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## *House: A Memoir* by Michael Ruhlman, Viking Adult, 2005

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### Recommended Readings



#### ***House: A Memoir***

by Michael Ruhlman, Viking Adult, 2005

Reviewed by Anne Wilson

Michael Ruhlman is far better known for his books on cooks and cooking, but this memoir of the home he renovated in Cleveland Heights, OH is an introspective examination of home, community, restoration and suburban culture.

This book is more appropriate for the curious individual who is interested in the history of urban expansion, especially in Midwestern suburbs, than for the home improvement junkie. Ruhlman presents a painfully honest account of the trials of home repair from contractor challenges, complications in building supply orders, budget management, and the personal toll that all of this takes on a family living in the home as the renovations take place.

The portrait becomes a bit too intimate at times as Ruhlman discloses marital strains and is less than kind in his descriptions of himself and his spouse. However, these distractions are easy to overlook as he describes the history and growth of the city of Cleveland, suburban development in the U.S. in general, and the unique history of the homes built in his neighborhood and on his block.

This book will inspire an interest in historic homes, create a desire to make a trip to Cleveland Heights, and engender sincere respect for those who are willing to take on the challenges and joys of restoration of 100+ year-old homes.

- Anne Wilson is professor of chemistry at Butler University.