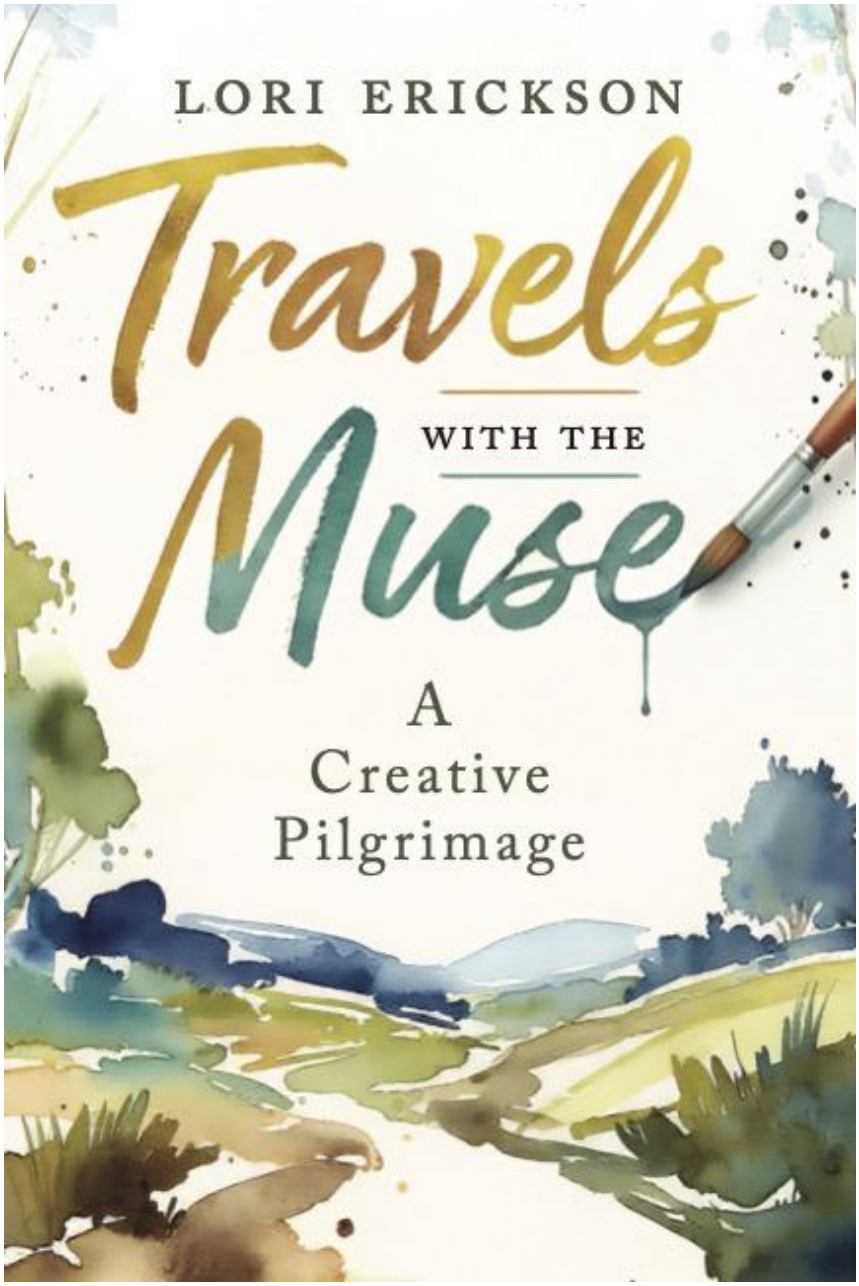
New from Lori Erickson



Travels with the Muse

A Creative Pilgrimage

Exploring the sacred through art and travel

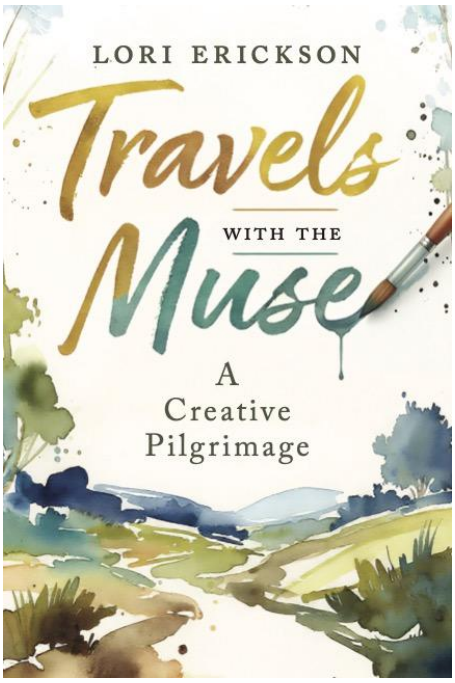
Published by Spiritual Travels Press | October 13, 2026

LoriErickson.net | SpiritualTravelsPress.com

About the Book

"On my journeys around the world in search of the sacred, art began to teach me. Beauty became my guide as I encountered holiness through buildings, stories, images, and music—often in places I hadn't expected, and in ways I couldn't have planned."

–Lori Erickson, *Travels with the Muse*



In *Travels with the Muse*, Lori Erickson explores how art can become a doorway into deeper spiritual awareness. Drawing on journeys to places where creative traditions are practiced with devotion and care—from the storytelling traditions of Wales and the soaring architecture of Barcelona to pottery studios in North Carolina and blues clubs in Mississippi—she reflects on the many ways art opens us to beauty, meaning, and the sacred.

Along the way, she encounters artists whose work reveals how creativity can awaken the soul. As she tries some of these art forms herself, she discovers the joys and humility of being a beginner.

Warm, thoughtful, and gently humorous, *Travels with the Muse* invites readers to see creativity not as a talent reserved for professionals but as a way of paying attention to the world—and as a spiritual practice available to anyone willing to begin.

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Lori Erickson
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About the Author

Lori Erickson, author of *Travels with the Muse (*photo by Bob Sessions)

Lori Erickson is one of America's leading travel writers specializing in spiritual journeys. She is the author of *Every Step Is Home*, *The Soul of the Family Tree*, *Near the Exit*, and *Holy Rover*, books that explore the intersection of travel and spirituality.

Her writing has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Better Homes & Gardens*, among other publications. She has been featured in national media, including the radio programs *Travel with Rick Steves* and *The Frommer's Travel Show*.

Through her books and travels, Lori explores how journeys—both outward and inward—can deepen our understanding of the sacred. She gives talks and leads retreats on travel, creativity, and the spiritual life.

Lori lives in Iowa City, Iowa, with her husband, Bob Sessions.

From Lori Erickson

For years, I've traveled to places known for their spiritual significance and written about what I found there. But while working on this book, I became interested in a different question: what role might creativity itself play in our experience of the sacred?

To explore that question, I began trying things I had never seriously attempted before. I drew and painted in sketchbooks, sat at a pottery wheel, and spent time with quilts, architecture, music, and other forms of creativity.

Much of what I made was tentative and imperfect, but something surprising happened along the way. The more I tried to create, the more fully I entered the places I visited. Sketching a street corner in Wales or tracing the curves of a basilica in Barcelona slowed me down. It taught me to linger. I discovered that you don't have to be especially skilled at something for it to transform the way you experience the world.

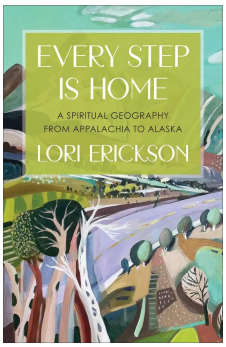
That realization led me to include my own sketches throughout this book. The drawings are quick, imperfect, and mostly done on location. I include them not because they are masterpieces, but because I hope they encourage readers who may feel hesitant about their own creativity. Art doesn't have to be polished to be meaningful.

One of the discoveries running through these pages is that creativity can become a kind of spiritual practice. Not performance. Not mastery. Just curiosity, presence, and a willingness to begin.

–Lori Erickson

These sketches were made during my travels and are included in *Travels with the Muse*.

Selected Media & Awards

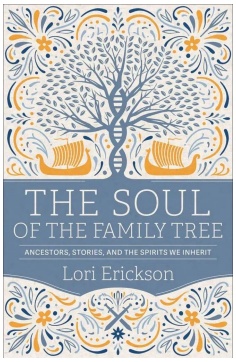


Every Step Is Home

• Finalist, Religion Book of the Year, *Foreword Reviews* INDIES Awards

• "Ideal for fans of Erickson's work… and those compelled to take a spiritual pilgrimage." — *Library Journal*

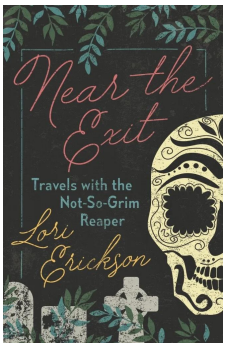
• "Highly readable and thought-provoking… proof that humans are designed to move." — *Booklist*



The Soul of the Family Tree

• "With a light hand, Erickson invites readers to explore their 'spiritual DNA.'" — *Publishers Weekly*

• "A spiritual grounding in family history can nurture a deep sense of belonging." — *Foreword Reviews*

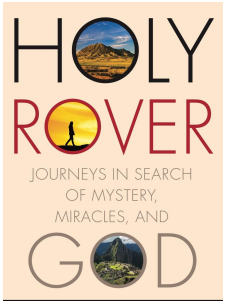


Near the Exit

• Silver Award, Religion Book of the Year, *Foreword Reviews* INDIES Awards

• Starred review, *Library Journal*

• Cover story and excerpt, *The Christian Century*



Holy Rover

• Named by the Associated Press as one of the top travel books of the 2017 holiday season

• Starred review, *Publishers Weekly*

• First Place, Spiritual/Religious Category, Hollywood Book Festival

• Finalist, Travel Book of the Year, *Foreword Reviews* INDIES Awards

Media appearances include NPR's *Travel with Rick Steves* and the *Frommer's Travel Show*.

Media Story Angles

• **The Courage to Be a Beginner**
What happens when a seasoned travel writer steps into unfamiliar art forms—and what it reveals about learning, risk, and creative growth at any age.

• **Travel Through the Lens of Art**
From Barcelona's architecture to the Mississippi Blues Trail, how exploring a destination through its artistic traditions offers a richer, more immersive experience.

• **Why Creativity Matters (Even If You're Not an Artist)**
How small, accessible acts like sketching or journaling can deepen attention, memory, and enjoyment—no talent required.

• **Art as a Way of Seeing**
How engaging with art—whether making it or simply noticing it—changes how we look at the world around us.

• **The Hidden Stories of Place**
How local art forms—from quilting to storytelling to metalwork—carry the history, culture, and identity of a region.

• **Midlife (or Later-Life) Creativity**
What it means to begin something new later in life, and why creative exploration doesn't have an expiration date.

• **Slowing Down in a Fast-Travel World**
How practices like sketching and close observation can counter rushed tourism and lead to more meaningful journeys.

• **When Travel Becomes Personal**
How stepping into new creative practices can shift not just how we travel, but how we understand ourselves.

Whirling Dervishes in the Sema ceremony, a meditative dance in the Sufi tradition. (From *Travels with the Muse*/Bob Sessions photo.)

Lori Erickson at the pottery wheel, learning the craft of shaping clay. (From *Travels with the Muse*/Cat Viera photo.)

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High-resolution images available upon request, including:
• Book cover
• Author photo
• Selected illustrations and photos from *Travels with the Muse*