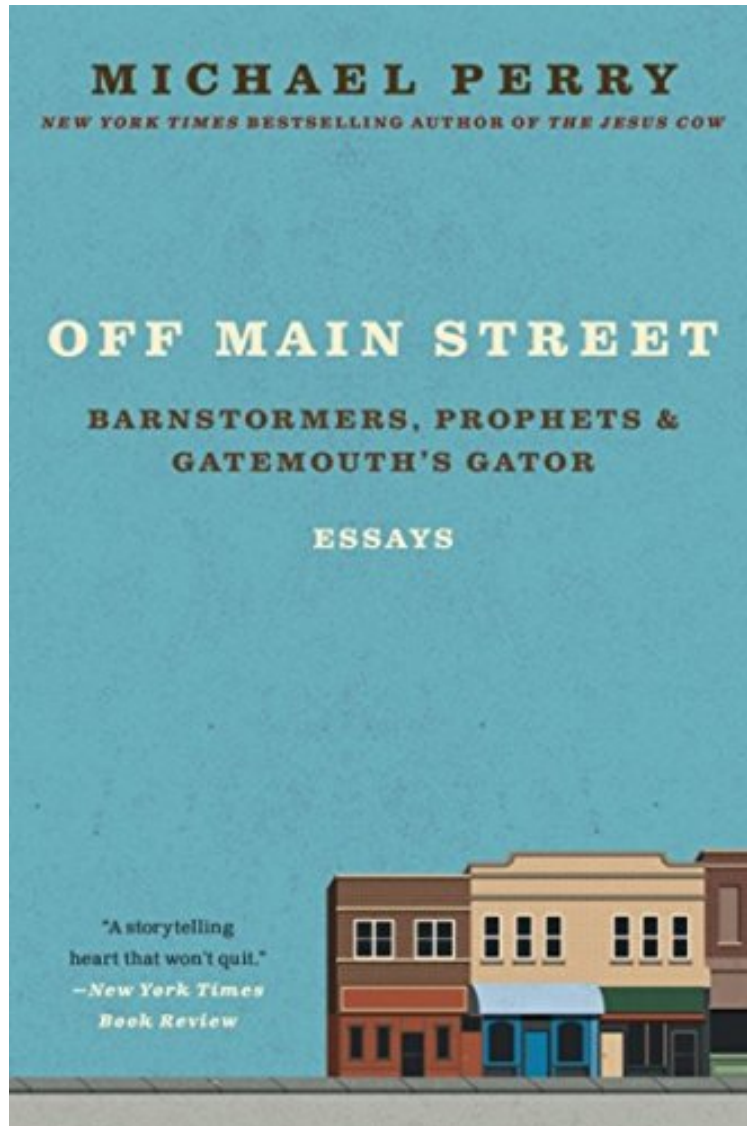


Off Main Street: Barnstormers, Prophets Gatemouth's Gator: Essays

Michael Perry

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#266816 in Books Michael Perry 2016-06-28 2005-04-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .68 x 5.311, .55 #File Name: 0060755504304 pagesOff Main Street Barnstormers Prophets Gatemouth s Gator Essays | File size: 22.Mb

Michael Perry : Off Main Street: Barnstormers, Prophets Gatemouth's Gator: Essays before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Off Main Street: Barnstormers, Prophets Gatemouth's Gator: Essays:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable, and diverseBy JTBooksI think the editorial reviewers

may have missed the point with this book. The diversity of this collection, as well as Michael's occasionally "crotchety attitude", are what make it a gem. We all generally live lives that are more diverse than we give them credit for and Michael illustrates that even the most mundane-seeming experiences can allow us to think about the world in new ways. And I don't think that writers are bound to only write about happy and amusing events, with happy and amusing attitudes; that would result in not much real writing being accomplished at all. And then what would we read? All of the essays here are worthwhile and enjoyable reading. The "mundane entry about hair loss" is not, in fact, mundane at all - it's one of the lighter entries (although maybe not for Michael himself) and is as worthwhile a read as the "one highlighting the local veterans' color guard rehearsing for a funeral" which is, it's true, quite moving. You see - diversity. I have to say that my favorite is probably the one about fear in which he describes being cut off in traffic by a spoiled youngster driving "one of those yappy little four-wheel drive pickups" sporting a "No Fear" decal", which leads to a rumination of what fear actually is and the unlikelihood that this young person is acquainted with it. This sort of traffic incident happens to me a number of times every week, living as I do in a big city. What scares me is wondering who is raising these children with no appreciation of the life around them - that's what I find frightening. This collection is an appreciation of the life around us, whether we like it - or even see it - or not. So, this is a different book from *Population 485*, as it should be. If you enjoy good writing with intelligence to spare, this will be a good investment for your (diverse) library. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the best (but all of Michael's books are...) By CustomerFood for the soul (with a side of truck stop pork rinds). His writing is relaxed and casual but goes to the core of what it means to be human. If you are from the Upper Midwest, you will especially relate to his work. He's the real deal having lived everything he writes. Michael is funny and wise in the same sentence. His essay on "No Fear" is worth buying the book for alone but every chapter is golden. He's the Mark Twain of our generation. Seriously... 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. My ribs have ached from laughter and I have filled some tissues with tears from reading "Off Main Street". By Carlos D. Pinkstaff Reading this book had me ranging from belly laughs to staunching tears. My wife is reading it for the second time and I overhear her giggling and snorting with laughter. Perry rocks!!

Whether he's fighting fires, passing a kidney stone, hammering down I-80 in an 18-wheeler, or meditating on the relationship between cowboys and God, Michael Perry draws on his rural roots and footloose past to write from a perspective that merges the local with the global. Ranging across subjects as diverse as lot lizards, Klan wizards, and small-town funerals, Perry's writing in this wise and witty collection of essays balances earthiness with poetry, kinetics with contemplation, and is regularly salted with his unique brand of humor.

From Publishers Weekly Perry, who chronicled smalltown life in *Population 451*, collects some previously published essays for this countrified collection. The author likes to write about bighearted truckers, country and blues musicians, itinerant barnyard butchers and other such characters. As he puts it, "I reckon I'm a pickup-truck-coveting blue-collar capitalist"; a guy who "wouldn't know tapis vert from Diet Squirt." But the wholesome subject of America's heartland doesn't jibe with Perry's sometimes crotchety attitude. He writes of being annoyed when he's cut off in traffic by someone driving "one of those yappy little four-wheel drive pickups" sporting a "No Fear" decal. What would that guy know about fear, he wonders? The incident prompts Perry to recall a sugarcane hauler he met while hitchhiking in Belize, a man whose situation—he was poor and held a dangerous job—made him, Perry assumes, intimately acquainted with fear. The book brims with alternately thought-provoking and pointless ramblings like these, as Perry visits the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington with 270,000 motorcycle-riding war veterans, stays at a hotel in Belize City and overhears a prostitute in the room next to his, and experiences other adventures. Generally, however, Perry's hit-or-miss writing combined with his "been-there-done-that" attitude ("I've seen a bunch of territory with my backpack right behind me. Fifteen or sixteen countries, something like that") make for a wearisome reading experience. Agent, Lisa Bankoff. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School—Perry has been a farmer, registered nurse, firefighter, cowboy, backpacker, and reporter. In a somewhat laconic, thoroughly enjoyable style, he introduces folks he has met on his journeys. The 33 solid essays, written over the past 10 years, convey the wonder of the seemingly ordinary. Whether riding along on the back of a Harley for a firsthand look at Rolling Thunder's annual tribute to soldiers who gave their life in Vietnam or contemplating the ways that Elvis has permeated the lives of people born after his death, Perry shows that everyone has a story. *Convoy* gives a passenger's-eye view of life as a trucker and paints a compelling picture of how American consumerism is tied to the 3.1 million or so truckers on the road. *Fear* This is the author's response to the arrogance of a nation that prides itself on No Fear slogans when it has not had to experience all that there is to fear in this world (written in 1997, the piece is even more meaningful after 9/11). The one flaw in the book is the paucity of recent pieces—only 10 were written since 2001. Perry shows such an uncommon mix of wisdom and humor that one feels a little cheated not to have been given a glimpse into more of his thoughts on the state of the world today. Reluctant readers will appreciate the scope Perry covers in only a few pages, and avid readers will enjoy getting to know him and a few of his friends.—Kim Dare, Fairfax County Public Library System, VA Copyright ©

Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Perry's previous collection of essays, *Population: 485* (2002), celebrated the rural community of New Auburn, Wisconsin. His latest compilation, gathered from publications ranging from *Road King* to *Men's Health* covers some of the same geographic territory: small-town life and its citizens. The book is divided into five sections, including essays about truckers and other "gearjammers," articles about country and blues musicians, and thoughts about rural life. Smith profiles the heroic (bus driver Gene Reed and his project "Christmas Is for Kids") as well as the contemptible (a solicitation letter from the Ku Klux Klan). It's almost unfortunate the essays are so diverse: a mundane entry about hair loss simply can't compete with one highlighting the local veterans' color guard rehearsing for a funeral: "One of the men had difficulty standing at attention--now and then his rawboned frame was swept by a list and sway, as if he were a cattail bumped by a breeze." Uneven, but very worthwhile. Rebecca Maksiel Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved