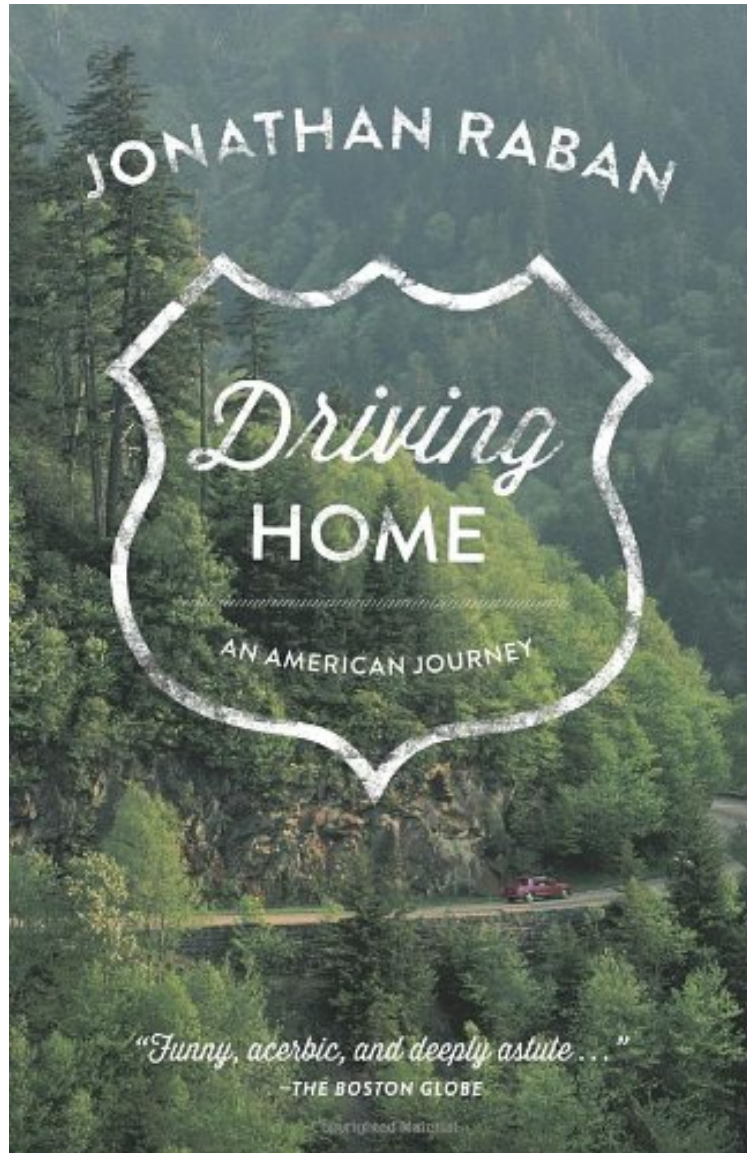


[Download] Driving Home: An American Journey

## Driving Home: An American Journey

Jonathan Raban

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#767565 in Books Sasquatch Books 2013-07-30 2013-07-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.53 x 1.52 x 5.481, 1.51 #File Name: 1570618828600 pages | File size: 69.Mb

**Jonathan Raban : Driving Home: An American Journey** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Driving Home: An American Journey:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Different sort of road-tripBy Sylvia B. Port TownsendCouldn't stop thinking about the setting, the cultural misunderstandings, the loneliness in a narrative that's kind of funny on the surface.20 of 23 people found the following review helpful. A LEISURELY RIDE HOME WITH A GOOD

DRIVERBy Schuyler T WallaceThe subtitle of Jonathon Raban's book, DRIVING HOME, "an American journey," is somewhat misleading. We readers travel along as he gives broader view to our normal image of driving home with global stories about existing and traveling. Along the way he picks up numerous luminaries, some living and others long dead, and proceeds to comment on their lives and purpose as we go along. He reflects on what values, if any, they bring with them and offers his opinion of where we've all been and where we're likely to end up. In short, he takes the long way home. Driving home is a metaphor for the settled life. It's a trip we probably make thousands of times over the years. It's a predictable and comfortable routine during which we see the same streets, make the same turns, dodge the same kids, and drive into the same garage that needs a good cleaning. There's a sense of relaxation as we walk through the front door, perhaps to the fragrance of fresh baked goods. Raban has taken that image from a piece of chocolate cake and glass of cold milk to an intricate multi-layered wedding cake accompanied by a flute of Dom Perignon. Examples of his circuitous route include a retelling of Sir Ernest Shackleton's "white warfare" assault on Antarctica and an account about Donald Crowhurst's deceitful actions during an around the world race. We're told about Seattle's class residency where young ber millionaires rule. A modern whale hunt is described featuring the views of both the hunters and "save the whale" advocates...the whale's opinion is the only one missing. Sarah Palin, Mark Twain, Robert Lowell, Barack Obama, and Sir Francis Chichester, along with many others, are jammed into Raban's bus with us as we make the drive home. It's crowded but does it work? I'll get to that later. This bus that Jonathon Raban was driving me home in seemed like a real car pool. There was a wonderful assortment of passengers and much conversation. It got a little political at times, a subject not advisable to introduce in a car pool. There were times I wanted to shout, "Where are we going, Jonathon?" as I got ready to bail out. But he was adept at keeping his hand on the wheel, steering more or less a straight line. He spent a little too much time on the left side of the road for my liking, but he went right at times, narrowly avoiding a culture crash. I never jumped. The forward is hard to navigate. In it the author laboriously explains the art of reading and his introduction to it. He moves on to discussing the complexities of language and how to reproduce it through effective writing. From there he tells us about his arrival in Seattle, combining history with the newness of his settling in, and finishes up with his thoughts on English literature and reviewing techniques. I thought Raban got a little wordy, a writing trait I find trying (although I occasionally get caught in the same snare, i.e. this review). After the forward, order is restored when his book begins. He ventures into numerous topics and because of his extensive research, crisp writing, and sense of order I was able to settle into an enjoyable book because I like this kind of informative stuff. I am an information nut. Curiosity is my passion and I suspected there was more to driving home than having cake and milk afterwards. Raban has shown me the way. If you are the curious type and interested in well researched information on a car load of disparate topics, I believe you will find much to enjoy about DRIVING HOME. You name it and Raban writes about it. Raban has created the perfect read for me, full of interesting information that can be trusted, and one I can enjoy at my own painstaking pace. If that formula fits your reading style, get this book...you'll be the smarter for it. And it goes very nicely with a glass of cold milk. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Triathlon King of Pain Great read.

For more than thirty years, Jonathan Raban has written with infectious fascination about people and places in transition or on the margins, about journeys undertaken and destinations never quite reached, and, as an expat, about what it means to feel rooted in America. Spanning two decades, *Driving Home* charts a course through the Pacific Northwest, American history, and current events as witnessed by "a super-sensitive, all-seeing eye. Proving that an outsider is the keenest observer of the scene that natives take for granted, this collection of Jonathan Raban's essays affirms his place as the most literate, perceptive, and humorous commentator on the places, characters, and obsessions that constitute the American scene. Raban spots things we might otherwise miss; he calls up the apt metaphors that transform things into phenomena. "He is one of our most gifted observers." (Newsday).

It was EB White who said: An Englishman is not happy until he has explained America. Jonathan Raban ought to be very happy on this score, because his *Driving Home* explains the State of the Union, and Raban continues to be the most resourceful refugee on our shores. Paul Theroux, *The Guardian*, UK With his characteristic curiosity and his insatiable desire to drink as deeply as he can from the wells of landscape or literature, Raban once again vividly captures the experience of trying to make a home in a place that he continues to find fascinating, bizarre, ugly, beautiful, repellent, and generous. Publishers Weekly Full of ideas that move through the language with the grace of a well-captained sailboat. Kirkus s "Describing how Raban left England two decades ago for a new life in Seattle, these essays offer agile readings of the landscape, literature and politics, 'along with some backward glances to England,' he writes, which 'may betray a lurking nostalgia for a society more settled in its shape, more instinctively known, than the one I live in now.'" *The New York Times*, Paperback Row Raban knows the best essayist trusts in drift and digression and habitually adds a literary trill. He is an erudite but adaptable companion, tart and genial, promiscuous in experience yet reliable in temperament He conjures with his new home, with the Pacific Northwest, with history, poetry, geography, catastrophes subjects Raban circumnavigates with finesse, shrugging off the obvious and regularly landing us on a shore we cant quite glimpse from here. Stacy Schiff, *The New York Times* Book Raban writes with

characteristic ease and insight[describing], among other things, his attempts to get to know his adopted home and its warring tribes. The New Yorker Raban achieves the perfect blend of the historical, observational and personal for which so many strive. I loved this book. Sara Wheeler, *The Literary*, Edinburgh Raban is at his best when treating the people, landscapes and cultures through which he is passing as if they were works of art: holding up absurdities to patient inspection, digging into their histories, forcing the complacent and skeptical to acknowledge hidden beauties. Phrase-making wit is much in evidence through these pages, and there is something refreshing about a first-rate writer whose stories are literate and sophisticated but never self-consciously literary. He knows how to capture the truth of a thing without saying it. Barton Swaim, *The Wall Street Journal* Raban opens the mind's eye with ease. This *American Journey* is the work of a fine example of that rapidly disappearing species, the man of letters. Carlo Wolff, *Pittsburg Post-Gazette* "Funny, acerbic, and deeply astute..." Antony Doerr, *The Boston Globe* Raban plots his course through his Americana scrapbook with historical vigour and intellectual flair. Alan Chadwick, *Metro*, UK It's a quest that Raban approaches, in these essays, with the full force of his remarkable talent, infused with the profound intellectual ease and quiet authority that only a writer with so much steadying ballast of good work as Raban has could muster. . In 604 pages, not a dull moment. How does he do it? Melanie McGrath, *The Evening Standard*, London "This Englishman in America is weird, unfettered, scruffy, alive... Mr. Raban's best writing, which is most of it, is succulent under a crusty exterior, like a fish baked in salt. His stuff is yet more proof that Britons are better travel writers and essayists than Americans: drier, funnier, more argumentative." Dwight Garner, *The New York Times* The essays collected in *Driving Home* do an excellent job of fleshing out the manifold conflicts indeed violence of the American landscape, but in the end, the dream of psychic renewal remains elusive, in large part because it is hard not to feel that the America of the past two decades, which Raban chronicles so carefully, no longer offers a sense of utopian possibility to the intelligent European mind, and Jonathan Raban is nothing if not an intelligent European mind. Adam Bresnick, *The Times Literary Supplement*, London the elegance, wit, intensity - and research - behind Raban's work demands that the reader follow the path towards Empsonian clarity. Nigel Fountain, *Oldie*, UK *Driving Home* isn't just a good read, it's a bunch of good reads. It's a book of important, smart work from a terrific writer who will both blow you away, and make you want to argue with him. Knute Berger, *Crosscut*, Seattle "Raban [here] showcases his craftsmanship as a writer and his bona fides as an intellectual. Every word is impeccably chosen, every metaphor meticulously selected... [His] virtues as a writer are virtually unrivaled when it comes to explaining our relationships with landscape and nature, and he's unrivaled, period, when describe water in all its forms, be it a placid puddle or a storm-swirled sea." Phil Campbell, *Columbia Journalism* The central work of Raban's life must be described as an effort to determine what America is like But along with that, the reader notes, big water draws from Raban a kind of genius for natural description. Thomas Powers, *The New York of Books* His prevailing voice is one of reason, civilised discourse and elegant analogy. The rational lucidity, trimmed of overt passion or ferocity, makes the rare emotional outburst more potent. *Herald Scotland* Raban provides his own peculiar and precise critique of the land he now calls home, full of cultural and historical observation and littered with his own dry, droll humour. The result is a must-read for fans of the writer, and a fine, if full, aside for fans of the USA. James Innes Williams, *Traveler*, UK Here is another, and welcome, addition to a genre that is best described as the literature of American encounter Its hard to think of another writer who combines such a gift for the description of physical place with a deep, analytical intelligence. *The National*, UAE *Driving Home* is a big book but it reads as if it's a short, anecdotal history of the United States from 1990 to 2000, and if you have never read a book by Raban this is a good place to begin. *The Spectator*, London Jonathan Raban writes about water in the way that Barry Lopez writes about snow or Wilfred Thesiger wrote about sand: it's not always in the foreground of his observation, but you can sense his natural element in his whole way of seeing. [*Driving Home*] is also an autobiography of sorts, a memoir of the years since Raban cast himself adrift from Britain and washed up in Seattle. *The Guardian*, UK The true Raban touch here is that he brings his deep reading of American history to play, and manages to interweave his personal journey with essays on the explorers Lewis and Clark, who made a similar journey at the request of President Jefferson. It takes a passionate history buff to note how many of America's virtues and vices have been present since independence and before, and a skilled raconteur to make us feel that passion. It's a fine ride. Kevin Jackson, *The Sunday Times*, UK The master of the margins, Raban is an inspired observer and a natural writer. He has always understood the US, and since he left his native England to settle in Seattle he has never lost his understanding of the US or his outsiders fascination with it. Six hundred pages of pleasure, including *Last Call of the Wild*. Eileen Battersby, *Irish Times* "*Driving Home* is a pleasurable baggy collection from an acerbic, sometimes crusty writer, well suited to the nightstand." *Seattle Weekly* A sterling collection. An incomparable travel writer, in this book Raban supplies myriad observations about his adopted home, but also on the larger American landscape, riffing on the West, urban architecture, national political trends, the dot-com economy, and most sublimely, about nature. David Takami, *The Seattle Times* About the Author Jonathan Raban is the author, most recently, of the novels *Surveillance* and *Waxwings*; his nonfiction includes *Passage to Juneau* and *Bad Land*. His honors include the National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN/West Creative Nonfiction Award, the Pacific Northwest Booksellers' Award, and the Governor's Award of the State of Washington. He lives in

Seattle.