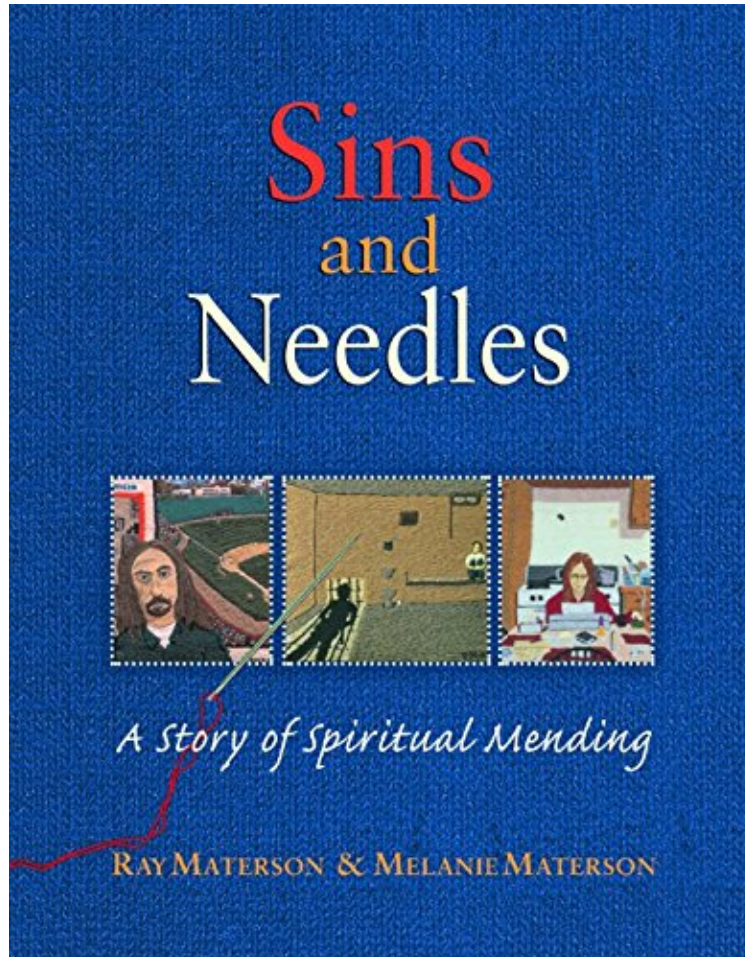


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Sins and Needles: A Story of Spiritual Mending

Melanie Materson, Ray Materson

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Melanie Materson, Ray Materson : Sins and Needles: A Story of Spiritual Mending before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sins and Needles: A Story of Spiritual Mending:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Artistic Genius RevealedBy Ellen D. SternRay Materson was born with the gift of being an artist- a person highly sensitive to pain and to pleasure who could convey these feelings to others. Even when locked up in a jail cell, with nothing to work with, he created his own materials- ironically one of them being a needle (a paraphernalia of the drug trade) and sock threads to create incredible stunning detailed works of depth and beauty of a definite style, snapshots of memory overflowing with feeling. Fortunately an appreciator, who was to become his soulmate and wife, came along and tells his life story with its suffering and its pleasures.The glossy pages show the embroideries at their very best. This book is a MUST read for all interested in art as a whole, particularly in embroidery, "Outsider Art", "Raw Art", in teaching, and in realizing how important artistic expression is and how important it is to be there for others as an Appreciator.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Real lifeBy Jecogil enjoyed this book because it is a story about real life. It is an unexpected and very atypical story about a person whose life is, for some time, dictated by the disease of addiction. It was a difficult book to put down because the story is compelling and so human. It is likely that the negative reviews of this book stem from an inability of the reviewer to appreciate the struggle of addicts and the people in their lives and/or an intolerance for folks who write that aren't "writers". Materson is an outsider artist and this book, like his art, lack pretense. It's a great story. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Inspiring storyBy Kathleen T. Inspiring story, lots of photos of his art in color.

Ray Materson wanted to be a priest when he grew up. He was an A student and sixth-grade class president. But in college Ray began drinking, which led to drug experimentation, which devolved to an addict's life of living fix to fix. Finally, petty acts of theft and the end of loans from friends led to carjacking with a toy gun and a sentence of twenty-five years behind bars. One miserable day in prison, Ray remembered an image of his grandmother sitting on the porch with her embroidery. At about the same time, the University of Michigan was to play in the Rose Bowl. Improvising a needlework hoop, Ray made a maize-and-blue Michigan M so he could officially cheer his team to victory. Soon Ray was sewing small flags and emblems using threads pulled from socks for pieces commissioned by fellow inmates, who paid him with cigarettes. Over time his work became more intricate-miniature masterpieces that told stories from his past and illustrated his dreams for the future. In stitching his artwork, Ray found hope and salvation. Enter Melanie, a woman who sees Ray's work in a local exhibition and writes him a fan letter. Ultimately she marries him while he's still in prison. With Melanie's encouragement and perseverance, Ray's artwork gains national attention and is a smash hit. To this day, his work is represented by the American Primitive Gallery in New York. Illustrated with fifty pieces of Materson's artwork, *Sins and Needles* is the riveting story of Ray's journey-of how a broken man manages to put the pieces of his life together in a most unexpected way.

From Publishers WeeklyRay Materson, a good student who wanted to be a priest when he grew up, began doing drugs in college and got into trouble with the law. He was sent to jail for a car-jacking (in which he used a toy gun), and while there, learned how to embroider. Sewing with the threads of unraveled socks, Materson made intricate works that depicted everything from his favorite football team to the confinement he felt in prison. Along with his wife, Melanie Materson, he tells the story of how he found hope and salvation through art in *Sins and Needles: A Story of Spiritual Mending*. The book includes illustrations of 50 pieces of Materson's needlework. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From BooklistRay Materson was, he says, "a good boy gone bad." He had been an A student, even class president once (in sixth grade), and had hoped to become a priest. But dysfunctional family life and an increasingly troubled, aimless adolescence led to alcohol and drug addiction, a failed marriage, petty crime, and a 25-year sentence for carjacking with a toy gun. He started turning around irrevocably, though, during the 1988 Christmas season. The University of Michigan was in the Rose Bowl, and to cheer the team on and bolster his sagging spirits, he stitched an M out of thread from his maize-and-blue socks. Soon he was embroidering flags and emblems for fellow inmates. As his work became more sophisticated, he got media attention. Other changes coincided. From prison, he corresponded with, met, and eventually married Melanie, a writer who proceeded to promote his needle-artwork and has helped him tell, compellingly and with winning simplicity, an inspiring and touching story of the transformative power of art and the resiliency of the human spirit. June Sawyers Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the AuthorMelanie Materson is a writer and musician who was born and raised in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. She is currently at the College of St. Rose in Albany on a painting fellowship. She and husband Ray have three children.