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Some kids were evidently not unhappy growing up, but they can still get pretty good childhood memoirs, especially if they are honest about exaggerating. Quaker pastor-author Gulley (the *Harmony* series) writes a low-key Hoosier who's who in this memoir set in Danville, Ind., where youthful acting out takes the form of hurling tomatoes and detonating cans of bug spray. Danville includes Quaker widows aplenty, pals named Peanut and Suds, an arthritic and deaf police dog and a mousery that provisions Indiana's homegrown pharmaceutical manufacturer, Eli Lilly. Gulley has no shortage of material, and the teenage years naturally bring an attack of hormones that prompts pathetic, doomed crushes. We even manage to learn a few facts about the humorist, such as that Gulley grew up Catholic. His chief object of fun is his youthful self, which takes the edge off his views of other characters from his youth, many of whom are relatives. Humor beats nostalgia and drama; this stuff is a laugh-out-loud tweaking of a not terribly misspent youth. (Apr.) Copyright © 2010 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Quaker pastor Gulley has made a name with his funny and folksy stories set in Harmony, Indiana, and featuring a Quaker pastor. Those fictions could easily be considered autobiographical, and perhaps to distance his life from his fiction, he here offers his recollections of childhood and adolescence in . . . Indiana (Danville, though). They're daffier than the stories. Oh, they start out innocuously enough, on such nostalgia-rousing themes as the new house, the baby picture, the paper route, family vacations, Halloween, the bike, church, chores, the traveling carnival, driving, pranks, and so on. In fairly short order, however, each takes a sharp turn into exaggeration and keeps on turning. Garrison Keillor has nothing on Gulley for wringing the ludicrous from the mundane, but Gulley is never foul-mouthed or louche, and that despite the interest in girls that inevitably emerges in this growing boy's life. The book this one is most like may be James Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times*. OK, not that near-surrealistically inspired. But as flat-out hilarious? Very nearly. --Ray Olson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Philip Gulley's sweet-natured 2009 memoir *I LOVE YOU, MISS HUDDLESTON* tricked me. I first saw this book at the GLBT store Brushstrokes in Atlanta and made a note to order in online, where I saw a cheap used copy. I assumed that since that bookstore was carrying it the tome was a gay-friendly coming of age tale about growing up in Indiana, something akin to *A LITTLE FRUITCAKE* or *MISSISSIPPI SISSY*. So it worked its way off my "to read" shelf and I was shocked to discover that not only was the author married with children, but also a Quaker pastor! That being said, it was a pleasant book, filled with good-natured humor and thankfully not in the least bit preachy. It harkens back to the days when religion was not fraught with politics and being a pastor was a career choice, like a doctor or a teacher. Gulley is quite well-known in certain circles for a series of books about a fictitious Quaker community called Harmony and a series of essays collected as the *FRONT PORCH* series. By all accounts he is a progressive pastor with a level of intelligence not often seen in the current blogosphere. The book itself is a humorous account of life in the 1960s and 1970s in Danville, Indiana. Philip was the fourth of five children born to a Catholic mother and a DDT-selling father. The book chronicles several hallmarks of the coming of age memoir, including family camping trips, paper routes and Halloween. These long-lost reflections of a vanquished small town life are funny and enjoyable with just the right dose of nostalgia and humor. Philip and I are not that far apart in age, so a lot of his upbringing I could relate to, as can most Gen Xers I'm sure. The days of spending the summer outdoors and hanging with your friends until it gets

dark without the worry of slow downloads or bounced checks strikes a chord. Gulley captures these moments with style and grace.

I have been collecting all of Philip Gulley's books. This one was just as great. So far never been disappointed.

Years ago I read both 'Hometown Tales', and 'Front Porch Tales' and absolutely loved them. This latest book of short stories was no different. Mr Gulley has become my 'Master of Main Street'! Every time I picked up this book, I was transported to a simpler time, a place where I would love to have grown up, or have my son grow up. Heck, I even googled Danville, In, tried (unsuccessfully) to convince my husband to retire early from the Navy, and pack up and move to this sweet little town I have never been to! It was strange though, to read this book from the perspective of a mother. Had I read this a few short years ago, I'd have laughed and shook my head at the crazy antics of young boys...now, however, I found myself saying (to no one in particular)... 'Where's your bike helmet??', 'Omg, he's gonna lose an eye!', 'Are these kids INSANE?!?! They're never gonna live to see 20?!' (and I'm only 28!). Also, I just love Mr. Gulley's dry sense of humor. He's funny without trying to be, and he embellishes his stories just enough so you get the gist of what happened, but with a little added amusement thrown in. I DEFINITELY recommend this book, and any other Gulley book you may be interested in. He's a great storyteller, and it's an absolute joy to read his books. Pull up a rocking chair, grab a sweet tea, and be transported to a time when kids were rough and tumble, bike riding, knee-scraping kids.

Gulley is a master of "right word at the right place" getting an audible laugh from reading. Giggling from his writing is constant. Reading about Philip growing up in small-town Indiana even tops a Leno show. Gulley must have had a good childhood, but the way he shares his experiences through his writing makes the reader feel like one of his happy neighbors, if not a childhood pal. Such delightful selection of words, for just the right moment. About a summer's garden abundance: "No calculator exists that can accurately extrapolate the tons of tomatoes generated by a hundred plants." Or the footnote on the church dealing with delinquency: "Quaker men, I would later learn after becoming one, are big believers in the redemptive powers of checkers." And "mothers were soothing our cowlicks with mother-spit..." One liners infiltrate the story as frequently as salt crystals in a theatre box of Indiana's Weaver Popcorn. The fast-paced story progression and continuous clean, homey, humor is reminiscent of this author's much acclaimed series of Harmony books. This

autobiography is the perfect start, followed then with the entire series. Don't forget the two Christmas specials, both so so-o-o funny, they are like Christmas classics. The wife and I actually sent copies out as Christmas cards to special friends. Yes, I do own almost every Gulley book. His humorous books could potentially be equaled, but never surpassed in fun entertainment. You'd best read it twice because it is packed so full of laughs you'll likely miss some of the subtle humor during just one read. Recommended without reservation, and you don't even have to be a native of Indiana to enjoy. Just a kid at heart. Even older youth will like "I LOVE YOU, MISS HUDDLESTON". With 's price--IT IS A BARGAIN BARREL OF LAUGHS.

I started to read it-but my faster reading neighbor borrowed it. What I read of it, I really like it. All of Phil Gulleys writings are great. I first heard about him from Paul Harvey years ago. He is so real! The seller got the book here quicker than promised and it's in great shape.

This is the second time I have read this book--on Kindle this time. I first had it in hardcover and lent it out so many times I finally lost track of it. Gulley tells the sometimes exaggerated but always funny story of his growing up years in Indiana. He paints the quirks of family and friends, as well as community members with such vivid strokes that you feel you know them--or at least someone like them. While I was reading the book, I would just burst out laughing and insisted on reading parts to my husband. I think I read him nearly the whole book! Gulley's Harmony series based on his years as a Quaker pastor is written in the same vein and I would highly recommend those as well.

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