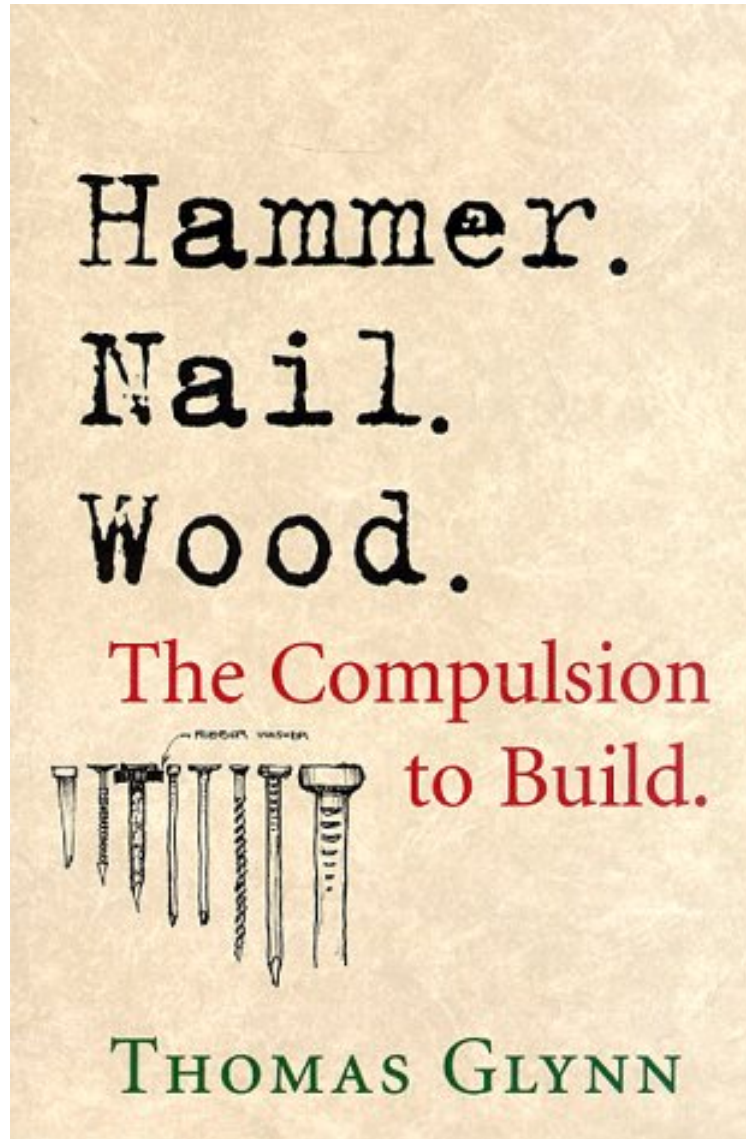


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## Hammer. Nail. Wood.: The Complusion to Build

*Thomas Glynn*

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#2487027 in Books Chelsea Green Publishing Company 1998-05Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 .51 x 6.00 x 9.14l, #File Name: 1890132063220 pages | File size: 43.Mb

**Thomas Glynn : Hammer. Nail. Wood.: The Complusion to Build** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hammer. Nail. Wood.: The Complusion to Build:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Much more than housebuildingBy Eileen G.This book is every bit as good as all the praise on its back cover, and its additional reviews promise. Thomas Glynn is a clear-headed, self-deprecating, and slyly reverent wise man. Often in this book he seems nearly egoless. It's part of how good and smart he is, and how well he tells his story.This is a seemingly simple but actually multi-layered book, on its surface about

the building of a small house that Glynn and his wife planned on "cheap land," that they bought. The land appealed to him despite the fact that he knew "I didn't really want to live on a farm, I wanted to live on the idea of a farm." And he really does build a house, and on a tight budget. He hires helpers, and is part of a little team. "Years ago I realized I wasn't much good at making money. I don't know why it took me so long to realize this." But he knows what it is that he loves, and one of those things is the work of carpentry. Glynn's book is divided into neat, short chapters. Some are almost meditative. He thinks deeply about a lot of things. He writes about himself, and several people and places who in the course of this project become important to him. There's a lot about wood, tools, and building, and somehow it is all very interesting, whether or not you liked Woodshop class. You learn about as much about the characters as you might know had you lived around there for twenty or thirty years. One of Glynn's incredible abilities is that he never tells too much about a person. It works well in this book. Whittled-to-the-bone declarative sentences reveal deep inner lives, complex and layered thinking, real emotion. It's a guide to run-down things, to parts of the northeast US that don't show up in the guidebooks, to persistence, to the value of things that might not have a price tag, or might be had for free if one knows where to look or how to ask - and a meditation, really, on nature, work, creativity, human (and canine, come to think of it) oddness and will. Glynn would seem to be a man who without any self-consciousness is, in fact, in tune with his surroundings and his fellow man - and can teach us a lot about love and acceptance. A great read, I have bought copies to give away, and you definitely do not need an interest in carpentry to enjoy it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Building a LifeBy JP Moore Building a home is truly an organic process. By "building" I am not speaking of paying some one or some company to put up a house for you, I am speaking of constructing a house, a home from the ground up to the rafters and beyond with your own two hands. Being an organic process, house building is by extension, if not definition, messy. It's messy in terms in terms of the mud and materials, the dust and the destruction so necessary a part of construction. It is messy because of the muck that comes from creating a home out of a dizzying whirl of creative, financial, and family dynamics. It's messy because to truly build one's own home piece by piece means getting one's hands dirty. Thomas Glynn's book "Hammer. Nail. Wood: The Compulsion to Build" is not really it about the "nuts and bolts" of the building process, there is very little how-to knowledge imparted here. Glynn focuses instead on the nuts of a different sort required to build one's own home. What doesn't scare you about Glynn's unusual book just might serve to inspire you. In short: A worth read. Interesesting word construction.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not what I'd hopedBy S The subtitle "The Complusion to Build" was what attracted me to the book after first learning about it in another Chelsea Green publication. I hoped for insightful wisdom about one's motivation to build things out of wood using traditional methods like timberframe. And there are some nice parts about the use of old tools, especially one section where he describes visiting a used tool shop in Maine. But I was dissatisfied with the book because of the constant digressions about the "local yokels." I wasn't interested in reading character studies of a misfit Vet, two junkyard owners, the local Amish families, and assorted others who populate this corner of upstate NY. I was hoping for deeper ruminations about craftsmanship, along the lines of "Grain of Truth: The Ancient Lessons of Craft" by Ross Laird. [That book was better than this one but at the time I didn't like it much either -- see my review about it.] Oh well. At least it was a quick read due to the extremely short chapters.

Hammer. Nail. Wood. is not quite a novel and not quite a construction manual, but it's a great read that will entertain and amaze while passing along a bounty of helpful information about how a post-and-beam house is put together. Readers who are experienced builders will grin with recognition, while aspiring builders will be given fresh insights into the joys and frustrations of the self-building process.

.com Glynn has written an exceptional book here, not strictly a "how-to" book and not precisely a novel, but a beautifully, movingly written account of his "compulsion to build" and his experiences as a result of it. This is the quintessential "learning-by-doing" story, giving the reader not only the nuts and bolts of building a house, but pulling one in to a compellingly written, sometimes tragic, sometimes hilarious, but always readable story of one man's obsession to build a house. --Mark Hetts From Publishers Weekly The impulse behind this book is good: a meditation by an inexperienced but enthusiastic narrator on building his own house. But while it is more intimate than Tracy Kidder's *House*, the inevitable plumb line for house books, it oversteps intimacy into preciousness. For Glynn (*The Building*), building is less a workaday experience and more a metaphor that allows esoteric descriptions of how carpentry is like sex, or rambling pseudo-spiritual musings in which thinking about how to repair a drain pipe turns into "I do not remember making that repair, though I must have. I do remember something else though. The sky opened. I saw something. I saw how miraculous everything was. Everything just was." What Glynn lacks in building skills and knowledge, he makes up for in determination, and that is evident here. But in his effort to make the particular universal, his human characters become less memorable than his nails. Perhaps Glynn wants readers to relate better to an adjustable wrench with square jaws and a wooden handle framed in iron than to a local Korean War vet who skids down roads on his head and winds up stabbed by a young girl who pets bees. The book's ending brings little closure, neither for the house (which continues as Glynn's ongoing project) nor for the people who live in and

around it. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Weary of New York City, Glynn heads far upstate to a dreamy, near-forgotten county in sight of Canada. He bought a rundown farm there long ago and never did much with it. Now he's decided to build a house for no reason but to soothe his soul: he loves wood and old tools and the sizzle of nails driving into green lumber. Far the most unusual aspect of his amateur building is his insistence on hewing timbers right out of the woods: big maples and hemlocks, which he takes to a local sawmill and shaves into planks and beams. Such are the construction techniques of a hopeless romantic, and Glynn has almost nothing to offer by way of advice to a working carpenter. Rather, his short chapters are prose poems on forgotten values: the precision of chisels; the lonely lifestyle of a well digger; the admirable, stubborn Amish. Glynn's effort is a modest but charming turn down back roads, refreshing, even Thoreaulike in its sly rejection of practicality. John Mort