

# West Coast Review of Books

100 Reviews  
of the Latest Books

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## SPECIAL! THIS ISSUE!

### The First Annual Movie Book Roundup

Fighting Old Age: The Fountain of Youth • The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Laetrile: Forbidden Weapon Against Cancer

Milton Berle: The Sad Side of "Uncle Miltie"

#### Mennonite Soldier

By Kenneth Reed. Herald Press. \$6.95

★★★★

HOW MANY of us truly believe in our religious convictions enough to risk the loss of our family and those that we love? It's a bit unrealistic, but *Mennonite Soldier* certainly makes a case for such convictions—or any other personal and philosophical convictions that lead to an unpopular action.

In the case of this novel, two brothers, Ira and Mastie take completely opposite stands during World War I—take completely opposite stands on how they want to live their lives and what they are willing to sacrifice in order to do so.

As the first chapter opens, we already know this is a story of the prodigal son. Is the son bad for leaving the way of his father, or is he good for leaving the way of his father? The son doesn't return to the small, secluded and protected community of his people, and he does find a new way to live with his own beliefs in spite of excommunication from his church and the complete alienation of his family. But he stands up for his right to choose, and that's what conviction is all about anyway. The story shifts back and forth between the two brothers, and we're caught up in a powerful examination of love and war, duty and conscience and the starkly different experiences of two men from the same walk of life.

It's a bit overly long and preachy, but manages to maintain the reader's interest and curiosity about a rather extraordinary way of life.