

The Most Beautiful Walk in the World: a Pedestrian in Paris – John Baxter. A Moveable Feast – Ernest Hemingway

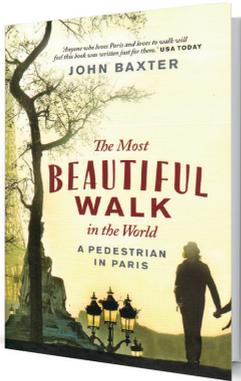
This reviewer recently represented literary North London, in an unofficial capacity of course, on the north bank of the Seine during a writer's residency with literary organisation, Paris Lit Up. My time was spent living, writing, performing, and teaching, in the French capital – and as with any visit to a place of wonder, it makes you thirst for more.

So following my Parisian adventures, I decided to go back and reflect on some of the books that I've read about the City of Lights, and that made me fall in love with the city in the first place.

John Baxter is an Australian writer who has lived and worked in Paris for nearly 25 years. His book, *The Most Beautiful Walk in the World: a Pedestrian in Paris*, one of his many about the city, is very much a love letter to his adopted home.

Baxter marvels at the hidden depths, and shallows, of the cobbles that have witnessed revolution, passion, vagrancy, love, death, and all else that human kind can through at it. He brings the streets he pounds to life, with the urgency of someone that wants you to know all about the anecdotal history of Paris.

He writes like only a resident write about a city. For any Francophile this book is a must read, and for anyone who delights in charm, wit and youthful exuberance for life, it is also a must.



A Moveable Feast is part, the autobiographical recounting of Ernest Hemingway's time in Paris, most notably with his first wife Hadley, and part, the dying man's love letter to a time that he was desperate to return to.

In Hemingway's indomitable way he created with *A Moveable Feast* a selection of stories that seems so matter of fact, and at times horrifically dark, while still managing to show off the raw, passionate beauty that he saw in the city that never left him, and within the people who changed his world.

In his later life Hemingway never seemed to find the satisfaction he had once enjoyed in Paris. Maybe the sunshine and hard liquor of Florida and Cuba, swilling around in a mind that never really got over his time in Europe, was too much for him in the end. The posthumous publication of this book of stories, following is suicide at 61, leaves haunting undertones.

Dripping and oozing with the lusty fire and wine fuelled honesty that you would expect from the man it is the perfect explorative Hemingway text for those who haven't yet delved the depths of this great writers mind. For lovers of literature, Paris, and more importantly lovers of life, *A Moveable Feast* must make its way onto your reading list.

While my time in Paris was not as debauched as Mr Hemingway's, nor were my walks as informed as Mr Baxter's, I did have a truly magnificent time in the city. If you can't go to Paris, then read about Paris. Have some quiet time, put on some Edith Piaf at a low volume in the background, dim the lights a little, and let some wine breathe. Open a book and get taken there.

