**Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century** by Jessica Bruder

From the North Dakota beet fields to California's National Forest campgrounds to Amazon's Texas CamperForce program, employers have discovered a new low-cost labor pool: transient older Americans. With Social security coming up short, these invisible casualties of the Great Recession have taken to the road by the tens of thousands, forming a growing community of migrant laborers dubbed "workampers."


About the Author: Jessica Bruder is an award-winning journalist whose work focuses on subcultures and the dark corners of the economy. She has written for Harper's Magazine, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. Bruder teaches at the Columbia School of Journalism.

Questions for Discussion

1. Did any of the people Bruder highlighted remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?
2. Were there particular quotes that stood out to you? Why?
3. What have you learned from reading this book?
4. Have you looked at any of the websites the author mentions throughout the book and in the notes? Did you find them informative? Entertaining?
5. Is it possible to find a book interesting without 'enjoying' it? Why? Was this one of those circumstances?
6. Bruder often writes about the retirees working in Amazon warehouses during the critical holiday shopping season. The workers describe walking an estimated thirteen miles a day in the warehouse, pulling orders. "People call it 'prison' because you walk single file, you clock in, you do your thing," Chuck Stout told the author. (p. 61). In addition to lower wages and little-to-no benefits, Amazon reaps federal tax credits – ranging from 25 to 40 percent of wages – for hiring disadvantaged workers in several categories, including aging recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and anyone on food stamps (59). Does this change your attitude about using Amazon? Why or why not?
7. Think about nonfiction and its relationship to truth. Does the nonfiction writer have an obligation to be truthful above all, or is bias acceptable in certain cases? Is the book objective and balanced or deeply personal and strongly biased?
8. What are some of the admirable qualities of the people Bruder interviewed? Is this someone you would want to know or have known?
9. What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Does the Bruder offer any solutions?
10. Has anything ever happened to you similar to what happened in the book? How did you react differently?

11. Did you think the ending was appropriate? Would you have liked to have had more information on the interviewees?

12. Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices the author made or the interviewees?