

Under the Same Sky

*A Reckoning with a Hunter's Legacy and the
Living Truth of Tanzania*



Kyle Smith McGowan &
Ree Pashley

Pre-Launch Preview

Hervey came to conquer.
Ree came and fell in love.
Kyle held the box
containing the story that
had been waiting for thirty
years to be told.

The Quiet Horizon is a
braided narrative spanning
three generations and two
continents — built from an
adventurer's handwritten
East Africa journals, a
decade of life actually lived
in Tanzania, and the
inheritance of a story that
was never just one person's
to tell.

Kyle Smith McGowan and
Ree Pashley weave together
Hervey Bushnell Smith's
wonder-filled colonial gaze,
Ree's living, breathing
Tanzania, and the quiet
reckoning of an heir who
loved a man before she fully
understood what he took —
and what he left behind.

Layered • Honest • Luminous.

This story is not a verdict, it's not an apology; It's a conversation across eighty years between a man who hunted Tanzania, a woman who fell in love with it — built a life, a family, a community inside of it — and the one who opened the box and had to ask both of them what it all cost.

Introduction - The A-Frame

The first time I walked into Hervey Bushnell Smith's house, I was about five years old. Too young yet to have the language for what I was seeing. I only knew there were animals everywhere. And they were watching me.

The emotionless glass eyes of a kudu. The frozen growl of a bear. The ghosts of both leopard and antelope. A full tiger pelt stretched across the floor, its head still attached, teeth caught mid-snarl, eyes fixed in the amber stillness of taxidermy. Cabinet doors inlaid with zebra skin in the dining room; black-and-white stripes where wood should have been, something that belonged in a savanna, not Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. A rhinoceros foot—enormous, almost absurd in a living room. Two elephant tusks flanking the fireplace like sentinels, ivory curves arcing toward the ceiling. Trophy mounts on every wall.

Staring. All of them staring.

I didn't yet know how I would grow to love him. I was five. I only knew his house was unlike any place I'd ever been—thrilling and unsettling in equal measure, the way certain things are when you're small enough that the world can still genuinely surprise you.

Hervey designed the A-frame himself. He built it in 1958 with his wife, Polly (Pauline, née Leitzel), just outside the center of Bloomsburg. And when I say he designed it, I mean that in the fullest sense: he imagined into existence a suitable shrine for his trophies, a place where they could be proudly displayed for anyone who entered his home.

He was a fourth-generation attorney by profession, a man who built a law practice with his name on the door. A civil litigator who argued cases all the way to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He was a serious tennis player, the kind who plays to win. A skilled storyteller whose stories stayed with you for decades. But the house was the thing—the thing underneath the suit, the thing that existed before and after the office, the courtroom, the Elk's Club. The house was the evidence.

You could read his life in the objects he chose to live among. Shells arranged beneath glass—exotic, deliberate, each one a small token of a world farther away than most people in central Pennsylvania ever reached. A photograph of Ginger Rogers, looking not at the camera but at him—something in the composition that told you everything about his magnetism, the kind of man who moved through the world and left an impression. The tusks. The tiger. The kudu mounted above the fireplace, there before I was born, there when I was five, there every visit after, watching me grow up until he died in 1999.

The house wasn't simply decorated with hunting trophies. It was a monument to a world he had gone into and touched with his own hands. These were the pieces he brought back from a life that mattered more to him than any case he argued or verdict he won. You couldn't stand in that living room and not know that.

I grew up knowing he was unusual. I didn't yet understand *how* unusual.

That understanding came in layers. As a child, I knew only the sensation of the house—the way it stopped you at the door, made you take inventory, made you move through the rooms with wonder and reverence. As I got older and began to understand something about travel, about distance, about what it meant to go where most people only read about, I started to grasp the scale of what he had done. This was a man from Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, who in the 1940s and '50s went to Kenya and Tanganyika, India, South and North America, and hunted big game. He fished in Amazon waters. He crossed oceans into the wild, into worlds as far from central Pennsylvania as the planet offers—and did it not once, but repeatedly. Compulsively. Because once he touched that world, he couldn't stop reaching for more.

He approached it all—the hunting, the travel, the adventure, every living thing he encountered—with what I can only call life, love, and respect. That was his vocabulary. He went in fully. He paid attention. He loved what he saw with the full attention of a man who knew exactly what it had cost him to get there.

And then he died, and someone almost threw the box away.

I don't remember who said it, one of the family, clearing out the A-frame, about an enormous shipping carton in the corner: *we can throw that out, it's just old papers from his trips.*

The reaction was physical—a kind of refusal that moved through me before language caught up. Someone was about to throw away his life. Not the kudu, not the tusks, not the visible artifacts—but the carton, the box no one wanted, was where his actual life was stored.

Inside was everything. Journals in his own hand, spanning years and expeditions. Correspondence—letters to fellow hunters, exchanges with safari companies, travel agents, airlines. Newspaper clippings. Magazine articles. Schedules. Receipts for gear, equipment, taxidermy. Photographs of kills, of landscapes, of people in places most only dreamed of seeing.

It was his interior life. More than the house, more than the mounts, more than his career—this box was what he cared about. You could feel it in the density of it, in the

accumulation of years of careful keeping. He hadn't thrown any of it away. Every receipt. Every letter. Every entry. Saved.

I took the box home and kept it for twenty-six years.

It wasn't avoidance, exactly. It was something closer to recognition—that something was there before I was ready for it, and uncertainty about what I would be asked to do once I finally looked. There were questions in that box I would have to sit with, questions without clean answers, and I knew it the way you know a difficult conversation is coming long before the first word is spoken.

But there was something else. It wasn't just that I wasn't ready. It was that the story wasn't ready. What sat in that box was a life that could only be told from the outside—a record, a chronicle. However carefully I handled it, however deeply I tried to understand it, it would have remained, at its core, two-dimensional: a story about a man who went out into the world, moved through it, and came home again with animal hides and horns. Something in me resisted that.

The box moved with me. Through houses. Through a four-year stay in the Netherlands. Back to the United States. Three more moves after that. I refused to let it go, because letting it go would have meant letting him go—and that was never really an option.

He was a man I loved, directly and without apology. I want to say that plainly, because what follows may complicate him, and I don't want complication to be mistaken for condemnation. He was brilliant and alive and full of love for the world, and also shaped by assumptions about who got to move through that world, and how. He was never asked to question them, and so he didn't. That isn't an excuse. It's something more honest than that. It's the truth of what it means to be a person formed by a time.

I didn't open the box again until I was ready to be honest about all of it. About what it means to inherit something: not just objects and photographs and journals, but a way of seeing, a quality of attention. And what you are meant to do with that inheritance once you understand it.

What finally made me ready was a trip to Tanzania.

My cousin Ree has lived there for nearly a decade. She is my first cousin's daughter—a grand-niece of Hervey as well. She married a Tanzanian man named Freddy and is raising ten children in Arusha and Karatu, in the mud of the rainy season and the dust of the dry season. She thrives inside a community that operates by entirely different principles than the one she came from. She is not a visitor. Her life is there.

I went to her wedding. I stood in Arusha, in the hills of Karatu, with the journals packed in my suitcase and Hervey's footprints somewhere in the same country, beneath all the years and the dust. And I felt it differently than I expected, not as landscape, not as a safari, but as a place where people live. Real. Complex. Alive in ways no trophy wall and no journal entry could ever fully describe.

A few years later, I wrote to her. I had questions: about what it felt like to live in a place that someone like Hervey had passed through, taken pieces of, and carried home. I wanted her complexity, her feelings about how he had moved amongst the wildlife and the native people. What he had taken. What he had left.

Almost ten thousand words came back.

I read them and understood I hadn't been waiting to open the box just to understand him better. I had been waiting for her.

Because with her life rooted in that place—with her family, her children, her daily reality unfolding in the same landscape he once passed through—the story changed. It deepened. It widened. It became something held in tension between then and now, between observer and participant, between inheritance and lived experience. What had been two-dimensional opened into something fuller. More complex. More alive.

It was no longer just a document of a man and his adventures. It was a conversation — between his world and hers, between loving a place and living in it.

I hadn't found just a contributor. I had found a co-author. The other half of the story —the living half, the part unfolding now in Arusha, the part of my family looking at the same country Hervey walked through, and seeing it—living it—from the inside.

This book is both of ours now.

It always was.

—Kyle

About the Authors

Kyle Smith McGowan is a Pennsylvania-based author and publisher whose work spans gothic fiction, speculative fiction, nonfiction, and the quiet spaces between. She writes under the names Rowan Kade (*Embers Trilogy - Echoes of Limeville, Traces of Limeville* and *Shadows of Limeville*), Maggie Adams Weaver (*The Willow Forge Academy for Girls*), and Alex Creveling (*Inherited*), and is the founder of Pine Veil Press, an independent imprint devoted to purposeful storytelling. Her most recent nonfiction work, *God vs. the Consumer*, examines faith, culture, and the cost of belief in a commodified world. A former software project manager and worship leader with a master's degree in Holistic Nutrition, she brings an uncommon range of experience to everything she writes — work rooted equally in research, intuition, and the conviction that stories matter.

Ree Pashley has always felt drawn to East Africa; she used her allowance to order *Teach Yourself Swahili* when she was just 12 years old. After backpacking through Uganda and Kenya in her twenties, she crossed the border into Tanzania and immediately fell in love - with the culture, with the country.

She spent a few months working in Zanzibar and another stint volunteering in Mainland Tanzania before settling down in lovely Arusha. The rest is a Happily Ever After trope: a wedding, a big family, and a dream house.

Pashley has a background in social work and criminal justice, but since relocating to Tanzania, she spends most of her time chauffeuring her kids around and writing at cute cafes. Pashley's work has been featured in *Herstry*, University of California Press, *Matador Network*, *Go World Travel*, and others. She is a contributing author to the devotional anthology *Darkness is as Light* (Parkend Books, 2021) and Guideposts' *Too Amazing for Coincidence* (forthcoming, Fall 2026).

Continue the Conversation.

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