

# The Pleasure of Ruins

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Walking through graveyards can be calming and powerful. They enshrine foreverness in a way that nothing else quite does. Each headstone is an emblem of eternity. Behind the inscription is all the passion of life reduced to a name, a few numbers, a brief description. The older and more moldering the yard, the more precious it seems.

Nearly a century ago Rose Macaulay wrote a book entitled "Pleasure of Ruins." It is an account of the relish she takes in seeing ancient crumbling structures throughout the world. We cherish these remnants — the Western Wall is one such — for they call up a splendor that has vanished except in our imaginations.

Each life leaves a trail behind it. When we visit the places where others worked or dreamed or dared, the structures bear messages of the past. We are part of a community larger than the one that surrounds us, taking our place in the pageant of ages. That is why we must not only build but preserve, so that the pleasure of ruins will be available when we too will be speaking through stones.