



Pushing the Limits of Motion Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Maybe it's the action of a powerful physical force or maybe it's the way we move to *counteract* that force. Some motion is more figurative, like the experiences we pass through on life's journey and the changes they inspire. Humans enriching their existence are humans in motion.

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Rachel Joyce, Fiction. Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does, even down to how he butters his toast. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning the mail arrives, and within the stack of quotidian minutiae is a letter addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl from a woman he hasn't seen or heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in hospice and is writing to say goodbye... And thus begins the unlikely pilgrimage. Harold Fry is determined to walk six hundred miles from Kingsbridge to the hospice in Berwick-upon-Tweed because, he believes, as long as he walks, Queenie Hennessey will live.

Still in his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold embarks on his urgent quest across the countryside. Along the way he meets one character after another, each of whom unlocks his long-dormant spirit and sense of promise. Memories of his first dance with Maureen, his wedding day, his joy in fatherhood, come rushing back to him - allowing him to also reconcile the losses and the regrets. As for Maureen, she finds herself missing Harold for the first time in years. And then there is the unfinished business with Queenie Hennessy. - *goodreads.com*

- Where would Harold be today if he hadn't made his pilgrimage? What would the state of his relationship with Maureen be? How would news of Queenie's death have affected him? What would his life look like?
- Why does the story that the garage girl tells Harold affect him so deeply? Do you think Harold would have mused on faith and gone on this tremendous journey had the garage girl told Harold that her aunt died of cancer anyway?
- What would it take to get you to make an extraordinary journey? Is there anyone or anything that could compel you to walk six hundred miles? What is it about human nature that compels us to act on certain things, and yet remain passive on others? Is some of that a human instinct, such as "fight or flight"?

