In this memoir about winters on her family's farm, author Phyllis Tickle offers glimpses of rural family life while telling a simple story of faith lived out and grace revealed. The first in a series of three books based on the liturgical year, this book is a collection of nostalgic tales that explores the mysteries of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany and reveals the presence of God in the everyday. From making homemade grapevine wreaths, to rescuing a newborn calf from the cold, Tickle, a physician's wife and mother of seven, illuminates small moments of meditation and worship in the ordinary events of life. Scripture passages enrich the narratives and add biblical context. In the stillness of winter, Tickle discovers a stillness of soul and nearness to God that show the thread of liturgy woven into the fabric of everyday life.

My Personal Review:
In 1976, Publishers Weekly religion editor Phyllis Tickle and her husband Sam decided to abandon city life and move their family back to their rural roots in western Tennessee. What the Land Already Knows is Tickle's account of winters spent on their farm in the small community of Lucy - "about four thousand citizens if, as we used to say in town meetings, one counted the tractors as well as the cows and people." This small book is beautifully written, often funny, always touching, and nearly impossible to put down. I devoured it in one sitting, then went back to reread each chapter separately, slowly, savoring the sweetness, the sadness, and Tickle's remarkable insights on family, winter, isolation, and faith. Following an unhurried path from Advent through the children's return to school in January, Tickle introduces her family - human and animal. Husband Sam is a doctor and passionate grape vine tender. Their seven children, the oldest married before the family moves to the farm, thrive in a world defined by chores, farm animals, and family traditions. Her mother, whose yearly frenzy of pecan cooking the author first tries to escape, then comes...
to cherish. Silly Sally, Mary, Saint, and Oscar, the cows whose lives, calvings, and deaths bring humor, blessing, and meat to the family’s life. By the time you turn the last of the 114 pages, you feel you might recognize Tickle’s family on the streets of Lucy, Tennessee, or any other small farm town. From her agonizing ambivalence over finding the right gifts for her children to her unabashed pleasure in returning the house to order after the holiday frenzy, Tickle’s honesty, always spoken gently, is disarming, beguiling, and sometimes startling. Perhaps the finest chapter is a reflection on names. Musing on her children’s delight in the naming of farm animals, of which there were scores, she notes that the named and the namer create together the identity of each, ending with this beautiful reflection: "What is New Year’s Day for the world at large is also the Feast of the Holy name for the church. . . . [B]efore the day is done, I still walk out by myself to Mary’s Hill for a little while and think about what it means to know the name of God and to be yourself called by it." Small enough to fit into a stocking, this is a nearly perfect book for reading and rereading during the long, dark nights of winter.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
What the Land Already Knows: Winters Sacred Days (Stories from the Farm in Lucy) by Phyllis Tickle - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!