



ENGLISH PASTORAL

James Rebanks

Published by Allen Lane | £20 hardback, Sept 2020

(paperback, 2nd Sept 2021)

"Rebanks writes so well that I can't imagine anyone starting to read it and not being eager to read it all at once, as I did, and not being moved by the life and the landscape he describes so well. I was thrilled by it"

Philip Pullman

As a boy, James Rebanks's grandfather taught him to work the land the old way. Their family farm in the Lake District hills was part of an ancient landscape: a patchwork of crops and meadows, of pastures grazed with livestock, and hedgerows teeming with wildlife. And yet, by the time James inherited the farm, it was barely recognisable. The men and women had vanished from the fields; the old stone barns had crumbled; the skies had emptied of birds and their wind-blown song.

English Pastoral is the story of an inheritance: one that affects us all. It tells of how rural landscapes around the world have been brought close to collapse, and the age-old rhythms of work, weather, community and wild things are being lost. And yet this elegy from the Lake District fells is also a song of hope: how, guided by the past, one farmer began to salvage a tiny corner of England that was now his, doing his best to restore the life that had vanished and to leave a legacy for the future.

This is a book about what it means to have love and pride in a place, and how, against all the odds, it may still be possible to build a new pastoral: not a utopia, but somewhere decent for us all.

James Rebanks is a farmer based in the Lake District, where his family have lived and worked for over six hundred years. His No.1 bestselling debut, *The Shepherd's Life*, won the Lake District Book of the Year, was shortlisted for the Wainwright and Ondaatje prizes, and has been translated into sixteen languages.



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