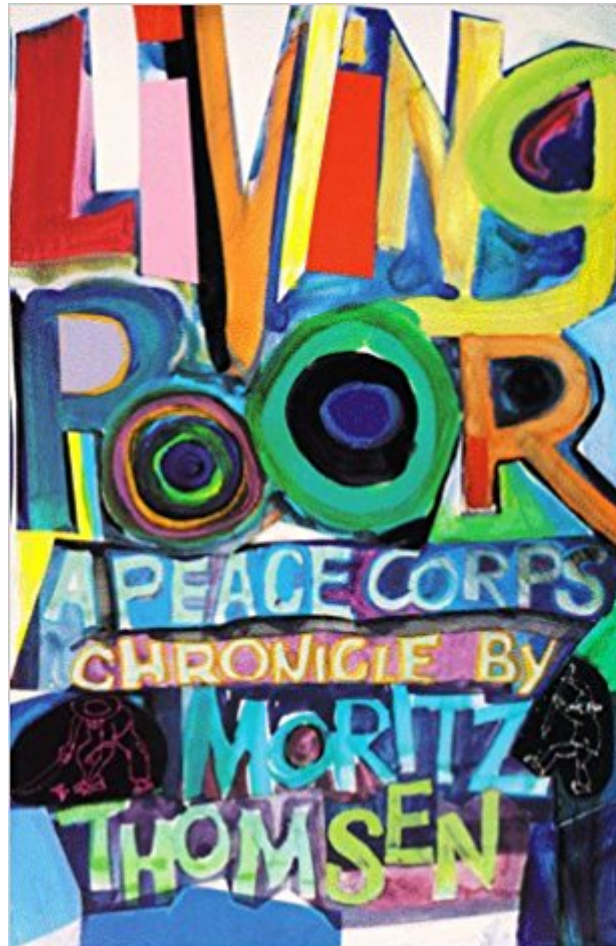




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# Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle



## Synopsis

At the age of 48, Moritz Thomsen sold his pig farm and joined the Peace Corps. As he tells the story, his awareness of the comic elements in the human situation--including his own--and his ability to convey it in fast-moving, earthy prose have made *Living Poor* a classic.

## Book Information

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: University of Washington Press; Reprint edition (May 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0295969288

ISBN-13: 978-0295969282

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #572,980 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Travel > South America > Ecuador & Galapagos Islands](#) #3195 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Travelers & Explorers](#) #8493 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics](#)

## Customer Reviews

"Moritz Thomsen's *Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle* was one of the first published accounts by a Peace Corps volunteer; it remains one of the best. And if you're going to just read one book on the topic, make it this one. It's realistic, painful, and somehow ennobling in its descriptions of Peace Corps life in Ecuador." *Nancy Pearl, Book Lust to Go* "Hilariously funny at times, grimly sad at others and enlivened with perceptive insights into the ways of the people and with breathtaking descriptions of the Ecuadorian landscape." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

I don't remember the last time I read a book that was so full of gray areas and provided no clear black and white situations or easy answers. This is what Mr. Thomsen so expertly accomplished in *Living Poor*. His description of his Peace Corps years in Ecuador showed his roller-coaster of emotions towards the people he worked with and the situations he found himself in. Perhaps one phrase can comprehensively describe the difficulties that he dealt with: "We aren't accustomed to doing things this way." According to Mr. Thomsen, the above phrase is the core of the biggest difficulty that any peace corp volunteer (and any development expert for that matter) will face during

their service. A volunteer enters a new world and is fired up with passion and idealism. However, they slowly realize that the effects they will have are potentially very minimal and creating any real change in a difficult environment can be extremely frustrating and at many times, impossible. As someone who has applied for the Peace Corps and waiting for a response, Mr. Thomsen's descriptions did not discourage me. In fact, I am now hoping even more that I am accepted because I realize how difficult and challenging the task ahead is. Knowing this, I still welcome it. As the author describes many times over, failing in such difficult environments should not be a mark of shame, it should be a badge of courage that shows you were willing to try and not give up even when faced with repeated setbacks. A potential volunteer or anyone interested in development work in general will thoroughly enjoy this book. Mr. Thomsen provides an analytic and a rich emotional commentary that is educational and eye-opening from many different perspectives.

Simply one of the best writers on the planet, Mortitz Thomsen is an American Treasure. *Living Poor* is the first of his richly told stories of Ecuador, the next is *The Farm on the River of Emeralds*, and then *The Saddest Pleasure: A Journey on Two Rivers*. Why these books are not available digitally is a crime, but maybe it has to do with the rights? Order all three when you can. Because of the expressive prose and brilliant writing, all these are my favorite books of all time.

A wonderful, timeless memoir. As touching today as when it was originally published back in the late 1960s. It's an affectionate but unsentimental account of Thomsen's tenure in Ecuador as one of the earliest Peace Corp volunteers.

The book was almost new condition!!! I was very impressed with the seller and I am thoroughly enjoying reading Mr. Thomsen's story about his time in the Peace Corps! He does not glamorize it but he also does not make you totally afraid of committing yourself to the 2-year stint of helping others in a developing country. A great read!!!!

My Peace Corps experience was quite different from Mr. Thomson's on the surface. I went to an Arabic country in Africa as opposed to a South American Country. I was in my 20s as opposed to late 40s. My training was in country and quite different. I was a teacher instead of a farmer and lived in a large metropolitan city. However, having said all that there were several times I thought "Whoa!" this is exactly what happened to me! And this is something that no non-PCV would ever understand. For example, he described the emotional feeling he had from living in Ecuador similar to

the feeling of first falling in love except that this feeling was constant. I had that feeling about Morocco and I STILL have it to this day 30 years later. He doesn't sugar coat the experience either and describes the hardships of which there were many. Underlying these descriptions were a message that they made him a better person. Ah, how I can relate. Excellent book and I highly recommend it.

Amazing book for anyone thinking about joining the Peace Corps. Changed my life for sure.

I just finished this book and couldn't believe I let it sit on my shelf for so long. I have been in the process for the PC for what seems like an eternity. However, reading this book has given me renewed hope to continue on with my journey as a Volunteer. Understandably the book paints a picture that being a Volunteer is not easy, but isn't that the point. I cannot wait for my adventure and can only hope that it will be the "toughest job I will ever love." Thank you Moritz Thomsen!

I am in the process of doing scholarship on the Peace Corps Master's International Program. I was told I had to read this book. For the past 30 days I read a little at a time. It was like dessert. Funny, sad, eye-opening... I can't even begin to explain how much I learned from this 315 page book. For anyone who yearns to travel or live abroad; for anyone interested in service work or the education one can receive from another culture, this book is fantastic. So thorough and interesting. I wish I could read more!

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