My Personal Review:
the number of people on this planet who can write like frederick buechner are a tiny, tiny lot. seriously, the dude can put some words into sentences! so, in a sense, i don't care what buechner writes about -- i'll read it, and enjoy it. fiction -- yup. non-fiction -- sure, bring it.

the beek (ah, that's my little pet name for him) hasn't written a full length book in a while. and, as he writes in the forward of this collection, he guesses that ability has left him (i sure hope that isn't true). in the mean time, buechner says he could pull together a collection of essays, scraps of fiction, poems, and family memories, with a sprinkling of faith and church thrown in. somehow, it works.

the best parts of this collection, in my opinion, are the first few pieces -- little memoirs about family members (buechner's mom and brother-in-law, in particular). the whole thing is a bit voyeuristic, looking into a period of time and slice of society that is not my own. buechner comes from east coast, private school, intelligencia, with old money thrown in (buechner's wife is heir to the merck fortune, and his own family, while experiencing some rough times during the depression, did pretty well).

reading often felt a bit like sitting with mr. b in an old but fancy sitting room, somewhere in an old money neighborhood in new england, listening to him tell stories while sipping tea. with milk.

it's a quick read, really, but just lovely. intimate and brilliant.