



*Ruth McKeaney*

*Author, Hungry for Home*

**PRESS KIT 2024**



# Meet Ruth

We are all hungry for home in a world where homemaking is quickly becoming a lost art. We are rarely “at home,” even if we spend all day inside our houses. Our desire to return to a place of simplicity and peace is rooted in the desire every human has for home.

The truth is, while we may be able to make a wonderful, comfortable home in a physical sense, four walls and a roof can never fully satisfy our longing for something more. The ability to make others feel loved, welcome, and cared for during their journeys through life is one of the greatest gifts we can give. This is the true art of homemaking, and it necessitates slowing down long enough in order to truly connect with your family and friends.

Of course, making a beautiful space to welcome others is a key part of creating a sense of home. As a team, my husband Bob and I discovered that we possess the unique gift of restoration. Hillside Farm is the pinnacle of our rehab projects, not just because of its significance in the canon of great American historic homes, but because Hillside is where we found our home.

As a mother of five and constant host (to literally thousands of people over the years), I go to the heart of what makes one feel at home. Every day, my goal is to make my home a safe place so my family and my guests have the opportunity to have deeper needs met. Intentional homemaking, in its most idealized form, is creating a setting where vulnerability and honesty are valued and protected, where understanding and grace are fostered and love freely given.

It's time to recover the richness of community that's been lost in the hustle and bustle of today. We can still slow down. We can still prioritize our family and friends over our “to-do” lists. We can still find beauty in the midst of chaos. We can still sit around the table with bowls of pasta and laugh until two in the morning.

We can still go home.

*Ruth McKeaney*





# *Our Story*

My husband and I own a charming historic home, Hillside Farm, just outside Philadelphia. It's a lovely property with giant trees and rolling hills, an enormous barn, a chicken coup, and a constant stream of friends and family.

Hillside began as a 300-acre dairy farm in 1717. Nearly 200 years later, it underwent its first restoration. In 1902, Richardson Brognard Okie, who was then still a young, untried architect, managed to buy the old farm for \$15,000. (The original deed to the property was signed over by William Penn.)

The house, a typical six-room tenant farmhouse, became Okie's architectural laboratory and a home for his wife and two children. The enormous barn sheltered his horses, who participated in the nearby Devon Horse Show, and his small herd of dairy cows. For over forty years, he made the long commute from his beloved farm into Philadelphia to work with his wealthy clientele until his untimely death in 1945.

Oakie's farm was a 90-acre plot that merged city and country, sophistication and rural practicality. Unlike many of the Colonial Revival homes Okie would later become famous for, Hillside retained its original personality and character.

In the 6 decades following the esteemed architect's death, the home fell into complete disrepair. Due to arson, the barn had burned down, and many of the outbuildings were essentially ruins. Hillside was no longer the proud farmstead of Pennsylvania and Northern Delaware's quintessential architect. Rather, it was a sad memory of happier times gone past.

By the time Bob and I got it, it would take several years to renovate the home and the outbuildings. The old copper pipes were corroded to such an extreme that during our first week or two in the home, I flushed a toilet upstairs, and my husband Bob (downstairs) was surprised by a gush of water that came down on his head like a waterfall.

I'll never forget standing in the basement with our beloved friend and architect, Betsy Grace, a local Okie expert, as we discovered the original ax markings on the beams from 1717.

Bob and I took our time planning how the finished property should look. Hillside is a farm, not an estate. It's wild and free by nature, but we wanted that freedom to grow out of a solid structure. Even wild things can be orchestrated and have a clear flow. In our opinion, this is the greatest sort of beauty.

We wanted defined, intimate spaces in the vastness. All over the property, you'll find Adirondack chairs and benches nestled under trees and between beds of flowers. Outdoor dining and living spaces echo indoor ones with fire pits and fireplaces. Our goal was to make it easy for our family and guests to be together comfortably.

Beyond the living spaces, I wanted every single place your eye looked to house something thoughtful and lovely. Behind cabinet doors, in hidden nooks and crannies, nestled on stone walls, we've displayed the words that matter most and artwork that makes us happy.

Hillside is where we found home, not because of the house itself but because of the life and beauty we experience within its walls.

Hillside is where Bob and I snuggle in front of the fire and dream up our next project. It's where the kitchen door is always open, rain or shine, night or day. It's where there is time for mulled cider and warm chocolate chip cookies and long talks with neighbors and family. It's where our children want to be with their friends.

My days at the farm are spent shuttling my kids back and forth between swim meets and school trips, baking for the next visitor, and working in my garden. It is a busy, full life that Bob and I have come to cherish.



The barn is always full of one group or another, learning how to bake apple pies with apples from our orchard or rooting our favorite football team on. Over the years, the farm has become the site of family reunions, weddings, endless laughter, and a few tears. Everyone fits inside Hillside. Everyone is welcome. Every corner holds a memory. Every object, meaning.

The thought of writing about our life at Hillside never occurred to me. Rather, the idea for this book was planted during a lunch with friends. “Ruth,” they said adamantly, “you have to write about this!”

“This?” I asked curiously.

“The farm! Your story! Your life.”

Really? Write about my life at Hillside? I chuckled and put the idea in my back pocket, never expecting to take it out again. But, like a persistent seed, the idea refused to stay buried. Instead, it took root and sprouted straight up. And before I knew it, one page after another, a book was born. It took all of us working together. My daughters did the calligraphy and illustrations, and Bob cheered me on.

Like Hillside, the book is a representation of Bob and me. We have flipped many homes, but Hillside is the apex of our rehab adventures.

For one year, we documented our life at the farm through words and photographs. In spring, we planted bulbs and threw garden parties. We gathered eggs and baked quiches. We celebrated new life and growth and all the color that comes with it. In summer, the fun and games went on from morning till night. Family and friends flowed in and out, and the BBQ never stopped. In autumn, we picked bushels of apples, baked crisps and pies, shut our garden down, and remembered why we are thankful for one another. In winter, as the snow covered the fields, we stayed warm inside with soups and stews and favorite books read by the fire. The monotony of the cold was broken by holiday parties and the promise of a new year.

From our favorite traditions and time-earned wisdom, to family recipes, gardening ideas, and hosting tips, for one year, we captured what “home” means to us. It is our hope that you will feel at home in its pages and be encouraged to make your house a home for others as well. Welcome to Hillside Farm.







# What They're Saying

"I discovered Ruth's Hillside Farm serendipitously on YouTube via Homeworthy. Having loved and been inspired by her family's story, I began following the Hungry for Home Instagram account. Her down-to-earth, intentional way of living led me to purchase her book and I'm so glad I did. I read it in three sittings and am excited to make her recipes. This book was beautifully and thoughtfully done and anyone who wants to make their home their sanctuary should definitely get it. I promise you'll love it!"

"I love Ruth, she is so comforting with her words. I love her home and her way of viewing life. This book is filled with lots of good ideas on how to bring comfort and joy into your home and life."

"Beautifully written book filled with amazing recipes, photographs and lifestyle content. I can't wait to work my way through the recipes as each as each one sounds incredible."

"Love your book! It's one of my favorites! I got it in the mail about a week ago and I've almost read through it all already. Definitely one I'll be buying and sharing with all my friends! So much beauty written on its pages."

"I discovered you on Homeworthy while walking on the treadmill- I was learning to stack habits (shoutout to #AtomicHabits!) Your episode is always my go-to, your book has turned into a reference manual for me, and while I haven't made your cookies yet, it's on my menu of goodies to make. I feel like we're aesthetic soul sisters-

"I very much enjoyed listening to you touch upon your journey and really enjoyed it. I see by the comments, you have a house tour on YouTube. I will definitely be checking that out! Thank you soooo much for sharing!"

"I just watched your house tour on Homeworthy and was so impressed with not only the lovely family home and surroundings you have created but also by you. Your presence and confidence on camera is remarkable."



# Speaker Requests

Invite Ruth to be a featured speaker at your next event, conference, retreat or podcast!

To submit a request, complete the online form [HERE](#).

# Press Inquiries

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[contact@hungry4home.com](mailto:contact@hungry4home.com)

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# Social



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Anticipated to reach 100K by July 2024

# Featured In the Press

At Hungry for Home, there's something for everyone. Author Ruth McKeaneey inspires a wide variety of audiences with her relatable, authentic approach to creating spaces, moments and memories that will last a lifetime.

HOMEWORTHY

CountryHome

**THE WRITING ROOM**   
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