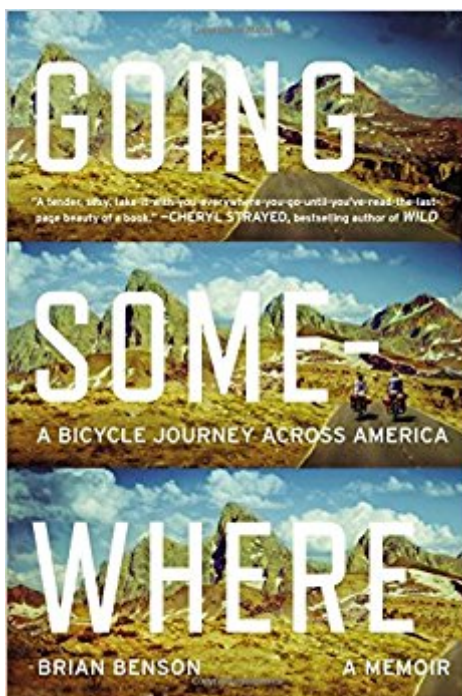


The book was found

Going Somewhere: A Bicycle Journey Across America



Synopsis

“Let’s hope Benson has more travels in mind. He is a gifted writer, an observant human with an eye for the telling detail and how to tell it.”
•Booklist
Brian has a million vague life plans but zero sense of direction. So when he meets Rachel, a self-possessed woman who daydreams of bicycling across the States, he decides to follow her wherever she’ll take him. Brian and Rachel soon embark on a ride from northern Wisconsin to Somewhere West. Brian is infatuated with the promise of adventure and each other. But as the pair progress from the Northwoods into the bleak western plains, they begin to discover the messy realities of life on the road. Mile by mile, they contend with merciless winds and brutal heat, broken bikes and bodies, each other and themselves—and the looming question of what comes next. Told in a voice “as hilarious as it is wise” (Cheryl Strayed), *Going Somewhere* is a candid tale of the struggle to move forward.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Brian Benson’s memoir about riding from the hinterlands of Wisconsin to Portland, Oregon on his bicycle is as poignant as it is gripping, as hilarious as it is wise. *Going Somewhere* is a tender, sexy, take-it-with-you-everywhere-you-go-until-you’ve-read-the-last-page beauty of a book.”
•Cheryl Strayed, New York Times bestselling author of *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*
“Irresistible. . . . Let’s hope Benson has more

travels in mind. He is a gifted writer, an observant human with an eye for the telling detail and how to tell it. [Booklist](#) “Charming” His travelogue is vibrant and engrossing, with wonderful portraits of Western landscapes and scruffy small towns, Job-like ordeals of gusty headwinds and breakdowns, and piquant portraits of kindly, parental folks who offer the cyclists food and shelter and another of a menacing drifter on a dark road. [Publisher](#) *cs Weekly*

Brian Benson grew up in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. He now lives in Portland, Oregon, where he teaches writing at the Attic Institute.

Going Somewhere is a coming of age tale that follows the author and his girlfriend on a bicycle journey that originates in the lake country forests of northern Wisconsin, traverses the plains and mountains of North Dakota and Montana, and culminates in the pacific northwest. I couldn't put this book down. As someone who loves being outside (and by association great travel/outdoor stories), I was pulled in by the vivid sensory details (i really want to take a bike trip now). Benson does a great job of fully immersing the reader into the wide range of environments and situation one would encounter on this particular route/method of travel. That said, the strength of this book, and what really kept me on the hook, is the astute and witty observations and reflections of young man simultaneously entangled in a romance and a struggle for self discovery. The writing is honest, the author definitely doesn't shy away from portraying himself in a negative manner, especially when he was, by his own admission, acting like a selfish dick. It's laugh-out-loud funny and super witty and fun, with enough serious reflection mixed in to keep it grounded. I don't know what to compare it to exactly, but if you can imagine if David Sedaris co-wrote a travel memoir with Jon Krakauer, with a little late nite cinemax sprinkled in (don't worry, its nothing too racy). A must read for anyone who's into the outdoors, traveling, or has ever been in a relationship, likes bicycles, likes witty writing, likes to drink mountain dew for breakfast, likes to read about how awesome strangers are, has taken a bike trip, wants to take a bike trip, has gone camping, or likes things that are awesome. So everybody. This book is a must read for everybody. Except for my friend Linus. He only likes things that suck. He would not like this book one bit.

I read Going Somewhere in smaller snippets so I could savor the journey with Brian and Rachel across the western United States. Brian's prose is beautiful, funny, and painfully honest. As a non-biker, I felt like I learned so much about the challenges and the beauty of travelling

by bicycle. As someone who has never seen the upper mountain region, I felt intimately connected to new ecosystems and the wonderful people who Brian and Rachel encountered on their trip. Going Somewhere has so many buried treasures in it—different themes emerge over the course of the book that make it SO much more than a travel memoir. It's also a powerful coming of age story that I could totally relate to—falling in love and searching for an adult identity—what more do you want? Well, Brian offers more. The book is also an extended meditation on the nature of community—big cities, rural life, and friendships over distance and time. Brian's reflections on the friendship of strangers gave me many moments of pause while reading to consider the kindness of strangers in my life. Brian's struggle with "being in the moment" and "trying to get to Portland" reminded me of my own struggles with mindfulness versus pursuing long-term goals. All in all, Going Somewhere is a book I will return to many times and I'm sure I'll carry away new revelations with each visitation.

The author did not take the time to write an intro that would have made all the unknown references he uses throughout the book make sense. We don't even know who his riding companion is or anything about their bikes. Worst of all, he seems to dislike the ride, he is bored and unhappy much of the time. If you are not happy on the bike, why are you riding? I got the sense that someone said to the author, "Hey you can make some money if you turn your blogs into a book and you don't even have to make it make sense; they will have bought it and it will be too late." it was for me.

I bought this book primarily because it was recommended by Cheryl Strayed and was disappointed. The author came across as self absorbed and not particularly interesting. Midway through the book I lost interest and just rushed through it to get it over with. The chapters seemed repetitive and didn't provide great descriptions of the landscapes. Also, I wasn't thrilled with constantly reading about what they ate or how often they had sex. I wouldn't recommend this book.

I enjoy a good adventure story and this one did not disappoint. Being a cyclist and of the female persuasion I found some of the comments about the girlfriend ridiculous and judgmental. I would have left him eating my dust halfway through the trip BUT when I think back when I was of this age and all the questions I had and the wrong turns I made well...it sounds quite familiar. I like the author's writing style and I also enjoyed following their journey on Google maps. I earmarked a few

pages in case I am ever cycling through Idaho or Wisconsin. Good job for a first novel and I would enjoy reading more by this author.

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