



Metal Cowboy: Tales from the Road Less Pedaled

Joe Kurmaskie

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This heartwarming collection of true stories reveals the thrill and the freedom of traveling America's back roads on a bicycle, and the joy of discovering unforgettable characters along the way. From the moment he "borrowed" his big sister's banana-seat bike and careened down the neighborhood hill at the age of five, Joe Kurmaskie has known the intoxicating freedom and power of the bicycle. In this big-hearted collection of stories, Joe -- dubbed the "Metal Cowboy" by a blind rancher he encountered one icy morning in Idaho -- tells of his whimsical, wild adventures through the American landscape.

Metal Cowboy: Tales from the Road Less Pedaled Details

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Author : Joe Kurmaskie

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From Reader Review Metal Cowboy: Tales from the Road Less Pedaled for online ebook

Lauryn says

Fun to read, especially after doing my first bike tour with my sister this summer. Quick, short chapters based on individual experiences or ideas made for a fast read if not overall narrative progression. Definitely moved to tears at moments. Felt like there was an underlying theme of aging and the passing of youth that I didn't necessarily connect with due to (re)discovering cycling, and the freedom it brings, as an adult. Would recommend to anyone who has been bitten by the bicycle touring bug, wonders/dreams about touring or wants some insight into why someone (perhaps a friend or loved one) might be inspired to tour.

Mike says

I have a soft spot for travel books, especially travel writing...in my high school years I discovered Peter Jenkins and his Walk Across America...in later years I read Bill Bryson's adventures whether in England or in the US....now I've come across Joe Kurmaskie's original writing, "Metal Cowboy" about his adventures on his bicycle around the world.

This book is a very good read if you are into travel and adventure. This was Joe's original book that he updated (the last chapter is catchup if you will of what has happened with selected stories he's told). It's not a how-to book, but rather, a telling of his stories from how he became known as the "metal cowboy" to the chapter about "The Day Before My Best Day of My Life (where he meets his future wife)."

Like John Grogan and other short story writers I've grown to like over the years, I'll be looking for and picking up his other volumes on his bicycle adventures.

Marc Baldwin says

I like Kurmaskie's writing style, his take on life in general, and I'm admittedly a little bit jealous of the biking adventures that he has been able to enjoy.

This book wasn't quite as good as "Momentum is Your Friend", one of his later books, simply because of the format. "Metal Cowboy" doesn't follow one particular adventure chronologically, but is more like a collection of essays about different events that occurred on several different trips throughout his life. The essays are enjoyable, but "Momentum" sucked me in more because it followed one story from beginning to end (riding across America from west to east pulling his two kids). It was a bit more compelling.

It was still a good book, and due to the format, it was actually a little easier to put down from time to time rather than staying up two hours longer than I wanted to because I couldn't put it down!

Kristine says

Attended one of the author's presentations in Portland, OR and decided to read a few of his books.
I was not disappointed in this one.

Kevin Taylor says

I enjoyed the easy-to-read stories that brought together a desire for a simpler life. Although I was often left with wanting to know more about the story and the place.

Slackorama says

I really enjoy the thought of hopping on my bike and touring around the world. I think I actually met Joe Kurmaskie when he was pedalling through San Francisco. (At least I met someone who was selling an early version of this book. It was in the early 90's so forgive me if I can't remember what the gentleman looked like.) So, I thought I'd be predisposed to like this book.

Alas, my predisposition came to naught. This book is just a series of encounters that he had along his tours. Some are entertaining and some are just weird. The language in some of the stories tend to wander into the hyperbole but mostly it's a pretty straight recap of what happened with some internal dialogue thrown in.

Some of the stories didn't stand on their own and felt like variations of stories that came earlier in the book so I'm going middle of the road on this book. Maybe with a bit of editing I could have given it another star.

Marilyn Geary says

Once upon a time, I was a touring cyclist who loved life on two wheels, one with the elements, and the joy of being under one's own power. Around those times, the local Border's Books (remember those?) was hosting a talk by a couple of guys who wrote books about the vagabond cycling life, so husband and I went. The talk was great, we bought books from both cyclists, and when at the end of the evening, they asked if anyone had room for fellow cyclists, up shot our hands! They were lovely guests, then went on to the next engagement. The cycling community has certainly grown since then.

About the book. Every cyclist gets a nickname, and you will enjoy reading how Joe The Metal Cowboy, got his. It's A fun read. Be careful, though, as it will have you kicking to get back on the road..

Highly recommended, for those who love adventure, outdoors, and/or cycling books.

Katherine says

I adored this book. There you go. Enough said.

For more, yes, it is a collection of short stories and no, they aren't necessarily related or in order - if you go into it expecting that, you won't like it, so change your plan before you pick it up. It's a wonderful tale of biking, but more a bunch of stories about the world, getting out there, meeting people and going where the road takes you. I was ready to hit the road with my bike before this, and now I'm truly hooked and envious of Joe and his travels. I would read it again to experience it again and will look for others of his travels in the future.

Fred says

It's always great to read about other people's experience cycling across the North American continent.

I've cycled across Canada from Vancouver to Halifax once in 2005 and across the United States from Seattle to New York once in 2008. I have many fond memories and unique experiences from these two trips of a lifetime.

Joe Kurmaskie has a great sense of humor and amusing way of sharing his experiences. I would recommend this book to anyone. I enjoyed an earlier book of his even more: "Metal Cowboy: Tales from the Road Less Pedaled"!

Heather says

i love all things bike, and the idea of freedom, of setting out on self-reliant two wheeled adventures.

ssooooo.... i really wanted to like this book. bbuuuuutt i didn't.

joe is a bit of a dork, and really not the best writer. he seems to be trying too hard, searching for meaning in all of his experiences. of course his lessons learned, characters met along the way, gorgeous scenery and life ponderings hold volumes of meaning to him, but for the reader, maybe not so much.

i suppose many of the stories could hold their own in installments, as short travel blogs or magazine features, but i think they are best left in his journal, to pull out and reminisce, or to be told over a beer, watching a sunset from the porch, or around a campfire.

Ernest says

Spring has (technically) sprung, which means I'm looking forward to getting my bike out and hitting the toad. While waiting for the snow to stop falling, I read **Metal Cowboy: Ten Years Further Down the Road Less Pedaled** a collection of vignettes taken from the author's life cycling around the world. The stories are taken from the journals he kept along the way, and though he encounters a lot of uphill climbs on a fully loaded touring bike, he finds a lot of kindness (and a little cruelty) along the way.

The short chapters are fun to read, but he skips around from different trips, and I'd have liked it better if the author had created more of a linear story. We find out early on that he'll ultimately meet up with the gal he falls in love with and marries...but in true cycling fashion, when it actually happens it's an event that pops up as we round a corner, not something that gets the treatment we were expecting.

This edition comes with some updates as it was written ten years after the original, and again the author could have done much more in terms of telling us how life turned out, though from the three sons following in his wake on a bike ride in the afterwards, we gather not too bad. The author has a good tone, but we could wish that he'd made a stronger narrative framework to keep us pedaling on those long uphill into the wind.

Through it all, Joe Kurmaskie promises us that no matter what day it is, it's a good day to get on your bike and ride.(less)

Lori says

I would almost have to label this a short stories. I expected a series of tales, at least somewhat in chronological order, all connected to biking. Some were funny, some sad, some eye-opening, and many enjoyable but there was no rhyme or reason that I could determine for the order of the tales. I felt like I was reading a series of magazine articles on biking from different authors that could have been ordered and connected into a more enjoyable book. I know, the author is a journalist who writes for magazines. I just expected more connection between the stories than all of them happened while he was on a bike.

Chris says

This book is very well written and by turns funny, sentimental and enlightening. It created in me a desire to ride my bike across the country as well. Then I realized I'm more of the off-road mountain bike type.

Still a very fun read.

Kristin Noreen says

I adore this book. Joe Kurmaskie is the only person I know who not only tours like I do, but writes about it. His stories are real and his endings are always moving. You always know why he chose to tell you that story, what he wanted you to get from it. Best of all, though, is knowing someone out there shares my world of bicycle touring.

J.K. Grice says

METAL COWBOY is a fun and inspiring read from cyclist Joe Kurmaskie. Wonderful essays about the places and people he encountered on his bike rides abroad. He even had an old touring bike like the one I still use: a 1979 Raleigh SuperCourse.

