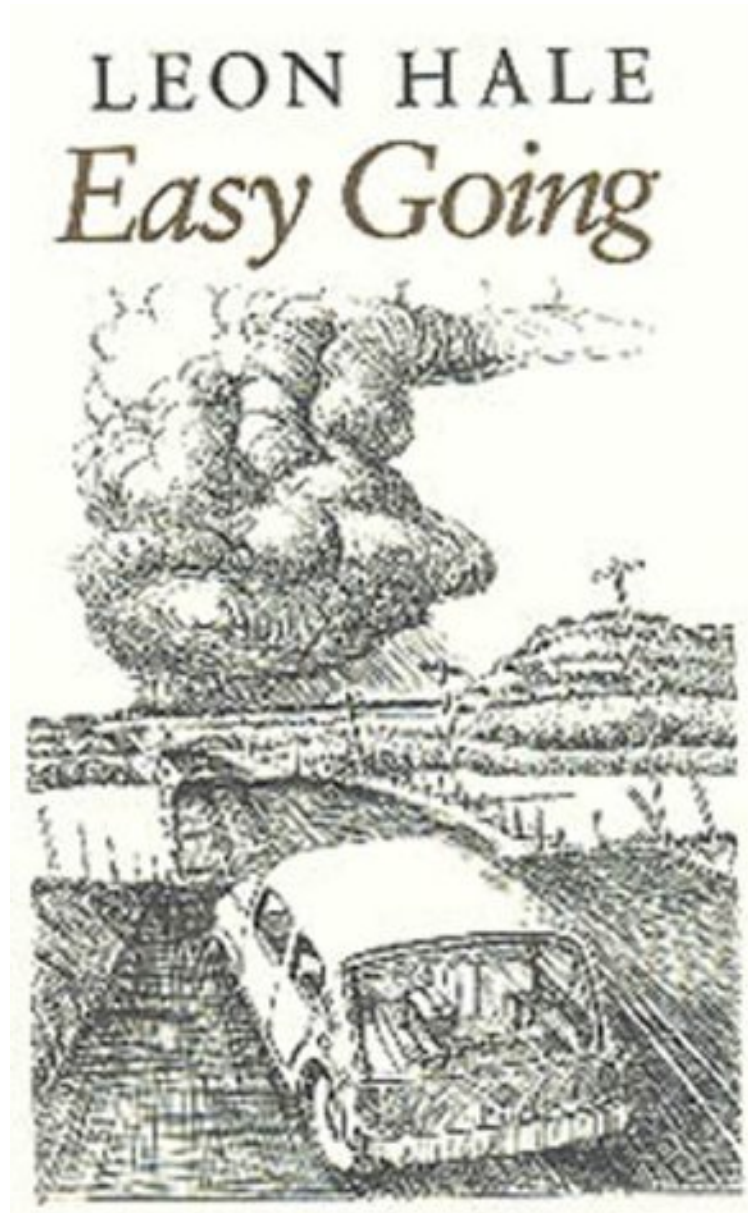


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Easy Going

Leon Hale

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Leon Hale : Easy Going before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Easy Going:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Didnt work for meBy Susan Wilderthis book did not appeal to me . there are so many books to read, I put this down fast and moved to another.1 of 1 people found the following review

helpful. I loved to read Leon Hale's columns in the paper. By Gloria I moved to Houston back in the '80's and was homesick for the days of driving a few miles and losing myself in the country (even in the '80's, Houston was crazy big). I loved to read Leon Hale's columns in the paper. His articles were real, earthy and reflected a love for life, people and nature. He told the same type of stories that I listened to my Dad, Grand Dad and Uncle tell when we were all fortunate enough to be gathered together. I would hang on every word and Mr. Hale was the first to spin a tale as well as that group. :-). That's a really nice compliment if you see it Mr. Hale. I have taken a lot of car and motorcycle trips to places he described in his stories just to feel that feeling you get when you appreciate being connected (not distracted). I have carried that practice through my life and several states and shared it with my husband and friends. We have all experienced enrichment, surprise, education and sometimes horror on our travels. I would not give up a single adventure. I have a copy of Easy Going that Leon Hale signed for my husband and myself back in 1983. I moved from Houston a little later and lost those precious little jewels that I read in the paper I think I'll pick up some of his novels that I didn't know existed. Having re-read some of the "Easy Goings" collection connected me to a simple place that I enjoy.

This delightful collection of Leon Hale columns from the old Houston Post introduces us to a fascinating assemblage of Texana, from memorable individuals to a quickly vanishing rural lifestyle in which joy can be found in the commonplace, if only one knows where to look. And Hale does. Looking and listening are his forte as he takes a relaxed ramble through the back roads of central Texas, across the Gulf Coast Prairie, and into the Piney Woods and Lower Rio Grande Valley. Everywhere he goes he finds uncommon ordinary folk: a bridge-burning sheriff, a country blacksmith still plying his trade, hardworking illegal aliens, a young man dying with quiet grace. Hale's approach to all he encounters is easy going, unpretentious, open to surprises. This allows him to rejoice in simple pleasures: good food at a generous table; the natural beauty of fields and forests; small domestic joys that so many of us take for granted -- such as picture taking at a family picnic, the happy company of a talkative baby, the fierce celebration of a sixtieth birthday, or a day that is special and luminous for no definable reason. Renewing acquaintance with these classic columns originally compiled in 1983 demonstrates most vividly the ambiguity of time's passage. Even as the stories recount in many respects a lifestyle that no longer exists, they astonish with the freshness of their telling and show the vividness and individuality this vanished lifestyle allowed. Here are stories about his mischievous Cousin C. T.; Peerless Ellisor, whose summary of wisdom after eighty-four years is that a man must have love in his heart; Sam Dement, who sells magazines door to door in a rural area, just as Hale's father did during the Depression; and John Rotan, who left a nursing home to live alone in a tin shack deep in the woods he loves. There are also tales of remarkable occurrences, such as his father's experience with a grateful panther; or when fifty birds discovered the delights of ice-skating; or when Uncle Rhodie's hitchhiking bear took over driving duties. Among many other things. Hale muses upon the timelessness of sandlot baseball, the reasons why people fish, memories of a first kiss, and the endurance of old time expressions such as getting easy, and back-reaching. And most of all, in this splendid collection, he reminds us of the richness of our state and its people as depicted by a person whose ability to see through stereotypes to the heart of things has yet to be equaled.

About the Author LEON HALE is the author of ten books, including two novels, four column collections, and an award-winning memoir, Paper Hero. His most recent books are Supper Time (Winedale, '99) and Home Spun (Winedale, '97). He writes a thrice-weekly personal essay column for the Houston Chronicle and has received numerous awards for his work. He divides his time between Houston, Washington County, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.